



Article

Two Neighbours, Too Many Crises: Re-thinking Measures to Ending the Tide of Jukun/Tiv Violent Conflict in Wukari - Taraba State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Since the return to civil rule in Nigeria in 1999, domestic instability arising from ethno-religious, inter and intra communal conflicts of varying dimensions have continued unabated. Jukun and Tiv ethnic groups have unenviable history of conflicts in spite of their neighbourliness and sometimes cohabitation in some communities in Wukari and other places in Southern Taraba State. This paper observes that decades of neighbourliness and cohabitation between Jukun and Tiv ethnic groups is inundated with gory narratives of violent conflict. It argues that the restoration of democratic governance in 1999 has failed to abate the recurring conflict situations between the two groups especially in Wukari. The study adopts survey and documentary methods of data collection and hinges its analysis on qualitative descriptive and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). We adopted dialectical materialism as our theoretical framework. The paper concludes that restoring permanent peace between the Jukun and Tiv in Wukari will enhance food production and development in the area. It recommends the need for a paradigm shift from the hitherto elitist driven peace process to a more inclusive people oriented peace process. This would allow the participants in the conflicts, the victims and community representatives to advocate better options that will promote the emergence of durable peace among the conflicting groups.

Keywords

Neighbours, Crises, Tide, Violent Conflict

Introduction

Globally, communal crisis, ethno-religious and intra-state conflicts appear to have remained one of the most destabilizing features in contemporary societies. Evidently, developing countries, especially in Africa and the Middle-East, tend to have been mostly affected by the ravaging internal conflicts. In the last three decades, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Angola, Chad, Uganda, Congo, Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire etc had experienced one form of conflict or the other. The Arab spring also snowballed into one of the greatest uprising that resulted to the collapse of several autocratic regimes especially in countries like Tunisia, Egypt and had reshaped administrative dynamics of several other regimes in Africa.

In Nigeria, since the return to civil rule in 1999, domestic instability arising from kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, rape, terrorism, ethno-religious, inter and intra communal conflicts of varying degrees and dimensions have continued unabated. In each of these, huge humanitarian tragedy and socio-economic disaster accompanying the tide appears to have stalled progress. In fact, it seems to have blotted

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stability, and instigated socio-economic and political disarticulation. It also has direct consequences on the development of these communities and the nation at large, with resultant negative impacts on vulnerable groups particularly women and children. Perhaps, it has increased the level of insecurity, instability and tends to have perforated the prevailing fragile peace in the country.

Many decades after the 1959 conflict between the Jukun and Tiv, the crisis instead of abating, has metamorphosed from a brush-fire to an all-consuming conflagration. Noticeably, what is known as “Wukari Crisis” has evolved in several stages in terms of causes, velocity of occurrence, valuables destroyed, number of lives lost, preventive measures applied and the overall impacts. Incidentally, what have not changed are the people involved. At the surface, one can quickly conclude that the crisis has remained inter-ethnic, based on the groups involved in the conflicts. However, such hasty conclusions have vehemently neglected the underlining drivers of the conflict.

Unfortunately, Wukari has suffered huge number of conflicts. Among these conflicts are the Jukun/Kuteb crisis of 1993, the Jukun/Hausa conflict of 1990, the Jukun/Hausa/Fulani crisis of 1992, the Jukun/Chamba/Kuteb violence of 1997 and seven devastating conflicts with the Tiv since 1956 till date, in which lives and property worth millions of naira were ruthlessly destroyed. There are also serials of gruesome murders especially in the farms. Such clandestine killings incubate pockets of violence in remote communities that host majority of farmers. Women and children are also trapped in the cross-fire. Thus, with its ethnic make-up, and political dynamics, earlier studies on Wukari crisis tend to explain the conflict from the standpoint of inter-ethnic and ethno-religious crisis, mainly between the Tiv and the Jukun (see Anifowose, 1982; Nnoli, 1995; Jibo, 2001; Egwu, 2004; Egwu, 2013; Aluaigba, 2008). The emergence of overt conflicts between the two ethnic groups began in the 1959 following the political disagreement that inundated the Federal elections of 1959. Since then, the continuation of the conflict has turned this feud into what Nnoli (1995) has described as “the deadliest inter-ethnic clashes” (cited in Aluaigba, 2008).

Incidentally, efforts at ending this crisis appear to be mainly palliatives and unsustainable. Over the years, both federal and state governments focused more on deployment of troops to quelling the conflicts. Also, sometimes financial settlements of traditional rulers and stakeholders in the community are done with a view to discontinuing the violence. However, this age long practice has not established durable peace among the people and in the communities. It has only provided an ephemeral peace thereby making the two groups and their communities susceptible and frequently relapse to conflict.

Following from the complexities and contradictions surrounding recurring communal conflicts in Wukari local government area, this study focuses on developing new measures towards the actualization of sustainable peace in Wukari. These new measures are fundamental to ending the tide of violent conflict between the Jukun and the Tiv people in wukari, Taraba State.

Theoretical Justification

Wukari has remained prominently relevant and its strategic importance is driven by the proceeds from its arable farm land. Incidentally, the confrontations between the Jukun and Tiv ethnic groups were initially driven by political power struggle and contestations in the defunct Gongola region. However, the present violent situations and recurring instability is largely driven by struggle for scarce resources which underlies the increasing rate of suspicion, animosity, ethnic squabbles and unfriendly neighbourliness.

Following from the above economic importance, this paper adopted dialectical materialism. Essentially, Engels defines dialectics as the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought (Sturrock, 2009). For him, Engels provides an account of the laws of dialectics, beginning with the three most fundamental ones:

- i. The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa;
- ii. The law of the interpenetration of opposites and
- iii. The law of the negation of the negation

Generally, the foundation of dialectical materialism is traced to the writings of Karl Marx who sought to substitute Hegel's dialectical idealism with dialectical materialism (Sturrock, 2009). As a result, the moment of transformations that defines dialectical movement become part of the struggles and contradictions of living actuality (Sturrock, 2009). Dialectical materialism therefore can be seen as embodying the highest level of philosophical generalization, embracing the universal laws and attributes of nature, the society and knowledge (Krapivin, 1985). For Ake (1981) dialectical materialism is characterized by three major assumptions. This includes:

- i. The primacy of material conditions
- ii. The dynamic character of reality
- iii. The relatedness of different elements of society (Ake, 1981, pp. 1-3)

Basically, Marxian perspective is anchored on the assumption that conflict is the driving force of history, the economy being the key factor characterized by a class struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed, the haves and the have-nots. It also emphasizes the economic factor as being crucial to all societies since economic resources, especially land is scarce and competition for them brings conflicts.

Thus, having explained the major assumptions of dialectical materialism, we also appreciate its explanatory vigor and analytical utilities yet we are not oblivious of its reductionist view point that not every conflict or disagreement can be attributed to the struggle for the scarce resources. However, considering the sectarian nature of violent conflict in Wukari, dialectical materialism becomes not only relevant, but the bedrock for understanding the drivers of the prevailing crisis. Part of this current crisis, as with other conflicts in Wukari, is about competition for resources (mainly land ownership). This could be seen mainly from the point that the arable land of Wukari has attracted many farmers from Benue State

and other neighbouring states. Majority of these farmers are of Tiv extraction. Interestingly, the two groups have co-habited for several decades.

Incidentally, numerous years of co-habitation does not translate to ownership of land. The two groups see themselves differently. While the Tiv settlers believe they are indigenes of the area with equal rights and privileges with the Jukuns, the Jukuns insist that the Tivs are settlers and do not own any land or have equal privileges with them. In fact, the Jukun people believe that the Tiv did not settle in Wukari but have rather encroached and violated the traditional land ownership system in Wukari. These divergent views have remained the source of animosity and conflicts among the two groups. For instance, it led to the Jukun/Tiv conflicts in 2001/2002. As a result, the Jukuns declared the Tivs non indigenes (Adamu, 2002).

Also, the most recent crisis in 2019 that spanned to 2020 began in Kente, a political ward in Wukari local government area. Virtually, every building belonging to the Tiv people was destroyed with over fifty people killed since the beginning of the violence. The conflict later spread to other communities like Tsokundi, Bantaje, Rafin Kada and Chonku where majority of inhabitants are Tiv. Presently, every household in Chonku is displaced and all property destroyed. In fact, no single building whether owned by Tiv or Jukun person stands in Chonku political ward. The conflict led to the destruction of Chonku primary school, hospital, Chonku police station, Millennium Development Programme's building located in Chonku and every other building. Till date, systematic killing has continued. Part of this is the gruesome murder of Rev. Fr. David Tanko, a Jukun Catholic Priest in charge of St. Peter's Catholic Parish in Amadu and several other despicable murders. No doubt, the settlers/indigeneship struggle in Wukari (see Nwanegbo, Odigbo & Ngara 2014) by the Tiv, Jukun and Hausa ethnic groups has sustained decades of destruction, maiming and unbearable insecurity condition in Wukari. These conflicts underlie the economic importance and the struggle to acquire and own them.

Methodology

Population of the Study and Sample Size Determination

One major area that present day Nigeria appears to be lagging behind is the area of data gathering and management. More than one decade after the national census in 2006, the Nigerian state is still unable to conduct census again. The implication is that researchers, government and individuals faced with the challenge of population determination relied wholly on the 2006 census outcome or estimates. In this study we consciously averted the temptation of relying on estimates. We have rather decided to utilize the only official data on Nigerian population which we generated from 2006 population census in Nigeria.

Thus, Wukari local government area has a total population of 241, 546 (National Population Census, 2006). Wukari Local Government Area is where the research took place. Wukari is one of the sixteen (16) local government areas in Taraba state created on 27th August 1991 by former military head

of State, General Ibrahim Babangida. The local government headquarter is situated at Wukari. It also has ten (10) political wards. These wards are stated below as:

S/N	Political Wards in Wukari L. G. A	
1	Akwana	ward
2	Avyi	ward
3	Bantaje	ward
4	Chonku	ward
5	Hospital	ward
6	Jibu	ward
7	Kente	ward
8	Puje	ward
9	Rafin Kada	ward
10	Tsokundi	ward

Source: Compiled by the author

Having established the number of political wards and population of the local government area, we therefore adopted Taro Yamane (1967) formula in determining the sample size. The formula is stated below as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = finite population

e = level of significance

1 = unity

Thus, the population of Wukari according to National Population Census (2006) is stated as = 241, 546 while the minimum size needed for a statistical analysis is 0.05 level.

n = sample

N = finite population = 241, 546

e = 0.05

1 = unity

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{241, 546}{1 + 241, 546 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{241, 546}{1 + 241, 546 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{241, 546}{1 + 603.865}$$

$$n = \frac{241, 546}{1 + 603.865}$$

604.865

n = 399.863

n = 400

Methods of Data Collection

Thus, this study relied on both survey and documentary methods of data collection. More specifically, survey method used in this study involves administering of questionnaire to specific number of respondents as determined by our sampling technique. Our questionnaire is close-ended. This method also includes face-to-face interview and personal observation by the researcher. The documentary methods are generally drawn from textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, internet materials, newspapers/magazines.

Thus, having determined the sample size to be 400, this study administered 400 questionnaires to the respondents. It is our view that since the last crisis affected vast areas of Wukari, extending our questionnaire to all the political wards in Wukari Local Government will give us better understanding and ample leverage for generalization. In this case, since Wukari Local Government is made up of ten (10) political wards.

However, Kente ward has handful of residents while no one lives in Chonku. In fact, Chonku is presently being referred to as “Wukari Desert” because no single soul lives in the whole community. As can be seen, majority of the Tiv population displaced from Chonku and Kente settled in Jootar a Benue State bordering community that is next to Chonku. For the purpose of balancing our information, we purposively administered 120 questionnaires to displaced persons from Kente and Chonku who reside in Jootar (Tiv community in Benue State bordering Wukari) community of Benue state in a bid to understand the feelings and the position of the Tiv population involved in the conflict.

The remaining 280 questionnaires were shared equally, 35 each to the other eight (8) wards in Wukari Local Government Area. In these eight wards, we involved random selection of members of the wards. However, the target remained community leaders, the youths and women. The utility of this design is that the questions gave us harmonized responses from both the participants in the crisis and those who bear the brunt of the crisis (especially women) on several key issues that seem not to have been satisfactorily discussed.

Two Neighbours, Too Many Crises: A Tale of Two People in Recurring Crisis

The history of the ancient city of Wukari is replete with conflicts of different sorts. Obviously, there is still no doubt that constant conflicts between the Jukun and the Tiv people in wukari have over the years endangered peace among the people and have continued to sustain unfriendly relations. In fact, prior to the Federal elections in 1959 the first conflict prone atmosphere had manifested in Wukari area. Shut (2007) explained that the victory of Mr Charles Tangur Gaza, a Tiv man of the UMBC, over Mallam

Ibrahim Sangari, a Jukun man of the NPC, who represented the Wukari Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives during the 1956 Federal Elections, was a major political challenge that threatened Tiv/Jukun relations.

In spite of winning contestable position, the Tiv group enjoyed substantial number of cabinet appointment in the then Gongola State during the Second Republic. For instance, to the surprise of the Jukun, the Alhaji Abubakar Barde led cabinet from 1979-1983 appointed Iyortyer Tor Musa, a Tiv man, as Wukari Local Government Caretaker Chairman (Best, Idyorough & Shehu 1999). Incidentally, this appointment coupled with other political developments turned the Jukun against the Tiv and indeed generated a sort of “cold war” between the two groups until the military coup of General Buhari put an end to the Second Republic on December 31, 1983.

Within the last three decades, what caused Wukari crisis tends to have shifted from identity and political contestations to a resource based violence. Contestations on indigeneship and land ownership instigated a conflict that led to the declaration of Tiv people in Wukari as non-indigene in 2002 (Nwanegbo, Odigbo & Ngara, 2014). Specifically in the 1990-1993, 2001-2002 and the present violence that began in 2019, it appears that Tiv-Jukun conflicts were manipulated indirectly by elites of the two ethnic groups. The role stakeholders and elites played in these conflicts consistently raised suspicion as both ethnic groups accused each other. It is alleged that elites especially political leaders of both groups were aiding and abetting the perpetrators of the conflict. According to Vaaseh (2013) the Tiv:

accused General TY Danjuma, a retired chief of Army Staff and former minister of Defense, as always enlisting the soldiers to fight on the side of the Jukun ethnic group. Another Jukun man, Group Captain Ibrahim Kephas, a retired Air Force officer and former military administrator of Cross River State, was also accused. The Jukun similarly accused the former governor of Benue State, George Akume, other military brass like General Victor Malu, a retired Chief of Army Staff, late General Inienger, rtd and General Atom Kpera, rtd of sponsoring and abetting the crisis (Vaaseh, 2013, p.17).

Thus, the traditional rulers and the community leaders have not shown strong commitment to ending the conflict. Their insistence on conditionalities of cohabitation and the quest to reaffirm their resolve to maintain ancient settlement patterns tend to have continued to make impossible, the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Hence, old conflict has continued to reincarnate in several other new forms. As can be seen, table 1 below shows seven phases of conflicts between the Jukun and Tiv.

Table 1: Cases of Jukun/Tiv Resource-Based and Ethnic Crises in Wukari

S/N	Date	Location	Groups Involved	Nature of Conflict	Major Cause
1	1956	Wukari	Jukun – Tiv	Ethnic	Politics
2	1964	Wukari	Jukun – Tiv	Ethnic	Politics
3	1976	Wukari	Jukun-Tiv	Ethnic	Politics
4	1982-1983	Wukari	Jukun – Tiv	Ethnic	Politics
5	1990-1992	Wukari	Jukun – Tiv	Ethnic	Landownership
6	2001-2002	Wukari	Jukun – Tiv	Ethnic	Landownership

7	2019 date	till	Wukari	Jukun-Tiv	Ethnic	Landownership/ Criminality
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Source: Compiled by the author

For the past few decades, the two ethnic groups of Jukun and Tiv find it difficult accepting each other even for marriage despite living together and being neighbours. Sometimes it looks forbidden for a Jukun man to think of marrying a Tiv woman and vice-versa (Odigbo, 2016). The ongoing violence has become very complex. In spite of the federal government intervention (troop's deployment) and the peace agreement between Benue and Taraba state governments, peace has remained elusive. Murder along ethnic lines has continued unabated especially in the bushes and farmlands. According Hunkuyi (2020), the latest killing occurred few days after six Fulani and two Jukun were ambushed and killed by suspected Tiv militia group along Wukari-Rafin-Kada road.

Being the centre where the conflict is staged persistently, Wukari appears to have been affected negatively. The conflicts have permeated the social fabrics of the people living in Wukari. It has sown the seed of hatred, suspicion, greed and envy among the people, especially in Wukari where several people from different socio-cultural, religious and ethnic background live. The consequence seems to be intolerance among people. In fact, in Wukari people seem to always resort to violent means for issues that ordinarily should not cause violence elsewhere.

In our investigation, the study administered questionnaires to some indigenes, inhabitants and the displaced persons in Wukari Local Government Area. These respondents personal information are stated below as:

Table 2 Respondents' Socio- Demographic Data/ Information

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents' sex		
Male	300	75
Female	100	25
Total	400	100
Respondents' age		
46 years and above	100	25
26 to 45 years	250	62.5
18 to 25 years	50	12.5
Total	400	100
Respondents' marital status		
Married	270	67.5
Single	130	32.5
Total	400	100
Respondents' highest education attainment		
Primary education	96	24
Secondary education	226	56.5
Tertiary education	78	19.5
Total	400	100
Respondents' occupation status		

Farming	180	45
Trading	100	25
Civil or Public servant	70	17.5
Student	50	12.5
Total	400	100
Respondents' religious affiliation		
Christianity	290	72.5
Islam	0	0
Traditional	110	27.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Following from table 2 above, we presented the respondents' socio- demographic data/ information of the respondents. As can be seen, a total of 400 respondents were logically enumerated. From the result, 75% of the 400 respondents were male while the remaining 25% were female. The reason for large number of male is because, men are more directly involved in the cause, execution and the resolution of conflict situations in Wukari. On the other hand, while little or no woman participate or engage in conflicts of this magnitude, we clearly observed that women and children bear the brunt of the conflict.

Thus, our table also showed 62.5% of the population enumerated are youths between the age of 26 to 45 years. This is important especially when put into cognizance that those within this age limit get more involved in conflict situations. Also, 25% were at the age of 46 and above while the remaining 12.5% were adults within the age of 18 to 25 years.

Generally, 67.5% were married while 32.5% were not married. Only 56.5% have attended secondary education, 24% also have attended primary school while the remaining 19.5% have privilege to attend tertiary institution. Among the sampled population 45% were farmers, 25% were traders, civil servants were 17.5% while students were 12.5%. the entire population have 72.5% who are Christians while traditionalists were 27.5%.

Based on the above classifications, the study seeks the opinion of the respondents on whether the persistence of land ownership struggles and indigeneship question undermine peace and social relations in Wukari. It also poses other questions to determine whether there are other causative factors that sustained Wukari crisis even under democratic setting in Nigeria. Thus, their responses are stated below in table 3 as shown below:

Table 3 land ownership struggle and indigeneship question undermined peace and social relations in Wukari.

Item	Mean (SD)	T Cal	P Value
Respondents' thought on whether indigeneship can manifest in the form of socio-cultural, ethnic, religious and political means among people.	3.20 (0.77)	82.95	0.00

Respondents' thought on whether land ownership can instigate communal conflicts in Wukari.	3.36 (0.89)	75.47	0.00
Respondents' thought on whether there have been persistent communal conflicts in Wukari especially since 1999.	3.34 (1.10)	60.57	0.00
Respondents' thought on whether ethnic and political identity contributes to Wukari crisis.	3.46 (0.92)	74.99	0.00
Respondents' thought on whether politics and land ownership are remote causes of communal conflicts in Wukari.	2.97 (1.05)	56.48	0.00
Respondents' thought on whether indigeneship status of some people living in Wukari contributes to Wukari crisis.	3.10 (0.98)	63.55	0.00
Respondents' thought on whether indigeneship question undermine an environment of trust for social relations in Wukari.	3.09 (1.00)	61.82	0.00
Respondents' thought on whether elite negligence, support and sponsorship of the crisis account for persistent communal conflicts in Wukari.	3.09 (1.11)	55.73	0.00
Cluster Summary. N = 400, SD = Standard Deviation,	3.20	53.35	0.00
T tab=1.96	(0.17)		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The hypothesis result presented in table 3 above showed that the T calculated result for all the items were higher than the tabulated T value of 1.96. These showed that the items were significant. Also the results were equally confirmed by the P value in all the items of 0.00 which were less than the 0.05 standard maximum levels for the items to be significant. In the same way, the cluster T calculated value of 53.35 was higher than tabulated T value of 1.96, just as the probability (P) value of 0.00 was less than 0.05, these implies that the hypothesis is significant. Therefore, the study accepted the stated hypothesis that land ownership struggle and indigeneship question undermined peace and social relations in Wukari.

Peace Agreements without Peace in Wukari

It is a truism that getting a cow into the river is not a guarantee that such cow will accept to drink water. Glaringly, there are several peace agreements on Jukun-Tiv conflict. But what is still questionable is the extent to which parties involved in the conflict have committed themselves in the implementation process of these agreements. Over the years, it has become a post conflict ritual that government and stakeholders gather to reach agreement. Incidentally, some of the agreements are either dead on arrival or never released officially or made public. Therefore, partaking in agreement process simply becomes a show of relevance or being lucky to siphon public fund earmarked by government for the purpose. For

instance, judicial commission of inquiry set up in 1992 to investigate the causes of 1990/1992 conflicts, ascertain the level of devastation and make recommendations to government is yet to release officially the outcome of their investigation. Since then, two major crises have occurred with numerous pockets of unrest and surreptitious murder.

Undoubtedly, the continuation of the crisis is not hinged on lack of knowledge of the causes of the crisis or lack of agreements. Moti (2010) argued that no effort has been far reaching and sustainable and none has yielded a lasting solution partly because the agreements were not fully implemented. He further explained that in the 1992 crisis, which is considered as one of the worst in terms of casualties and destruction of property, the Governments of Benue and Taraba states met with the former military Vice- President and other stakeholders and the following “10 Point Peace Plan on the Jukun-Tiv Conflict of 1992” was reached:

- The two traditional rulers, i.e. the Tor Tiv and the Aku Uka have been directed to do more than what they have been doing to make peace and allow peace to reign;
- The Aku Uka to invite the Tor Tiv to Wukari for a crusade to talk to both Jukun and Tiv in Wukari;
- The Governor of Taraba state to make sure that in reconstituting the Wukari Traditional Council, the representation of the Tiv people is well addressed;
- The Police should prevent arms getting into private hands – starting from Wukari. The exercise should be carried out in Wukari, Donga, Ibi and Takum Local Government Areas in Taraba state; and Katsina-Ala and Ukum Local Government Areas in Benue state. The Police is to make sure that there is no road block and if there is any, it should be by the Police itself;
- On the issue of boundary between Benue and Taraba States, the Vice-President is to meet with the two Governors after the report on same is submitted by the National Boundary Commission;
- The two Governors should jointly tour the crisis area and forward report to the Vice-President;
- The displaced people are to be appealed to return home and the Police should ensure security for the returnees;
- Mischievous tendencies by Taraba Government to discriminate against certain ethnic groups and tribes should be discouraged;
- Regular reports should continue to be sent to the Vice-President on the crisis; and
- The Government of Taraba state will be held responsible if the crisis continues (Yamusa, 1992, cited in Moti, 2010, pp. 11-12). Most of these agreements were not implemented and the crisis erupted again in 2000 (Moti, 2010).

Indeed, the 2000 and 2002 post-conflict agreements have also not seen the light of the day. They all died the same way the previous agreements did. In the present conflict situation, more than three agreements have been signed yet ending the conflict is not in sight. Incidentally, the gruesome murder of Rev. Fr. David Tanko a Catholic Priest in charge of St. Peter's Catholic Parish in Amadu on 29th August, 2019, who was on his way to mediate between the warring groups in the conflict prompted calls for more commitment from all levels of government to end the crisis. In their response, Benue and Taraba state governments' brokered peace agreement on April 2020 on the lingering crisis between Jukun and Tiv people. According to News Agency of Nigeria (2020) a communiqué was presented at the end of a joint mediation peace meeting between the two states held in Lafia, Nassarawa State Capital.

Unfortunately, in spite of the several peace agreements, violent situations and clandestine killings have increased. For instance, Hunkuyi (2020) explained that there was tension in Wukari on 2nd June 2020 after the killing of a pastor and his wife by suspected Tiv militia. The crisis is gradually becoming intractable. Hence, parties in the conflict tend to jettison any form of compromise thereby making peaceful resolution almost impossible for now. The implication is a complex insecurity problem. Presently, communities are drifting towards the state of nature where lives remain nasty, brutish and short. Though, there are peace agreements, but on daily basis reports of attacks in farms, ambush and murder of innocent citizens have not ceased.

Re-thinking Measures to Ending the Tide of Jukun/Tiv Violent Conflict in Wukari

There is no gain saying the fact that the resource based quarrels among the Jukun-Tiv groups always trigger other disgruntled symptoms that have continued to fuel insecurity pathogens. It is also indubitable that peace is a desideratum for sustainable growth and development in a conflict ravaged society like Wukari. However, while peace between the two warring groups of Jukun and Tiv is a challenge, this study intends to unveil and also provide suggestions capable of reviving peace among the group.

Understandably, it is our view that achieving peace in Wukari local government area, demands evolving a sustainable peace process. This in no little measure will help both parties in the crisis to embrace the culture of peace. According to the United Nations (1998, cited in Castryck & Duquet, 2010) culture of Peace is defined as 'values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.

Thus, having acknowledged the fact that there exists early peace efforts which are central to the realization of the prevailing ephemeral peace in Wukari, however, we make bold to state that the processes are incomplete and hugely devoid of inclusiveness required for peace. In fact, the idea of

peace that is hinged on two state governments (sometimes with the traditional rulers) constituting commission of inquiry from those outside the conflict or signing agreements cannot realize peace in Wukari. The complexity of the crisis has given rise to multiplication of nefarious groups engaging in dastardly act of maiming, destruction of property and unnecessary murder. Therefore, achieving peace means a holistic engagement of all persons directly or indirectly provoking the conflict.

The new approach has to be broad. In this regard, the drivers of the process must be from within the conflicting groups while government representatives map out modalities and oversee the progress. Its broadness and inclusiveness entails that there would be representatives of the traditional councils of both Jukun and Tiv ethnic groups and would be led by the traditional rulers. At the micro-level, there will be representatives of the communities (especially the elders) led by the community leaders. All the communities or political wards inhabited by both Jukun and Tiv would be represented. Also, there would be youth representatives, the representatives of the militia or community warriors are to be present. Farmers and selected members of the public would also be represented. Those public representatives would be selected by the people.

This strategy will mark a paradigm shift from the elitist celebrated post conflict “office agreements” to a more people oriented and pragmatic resolution that will bring to an end decades of violence in Wukari. The goal of all of these efforts is reconciliation, getting the people to accept each other as part of their own group or be reconciled to mutual co-existence and tolerance. This is important because what causes crisis is sometimes shocking. Perhaps, it boils down to the fact that people who have lost love ones in the previous conflicts are targeting any opportunity to revenge. In this circumstance, peace cannot be achieved without genuine reconciliation and forgiveness.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

We reiterate that this study explored new strategies that will orchestrate a paradigm shift from the hitherto moulded elitist prescription of achieving peace in a trouble community of Wukari to a more realistic approach of establishing and maintaining peace among the Jukun/Tiv people in Wukari. A wide range of processes that are people driven and which will ensure conflict transformation era, transitional justice, trauma healing, sustained advocacy on peace and enlightenment appeared to have been neglected. The paper recommended government establishment of peace mechanisms and processes that will be driven by the people. This will enable the people air their grievances, find common grounds of settlement and ensure genuine reconciliation. Such reconciliation will assist to scale down the group agitations and animosities in the area. There is also need for government to:

- i. Reconstruct devastated communities and embark on programmes and activities to ensure the communities do not slide back to violence.

- ii. Embark on re-orientation campaign to ensure that people abandon the old way of life that promotes vengeance and vendetta.
- iii. Pursue the provision of basic amenities in all affected communities especially when put into cognizance that many years of conflicts have hindered access to basic necessities of life in Wukari and neighbouring Tiv communities.
- iv. Prioritize the establishment of structures and measures to enhance early detection of threat, speedy response to risk situations and creating security structures capable of supporting Jukun/Tiv communities to resist potential challenges that will cause the communities to slide into violent conflict.
- v. Improve security of lives and property. A situation where investors are afraid of investing because of perennial conflict is a challenge to the development of the two border communities.

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