

Effective Management of Communal Crises and the Achievement of Food Security in Nigeria: A Study of the Tiv-Jukun Crises in Taraba State

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Abstract

Nigeria's quest for achieving food security is under threat by incessant communal crises. Among several violent crises, the frequent Tiv-Jukun crises in a widely acclaimed foremost agricultural producing area constitute a threat to the integrated Agricultural Transformation Action Plan, (IATAP) for achieving food, and cash crops security in Nigeria. Descriptive and exploratory designs were used, relying on both quantitative and qualitative evidences for examining; these crises, strategies for managing it, and its implications on food security. This study is critical for national orientation, the achievement of national integration and cohesion among the people, and for peaceful agriculture. Reviews and analytical techniques revealed that the crises centered on socio-economic and political factors. Governments' strategies for handling communal crises were devoid of both preventive, and effective management, as approximately 10% annual slack in food supplies due to the crises could significantly be accountable for Nigeria's inability to achieve food security. The constitution, national integration and food programmes reviews are imperative.

Keywords: *Communal-Crises, Constitutional-Reviews, Disparity, Displacements, Farmers, Food-Programmes, Food-Security, Killings.*

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Background to the Study

The first sets of Tiv people in southern and central areas of Taraba State, North East Nigeria were believed to have migrated to the area in the 1800s (Adesoji and Alao 2009, and Alozie 2019). These researchers posited that the Tiv people gained socio-political prominence in the former Wukari province, especially when a Tiv man won a seat to the Federal House of Representatives in 1959. The people have been great farmers of many sorts, and driven by land hunger, hence their inclination for migration. On the other hand, the Jukun people have inhabited Wukari and many other parts of the state around the 15th and 16th Centuries. The latter have been warriors and great farmers as well. Both the Tiv and Jukun farmers of Taraba State usually contributed approximately more than 10% of annual staple food crop supplies in Nigeria, largely by small scale farm holders.

The long running Tiv-Jukun crises dated back to the 1840s (Akanji, 2019). The emerging prominence of the Tiv people coupled with their clamour for equal rights and entitlements to economic and socio-political rights triggered several crises, usually leading to the killing of people, with hundreds rendering homeless, and many others fleeing to either other parts of the state, or to Benue State which is home to most Tiv people.

Communal conflicts in Nigeria usually take the form of clashes of varying interests, sometimes violently, either between two or more communities, or between different ethnic groups, religious groups, cattle herders verses farmers, and among others within a community. The violent nature of most of such conflicts continued to threaten the peace and security of people across the local government areas of Wukari, Ibi, Donga, Takum, Kurmi, Bali, Gassol, and the state in general. These incessant crises have threatened the mutual cohesion of the people and food security in Nigeria. The magnitude of these frequent crises has grown to an intolerable scale amounting to a national challenge.

The resulting frequent destruction of human lives, animals, homes and farms no longer guarantee peaceful co-existence among the people. Hence, Alimba in Alozie (2019) asserted that the Tiv-Jukun crises have denied the people the dividends of democracy. Like similar communal crises of Birom-Hausa/Fulani communities in Jos, Plateau State, Ife-Modakeke in Osun State, and in Oyo, Nassarawa, Abia, and Kano States were all centred around the indigene-settler sentiments. Indigene-Settler sentiments in Nigeria usually manifest in form of disparity, and eventual crises between the warring groups. Hence, the indigene, native or 'son of the soil' versus settler controversy is meant to stigmatize the latter groups.

Alubo, (2003) and Akanji, (2019) described the so called 'Settlers' as citizens of Nigeria either born in a place, but whose parents were from elsewhere or emigrants, subjected to discrimination and various forms of exclusion or deprivation from certain rights, privileges or opportunities enjoyed by the 'indigenes'. The Tiv-Jukun incongruent competition for available opportunities and resources have assumed a fierce dimension characterized by claims and counter claims in unique projection for self-actualization (Alozie, 2019). Hence, each group taking their destiny into their hands by the show of force at any slightest conflict which usually surround the enforcements of their rights and privileges. While the Tiv people the area claimed to be indigenes, the Jukun people see their Tiv neighbours as people who have other

homes elsewhere (Adesoji and Alao 2009, Akombo 2016). The implication of the Tiv-Jukun crises on food security in Nigeria is obvious from the destruction of human lives, animals and farms, the expulsion and the mass movement of hundreds of the 'settler' farm holders considered to be persona-non-grata from their locations or communities in the agriculturally virile staple food crops producing areas would remain a significant slack in the country's food security.

Nigeria's quest for a diversified economy from crude oil is under threat from incessant communal crises which have made life difficult across the country. Worst of all, the aim of reinvigorating agricultures at risk due to the gradual but devastating blow to agricultural practices. A major aim of Nigeria's national agricultural policy is to achieve sustainable food security which can guarantee adequate nutrient intake, creation of income and wealth, export expansion and foreign exchange earnings. This was to be achieved through the Integrated Agricultural Transformation Action Plan (IATAP) launched in August 2011 for developing value chain of five key commodities – rice, cassava, sorghum, cocoa and cotton. The first three of these commodities are typically the major farm outputs of the Tiv and Jukun farmers of Southern and Central Taraba. The success of this action programme depends largely on peaceful agricultural production in Nigeria. Nwajiuba (2012), listed three issues to be addressed for achieving green agriculture (resource efficiency, social inclusiveness and low carbon in agriculture) among which is safe and sustainable agricultural practices, protein, the soil and few external inputs.

Problem Statement

Apart from rural-urban migration, population growth, and climate, communal crises are perhaps the next greatest threat to food security in Nigeria. The Tiv-Jukun crises of Taraba State affect about 0.2 million farmers producing approximately 10% of Nigeria's annual food crops which can hardly be ignored. Livestock produced in large quantities from these areas were never spared.

Successive Nigerian constitutions from political independence in 1960 as amended to date shed light on citizenship and fundamental rights, chapter iii section 25 to 27 of the 1999 constitution stipulates the condition for citizenship of a place of birth, registration, and naturalization. While chapter iv of the constitution spells the conditions for enjoying fundamental human rights of every Nigeria irrespective of ethnicity, and place of birth but in-exhaustive of indigene-ship and ethnic considerations. For instance, political consideration of indigene-ship is on the basis of either ethnic or sub-ethnic rights in nature. Hence, by this constitutional provisions, group or ethnic groups rights supersede individual citizen rights. Hence it is apparently clear that the constitution casts the cloud over the citizenship of a place or Nigeria in favour of indigene-ship of a place through one's parents or grandparents indigenes to a community, local government and state.

Research Questions

Several pertinent questions should be considered such as;

- I. Can Nigeria achieve sustainable food security in the largely volatile agricultural producing areas given the Boko Haramwar in North East, herdsmen/farmers crises, and several insurgents across the country, carrying out acts inimical to peace?

- ii. Can Nigeria achieve food security with poor agricultural activities, hunger, and despair instead of self-sufficiency and guaranteed food production and food exports?
- iii. Can Nigeria achieve food security when human lives, livestock, crops and homes being destroyed frequently in their hundreds and thousands?
- iv. Can Nigeria surmount her food security challenges in which over 15% of her farmers who earned more than US\$1.5 (N547.5) on average per day (Nwajiuba, 2019) end up in the internally displaced persons (IDPs)' camps, while others were either killed or maimed?
- v. Can Nigeria achieve food security when there is fear, apprehension and uncertainty in place of hope due to crises like the Tiv-Jukun crises?

The World Food Summit (1996) defined 'Food Security' as the access by all to sufficient food for an active and healthy living. A country which has achieved sustainable, adequate food nutrition for every citizen is said to have achieved food security. Such a country is also said to be wealthy. Hence, food security is necessarily a good measure of standard of living and an indicator of Human Development Index (HDI).

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to examine the implications of the Tiv-Jukun crises on food security in Nigeria. Specific objectives of the study include the examination of the;

- i. Major causes of the communal crises in Nigeria, and in particular the Tiv-Jukun crises in Taraba State.
- ii. Strategies employed by the governments for managing and containing communal crises in Nigeria, and in particular the Tiv-Jukun crises in Taraba State.
- iii. Implications of communal crises, particularly the Tiv-Jukun crises on food security in Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

After gaining proper insight into the Tiv-Jukun crises, both the Taraba State, and Federal Government of Nigeria can cast more attention to the weakness of section 147 of the 1999 constitution widely considered to be a fundamental flaw underlying 'indigene-settler' crises in Nigeria. This evaluation of the implication of Tiv-Jukun crises on food security in Nigeria can be a 'wake-up' call to both the national orientation and national integration policy makers to stand up to the challenges of national cohesion as a panacea to communal crises in Nigeria. This paper can also rekindle the interest of the Nigerian military and police authorities to re-assess their tactical strategies for curbing militia tendencies in crises ridden areas of the country. The Taraba State and National Assemblies will definitely act in resolving several communal crises fundamentally fueled by party politics if the recommendations of this research are properly implemented.

Again, this study can bring into focus the loss of lives and colossal losses of food crops and animals in several tones especially rice, cassava, yams and maize in the Tiv-Jukun habitat of Taraba State. Hence, this study can effectively draw the agricultural authorities into the struggle for ending communal crises in Nigeria. Ending communal crises in Nigeria can enhance the realization of the dream of the Integrated Agricultural Transformation Action

Plans (IATAP), and food security in Nigeria. As a contribution to knowledge, this study can be useful to different categories of stake holders, including researchers inclined in negotiations and conflict resolutions.

This study can be of great interest not only to the wholesale and retail food sellers but also to the individual consumers spread across the country.

Literature Review

Comparative Review

The Research Gap

Lack of focus on the impact of communal conflicts on food security in Nigeria provides the research gap for this study.

Table 1: Comparative review of related literature

S/No	Authors	Title	Study objectives	Methodology	Findings	Recommendations
1	Adosoji, A. D. & A. Alao	Indigene-ship and citizenship in Nigeria: Myth and Reality	Examination of indigene-ship, Myth and Citizen-ship Myth and Reality	Indigene-ship is a major factor in communal conflict in Nigeria	Constitutional reform to address indigene-settler dichotomy	Periodic reforms on National Integration Policy in Nigeria
2	Akanji, T (2019)	Understanding the issues in citizenship-indigene-ship crises in Nigeria: Lessons of Multi-Ethnic cities	Examination of how indigene-ship syndrome has created insecurity in Nigeria	Descriptive/ survey method	Section 147 of 1999 constitution , a flaw for communal volatility in Nigeria	Periodic reforms on National Integration Policy in Nigeria
3	Akintol, O. E & A. Alao (2009)	Indigene-ship and citizenship in Nigeria: Myth and Reality	To examine the indigene-settler question in Nigeria	Source of data collection explanatory and deductive analytical method		Indigene-settler syndrome has negative impact on federalism in Nigeria section 147 of 1999 constitution should be amended
4	Alozzie C. C. (2019)	Communal conflicts and challenges of National Integration in Nigeria	Examine communal crises as Interjecting National Integration in Nigeria	Exploratory and Deductive Design	Indigene-settlers syndrome as bane of National disintegration in Nigeria	Periodic reforms on National Integration Policy in Nigeria
5	Nwajiuba, C. (2012)	Nigeria's Agricultural and Food Security Challenges	Examination of Agriculture and Food Security in Nigeria	Survey/descriptive design	Challenges of agriculture and food security in Nigeria are enormous due to insecurity	Redefine agricultural and food security strategies in Nigeria

Conceptual Clarification

According to Okpoko (2012), There are divergent views of scholars on the precise meaning of conflicts as each one defines it according to the individual research, circumstance, dimension, and space of time.

Definitions of conflicts can also be a reflection on the class of interest and class struggle between warring groups, To Alozie (2019), conflicts involve competition among individuals for the control or exercise of dominion and counter activities over certain cherished values in a particular locality over a space of time.

Marxist scholars view conflicts in terms of class struggle for economic gains or supremacy between bourgeois (the rich, cohesive, and stronger groups) and the proletariats (the have nots, and weaker groups). In the 1937 popular book titled "The communist manifesto, Karl Marx posited that class conflicts have been a part of human society by nature. On the other hand, Angaye (2003) in Alozie described conflicts as the aftermath of the quest for domination over other groups by the dominant group. Alozie (2019), sees conflicts in a society or organization as an inevitable quest since achieving amicable ways of sharing wealth and opportunities are hard to come by. Usually, the dominant groups in conflicts do emerge from certain advantages over others. The term 'elite' derived from French meaning excellent as used by Pareto (1915-19), in his book titled 'The Mind and the Society' refers to the group of people who show the highest ability in their chosen field of endeavor. Whereas, Mosca in his work titled 'The Ruling Class' (1896) posited that the society or the political system comprises two groups, the rulers and the ruled. The rulers are the elites who control most of the wealth, power and prestige in the society. The ruled are the masses that are perpetually under the elite.

The elitist argument is that liberal democracy and authoritarian socialism are necessarily the manipulations of elite system. Hence, in 1935, Pareto justified this position in his piece of work, the law of elite circulation, while Mosca in 1939 argued on political class. On the other hand, Lopez (2013) cited Pareto notion of political class as elite's law of circulation to mean that elites can only be stated by other sets of elites keeping the masses perpetually under domination. In the classical elitist literature, Pareto explicitly likened the elites as lions by capacity, personality and the skills in using coercion to dominate the masses whose weakness relatively resemble those of fox. Hence the contemporary class struggle was clearly foreseen by the elite theory. The theory describes the economic elite as policy planners who possess superior power.

Theoretical Framework

Elite theory is adopted as the theoretical basis of this paper. In the elite theory, three famous sociologists; Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels in the early 20th made separate but related sociological analysis of the term 'elite' (Akanji 2019 and Aknitola and Yabayanze 2017).

Empirical Literature

The Major Causes of Tiv-Jukun Crises in Taraba State

Political Factors: Most political literature have it that crises occur due to differences in inter group relations which apparently seem to be inevitable as individual and group interest differ. Hence, crises are phenomena in inter-relationships. Buttressing this point, Smith, (1968) and Tilly, (1969) posited that every political process has a potential for violence due to the diverse political maneuvers or strategies for gaining individual or group power advantage. Akombo (2016.16) argued that the British Colonialist found the Jukun people more cohesive with their age long organized native authority administration and chiefdom compared to their Tiv counterparts in the Old Wukari Federation. The colonialists therefore promoted Jukun supremacy over their Tiv neighbours, and hence introduced the idea of exclusive tribal lands for the former among other preferential treatments (Akombo 2014.3). Attesting to this argument, the researcher cited cases of politically motivated crises of 1959 when a Tiv man,

Charles Tanguil Gaza won the seat to the Federal House of Representatives for Wukari Constituency, the appointment of Simon Iorter Musa, another Tiv man as Wukari Local Government caretaker chairman, (1981-1983) by Abubakar Barde (Governor of defunct Gongola State), and the appointment of some Tiv people into the government of Rev. Jolly Nyame (former governor of Taraba State), supposedly leading to the 1990-1992 crises.

Social Factors: The Tiv people of Taraba State who were by all accounts late comers and whom by their social orientation continued to grow to the fear of the Jukuns. And between 1928 and 1937 the Tiv people of the state grew by approximately 2.5 times their Jukun counterparts and from 11.3% to 37.3% compared to the latter who grew from 8.6% to 10.0% in the same period (MA/PROF/FED/4/1/4377 in Akombo 2016). By 1948, the former were almost half of the Old Wukari Federation, but were socially excluded, like the exclusion from Wukari Native Authority administration), and from several opportunities (Gunn, 1947 in Akombo 2014.97, and Agaba and Akintola 2012). So, the preference for those who could trace their descendants to Wukari to enjoy social rights and privileges heightened the division between the two contenders (Adesoji and Alao 2009, Akombo 2016, and Albert 2001).

Economic Factors: To the materialists like Stuart Hall and Karl Max, the decision to gain economic advantage over others plays a central role in inter-group relations. In the Tiv-Jukun crises of Taraba State, the strive for retaining or gaining economic power over land, and other resources of the area by the Jukuns, contended by the Tiv people fuelled the hostilities between the two groups. The struggle for supremacy in political representation, social amenities and access to land, employment, education, e.t.c have been dully attributed as the major causes of the Tiv-Jukun crises in Taraba State.

Research Methodology

Descriptive or survey method was adopted for this study, using exploratory and qualitative methods of analysing the Tiv-Jukun crises, the farmers killed or displaced, animals and farm lost. In this study, gathering precise information was done through secondary data and personal interviews. According to Agu (1992) and Adefila (2008), a descriptive research method describes a situation, event or the scenario under consideration. This method is suitable for the description of the actual conflict between the Tiv and Jukun people of the eight local government areas of southern and central Taraba, and its impact on food production and supply in Nigeria.

According to Akintola and Yabayanze (2017) and Alozie (2019), the exploratory (deductive) or qualitative analytical approach is suitable for this study, based on the utilization of the analysis of data from Journals, Workshops/Conferences, Text Books and relevant unpublished research works.

Discussions and Findings

Government Strategies for Managing and Containing the Tiv-Jukun Crises in Taraba State

Containment, Reliefs, Reconciliation, and Resettlements (CRRRs)

Containment is a mechanism for moving insecurity agents, usually the police but rarely the military for dislodging the militias in fighting or the use of peace agents to calm nerves where there were likelihood of breakdown of law and order. In every communal crises, the government usually intervene to contain it by detachments of security personnel not only to stop the fighting if any but also to maintain peace which can guarantee lives and properties, guarantying the exercise of voluntary occupations; farming, civil service, entertainment, e.t.c and free movement of labour and goods.

Relief is the act of reducing pain, anxiety, e.t.c which can give hope to people instead of despair by providing immediate necessities of life like tents, food and water, clothing, medicine, e.t.c. Reconciliation is an act of bringing opposing groups to an agreement, usually through mediation and round table discussions. This method of settling crises can be effective if the issues of disagreements are adequately addressed, and where warring parties to a dispute are pacified.

Resettlement may be a part of settling crises where land is involved. A careful analysis of land disputes or claims may favour resettlement of a part or whole group of people elsewhere. In all the Tiv-Jukun crises which involved land disputes, containment, relief, reconciliation and resettlements were applied by the governments. In some of the Tiv-Jukun crises beginning with the 1959 to the 2019/2020 disturbances, these strategies were applied and in particular the resettlement of the Tiv people of Kparev, Akwana, Ikyernum, Rafin Kada, Kente, Assa among others in the 2001/2002 and 2004 Zegeate and Atem Tyo, attacks (Akombo, 2016.155)

Containment, Reliefs, Reconstruction and Compensations (CRRCs)

These strategies constituted the second set of government interventions in many communal crises in Nigeria, including the Tiv-Jukun crises of Taraba State.

Reconstruction of damaged public facilities like roads, culverts schools e.t.c and private houses were usually done in order to reinstate people's confidence, hopes, and peace. On the other hand, compensation have been a mechanism for pacifying individuals who lost identifiable relative(s) personal properties like homes, cars, farms, e.t.c not only to restore asset losses, but also to reduce the chances of reprisal attacks.

Government strategies for managing and containing communal crises in Nigeria were restricted to the CRRRs and CRRCs. The inadequacy and ineffectiveness of these strategies may be seen from the frequency and number of communal crises in Nigeria, and in particular the Tiv-Jukun crises. Nigeria has witnessed the 1959 and 1964 Wukari Tiv-Jukun disturbances in which several houses, animals, farms e.t.c were lost, the 1977 Jukun youths' attacks on Tiv settlements and its inhabitants, the 1990-1992 bloody crises, the 2001 and 2002 Tiv-Jukun/Fulani fatal crises, the 2004, and the 2019/2020 bloody crises. The areas mostly touched were Wukari areas of Piye, Bantaje, Tsokundi, Nwokyo, Akwana, Assa, Kente, Rafin Kada, Chonku, Fyayi, Riti Sondi, Chediya, Ugber Jembe, Akomikyar, Abagye, Nakombo, Gidan Idi, Takum, Kurmi, Bali, Ibi, Gassol and Donga Local Government Areas estimated hundreds of lives, thousand animals and farms were lost, with several houses burnt, and estimated losses of several millions of food crops (Akombo 2016.155).

Findings

- i. Social, economic, and political factors were found to be the major causes of the Tiv-Jukun crises. These factors corroborate with those of several studies on communal crises in Nigeria.
- ii. Government strategies for managing and containing communal crises in Nigeria particularly the Tiv-Jukun crises were devoid of the application of proactive measures like legislative provisions, and prosecution of crises offenders.
- iii. Approximately 10% of annual food crop output losses in the Tiv-Jukun crises of Taraba State to the national output food production in the crises years were critical in the incapacitation of Nigeria's un-attainment of food security.

Conclusion

Social, economic, and political factors were central to the Tiv-Jukun crises in Taraba State. First, the clamor for equal rights and privileges by the Tiv people which were resisted by their better rooted Jukun people led to the several shows of force in the crises years.

Secondly, the struggle for retaining the control of economic resources like land by the Jukun people, and with the clamour for equal access to such resources continued to climax into violent clashes. Again, the quest for championing representations for each of the warning groups usually resulted in the elitist hijack of the process of dichotomizing the settler-indigene arguments. It was the difficulty in managing and containing this dichotomy that has continued to undermine the peace and tranquility of the people. It was the failure of government to provide the legislative framework and to apply sanctions for crises offences that has not encouraged national cohesion, and integration. And this has also made it impossible for Nigeria to achieve food security due to, incessant communal crises inimical to peaceful agriculture.

Recommendations

- i. Constitutional review to adequately address the settler-indigene dichotomy which has continued to fan the ember of communal crises in Nigeria.
- ii. Reinvigorating national orientation and integration policies has become imperative.
- iii. Aggressive national food programmes have also become imperative so as to achieve food security for the country.

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