

Political Economy of Settlement Patterns and Rural Development in Tiv Land of Benue State

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Abstract

Tiv land of Benue State is largely rural, underdeveloped and predominantly scattered in terms of settlement pattern. Being located in the context of Marxist political economy perspective, the paper has established that scattered settlement pattern which is a predominant feature of most parts of Tiv land of Benue State is largely a product of the mode and practice of agriculture, land tenure system and indeed, the prevailing socio-economic forces. The central thesis of the paper is that isolated, dispersed or settlement pattern does not only portray the state of underdevelopment and poverty in Tiv land of Benue State and elsewhere in Nigeria but also, to a large extent, compounds and reinforces the problem. It implies that this pattern constitutes one of the major problems of underdevelopment, poverty and insecurity in Tiv land of Benue State. Specifically, it is antithetical to meaningful and sustainable development of rural areas; it also affects agriculture productivity as well as socio-economic and commercial activities; and ill - disposition to commercial and industrial activities as well as provision of social and infrastructure facilities; it discourages political mobilization and participation as well as community mobilization and social interaction and more importantly, it is more difficult to defend and prone to land disputes and attacks. Thus, the paper recommends nucleated or compact settlement pattern as most suitable for the development of rural communities in Tiv land of Benue State through a legislative-based rural settlement plan similar to Tanzanian rural resettlement model. Although, attempts to relocate people to nucleated settlement will be confronted with fierce resistance because of the value attached to land, with proper awareness and effective legislation people will be convinced to support the plan because of its gains.

Keywords: Settlement; Tiv; Benue State; Rural Development; Insecurity

Introduction

Human settlement is a critical component of sustainable development; an incontestable fact. This phenomenon impacts tremendously on the transformation societies across the globe. Yet, it receives greater attention from the fields of geography, archaeology, sociology and history. There exists intellectual gap with regard to discourses on human settlements which generates the imperative to interrogate the subject matter within the context of political economy in particular, and in the field of political science in general. A political economy perspective implies that the character of settlement pattern in Tiv land of Benue State cannot be properly understood without interrogating the mode and practice of agricultural practice, land tenure system and the general socio-economic formation of the Tiv society.

Undoubtedly, the Tiv society and Igbo of Nigeria are classical cases of settlements disintegration in the tropical Africa due largely to the desire to people to settle on or near their farm lands (Udo, 1982). Majority of the Tiv people in Benue State live in rural areas in mostly sparsely distributed compounds, hamlets and small villages which normally consist of few thatched rounds huts. Although, the Land Use Act (1978) vests the ownership of land in the state government, the Tiv people who are largely peasant farmers still exercise control over their ancestral lands; and this is not peculiar to Tiv land.

Tiv land of Benue State and indeed, Nigeria as a whole, is largely rural in terms of population distribution and concentration. The rural areas are mostly inhabited by the peasant population with agriculture as main economic activity. However, there is no systematic effort at recording the actual population of the rural areas beyond estimations. Post-independence efforts at ascertaining the number of people residing in the rural areas started in 1963 Census which puts rural population at 80.7%. This drops to 70.13% in 1985, and 69% by 1990s (Muoghalu, 1992). In gap further reduces in 2005 to 53%; and about 51.6% in 2011 (The World Bank Development Report, 2015). Regrettably, these non-urban centres are predominantly unplanned, poorly serviced, and underdeveloped and in most cases, like in the Tiv land of Benue State, are largely scattered in terms of settlement pattern. Nigeria is generally described as a poverty capital of the world. With a national poverty headcount rate of 40.1%, majority of the absolute poor is drawn from the rural communities in the ratio of 18% urban and 52.1% rural, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020). In terms of zonal distribution, the Northern parts of Nigeria take highest share of poverty in the country as demonstrated below:

Table 1.1: Poverty Distribution in Nigeria

Geo-Political Zones	Percentage (%)
North-Central	60.7
North-East	69.1
North-West	71.4
South-East	59.5
South-South	55.5
South-West	49.8

Source: *National Bureau of Statistics (2020)*

Benue State which is located in the North- Central geo-political zone of Nigeria, is known to be among the poorest states, occupying 16th position out of 36th, with a poverty rate of 32.90%,

unemployment and underemployment rate of 55.50%, and a jobs deficit of 84,828 per year for the next four years (NBS, 2020). Indeed, the rural areas of Benue State are comparatively worse than the urban and semi-urban centres. The Tiv land and Benue State in general, is also confronted the problem of security threats especially on account of Fulani herdsmen attacks. However, the incidence of herdsmen attacks and occupation of rural areas has become a feature of economic livelihood in almost every states in Nigeria with Middle-Belt region as the epicentre and rural farmers as major victims. In Benue State, not less than 2000 people have been killed with properties valued in billions of Naira destroyed by marauding Fulani herdsmen between 2013 and the early part of 2018 (The Nation, February 6, 2018).

Tiv land which occupies about two third of the Benue State population and landmass is at the centre of rural poverty, underdevelopment and insecurity crises in the state. Although other parts of the state especially, Agatu and Okpokwu Local Government Areas (LGAs), have experienced hostility from herdsmen, the Tiv rural areas of Benue State are mostly affected. Between 2015 and 2020, more than 13 out of the 23 Local Government Areas in Benue State were under attacks by marauding Fulani herdsmen with devastating toll on human lives and property; and these LGAs include Guma, Makurdi, Gwer, Gwer West, Agatu, Tarka, Buruku, Logo, Katsina-Ala, Ukum, Gboko and Kwande.

The crisis in rural areas of Tiv land of Benue State and Nigeria in general, has been explained from dimensions and perspectives. However, the nature of rural settlement pattern in Tiv land constitutes a critical aspect of the problem (Ahire, 1993; Hembe, 2005; Agba, 2012; Tarnande, 2015). The worsening socio-economic fundamentals, low agriculture productivity, near absence of social infrastructure, poor political participation and mobilisation, increasing magnitude of insecurity and land related disputes and indeed, the slow pace of rural development in Tiv land of Benue State have combined to expose the inherent deficiencies in the scattered settlement pattern.

Inferably, scattered settlement pattern does not portrays the state of rural underdevelopment and poverty in Tiv land of Benue State but also, to a large extent, compounds and reinforces the problem. This therefore, creates the imperative to interrogate the nature and character of settlement pattern in Tiv land, and the extent to which it has stymied rural underdevelopment, discourage political participation and mobilisation, hinder effective provision of social amenities and indeed, expose rural areas to security threats and attacks.

Conceptual Clarification

In the field of social sciences, one needs to reflect on several views and perspectives of other scholars to arrive at operational and suitable meaning of any concept. It is in view of this that the paper attempts to conceptualise political economy, rural settlement and rural development so as to facilitate the understanding of their ordinary and theoretical meanings as well as the context in which they are used.

Political Economy: Conceptualizing political economy is a herculean intellectual task because of its vast and its usage and application cuts across virtually all the disciplines in the social sciences and beyond. Political economy is a concept, theory, an approach and a field of study. As a concept, the term “political economy” was first used by a French Economist, Antoine de Mont Chrétien (1575 – 1621) in a work titled “Traiite de l’conomie politioue” (Kozlov, 1977). As used in the field of political science, political economy simply connotes a relationship between economics and politics. This explains why political economy was originally termed the science of the wealth of nations or the economics of politics (Olaniyi, 2001).

Thus, Nwabuzor and Mueller (1987, p.42) define political economy in relation to political issues as suggestive of the analysis for the distribution of power in any society, be the economic relations within that society. It is generally used to refer to interdisciplinary studies in order to understand

the general socio-economic and political environment and indeed, the basis of the development of society. In this regard, political economy can be viewed from two main standpoints: as a totalising scientific mode of analysis and as the context within which socio-economic activities take place, and more importantly, as the tool for understanding the material production in societies, and the construction of social forces and classes (Anifowose and Enemu, 1999).

As field of study, political economy became an independent science in the 17th century during the bourgeoisie struggle against feudalism. The pioneers of political economy were bourgeois economists. In the context of this study, political economy as a concept, discipline and scientific tool of analysis could be traced to the works of classical or bourgeois economists such as Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, David Hume, and John Stuart Mills and so on. However, political economy becomes popular through the works of Karl Marx and his apostles such as Fredrick Engels, V.I. Lenin, and so on. Scholars of the Third World Countries (TWCs) otherwise known as neo-Marxists such as Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallenstein, Colin Leys, Furtado, Cardoso, Walter Rodney, Arghiri Emmanuel and Geoffrey Kay, Ake, and so on later adopt political economy to explain the development and underdevelopment of TWCs within the context of the dominant international capitalist system.

Settlement Pattern: Before clarifying the concept of settlement pattern, there is the need to have an idea about the difference between settlement “patterns” and “type”. The concept of settlement pattern is often used, and sometimes, synonymously with settlement type. But they are sometimes interchangeable and one being element or part of other. Sometimes form and pattern are used interchangeably; but in this paper, it has been used as settlement pattern. According to Willey (1953, p.2) settlement pattern deals with the way in which man disposed himself over the landscape on which he lived. It refers to dwellings, to their arrangement, and to the nature and disposition of other buildings pertaining to community life. These settlements reflect the natural environment, the level of technology on which the builders operated, and the various institutions of social interaction and control which the culture maintained. Thus, settlement pattern strictly applies to the spatial arrangement or distribution of settlements within a given area.

Rural Development: Central to the concept of rural development is the understanding of what development entails. However, the various conceptual and theoretical arguments pertaining to the concept of development are far beyond the scope of this paper. Emphasis here is to conceptualise rural development which attracts enormous definitions by several scholars. In their views, Madu, Yusof and Suyatno (2015), define rural development basically as a review and assessment of the improvement in the quality of life of rural people which is broadly measure in terms of sufficient provision of health and social services, good living conditions and bridging of income inequalities amongst others.

The paper adopts the United Nations Publication (1986) view which defines rural development as a strategy design to transform rural life by extending to the masses of the rural population the benefits of economic and social progress. Thus, rural development in the context of this study considers man as the means and ends of development. Rural development entails the transformation of rural society in all its ramifications, improvement in the lives of the generality of rural populace, enabling everyone to have a chance at success and access to health care, education, shelter and other essential and basic amenities.

Tiv Settlement Patterns: Historical and Theoretical Insight

There are several writers on Tiv society and Africa in general who write on the history, theories, evolution, spread and patterns of human settlements such as Bohannan (1954) *Tiv farm and*

settlement; Ruel, (1962) *Banyang settlement*; Udo (1965) *Disintegration of nucleated settlements in Eastern Nigeria*; Obwa (1976) *District planning as a strategy for rural development in Kenya*; Ngware & Haule (1982) *The forgotten level: village government in Tanzania*; Adejuyigbe and Aloba (1987) *Revolution of inter-community settlements in South-Western Nigeria*; Omofonwam, & Kadiri (2007) *Evolution and spread of settlements in the Esan area of Edo State*; Almed (2009) *Settlement pattern and functional distribution in emerging communities in Kwara State*; Adams & Okoama (2011) *Settlement patterns and economic development: a case study of the Twifo –in Ghana*; and Uji (2015) *Migrant groups and the development of urbanisation in Tiv society of central Nigeria*; among other works. A central theme of most of these works is that the history and patterns of rural settlements in Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria and other parts of Africa is basically a product of past and present historical, cultural, economic and ecological factors.

On the Tiv people in particular, Bohannan (1954) uses archaeological and ethnographic data such as mat-impression decoration on pottery and iron tools to show that hilltop settlements were occupied by Tiv people spanning the period from the late part of the first millennium BC. However, on the general history of Tiv origin and migration, Hembe (2005, p.35) argues that “no one appears to be quite sure about how, when and where exactly the Tiv came to be where they are today”. This explains why there are several versions of, and in some cases, conflicting stories of the origin and migration of Tiv people into the Benue Valley. The stories are basically enshrined in oral history, ethnography and archaeology and thus, there is no precise view about the early stages of Tiv migration. While many authors suggest that the Tiv originated from Congo, there is no agreement regarding exactly why and when the Tiv left the Congo region.

Notwithstanding the inconsistencies in most literature, Tiv people are known to have settled in Benue Valley for long period of time. It is noted that during early stages of the Tiv movement into the Benue Valley, they relied mostly on hunting and food gathering. On reaching the Benue plains, they increased their farming activities in response to the more favourable environmental conditions. The desire to expand farming activities prompted the Tiv people to marry many wives, the development which eventually resulted to population explosion and pressure on land.

In his views on the history of Tiv society, Hembe’s (2005) account further suggests that students of Tiv society have neither agreed about the pattern of Tiv settlements in the past nor about the forces that have continued to determine the nature of the changing patterns. Historically, Bohannan (1952) describes the Tiv as people without towns. Similar argument by Tseyayo (1975) has it that the Tiv landscape seemed to have record an absence of nucleated settlements before the advent of the white man. Udoh (1982) buttresses this by contending that the Tiv live in scattered homesteads but small nucleated villages were the rule in the past, when Tiv settlements were fortified with strong round walls or palisades, and ditches. In a similar manner, Dorward (1971) argues that before colonial rule, the Tiv lived in protected settlements because of the uncertainties of the times when marauding group of slave gatherers and other warlike parties menaced. The Tiv have always stayed on scattered compounds on their farmlands.

The historical description of Tiv people therefore points that Tiv settlement patterns have undergone transformations on account of the socio-economic, political and historical development of the Tiv society. In his word, Ogundele (2006) posits that the most distinctive feature of Tiv people is that they migrate a lot within the broad territory. Ahire (1993, p.14) makes a similar argument of the Tiv people that Tiv people are predominantly farmers and like the nomad Fulani people who move from place to place in search of pasture for their cattle, the Tiv people also

migrate from place to place within Tiv land and elsewhere in search of rich farm lands to cultivate. Suffice to therefore situate the history of Tiv settlement pattern and its changing nature in the context of Marxist political economy.

Theoretical basis of this argument is that almost all the rural settlements of Tiv land perform mainly primary function as agricultural settlements. Thus, primacy is given to the material existence and production of the society, especially the role of the economy to the study of the Tiv settlement patterns. Every socio-economic system has its mode of production and each mode of production has its own peculiar social classes, class relations and contradictions upon which the ideology, philosophy, dominant values, legal and state institutions etc, are based (Beckam, 1983). This perspective helps to explain that the nature and character of settlement patterns in Tiv land is not only a reflection of the economic history of the people, but also largely determines by the mode and practice of agriculture, land tenure system and indeed, mode of production in general.

The traditional Tiv society was organise around communal mode of production which largely defines its value system including the patterns of settlement. In the pre-colonial Tiv society, the administration of land was carried out in village councils, and decisions were by consensus of elders who constituted the councils. Land was communally owed on behalf of the families. As argue by Tarnande (2005), the greatest impetus to the change in Tiv and African orientation in general is the incursion of western economic mode of production - capitalism. Notwithstanding the obliterating forces of colonialism, there is no corresponding transformation of this mode of production. What exists in Tiv society could better be referred to as articulation of modes of production.

Traditional communal land tenure system has given way to individual land holding in most parts of contemporary Tiv society. Although the Land Use Act of 1978 gives ownership of land to the government, the Act does not disturb the rights of users of land already occupied or developed in rural areas but transfers allocative powers over undeveloped land from traditional authorities to local government (Tarnande, 2015). People still lay claim and exercise rights to their farmlands. Land which is a critical factor in rural economy of Tiv people is own and control by the peasants. Holding on to land becomes a norm and this to some extent, determines the pattern of rural settlements in contemporary Tiv society.

Peasants control land either collectively or individually on behalf of the family on the basis of tradition. Since every farmer wishes to be seen exercising control over his land, he has to settle on it. Those who leave such lands and migrate to cities lose them to other contenders. Attempts to reclaim such lands when they desire to retire to the village often result to land dispute. It is therefore the attempt to control and protect these that has been responsible for the proliferation of dispersed settlements all over Tiv land. Some of these compounds consist of one or two huts where just a man and his wife live.

The Nature of Settlement Patterns in Tiv Land

The Tiv is an ethno-linguistic group in Nigeria which is reputed to be the fourth largest ethnic nationality (Igirgi, 2007). Tiv is the pre-dominant ethnic group in Benue State; and the state comprises several other ethnic groups such as Idoma, Igede, Etulo, Abakpa, Jukun, Akweya and Nyifon, Idoma and Igede. The Tiv occupies 14 local government areas, while the Idoma and Igede occupy the remaining nine local government areas. According to the 2014 estimates which is based

on 2006 Census, the Tiv people boast of a population of over six (6) million people especially those living in Benue State. Through political engineering and state creation in Nigeria, “the largest population of Tiv people are located in Benue State with widespread population across Nassarawa, Taraba, Plateau and Cross River States (Hembe (2005, p.28). The Tiv also have good numbers in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Adamawa, Niger and Kwara States in Nigeria; and even in the Republic of Cameroun. They are the majority among the minorities in central Nigeria with a great population in more than 10 states of the federation (Torkula, 2001). The territorial spread of the Tiv, according to Avav (1993, p.34) “is comparable to that of the so called major ethnic groups; namely Igbo, Hausa and the Yoruba”.

Most importantly, the Tiv land of Benue State which is largely rural with agriculture as the main source of livelihood, is predominantly scattered or isolated in terms of settlement pattern. Most of the rural settlements in Tiv land are not only scattered but also unplanned and poorly serviced, unlike urban settlements. There is continuous proliferation and increase in the number of compounds settlements in Tiv land. Tser (2013) captures the reality of the proliferation of Tiv settlements;

in Benue North East and North West Areas (Tiv land), once a male member of a family graduates into adulthood (not necessarily by age but by maturity in mind and physical ability) whether married or single, with the consent of the head of the family, he relocates to settle at the extreme end of the family farmland to forestall cases of encroachment by non –family members; and this is why scattered settlements are rife in these sub-region of Benue State. From Tsar – Mbaduku in Vandeikya LGA to Agaigbe in Gwer West, Abako in Ukum, Gbinde and Mabagertyav in Konshisha, Yelewata and Nzorov in Guma, Mbaswa in Ushongo, to Shitile in Tarka LGAs and so on, the settlement pattern is predominantly, the dispersed type; and people are found in almost every portion of their land to forestall encroachment on the land by non-family members. (pp.83. 86).

This narrative helps to explain how most of the rural settlements in Tiv land are characterise by sparsely located and isolated villages, hamlets and single compounds. The compound is the smallest unit of analysis which in some cases are clustered together to form a hamlet or small village which is perhaps occupy by members of an extended family (kindred). Most of the compounds in Tiv land comprise a closely-spaced group of small buildings constructed traditionally from sundried mud or mud blocks around a wooden frame, and roof with thatch grass or palm fronds. In Tiv epistemology, a compound or homestead refers to as “*ya*”; while a hamlet or village is called “*tse*” or “*agar*” respectively. When two or more families of the same genealogy occupy an area, the prefix ‘*mba*’ is added to the name of the homestead which means offspring of their common ancestors or nucleus of the former inhabitants. Perhaps, an average rural Tiv person erroneously refers to some settlements as “*geri*” (towns) without reference to the population threshold of 20,000 and other essential service functions that qualified a town.

In most parts of Tiv land, the hitherto existing big compounds have disintegrated into smaller compounds comprising members of the immediate family- the father, mother and with or without children. Undoubtedly, extended family system which hitherto existed in Tiv land has gradually given way for nucleated family system, though without corresponding nucleated settlement pattern. Unlike in the past, compounds are becoming smaller in size; and it has to do with the erosion of communal values, the desire to settle on ancestral farm lands, incursion of Christianity,

and the wave of Western civilization that make traditional system of polygamy unpopular among the people.

Small settlements in form of hamlets and villages are sparsely located in most parts of Tiv land because they represent family lineage. The population density of Tiv settlements clearly fits into Udo's (1982) analogy of sub-Saharan settlements that some of the villages are small in size of less than 10 compounds. With regards to Tiv land, Udo (1982) further maintains that the average Tiv village consists of a group of about six sleeping huts and huts average about 2.5 inhabitants. However, there are variations in village sizes in Tiv land. This ranges from one or two huts to twenty huts per village. In few areas, villages in Tiv land have grown into big settlement units or rural "towns", with populations well in excess of 5000. Indeed, settlements expand and evolve as populations grow.

The distribution of Tiv population is not even; some places, especially in the northern part of Tiv land record densities as low as 30 persons per square mile, while the southern parts of Tiv land densities reach the incredible height of about 700 - 800 persons per square miles (Ubaa, 1970, cited in Hembe, 2005, p.41). These high densities are commonly found in *tyar* Gaav, Kunav, Ukan, Mbagen, Mbagba, Mbativ, Nanev, Ishangev-Tiev and Ishangev-Ya. In areas with high population density, some settlements are continuous with the dispersed compounds of one village almost adjoining those of the next. Because of high population densities, these areas experience an acute shortage of farmland and this tends to encourage rural - urban, but especially rural - rural migration. This analogy explains to some extent, how the people from the northern parts of Tiv land have spread all over southern parts of Tiv land and beyond.

Despite that dispersed settlement pattern is a feature of most parts Tiv land of Benue State, there exist few cases of nucleated settlements in form of towns and urban or semi-urban centres such as Gboko, Makurdi, Katsina - Ala, Adikpo, Vandeikya, Korinya, Zaki-Biam and so on. However, the existence of dots of nucleated settlement does not significantly change the general landscape of Tiv land. Most of the big settlements or major towns in Tiv land are products of colonial activities and historical developments. Some of them are local government administrative headquarters such as Gbajmba in Guma, Tse-Agberagba in Konshisha, Wannune in Tarka and Lessel in Ushongo, among others. Besides, some nucleated settlements in Tiv land are market centres such as Ihugh in Vandeikya, Gbeji in Ukum, Anyiin in Logo, Gbor in Katsina - Ala, Jato Aka in Kwande, Ikyobo in Ushongo, Jov-Ikyundan in Konshisha, Tse-Kucha in Gboko, Asukunya in Tarka, and Tyulen in Guma, and so on. Other clustered or linear settlements are located along the major roads as demonstrated in the table below using Konshisha, Ushongo, Guma and Tarka LGAs of Benue State as case studies;

Some Nucleated Settlements Along Major Roads in Tiv Land

LGAs	Roads	Settlements
Konshisha	i) Awajir – Tse-Agberagba – Wuese – Ogoja	Gungul, Adoka, Tse-Agberagba, Iber, Wuese.
	ii) Gboko – Oturkpo – Enugu	Jov-Ikyudan, Achoho.
	iii) Wuese – Korinya – Ihugh – Tse-Mker	Wuese, Jov Mbavaa, Alabusa, Amua. Jov – Mbava, Tyoutsa.
	iv) Branch Atser – Korinya – Mhambe – Tse – Agberagba	Korinya, Mhambe, Agbeede, Amua.

Ushongo	i)	Gboko – Lessel – Ihugh	Kartyo, Madugu, Waopera, Lessel, Ge-Mbayem, Alu.
	ii)	Katsina –Ala – Ugbema – Adikpo – Ogoja	Ushongo, Akerior, Gbatse.
	iii)	Ge-Ikyobo – Tse-Anshagba – Akputu – Agera	Tse-Ushiinyi Ayu, Yaakur, Ukali, Uga, Ikyoobo, Mbayar
	iv)	Branch Kuhwa – Heagha – Korinjo – Ushongo	Abia, Ate-Kumbur, Mbatiam.
Tarka	i)	Makurdi - Yandev – Katsina – Ala – Zaki – Biam – Wukari	Tiortyu, Uchi, Nyambee, Gwarche, Agudo, Wannune, Tarhembe,
	ii)	Buruku – Ijer – Wannune	Ortese, Tse- Agbuuku, Sooyoan, Usombo etc.
	iii)	Wannune – Ikpa – Igbor	Tse-Yave, Azungur, Anbyoho, An-Gbaaye, Amenger
Guma	i)	Makurdi – Lafia,	Daudu, Ortese, Yelewata,
	ii)	Makurdi -Tyulen Anyiin – Wukari	Abinsi, Agasha, Tyulen, Ikor, Azom, etc.

Source: *Field Survey, (2021)*

In accordance with the theoretical base of the paper, land tenure system and the practice of agriculture are the most critical determinant factors of scattered settlement patterns in Tiv land. Land which is a fundamental factor of agriculture production in Tiv land as it is elsewhere, is not only central to the migration of Tiv people but also defines their pattern of settlement. There is always the need for the people to move to lands suitable for agriculture and indeed, settle on their family lands. Therefore, the desire to expand and exercise control over land for agriculture purposes often leads to establishment of new and isolated settlements. This development is facilitated by Bahannan and Bohannan's (1968) principle of residence rule which gives everyone the right to live in an area associated with the smallest segment to which he is affiliated by birth – normally that of his father. The land tenure and agriculture practice argument is shared by Tser (2013) who further narrates that;

predominantly, the Tiv who occupy the Benue North territory are farmers who treasure so much in arable land as their main source of survival; a Tiv man believes that riches are derivable from land (*shagba dugh shin nya*). By the principle *shagba dugh shin nya*, a Tiv man farms and uses his farms proceeds to sponsor education of his children, marry more wives and improves his standard of living generally. This makes the Tiv to evolve a means to protect his family land from encroachment by non-family members by settling across the length and breadth of his farmland. This process has led to dispersed settlement pattern in Tiv land (p.83).

However, the situation in the Southern parts of Benue State which comprises the Idoma and Iggede is slightly different, In comparative terms therefore, Tser (2013) further elaborates that;

in Benue South (Idoma and Iggede Land), the settlement pattern is predominantly nucleated. This however does not suggest that the people that settle in this sub-region are not farmers and therefore they do not treasure land. The Idoma and Iggede people are very good farmers and treasure land very well but they choose to settle together for socio-cultural, economic and security reasons and leave the hinterlands for farming and hunting activities. This explains why if you get to Usha in Agatu, Idaba

in Apa, Ikpommolokpo in Ado, Ichama in Okpokwu, Okpiko in Ohimini, Ugboju in Otukpo LGAs respectively, they are all nucleated settlements with hinterlands virtually unoccupied (p.84).

Another dimension to the nature of settlements Tiv land of Benue State is that they are mostly the products of farm sites, family inheritance, migration, market centres, administrative headquarters, government designated areas, social centres and so on. In his work, Uji (2015) attributes the emergence and creation of settlements in Tiv land especially along the banks of River Benue such as Abinsi, Katsina-Ala, Wurukum and Wadata to the activities of Jukun, Hausa and Tiv migrants in the Benue Valley. Also, the colonial administration and Native Authority (NA) established some settlements in Tivland; and the best examples are Gboko which was established by Captain Downes in 1932, as the administrative headquarters for the Tiv Division, and the so-called Tor Tiv settlement area at Mbaakon respectively (Hembe, 2005).

Fundamentally, most of the settlements in Tiv land started as individual or family settlements or farm sites. Indeed, even the market settlements and the ones established by government especially the colonial and Native Authority were named after the British appointed chiefs in Tiv land. Examples include Korinya, Annune, Igbor, Zaki-Biam, Aliade, Adikpo, Kyado, Donga, Jato-aka and numerous others. Thus, the family and family inheritance argument on the origin of settlements in Tiv land clearly fits into Bylund's (1960) evolutionary model and Hudson's spatial competition theory in which the original settlers reproduce and their offspring subsequently settle in the available space close to the original homestead before occupying more distant areas. Subsequently, this process repeats itself because the offspring of the settled land reproduced in the same manner and the chain continues.

There are instances, though small, where a group of individuals or family migrate to form new settlements probably because of displacement. This has become a common feature of most parts of Tiv land where new settlements are emerging along Naka Road in Gwer- West LGA, Katsina-Ala LGA, and a classical example is the emerging settlements along Daudu axis in Guma LGA on the Makurdi – Lafia Road. The emergence of these settlements is as a result of incessant attacks and occupation of the ancestral homes of the rural people in Benue State by the Fulani herdsmen. The emergence of new settlements in Tiv land, especially on account of displacement could be explained using Wagstaff (1978) catastrophic theory which stipulates that the founding of new settlements is not necessary a continuous process in space but as a result of certain event(s) which may lead to dissatisfaction by members of the community.

In addition to the above, some historical events in Benue State and the neighbouring states of Nasarawa and Taraba have also resulted to new settlements in Tiv land of Benue State. These events and the new settlement have been captured by Tser (2013, pp.87-88) as below;

- i) The 2001 Benue - Taraba crisis that led some Tiv refugees to return to Benue State and some settled in Mbaton (*Kenpeshio*), a settlement/market in Katsina –Ala LGA along Zaki-Biam – Katsina – Ala Road;
- ii) The 2001 Abinsi crisis in Guma LGA which led to the development of Tior-tyu settlement/market in Tarka LGA along Makurdi –Gboko Road;
- iii) The agitation for the creation of Nyamatsor and Anber LGAs from the present Buruku LGA which also led to the development of Abwa settlement/market along Gboko – Ugbenma Road to its present status; and,

- iv) The struggle for the leadership of Groundnut Marketers Association in Luga Market of Mbayion which led to the development of Igbesue settlement/market in Mbativ, all in Gboko LGA.

Impact of Settlement Patterns on Rural Development in Tiv Land

Scattered settlement pattern which characterised most parts of Tiv land does not only provide parameters for measuring the level of underdevelopment and poverty, but also impacts negatively on rural development in various ramifications. It implies that scattered or isolated settlement pattern is one of the major problems of rural underdevelopment and poverty in Tiv land. This argument is supported by Tarnande (2015) who maintains that the dispersed settlement pattern which characterizes the best part of the Tiv rural society is in several ways antithetical to meaningful, rapid and sustained development; and it can be blamed partly for the slow pace of development which makes the Tiv society stand out as a sore thumb of poverty when the geography of socio-economic development in Nigeria is being discussed.

In an elaborate account on the impact of scattered settlement pattern on development in Tiv land, Tser (2013, pp. 86-87) narrates that;

this pattern does not lend itself to rural development strategy. When projects like schools, skill acquisition centres, health facilities and installation of electricity transformers are proposed for the area with scattered settlement pattern, it becomes difficult selecting suitable sites for the projects. This situation has led to the location of projects in few clustered settlements with fewer people at the expense of the rural dwellers who are scattered over the landscape and constitute the majority of the population. In agriculture development, introduction of commercial mechanized farming will pose a problem of displacing the people who are scattered over the landscape.

From the point of view of agriculture productivity, commercial and industrial development, as well as social and infrastructure provisioning, argument against scattered settlement in Tiv land of Benue State relates to the fact that it results in waste of large and valuable agricultural lands by depleting the available cultivatable area which tends to discourage large scale mechanized agriculture. In another dimension, scattered settlement pattern is noted to be unamenable for commercial and industrial activities as well as provision of social and infrastructure facilities. The reason being that social amenities such as water, electricity, schools, health clinics and housing are better established, profitably and efficiently run in a nucleated settlement. Industries are usually provided where there is concentration of people. Commercial activities are mostly found in urban areas because, commerce and industry thrive better in towns and villages where investors could get market and make profit for their products. In a related development, the unplanned, informal and scattered nature of rural settlements in Tiv land has made it difficult to put in place a framework for the provision of social infrastructure. The settlements are so numerous and scattered

that any attempt to supply them with social amenities and infrastructure will not generate the desired development results. In practical terms, Tser (2013) supports this position thus;

drilling a borehole for the people of Ojantele in Apa, installing a transformer for the people of Edumoga in Okpokwu LGAs respectively will be better protected than if the projects were established in an environment with the people scattered over the landscape. Similarly, schools, health facilities, skill acquisition centres and other projects established among the people in nuclear centres will be more accessible to the people. In the case of agriculture development, the hinterland left for farming by the people in the clustered areas like Agila, Abogbe, Uchobo, Uwokwu, Ojapo, Ogobia, Ikobi, Itogo, Ukwo and other settlements in Benue south can be utilised to establish farms without necessarily displacing the people (p.86).

This is the picture of the parts of Benue-South as can be seen in Idoma and Igede land. However, the nucleation in the Benue South sub-region is not tantamount to rural development, it is argued that nucleated settlement pattern is more amendable to rural development. Under nucleated arrangement, all farming activities are carried out outside the settlement area; while other economic activities are done within. This allows for an efficient use of social amenities like schools, health services, electricity, water and sanitation.

Another inherent deficiency in scattered settlement pattern is connotative of the reality that it discourages political as well as community mobilization and participation. This pattern of settlement deprives people of their sense of neighbourhood, community efforts and social interaction because it has proven difficult to bring people together. Politically, most people are usually disenfranchised and find it difficult to participate in electioneering processes such as voting at elections because of the distance to where polling centres are located. Even in the past, Hembe (2005) argues that the dispersed nature of Tiv settlement led to the lack of centralised political institutions in Tiv society. It has become common knowledge that the inhabitants of the emerging townships and larger villages are far more receptive to new political ideas than those of the rural areas. This is probably due to the fact that inhabitants of towns are better informed, more enlightened and free from the grip of tradition and the fear of the elders. It implies that political activities are more concentrated in areas with high concentration of people. In another dimension, the disappearance or absence of strong community projects in Tiv land can also be attributed to scattered settlement pattern which hinders community mobilization and social interaction.

In the aspect of security, it has been argued that the problem of insecurity in Tiv land of Benue State especially the incessant Fulani herdsmen attacks and land disputes can be largely attributed to the negatives of scattered settlement pattern. The desire to control and protect land usually leads to land hunger which in turn results to encroachment and conflict. Generally, scattered settlements are more difficult to defend. However, it has been argued on the contrary that, in events of security attacks, nucleated settlements usually have more casualties due to the high concentration of people in an area. This school of thought believes that attacks on one community will alert the next one and this would help to prepare for counter attack unlike in the case of clustered settlements where the attack can be carried out in a swoop. This philosophy entails that scattered settlements are more difficult to defeat because it takes more time. Thus, the more the settlements are scattered, the more difficult it is to overwhelm them at once.

As convincing as this argument may sound, it does not really captures the scenario of security threats in Tiv land on account of the deficiencies associated with isolated settlement pattern which

is defective for the purpose of collective defence against external attacks. Historically, Hembe's (2005) has argued that the Tiv revolts of 1960 and 1964 affected the scattered homestead in the rural areas more than the nucleated areas. Some of the villages like Taraku in Masev successfully held their ground against adversaries both in 1960 and 1964. They also expect better police protection in case a riot erupts.

The link between scattered settlement pattern and persistent attacks on farming communities in Tiv land of Benue State by marauding herdsmen has been widely acknowledged. The Benue State Committee on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Tiv land (2014) identifies scattered settlement pattern in Tiv land as one of the major factors which expose rural Tiv people to herdsmen attack. The report indicates that nucleated settlements would have been more difficult to ransack by the herdsmen. Besides, it would have been easier for government to send security men to protect such villages (Tarnande, 2015, p.9). Thus, it has been argued for instance that, in Guma LGA which is one of the most affected areas in terms of Fulani herdsmen attacks on rural communities in the state, settlement like Agasha would have been destroyed by the Fulani if not because it is big and has larger population than most of the small compounds settlements that scattered all over in most parts of the local government. Many attempts have been made to attack and burn the area but people always repelled them.

To every coin, there are two sides. Thus, despite the disadvantages associated with scattered settlement pattern, it is also noted with some benefits. Scattered settlements are less prone to crime and relatively free from health risks that associated with overcrowding. The benefits scattered settlement pattern to an average peasant farmer is that it brings people near to their farm lands and helps to prevent encroachment and ensure control over land. This pattern of settlement is also suitable for shifting cultivation and also helps in preservation of cultural heritage. However, the advantages of nucleated settlement far outweighed its disadvantages and therefore stands out as the best for the development of rural areas in Tiv land and elsewhere in Nigeria. Udo (1982) argues in this direction that even in the traditional Tiv society, like many other pre-industrial societies, the nucleated settlement pattern have been accepted as the most normal and rational form of settlement.

Conclusion/Recommendation

The Tiv land of Benue State stands out as one of the most dispersed in terms of settlement pattern in Nigeria and indeed in the whole of Tropical Africa. Settlements in rural areas of Tiv land of Benue State are sparsely distributed along family lineage system. Indeed, the nature of settlement pattern in Tiv land of Benue State cannot be understood in isolation from the history of migration of the Tiv people, their mood of agriculture practice, land tenure system and more importantly, the general mode of production. The prevalence of isolated or dispersed settlement pattern in Tiv land contradicts traditional African philosophy of communalism which is an indication of the changing nature of socio-economic formation of the Tiv society.

Scattered settlement pattern which dominates most parts of Tiv land does not only portray the state of poverty and underdevelopment but also antithetical to the development of rural areas. Specifically, the implications of scattered settlement pattern on rural development are that it affects agriculture productivity, socio-economic and commercial activities; unamenable for commercial and industrial activities as well as provision of social and infrastructure facilities; discourages political mobilization and participation as well as community mobilization and social interaction;

and more importantly, contributes to land disputes and indeed, vulnerable and deficient in terms of collective defence against external attacks.

The problem of incessant attacks on rural communities by the marauding Fulani herdsmen has greatly contributed to the awareness and clamour for addressing the issue of settlement pattern in Tiv land of Benue State. This development results to *sor tema* (resettlement) advocacy which is yet to yield the expected outcome. This is largely because it has not been given the attention it desires especially that it is not captured as government policy or legislation to be part of rural resettlement action plan in Benue State and Nigeria at large. Therefore, the paper recommends nucleated or compact settlement pattern as most suitable for the development of rural areas in Tiv land of Benue State. Although, attempts to relocate people to nucleated settlement will be confronted with fierce resistance because in Tiv land, land is mostly occupied on the basis of family lineage and people prefer to stay on the ancestral lands, with strong advocacy and proper implementation, people will be convinced to support rural resettlement plan because of its gains.

Thus, the Tanzanian rural development model presents lesson for the government both at the state and national levels for the transformation of the rural areas and resolution of the problems associated with scattered settlement pattern in Tiv land of Benue State. The Benue State Rural Resettlement Action Plan based on Tanzanian model of rural transformation through village integration approach is recommended. There is the need for a legislative based and sustainable Benue State Rural Resettlement Action Plan especially at the state level beyond the proposed rural development policy by the Benue state government. For the fact that the industrialization of the Benue state cannot be possible without transforming the rural sector, rural resettlement should be made a priority for the rural development policy in Benue state and Nigeria at large. The Benue State Rural Resettlement Action Plan will be built on the philosophy of *sor tema* (resettlement) advocacy with more radical to be adopted. This plan will not be new, it has been tried in several parts of Africa with varying degrees of success.

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