



Religious Pluralism and Inter-Faith Dynamics in West Africa: A Comparative Perspective on Malawi

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Abstract

Religious diversity in West Africa is characterized by a rich tapestry of faiths coexisting within multi-ethnic societies. Malawi exemplifies this with its diverse religious landscape, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous beliefs. Understanding the interplay between these religions and their impact on societal dynamics is crucial for fostering inclusive environments. The research employs a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with focus groups from various religious denominations and quantitative surveys targeting Malawi's population. Data analysis includes thematic coding for qualitative data and statistical testing for survey findings. Findings indicate significant disparities in inter-faith dialogue participation, with Christian communities engaging more frequently than Muslims or indigenous believers. This suggests a need to enhance engagement strategies that accommodate different religious norms and practices. The study underscores the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in promoting equitable interfaith relations in Malawi. Recommendations include developing tailored educational programmes for faith leaders and fostering community-building initiatives across denominational boundaries. Develop educational resources that are inclusive of all major religions, advocate for religious literacy training among educators, and organise inter-faith forums to address common societal challenges such as poverty and healthcare disparities.

Keywords: *African geography, Pluralism, Religion, Ethnicity, Comparative analysis, Cultural studies, Theology*

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