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ISLAMIC LAW, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper has critically examined the implementation of Islamic law in Nigeria today vis-à-vis the right to religious freedom of Muslims and non-Muslims. The study has considered in relatively greater details the Islamic law of apostasy and its implications on citizens' fundamental right to freedom of religion, thought and conscience. This inquiry found out that as Islam does not draw a caesura between religion and other aspects of human life, its practice in Nigeria affects the rights of individuals especially non-Muslims. The study recommended legal reform, de-politicization of Islam, adherence to state secularity principle, active awareness of religious pluralism, respect for the rule of law, and cultivation of patriotic sense, inter alia, as constituting the possible remedy. While structural-functionalism is the theoretical framework on which this investigation was built, the methodology employed was critical analysis.

*Keywords:* Religious Freedom, Human Rights, Islamic Law, Nigerian Constitution