ABSTRACT

This study examined the phenomenon of religious extremism among the Muslims in Uganda. Its main objective was to investigate the main drivers of this phenomenon, its manifestations and the consequences arising from it with a view of making recommendations on how it could be prevented and countered. This study used a phenomenological research approach, employed a case study design (Busoga Region was chosen for this purpose) and mostly used qualitative methods to collect data from both primary and secondary sources.

The study revealed that this phenomenon is growing among the Muslims in Uganda and poses very serious challenges and threats to the country's peace, security, social - economic development and social cohesion. The rising trend of this phenomenon among the Muslims in Uganda is exhibited in the rising levels in extreme rhetoric, attitudes, beliefs, practices and actions and manifests its self in several ways including claim of absolute truth; intolerance to other religious viewpoints; use of hate speech; holding skewed religious viewpoints and emphasis on the use of violence to achieve the desired goals among others.

This study has established that the causes of this phenomenon are varied and include political, economic, historical, psychological, social and theological factors and that the youths in the age bracket 15-35 are the most susceptible to this phenomenon .

The findings of this study have demonstrated that the phenomenon of religious extremism is contrary to the principle of moderation which is very much emphasised in Islam and its major sources: the Qur'an and Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad. Several efforts aimed at preventing and countering this phenomenon have been undertaken by various stakeholders but all these have proved futile as the phenomenon is neither diminishing nor being contained. The researcher recommends that preventing and countering this phenomenon among the Muslims in Uganda requires a whole of society approach that involves different stakeholders. These include the government, religious, political, local and cultural leaders; the media; educational institutions; development partners; artists; CSOs; security institutions and the whole of community.