



Sports: Examining the Social Implications of Football Religiosity and Fanaticism among the Nigerian Youths

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Abstract

This study examined the traits of growing religiosity in football among Nigerians as related to fanaticism, hostility, hatred and intolerant behaviour exhibited by football fans. Apparently, Nigeria as a nation is generally known as one of the most religious countries around the world which culminated into different social identities. With the current trends, sports have become a universally acceptable tradition accustomed with common excitement and satisfactory to many individuals across the world irrespective of their cultural, social and religious affiliations. More than religion, sports have built inter- personal relationship and inter-connection among people of difference origins both locally, nationally and globally sharing common identity and affinity to a particular cause with the use of digital media. Likewise in Nigeria, sports have created both positive and negative impression in the minds of the youths which sometimes relates to companionship and hostility as the case may be. This research adopts qualitative method using the available empirical studies and other secondary sources on religion and football. It aims to provide knowledge and adequate attention about the negative impact of religious sensitivity on football which leads to fanaticism and fandom.

Keywords: Religion, Sports, Football, Fanaticism, Youths

I. Introduction

In Nigeria, religion plays a dominant role in the life of the people as many want to be recognized and identified with particular groups or associations. As an heterogenous and pluralistic society, it is a composition of inhabitants of different ethnicity, religious and social entities which give a diversity outlook. It is a country that people with different religious adherents socially co-exist for economic and political activities on daily

basis (Hackett & Olupona (n.d) cited by Nwahagi, 1998). Thus, religion is perceived as a sacred and sensitive element which not only gives peace of mind but also sense of belonging to the majority people. According to Idowu (1966) Africans including Nigerians are “A people who in all things are religious”. Nwahagi (1998) also buttressed that religion has helped to shape probably the social, political and economic activities of the people of Nigeria.

Undoubtedly, many scholarships have affirmed that Africans and religion are inseparable because it has become their daily practice. Thus, Onwurah (1990) gave a perfect description of a particular ethnic group in Nigeria when he averred that “The Igbo person is very religious and does not know how to live without religion - he or she eats religiously, drinks religiously, sneezes religiously. Religion is part of the whole life”. It is noteworthy that Nigerians take their religions seriously and this religiosity lifestyle has transcended to other aspects of their endeavors including their public life (Onaiyekan, 2012). To many, religion is a sensitive matter that gives social identity, exaltation and companionship, hence, it must accord absolute respect and appreciation and any attempt to tamper with it can result to unrest and chaos in the community. Over the years, level of sensitivity has culminated to religious intolerance, religious crisis and fanaticism in Nigeria (Iwuagwu, Ekoh, Ngwu, and Gyimah 2023).

In the modern contemporary, sports especially football has been a driver of joy, comfort and satisfaction among the youths around the globe and Nigerian youths are not exempted. According to Tepend (2021), football is the most famous and watched sport around the world with approximately 3.5 billion fans. It is commonly known as soccer in United States and arguably the number one sport in the globe (Iwuagwu et. al, 2023). In other words, football is a household name in many Nigerian’s



homes this is because there is considered to be a fan of football in every home in Nigeria. Hassabi, Mortazavi, Giti, Hassabi, Mansournia, and Shapouran (2010) and Kramer, Dvorak, and Kloeck (2018) opine that football is the most-watched, supported and even celebrated in the world.

The advent of advanced digital technology has aided widespread and acceptability of football across the world popularly known as a global village. This is because football fans can watch and access instant information about football activities at the comfort of their zones. According to Dogari, Apuke, and Idi (2018), some substantial research has shown that technological advancements are now prevalent in developing countries which create interconnection among young people in the world. This globalization syndrome gives room for football fans to express their feelings and opinions about their football clubs and activities. Knoll, Schramm, and Schallhorn (2014) and Vallerand, Mageau, Elliot, Dumais, Demers, and Rousseau (2008) observed that some football fans shown interest of watching football match in viewing centre as this help people to relax and relief from stress as well as create opportunity for social interaction and identity.

It is noteworthy that Nigeria has the highest number not only in population approximately more than 200 million people (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP 2021) but also in number of religious adherents comprises of more than 400 ethnic nationalities (Kitause & Achunike, 2013). Hence, the young people share the large portion in the population demography with a median age of 19 (Iwaugwu et. al, 2023). However, the influence of globalization and technological advancement has posited football as a current trend and modern religion. For example, it is estimated that 100 million Nigerians enjoy football (Cheeron Nigeria, 2019). This means many Nigerians are passionate about football just like their religion. Many scholarships have highlighted the position of religion and the importance of sports especially football in Nigeria but little attention has been given to the state of religiosity of Nigerians in football which culminated to fanaticism. This paper dissects into the subject matter because it is timely.

Religion: The concept of Religiosity and Fanaticism

Religion is a phenomenon that has no general or universal acceptable definition, this is because it is subjective to individuals' perception about what gives them peace of mind and sense of belonging. The complexity of religion is derived from certain condition which means the concept of

religion is naturally beyond human comprehension, in other words, the object of religion can only be conceived differently by different people (Metuh, 1987). Hence, the attempt to define religion has attracted various scholars - theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, historians etc., who see it from different perspective (Metuh, 1987). As at today, there is no comprehensive acceptable definition of religion. However, some opinions of religion refer to it as an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, practices and worship that centre on one Supreme Being called God, or the Deity (Watkins & Watkins 1992). In the words of Metuh (1992) "Religion is an institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values, and practices focused on the relationship between God and man, and between men living in society" (p.11).

On further note, religiosity is the state of being religious consciousness that is the act or expression of behaviour that are religious inclined. In the work of Lewis (1978), *Roget's Thesaurus* cited by Prokopiw (2020), he asserted that religiosity is synonymous with the term religiousness, orthodoxy, faith, belief, piousness, holiness, devotion. However, just like the root word religion, there is no appropriate definition for religiosity as many scholars have described it according to their perceptions and field of study.

It can be understandable that the word fanaticism is historically first and foremost a matter of religion. This means that without religion, we cannot be discussing about fanaticism because it is an extreme and irrational behaviour that is religiously inspired (Prokopiw, 2020). Although fanaticism can also be observed in others social aspects such as politics, sport, fashion, entertainment among others. The concept of fanaticism does not have an agreed definition even though it is frequently used to describe unacceptable behaviour in the society (Erdogan & Sirin, 2021). The term fanaticism is an etymologically traced from the root word *fanum* a Latin word which is used to describe a sacred structure such as temple; the noun combined with a suffix *aticus* to form *fanaticus*; an adjective which refers to a mode of behaviour inspired by a religious system of beliefs ((Prokopiw, 2020). In other words, it is used to describe those who literally devoted to the temple with extreme madness (Oxford, 1968). According to Oxford dictionary (1968), the word fanatic is used to describe a person with extreme religious behaviour which can be expressed in either positive or negative condition.



On this note, the word fan was coined out of this terminology; which indicates a form of devotion and attachment to a brand. In other words, sport fans express their maximum commitment, love and loyalty to a team in a socially acceptable manner, at the same time, such behaviours can also be express in extreme pattern – hatred, intolerance and violence which is totally unacceptable in the society (Kazan, 2009). According to Galeano (2006), sport fans develop emotional fluctuation to their team which can be expressed in either positive or negative dimension with greater power in which this commitment can reach the point of sacrificing one’s life for the team. On this discourse, it can be expatiated that sport fans can express an unpredictable behaviour as a result of their love and loyal to the team; this can either strengthen companionship or inflict pains to the others.

The Intersection between Religion and Sport

In the contemporary time, it can be observed that sport is the most popular event that is watched across the world (Hassabi et al. 2010 & Kramer et al. 2018). According to Barnat (2019), on different occasions, sport has been a major subject matter in academic discourse in comparison with religion. He buttressed that there have been many publications and interviews describing sports in various general slogans such as “sport is the new religion”, “football is not a sport but a religion”, “football is a modern religion”, among others. Thus, Barnat stated that this argument can be found in the work of Pierre de Coubertin (2014), *Address from Olympia to the Youth of the World* from 1927, who argue about the religion of sport although his position remains ambiguous according to Jim Parry (2007) in his article entitled: *The religioathletae, Olympism and peace*, he averred that the two concept are different and concluded that religion of sport cannot be seen as an alternative to traditional faith.

In the notion of the academic discourse, there are two school of thoughts – the proponents and the opponents. The former adopt the functional approach of religion sharing similar attributes with sport. The historical perspective of the religion of sport was postulated in the 20th century led by American sociologist Harry Edwards who presented in his book *Sociology of Sport* (1973). He analyzed the growing popularity of sport in United States more than politics considering the religiosity of the Americans but not the same level as traditional religion; he affirmed similarities attributes in both subject matters. These characteristics in religion such as – (a) doctrine, (b) organization, (c) practical

symbolic (d) existential and (f) religious authorities can also be likened to sport system. Therefore, he observed that “gods” can be referred to charismatic, talented and famous athlete who is globally celebrated – like Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo in football. Also, believers can be the fans who are loyalists to their clubs or favourite athletes. Additionally, with similar case with religion, the degree of the creed or religiosity exhibited by the fans to their clubs or athletes can escalate to fanaticism. This regards, to athletes and fans can be life fulfillment, purpose and direction.

In the case of authority, Edwards (1973) termed it “ruling-patriarch”, these are the sets of people that occupy high positions in sport system, they give order and enjoy influence, prestige and power in the sport system just like religious leaders in religious establishment. Similarly, like sacred places in religion – temple, church, shrine, mosque etc., sport also has designated place of worship like stadium, hall, sport facilities and national hall of fame. These places can also be considered as pilgrimage patronage. Subsequently, the religious symbols – cross, rosary, crescent and star, traditional oracle can also be seen in sport system, these are medals, trophies, team emblems etc. which give recognition and high value in sport. Edwards (1973) explains that religious rituals like worship, prayer procession and celebration gives meaning and purpose to life in religious system. Also, in world of sport, the law of principle, hard work and practice lead to success which makes human life meaningful. To him, sport involves feeling, ritual and the celebration of human achievement. Finally, Edwards opines on doctrine in sport, religion offers dogmatic concept and avoid critical thinking and questioning; in sport he explains that the functioning of sport in society, its acceptance, and the legitimacy of practices related to it are based on a “body of formally stated beliefs, accepted on faith by great masses of people” (p. 261).

According to Barnat (2019), Edwards (1973) concluded on two notes; he described sport as a universal popular religion in America and he also termed sport a “quasi-religious institution”- this does not mean that sport can serve as a replacement for the traditional religion in America but as a *civil religion* he indicates that sport is deep-rooted in huge interest and collective values. Therefore, sport can only serve as complementary arrangement to traditional or sacred religion.

Another interesting discourse is from Prebish (1984), he appreciates Edwards (1973) position on similarity between religion and sport but criticized inconsistencies in his postulation. He



argues that sport cannot be placed as an alternative to traditional religion because of identity conflict because one cannot profess the two at the same time, that is, a committed sport fan is also a Christian or Muslim as the case may be. He observed that most religious adherents practice their faith because of pressure from social construct of non-religious and socio-cultural factors. He acknowledged that both religion and religion have similar influence and ritual on their adherents which he believes provide meaning to their live. He describes religion as the concept of “experience of the ultimate” that is feeling of oneness of nature. Barnat (2019) asserted that Prebish didn’t elucidate the transformation of life but only concern “attitudes, values, frames of reference, interpersonal relationships, and social involvements” (1984, p. 318).

From the functionalists’ view of points, religion should provide the fundamental answer to the meaning of life. In the society, the important function of religion is to integrate people and connect them into a collective entity (Davie, 2007, Dobbelaere, 2004, and Robertson, 1970). According to Durkheim (1995), A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and for-bidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single community called a Church, all those who adhere to them (p. 44). In other words, religion is not a content but by the function it performs. This function consists in the fact that it is integrative; it is a social binder that cements the community. Thanks to religion, society consolidates its foundations (Davie, 2007, p. 30–31).

Damian Barnat (2019) agreed with Edwards postulation on sport phenomenon as religious or quasi-religious. He explained with Durkheim’s definition of religion as mainly integrative function which is consonant to Edwards position about religion. Furtherance, Davie (2007) considered Durkheim’s perspective that religion is nothing more than the symbolic expression of social experience” (p. 30–31). Barnat gives similar view on Edward assertion on sport as a popular religion when he said “an attack upon sport is an attack upon the society itself” (Edwards, 1973, p. 90). Edwards analysis on sport indicates that society places ultimate values and honour on sport which pave way for its popularity for instance, fans eulogize and respect the athletes and expression of emotions during sport activities. This shows that sport strengthen sense of communality and belongings which can be described as *civil religion*. On this notion of civil religion, Kossakowski (2017) notes

that sport fosters strong bond in the community, he explains sporting activities like game, national colour, anthems as well as members of modern societies glorify a nation, its myths and greatness” (Kossakowski, 2017).

Finally, the functionalists commented on Prebish’s position, according to Twietmeyer (2015) religion connotes absolute allegiance which means commitments, it is not a content and the sacredness of religion is subjective to individual’s perception. On this note, many scholars unanimously considered sport as the modern religion (p. 241). The school of thought concluded that any aspect of life that is considered important and ultimate, can be determined as religious and sacred. This means sport, humanism, nationalism, capitalism, scientism can be regarded as religion.

The second school of thought – opponents give a substantive approach about religion and sport. According to their point of views, religion is naturally unique and should be distinguish from other aspects of culture because it transcends beyond physical component; it is metaphysics – belief in the existence of supernatural being and spiritual realm. Damian Barnat (2019) notes that Max Weber is considered in support of substantive approach to religion, although he didn’t provide justification for this in his work. Davie (2007) states that Weber drew attention to content (substance) of a particular religion, this position serves as reference to other scholars in the 20th century (Rudolf Otto and Miracea Eliade cited by Davies 2007).

The substantive approach on religion was majorly spearheaded by Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (2007) and the Scottish sociologist Steve Bruce (2002). Bruce (2002) opines religion as a belief, system or action predicated on the existence of entities with powers of agency (that is, gods) or impersonal powers or processes possessed of moral purpose which can set the conditions of, or intervene in, human affairs” (2002, p. 2). He explains that providing individuals with a system of morals and societies with an integrative framework is a defining feature of religion, thus, all social phenomena performing such functions must be considered religious. He argues that separation of certain sphere of reality or inability to explain conventional understanding of certain phenomenon shows that functional approach to religion is too broad (Barnat, 2019). According to Davie (2007) and Dobbelaere (2004), the flaw of the approach is excessive inclusiveness which undermine the theoretical values (p.20 and p.50)

Similarly, Roland Robertson (1970) and Karl Dobbelaere (2004) interrogate the nature of



sport as *civil religion* as described by the approach which show inconsistency. He argues the weakness of the definition of religion by the functionalists who recognize other aspects of culture as religion phenomenon and should remain sacred. On the final note, the substantive approach asserts that the functionalists are unable to acknowledge the nature of individual secularization process closely common to the modern societies like the United States. This suggest replacing nonreligious element as an alternative to traditional religion. Many researchers affirm that secularization of Western Europe is a social phenomenon (Davie, 2007, Dobbelaere, 2004 Norris, Inglehart 2011). This means that inclusive of others phenomenon like sport, humanism and nationalism that provides meaning to life for an individual which can be defined as religion show a misinterpretation of the secularization of Western societies (Robertson, 1970, p. 39).

Therefore, Damian Barnat (2019) remarks that some researchers share similar opinions about similarities between religion and sport as both have common purpose to give meaning to human life. The two subject matters significantly determine individual and collective identity; thus, they serve preserve and reproduce communal values. He also notes that the functional approach to religion cannot be justifiable as regards to sports because the perspective is too broad which includes religious ideologies and worldviews that are essentially secular in nature.

The state of Football in Nigeria

As at today, football is not alien to Nigerians. Though it is not a traditional sport; over the years, it has become a part and parcel of the people's way of life as many perceive it as form of entertainment, relaxation and comfort (Knoll et al 2014 & Vallerand et al 2008). In the views of Boyle and Haynes (2004), globalization enhances major awareness and publicity of football in the modern time as many people show keen interest and support for various football events and activities which gives global recognition such as world cup, African nation cup, European Leagues Cup among others. The Nigerian media has reshaped the perception of many youths towards football since 1980s after major reform in the media and communication industry. The introduction of transnational media cooperations pave way for the integration of many cable channel companies such as DSTV, Sky sport, CNN which broadcast lives sport matches and events across the globe (Dogari et. al, 2018). Therefore, many Nigerian youths are attracted and fantasized with the football events by setting up a

fanbase for different clubs in Europe like Barcelona, Manchester United, Chelsea, Real Madrid, Arsenal among others according to their choice and interest (Dogari et. al, 2018). This brings social cohesion, identity and companionship among the youths irrespective of their ethnic, religion and cultural background.

Many researches have shown that Nigerian youths derived interest in support of the European leagues than the local league known as the Nigerian Premier League, NPL (Igundunasse & Ojiji, 2016). The survey available shown that 70% are fans of English Premier League (EPL) while only 30% show interest in the Nigeria's league. According to Noi Polls (2018), 34% of Nigerian youths support Chelsea Football Club, 33% identify with Manchester United and 23% with Arsenal. Another accurate data shows that many Nigerian youths preferred to watch live matches in commercial places popularly known as viewing centres (Onyebueke, 2015).

With the growing proliferation and affordability of Cable TV Channel, paid subscription and digital TV application, football fans are left with various choices to watch the matches. Hence, there have been increasing available viewing centre in every nook and cranny of the communities especially in strategic and commercial places. This viewing centre offers services at affordable charges with the purpose to gives maximum satisfaction to their clients. However, many fans prefer to grace the matches at the viewing centres (Dogari et. al 2018). On the match day (mostly weekends and sometimes weekdays), fans find their ways to the centres with the intention to give maximum support to their favourite clubs majorly the foreign football leagues. Some of the fans put on their clubs' jerseys, wrist bands, caps or mufflers to show their loyalty and commitment to their clubs. This indicates that Nigerian youths have developed practice and tradition for watching European football (Onwumechili & Oloruntola 2014; Onyebueke 2015; Omobowale, 2009) Conversely, football events have become more like a daily activity in Nigeria; this is because there is a likelihood of featuring of football matches in European leagues and the fans are always looking forward to enjoying it except during the European leagues break.

Football Religiosity and Fanaticism among Nigerian Youths

In recent time, Nigerian youths are one of the major lovers of football in the world with more than 100 million fanbase in the country (Cheeron



Nigeria, 2019). Many Nigerian youths are supporters of different European Clubs, with majority pledging their allegiance to football clubs in English Premier League (EPL) such as Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester United among others (Noi Polls, 2018). Interestingly, football fosters social cohesion, identity and companionship among Nigerian youths irrespective of religious, ethnic or socio-economic background as this aid national integration and nation building. Arguably, Nigeria is one of the most religious people in the world as colossal numbers are adherents of Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion, in fact Nigerians do not use their religion to play because it is believed that it gives hope and peace of mind (Onaiyekan, 2012). This indicates that traits of religiosity can be found in behaviour, lifestyle and other facets of lives of many individuals. In this regards many Nigeria coverup under sport to express their religiosity, fanaticism and ethnicity (Dogari et. al 2018).

Similar to religion scenario, most football fans cherish and protect the integrity of their clubs as this is one of traits of their religious sensitivity which provides social identity and fulfilment. In the course of trivializing the club and mockery of the loosing team as well as the poor performance of the players by the rival fans, the opposing fans may get provoked to the point of physically attacking the rival fans which leads to fanaticism. Conversely, comprehensive research conducted by Dogari et. al (2018) shows that there are two types of football fans in Nigeria. The “die-hard” and “non-dire-hard” fans. The die-hard fans are more passionate about their club and they are always ready to defend their club by all cost since they are emotionally attached to the team. The non-dire-hard fans support their club for fun and entertainment and they control their feeling against fanaticism.

According to Dogari et. al (2018), most Nigerian fans are of the age spectrum of 18 to 40 years, consists of people from religious and ethnic groups as well as different occupations such as students of tertiary institutions, business people, mechanics, butchers, artisans, Okada (tricycle) riders, shuttle drivers among others. In addition, most of the football fans are males with few females. Iwuagwu et. al (2023) observed that most fans enjoy watching match at the viewing centre which is usually charge at affordable fee, the rationale is to extol the integrity of their teams and also criticize the opposition teams. In most cases, the fans of opposing team engaged in verbal assaults, displaying strong feeling of hatred,

violence and fanaticism against themselves (Omobowale, 2009).

He asserted that the die-hard fans arrived at the viewing centres thirty minutes before the commencement of the match. They are always recognized with their clubs’ symbols and emblems such as T-shirt (jersey), cap, wrist band, muffler etc. They always exchange pleasantries with their fellow fans using the clubs’ slogan and sit comfortably at strategic position in the midst of their fellow clubs’ fans to show solidarity. The purpose of coming early is to listen to the analysis from the sport analysts on the teams as this will provide insights about the prediction and expectation of the match. They listen with keen interest and also share their opinions on players’ abilities, selection and strategy they wish their coaches adopted.

In the midst of this, disagreement might start among the fellow fans on players’ preference, team formation and favourable strategy to be put in place to win the match. Once the match starts, full attention is shifted to the screen as applauding and criticism began among the fans about the players. Any team that scores first between the two teams result to jubilation and celebration among the fans. The winning team fans begin to troll and mock the rival fans which results in argument, hostility and violence (Omobowale, 2009). It is noteworthy that die-hard fans express their religiosity and fanaticism behaviour during this period especially from the part of the loosing team. Some fans take it personal by exhibiting verbal and physical confrontation, this can lead to denigrating and profiling of family, religion and ethnicity so as to score cheap point against their opponents. This also occurs on various social media platforms mostly on sport and fans page – like twitter, facebook, Instagram etc (Dogari et. al., 2018).

Football religiosity and fanaticism have become the tradition among the football fans, it can either be intra and inter personal affairs as a result of inability of the fans to control their feeling and emotions (Iwuagwu et. al 2023). In past cases, some fans have lost their lives as they feel sad and depressed because their teams performed below expectation as this culminated to anxiety-induced heart failure (Kramer et al. (2018). For instance, after Chelsea lost to Barcelona in the Champions League in 2012, a Chelsea fan was reported to have collapsed (Olakotan, 2012). A recent example is the death of five Nigerians during Nigeria versus South Africa semifinal match in AFCON 2023 tournament, out of these deceased are a serving member of the National Youths Service (NYSC), identified as Samuel, a former member of the House



of Representatives, who represented Ika federal constituency of Delta State, Dr Cairo Ojougboh, Deputy Bursar of Kwara State University (KWASU), Alhaji Ayuba Abdullahi, a sales representative in Ogun State Mikail Osundiji, Anambra-born billionaire, Chief Osondo Nwoye who lived in Ivory Coast (Leadership, 2024).

It noteworthy that most of these football enthusiasts also use football as a means of financial gains as they engage in active sports betting. It has been recorded that over 60 million Nigerians engage in sports betting with almost \$ 2 billion spent on it every day in Nigeria (Premium Times, 2014), there is a growing ratio in football betting among football fans in Nigeria (Owonikoko, 2020). This involves a gambling activity on prediction of the winner of the match with accurate score line. In most cases, many football fans feel depressed and emotionally down because of losing money and valuable things through sports betting as this has also resulted to suicide mostly among the die-hard fans. For instance, a Nigerian living in Ghana committed suicide in August 2020, following Barcelona's 8–2 loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League due to the high stakes he placed in the game (Akyereko, 2020).

II. Conclusion

From the academic discourse, it has been established that religion plays a significant experience in all ramifications of Nigeria in which sport is not an exception. The research affirms that Nigerians are comfortably identified and associated with their religions because it gives sense of belongings and peace of mind. The study also investigates the correlation and connection between religion and sport highlighting the scholastic views on its similarities and differences; it arrived at the description of sport as a civil religion which builds social cohesion, identity, comfort and satisfaction among the people. In addition, the study also explores the religiosity and fanaticism attitude and experiences of the Nigerian youths which continue to build social, religious and ethnic tension but can escalate to conflict, unrest and chaos if not properly maintained.

III. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

There is need to understand that Nigeria is a fragile state in the aspect of nation building and national development; hence, football religiosity and fanaticism is a colossal threat to her peace, security and unity because it can escalate to ethno-religious conflict if it goes out to control. To this regards,

adequate attention must be given to this part in order to maintain a harmonious and peaceful co-existed society.

It is pertinent to address football religiosity and fanaticism among Nigerian youths especially the fans by educating them about the importance of tolerance, self-control and human right when interacting with other fans. They should be enlightened that the objectives of sport are to promote hard work, reward and unity among the people in the globe.

The local government should regulate the operations of the viewing centres through registration and issue of license as this will curb nefarious activities such as selling of drug, India hemp and illegal fighting. The local security agencies like – Neighbourhood Safety Corps and Civil Defence Corps should monitor the viewing centres' premises especially during football match to prevent illegal fighting and any violence should be immediately reported to the nearest Nigerian Police station. The owner of the viewing centre should be at alert to prevent illegal activities and any case of violence should be reported to the Nigerian Police Force for proper investigation.

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