INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND CRISIS IN NASARAWA STATE: A STUDY OF NASARAWA SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT 2001-2015

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ABSTRACT: Human history generally has been history of conflict interest and values expressed in varieties of inter-ethnic crisis. This work is set out to examines the nature and character, vis visa to fish out the major forces or problems that has been persistently led to inter-ethnic crisis in the area. Not only that, to state the implications of this crisis as it affects the area, state and nation at large and with the view to profound solutions or make recommendations in order to ameliorate the major challenges of inter-ethnic crisis in the area.

KEYWORDS: Inter-Ethnic Relations, Crisis, Conflict Interest, Conflict Resolution, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Nigeria regained her full socio-economic and political freedom from the British on 1st October, 1960. This was the consequence of the decolonization process of the post-world war II, which has been thoroughly interrogated and needs no repeating here. Suffice to say this however; that regardless of the festivities that accompanied this historic development however, independence came with a lot of challenges for the emerging Nigeria nation. For instance, Nigeria since independence inherited a socio-economic and political structure, a defective and unbalanced federated unit, an intensification of ethno-religion consciousness and rivalries, a subverted indigenous ethos of government and culture and above all our inexperience leadership therefore compounded a lot of inter-ethnic crisis that engulfed our nation today precisely the Nasarawa State which is the area of focus.

This unholy relation claimed a lot of lives and properties destroyed in the area. Not only that the displaced people face a lot of hardship therefore, cripple socio-economic and political activities in the area. Most of the apparatuses of the state could not meet or support the aspiration of the emergent nation. From all indications, there was little doubt that independent Nigeria was, despite the euphoria that greeted her birth, headed for a turbulent and crisis – ridden future. All these contradictions seriously affected the nature and character of interethnic relations in the country. For example, they were fundamentally to the issues that led to the Nigeria civil war 1967 – 1970. Similarly, they are critical variables in the phenomenal upsurge in communal crisis, religious wrangling, the clamor for resource control and insurgency related conflict in different parts of the country today. Others include socio – economic and political crisis among others were the major causes of inter – ethnic crisis in the study areas.

It is against this background that, this paper is set to examines, the nature and the main contending issues that always lead to the crisis in Nasarawa State precisely, the Southern Senatorial District of the State. The paper therefore shows that the contradictions which flow from these crises are critical variables in the unbalance between different sections in the State. The paper would also draw the attention of the entire ethnic nationalities in the Southern Zone, Nasarawa State and beyond the implications of persistent ethnic crisis. In the final analysis, the paper will profound or make recommendations which will go a very long way to ameliorate the major challenges of inter-ethnic crisis in the State.

Statement of the Problem

It has been noticed that Nigeria, Nasarawa State, the study area in particular was made of a conglomeration of antagonistic ethnic confederacies whose association with one another are entirely artificial, accidental and recently the product of colonial rule. However, the conflicting issues in respect to land as a factor of production, settlers and indigene dichotomy, who to govern, the crisis between the herdsmen and the farmers form the basis problem of this research work because they had serious implications on the history of inter-groups relation among the people. What also prompted me to venture into this research was the complexities and dimensions of the expression of ethnic nationalism in the study area-which also poses serious threats to national stability. All these are therefore some of the contending issues, this study intends to investigate and profound solution to it.

Aim and Objectives

- i. To analyze the nature, character and the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in the area.
- ii. To investigate the forces or factors responsible for the persistence ethnic crisis in the area.
- iii. To examine the changes and the continuities in the relationship between the contending parties.
- iv. To examine the nature of socio-economic and political problems that trigger the crisis.
- v. To analyze the effect of this crisis as it affects people, the state and the country at large.

Signification of the Study

- i. The study will identify and will bring out the major challenges or problems in the area.
- ii. Another significance of this study is that, it is coming out at the time Nigerians needs to re-examine themselves together, learn how to live together, arising from the crisis that nearly set the State apart and nation at large.
- iii. The study is also significance in the sense that, it helps in reconstructing our approach to the concept of national building and citizenship.
- iv. The study will also expand our knowledge of Nigerians ethnic complexity and will promote common national understanding and cultural integration of its diverse ethnic nationalities.

v. The work if accomplished will continue to remain in the library for others to consult and to see the nature and character of inter-ethnic relations that existed among the various ethnic groups in the area.

Scope of the Study

The study is basically on the crisis and inter-ethnic relation in Nasarawa State and precisely, the Southern Senatorial District of the State which cover, Awe, Obi, Keana, Doma and Lafia Local Government Area of the State. The study will focus on the activities of relations between the ethnic nationalities that inhabited the areas with the view to analyze the major factors that banded them together as well as the major challenges that displaced them. This research is restricted between 2001-2014. The choice of this period is to enable the researcher to assess the effect of the crisis in the study area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of data in any historical writing is indispensible as it constitutes the major ingredient in the compilation of history. In historical writing or research of this magnitude, primary and secondary sources are broadly considered the major informative and also serve as necessary historiographical tools. It is expected that historian should show a remarkable knowledge in handling and using his source of information and one of these ways the historian can effectively manage the sources is through interrogation, corroboration, examination and assessment of the different sources at his own disposal.

Mike Odey, in his work "Land Disputes in the Benue Valley Since 1900: A study in an aspect of inter-group Relation in Central Nigeria during the 19th and 20th centuries, traces the genesis of inter-ethnic crisis in the Benue valley to the pre-colonial era as a result of land disputes, accentuated by migration and search for new settlements and identify. According to him, various ethnic nationalities in the area were busy fighting each other over land. This work also tries to attach the rampant cases of communal conflicts to British arrival, bur coning population growth, migration into Central Nigeria because of waves of political and religion crisis in the north and intensification of Agricultural production. He cites some of major land disputes or conflict in the Benue valley as Nzorou – Damkor conflict which is in the study area. He also emphasis political dimension of communal clashes such as creation of state and local government areas, political appointments, settlers and indigenes dichotomy, appointment of chiefs, electoral manipulations and boundary demarcation crisis. This work is crucial because it touches on virtually all the aspect of inter-ethnic relations in the study area.

Okeph O. Okpeh in his work "perspective on the crisis of inter-group relation in post-colonial Idoma land. An Introductory Discourse on the National question" pin points some major factors responsible for these crises in Idoma Land and these factors range from plural nature of the polity. The author stated that, the multi-ethnic nature and character of the Nigeria nation arising from inter-group relations has been identified as one of the major issues in the crisis of inter-ethnic relations in the post colonial Nigeria. I therefore agree with him that, ethnic plurality or heterogeneity nature of Nigeria, produces the basis for communal clashes in Nigeria and Nasarawa State, Southern Zone in particular.

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Godwin Hembe in his work, "British – Tiv Relation in the colonial Era" argues that one cannot totally neglect the issues of war, conflict, violence and hostility in the inter group relations. According to him, this form another central idea in inter group relations. He maintains that when two or more ethnic groups engage each other in competition for valuable things which are scarce, the inevitably create tensions, fear and inter group hostilities and these conditions provide situations for manipulations to create ethnic stereotype of their apparent such as an aggressive, greedy, dishonest or infidels and even cannibals. This one is very relevant because he addresses fundamental issues such as aggressive, greedy, dishonest and infidels being the major causes of the persistent ethnic crisis among neighbours just like the study area of this work.

O. Otile in analyzing on conflict, their resolutions, transformation and management argued that, conflicts arise from the pursuit of divergent interest, goals and aspirations by individuals and, or groups in define social and physical environments.

He further stated that changes in the social environment, such as contestable access to political position, or perceptions of new resources arising from development in the physical environment, this he said are fertile grounds for conflict involving individuals and groups who are interested in using these new resources to achieve their goals. I support the argument put by the author because the issues raised in his analysis are issues that brought conflicts in many Nigerian societies to today be the issue of divergent interest political positions among others.

T. Avav's "The Tiv and their neighbours" diagnoses inter group relations between the Tiv and her neighbours. These neighbors include, Idoma, Alago, Jukun etc. He contends that virtually all Tiv neighbours within and outside Benue State brand the Tiv people as bad neighbours, war like and aggressive people and also being afraid of the population domination of the Tiv. He further argued out that, the Tiv people in the pre – colonial period had peaceful relationship with the Alago as they entered into several contracts with the Tiv people to assist then in their wars with other neighbours in order to centralize Keana's political power. He further, stated that, with the increasing number of the Tiv people in the Study area, the relationship changed as there was fear of Tiv domination by the Alago and other ethnic groups in the area. This according to the author culminating into attacks on the Tiv people by these ethnic groups. He buttresses his argument with an event he described as an unprovoked attack on the District Head of Nzorov in Guma Local Government Area, killing him and his three sons in 1989. The weakness of this works, however, emanates from the fact that he is bias and so emotional about the Tiv oppression. He also failed to examine the relationship between the Tiv and their neighbours in the area of social-economic and political spheres. He also failed to give substantive reasons why the Tiv people have been continually been attacked by the Alago and others neighbor. Despite the weaknesses, the work has shaded more light on the study of inter – ethnic relation and crisis in the study areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Inter-ethnic relations have attracted the attention of scholars in the recent times. However, one problem of the concept is that, it has been conceived by a number of authors in various

dimensions and at different levels. And added difficulty arises with the involvement of several academic disciplines in its handling, because the different disciplines have their own traditions, norms, perspective and idioms in carry out a research. In this case, one can hardly introduce technical terms that have been developed within the framework of one discipline without translating them into the language of other relevant field of study.

The methodological approach to this research is primarily targeted at providing a coherent interpretation of all the sources and data that will likely be used in this work. Many sources are implored in the reconstruction of any aspect of the past human activities if it is to be regarded and considered reliable and historically admissible. And this research work is therefore not an exception. The sources to be used in this particular aspect of the history of relation are many, varied and are often classified into primary and secondary sources. Among the primary sources are oral interviews which have been and will be conducted with well-informed personalities from various sections of the contending parties and their neighbours. Archival materials constituted another different form of raw data mostly of colonial reports, assessment and correspondences and oral tradition that will be collected will be subjected to critical analyses and interpretation. Equally close examination will be extended to the use of secondary sources comprising mainly of books, journals, seminar and conference papers, unpublished Dissertations/Thesis and projects.

Conceptual and Theoretical Clarifications

The concept "Inter" literally means "between" or "among". Relation refers to the way in which one thing is associated with or connected to the other (Nwabueze, 2003). Inter group relations therefore means the simple or complex, conflicting or accommodating, corporative, consensual, peaceful or acrimonious, intense, dense or indifferent way that one group is connected or associated with another in the course of their interaction with each other. Group relations as a study focuses essentially on the series of methods, strategies or approaches to the understand of separate group dynamics, of diffusing tension between different ethnic groups and creating or building bridges across potential or actual conflict or crisis relationships, or directly promoting harmony. It may also be seen as packages curriculum for crisis management and containment based on scientific understanding of group characteristics and a more accurate capacity to predict the pattern of prejudices, preferences, and sentiment among and between members of groups in interaction with one another (Nwabueze, 2003). It is also significant to notes here that relations between social groups are importantly influenced by the resources of the interaction of groups. What is them ethnicity?

Sanda (1976) defined ethnic group as consisting of interacting members who define themselves as belonging to a named or labeled social group with whose interest they identify and which manifests certain aspects of a unique culture, while constituting a part of a wider society. In Nasarawa some examples include Eggon, Alago, Tiv, Jukun, Fulani, Agatu, Gwandara, Kanuri (Kamberi) Akye among others. Otite (1978) argued and identify 374 ethno linguistic groups in Nigeria. Sanda's and other definitions of ethnic groups have tended to emphasis common interests, identity, language and sentiments, general core norms and values which separate and distinguish members one group and another group in the same society. These groups corporate and compete favorable with one another in the area of socioeconomic and political activities and sometimes under well organized group contexts with their leaders playing prominent roles and at other times under less defined organization in which the sense of groups is sustained by common ethnic relations one significant feature we

have to take not of is ethnicity, that is, the feeling of belonging and loyalty to a group as well as the consequences of that sentimental attachment. Ethnicity according to A. Conhen (Zanda 1976) refers to "strife between ethnic groups in the course of which people stress their identity and exclusiveness".

G. Debros in (Sanda 1976) affirmed that if one starts from a theoretical position that conflict in some forms is a normal condition of society, ethnicity implies a form of separations and instability in respects to questions of dominance that can easily lead to social conflicts. We must regard conflict/crisis as only one form of manifestation of ethnicity groups cooperate to achieve common goals and to discuss to settle their differences. Indeed, the application of conflict resolution and promotion of inter-group cohesion is the central objective of intergroup relations. Groups compete for allocation of resources, occupation of position of power in government, sitting of development projects, chiefdoms among others. These are fundamental challenges which ethnic sentiments are manipulated organist for their primordial interest.

Nnoli also notes that the concept of "ethnicity" is a complex one and agrees that an ethnic group is a social group characterized with clear cultural identities such as language, mode of dressing, common historical background and ethnocentrism among others. He further notes that the concept of "ethnic conflict" denotes communal war in which members of the same ethnic group participate in order to achieve common objectives. In the contest of Nasarawa South Senatorial District's, conflict/crisis the concept of "ethnic conflict/crisis" denotes war or confrontation over scarce resources like land, socio-economic and political opportunities for different ethnic's groups that co-exist peaceful in the area, includes; Alago, Tiv, Hausa-Fulani, Eggon, Jukun, Koro (Mighili) etc.

As ethnic sentiments such as distrust, hatred, and intolerance encouraged perpetuation of inter-ethnic conflicts over scarce facilities such as farmland, appointment, boundary demarcations, and recruitments/employments.

Understanding of Inter-Ethnic Relations and Crisis in Nasarawa South

Nnoil argued that, competition force scarce socio-economic and political opportunities usually encourage ethnic suspicious, distrust, hatred and intolerance between competitors in any part of Nigeria. In any society where two or more groups emerged there bound to be conflicts. Conflict is part of human existing/association and can only be managed but never eradicated. In African cultures, conflict is managed through restorative justices. The entire goal of conflict management is to restore peace through forgiveness and reconciliation. Conflict has been understood by various people. In military terms, it means war between antagonists' forces, especially prolonged struggle, in psychology, it is interpreted as mental struggle, the psychological state resulting from unconscious opposition between simultaneous but incompatible desires or needs. In literature, it refers to plot tension or the opposition between characters or forces in literary work. Many outside their understand and see it as a struggle over values and claims to scarce resources and power. All those mentions often leads to Inter-ethnic violence when two or more ethnic group who were related by boundary, race, and culture conflict each for means of survival. These could be farmland, poverty, inequality, appointment, politics among others. In all conflict is basically inevitable and unpleasant fact in human societies, therefore, should be kept within control, managed or possibly avoided.

Those human societies as address in this write up includes; Alago, Tiv, Agatu, Jukun, Koro (Mighili), Eggon, Hausa-Fulani Gwandara, Akya and Kamberi (Kanuri) among other in area.

Factors that brought about conflict in the areas

Ethnic violence could be looked at in two forms: Inter and Intra ethnic violence. Each communal or ethnic group has its own unique history but some valid generalizations could be made about the character and manifestations of ethnic and communal violence in Nigeria Nation.

One of the major conflicts in Nigeria today, and in Nasarawa State and indeed Nasarawa South in particular was the growing of inequality in the distribution of economic resource between the component ethnic nationalities in the area. In recreation to this is the alarming rate of impoverishment of the rural dwellers.

Right from the colonial period especially within the Middle Belt, economic policies aimed at the exploitation of resources of the rural areas radically altered the significant of land as the main economic resource. This involved, an ever-widening commitment of both land labour resources to the production of cash crops but without the corresponding improvement in techniques and land regeneration which led to greater control over land as well as greater mobility and expansion of the labour population.

Secondly, there are manifestations of competition or struggle over kingship or chieftaincy stools. Closely related to this was the emergence of "settlers and non-indigenes dichotomy in some areas within the state proved to this disposition which has affected the political and social fabrics of the state over the years. Tield to this scenario was the issue of farmland. Recently, this development has seriously affected socio-political and economic relation of the parties that involved in this deadly act. The Alago, Gwandara, Koro (MIghli), Kanberi (Kanuri) and Eggon (Ombatse).

Thirdly, there has been virtually a fundamental crisis of legitimacy in the political structure and command of Nasarawa State reason that, those who come into power either through rigging and stolen election results using Police Force or thurgs to manipulate their ways. In the light of this, Kuka Hassan argued that, "illegitimacy cannot but beget illegitimacy". Arising from this action, many contradictory pulls, and strains things happened, which support to be kick against but are considered normal on the hands of collaborators and because Nigeria, Nasarawa State and Southern part itself is so weak, issues of politics and other forms of social relations led to tension and ill motives inturn gave birth to persistent crisis and conflict in the state.

Fourthly, another cancer worm that has been a menace in every community is Nigeria today is the issue of poverty. This is connected with the problem of economic recession/depression the state and the nation at large are witnessing. This, therefore, lead to serious economic crisis which have aggravated unemployment, sense of frustration and abandonment among the people and further created avenue for mischief's maker. In his word, A. M. Adejo argued that;

The poor are vulnerable and are easy targets for cynical manipulation by the rich and desperate politicians. This has clearly manifested in the violent eruptions in Lagos, Kano, Kaduna and Ibadan. It follows that, the nation must design people-friendly poverty alleviation strategies to stem the tide of national crisis.

Fifthly, the summary of the major source of inter-ethnic conflict/crisis is mostly competition and leadership. This can arise from competition over scarce resources such as pasture/grazing areas as is the case among the farmers and the grazing Fulani in the State, source of water supply, lands for farming among other mineral resources.

Sixthly other conflicts are rooted in the lack of access and control to vital socio-economic, cultural and political resources. In other word, the nature of Nigerian polities and Nasarawa State in particular mixed up in this is both polities of ethnicity and minority. The nature of unequal access and unequal treatment received by minority groups by the dominant groups has long stirred suspicious and hatred. According to A. M. Adejo;

The consequences are contagious ethno-political activism and the emergence of ethnic elite willing to mobilize their kith and kin in response to changing political opportunities and resources. And since governments have designed structures of exclusion and privilege which they are not willing to change, so long will violence continue to be used as the final expression of frustration in the oppression.

Seventh sphere of conflict in the State could be that of population growth and expansionist policy to sustain ethnic bound occupations. This is more visible among the land as a factor of production. The migration of Tiv and Fulani who where been known as a farmers and nomadic cattle rearers are source of conflict in the territories of their host neighbours. For instance, in Doma and Awe of recently crisis broke up between the Fulani and Tiv as well as Agatu and also between the Fulani and Tiv in Awe Local Government. Details of this will be analysed the next sub-heads. In these circumstances, mythology and migratory histories as well as descent and inheritance claims are manipulated to assert new ownership in foreign territories and in the process, created atmosphere of crisis and bloody clashes and conflict. It is important to note that the way and manner various people perceive a resource is relevant in conflict generation and management. A resource in this sense may be defined as "an opportunity in the environment that has been identified and appraised by a population of potential users" (Meier 1968, in Mbogunje 1972).

The eight factors of conflict are the perception of disregard for cultural symbols and the "pollution" of cultural practices where an individual of one neighboring or immigrant group threatens the cultural trait of another group, such act could very easier turreted as that of entire group, and consequently, the penalty imposed on the offender according to the hosts, culture is also often interpreted in terms of intergroup rather that interpersonal relations. For example, the destruction of a community's central shrine of a protective god or deity could easily spark off emotions and will result men into conflict.

The most recently of this scenario happened in Keana Town in Keana L.G.A. in the study area when a 'stick' a symbol of a god/deity very close to the Central Masjid in Keana was removed in the night by unknown person(s) who is suspected to be a Muslim(s) nearly created tension between the traditionalists and their Muslims brother in Keana Kingdom but because of quickly intervention of the stakeholders both the traditionalists, and the Muslims and also the government, the matter was urgently brought under control to avert deadly conflicts. However, traditionalists when to their central shrine and caused whoever is responsible for such act.

Having perused through the various factors responsible for persistent ethnic clashes in the study area, we now look at the various manifestations of the crisis in the study area.

MANIFESTATIONS OF INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN NASARAWA SOUTH

The Assassination of the Chief of Azara in Awe L.G.A.

Azara is situated in Awe Local Government Area of Nasarawa State who now held a status of Development Area with its headquarters in Azara is said to be a very peaceful areas before this ungodly incident happened. Ayih confirm that Azara is occupied by many ethnic nationalities amongst them are; Hausa, Jukun, Fulani, Alago, Eggon, Tiv, Doemak and Kwalla among other ethnic groups. The chief of Azara His Royal Highness, Alhaji Dr. Ibrahim Musa of blessed memory until his demised was attacked and assassinated in 2001 on his way to Lafia for official engagement by unknown assailant near Tiv village called Ihaman. Rilwanu confirms that the death of the Chief of Azara truncated the long existing cordial relations among the Tiv neighbours. These neighbors are Fulani, Alago, Jukun, Koro (Mighli), Hausa and Eggon in 2001.

This occurred on the ground that the chief was murder very closed to a Tiv village of Ihuman. Even though the Tiv in that village and its environs denied the said allegation. The ethnic groups namely Fulani, Hausa, Jukun and among others sympathizers joint the crusade against the Tiv neighbours when the Tiv groups who believe in rumor of the contribution of the Alago and Eggon ethnic groups toward their attacked and displacements, attacked Agwatashi and Tudun Adabu a community of Alago and Eggon in that order. Rilwanu further confirms that the Inter-Ethnic war embarked upon was so destructive as many lives and properties were destroyed and precisely the Tiv people displaced. In this development, His Excellency, the Former Governor of Nasarawa State, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, Stake holders of the all ethnics group mentioned above, sympathizers and well-wishers quickly intervene and in no distant time the situation was brought under control where normalcy and peace restored.

The murder of two Tiv students in Azara

Rilwanu argued that, Tiv people competed favorable with the Fulani, Hausa and Jukun in Azara Development Area in Awe local Government Area for scarce resources such as farmland, admission into primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, promotion and appointment in Azara. This brought about hatred, distrust, suspicion, and above all intolerance that was set in between those ethnic groups in Azara. It was as a result of these and the murder of their two children by unknown assailants(s) the Tiv people in Azara and its environs suspected, accused and started fishing their neighbours after the leaders of the Tiv

took the matter before the Chief of Azara and no proper action were taken into consideration against the suspect.

Suemo argued that the Tiv people as cited by J. O. Aper that efforts were all made to get the support of Chief of Azara to brought the suspect to book that the Chief was ambushed and was murder near the Tiv village of Ihuman in his way to Lafia for official engagement. Even though the murderers were not caught and investigation that followed, many Tiv's people suspected to be the connivers of the incident were arrested because the scene of the incident is very closed to the Tiv settlement.

2012 Alago and Eggon (Ombatse) Conflict.

The Alago people found themselves randomly encapsulated by a number of other nationalities. Among the notable ones that have been peaceful or either come to see themselves as playmates or neighbor brothers of monumental honor and recognition are the Eggons. The relations between them go beyond playmates but though inter-marriages among others. This is an evidence of a long standing of interactions among the two groups. However, the relationship deteriorated in the recent times precisely in 2012 and 2013. This was as a result of land disputes identify as immediate causes of the mayhem among them. The major disagreement was the refusal of the Eggons who were farming at the padama land, a (royal crown land) which was giving to them (their parents) by the Paramount ruler of Assakio Chiefdom right from the time immemorial even before the present ruler. Eggons over the years, right from the time have being been paying tributes to the all successive Osakyos but this time around refused to pay the said tributes to the paramount ruler for farming on the Royal Crown Land. In reaction to this, the paramount ruler His Royal Highness Osula Inarigu ordered that any Eggon, Alago, Kwalla among others who refused to pay the said tributes as enshrine in the tradition of the land should no step inside that fadama land for any business without his approval. However, the ordered was violated by some portion of Eggon trooping in numbers to the crown land for farming.

In receiving signal or information violating the order, the Osakyo sent his palace executives to go and investigate whether the information received is true or not. On reaching the crown land, it was discovered that the Eggon farmers were really farming on the land without the clear permission from the paramount ruler and attempt made by the people Osakyo sent to stop them failed and were at same time thoroughly beaten. However, tension mounted and instantly, the security men, Government and stakeholders quickly intervene to avert some ugly consequences through round table discussion and the two parties agreed to live harmoniously with themselves.

Consequently, upon the hidden agenda by the Eggon, organized their youths "the so-called Ombatse group" attacked the Alago people of Assakio on the early hour of Friday 1st June, 2012, killed and displaced people and in addition destroyed, burnt shops, houses even Odu Shrine among others up to on Monday 4th June, 2012 without anybody stopping them even the government them has no taking serious measures on political ground.

In a similar development, and in another violence that was embarked by the Eggon, Militia (Ombatse) on the $13^{th} - 16^{th}$, 2013 on Alago people of Odobu and Obi, the headquarters of Obi L.G.A. was also disastrous. Reason been that, the Eggon Ombatse youths were caught alone Obi – Assakio in a J. 5 bus suspected to carried along with them some sophisticated

weapons heading toward the direction to Obi and at the process of interrogating them where they were heading to with these arms, one among them ran into the bush and the rest were handed over to the Police while there bus was burnt down by Alago boys in town Obi. While the Eggon Ombatse youths on receiving this information decided to mounted road block at Tudun Adabu, an Eggon community in Obi L.G.A. and anybody suspected to be an Alago people are removed and taking to their hide out demanding their boys at the security hands released before they will also release the ones captured at the road blocked at Tudun Adabu. At the process, the paramount ruler of Obi His Royal Highness Ogiri Dangiwa Aliyu Orume after receiving the news quickly intervened and released their boys from the security men to favour the released of the Alago people at their custody. He further promised to pay the J. 5 bus burnt in no distant time so as to bring the matter to an end which all parties agreed during the peace accord. But typical of aggression and hidden agenda by the some Eggon militia Ombatse, on the early hour of Friday the 13th September, 2013, the Eggon Ombatse, militia attacked, killed and burnt houses, shops among others in Odobo and Obi town and furthers extended the same attacked on Alago people of Assakio out of anger for the 3rd term and property worth Millions of Naira destroyed by them before the security men were sent to brought the situation under control.

2013 Eggon (Ombatse) and Koro (Mighili) Conflict.

The peaceful co-existence between the Eggon and Koro for very long time has got broken in 2013. The incident that occurred shortly after the crisis that engulfed the Assakio chiefdom between the Alago people of Assakio and the Eggon nation (Ombatse) was as a result of stolen motor-cycle which involved a Koro (Mighili) boys and Eggon boys. The owner of motor-cycle later discovered his stolen machine from an Eggon boy who participated on the act. The said person further made mention of one Koro (Mighili) person who together the moter-cycle was stolen. The Eggon (Ombatse) Youths felt that the Koro (Mighili) person that was involved and mentioned by their boy should be brought to book and instead of them to report to the security men, the Police or the Civil Defense, they later gang themselves and moved toward the hidden place where the Koro (Mighili) boys use to gathered at Gwandanye and at the process to enforced on the suspected person mentioned by the Eggon boy, led to the death of one of the Eggon (Ombatse).

On the announcement of this death, all Eggon Ombatse converged at Agyaragu a side dominated by Eggon then matched toward the Gwandanye attacked and killed even the innocent ones in addition to their property that was destroyed not just that, the palace of the Zhe (Mighili), the paramount ruler of the Koro people was reduced to ashes. However, the government and major stakeholders from both ethnic groups quickly intervened and normalcy/peace restored back and commission of the inquiry was put in place by the government to investigate the crisis that engulfed the area.

2013 Eggon/Gwandara Crisis in Kwandere and Deddere

By 2013 socio-political and economic relations of the Gwandara of Kwandare with Eggon became soared when the Eggon (Ombatse) attacked, killed and burnt some houses, including that of their traditional ruler "the Sangeri of kwandere". From the available information gathered from the two parties was that, the Eggon are accusing Kwandare community of harboring Fulanis, the based they used to attack them was their reasoning/anger to attack Kwandare. While the Gwandara (Kwandare community) denounced harboring of Fulanis.

That the Fulanis ran to Kwandare for the sake of their lives just like the Eggons did in other places for the safety of their lives. However, they further stated that the Eggon (Ombatse) group has their hidden agenda for attacking them and not the presence of Fulanis in their community. In a related development, the same attacked was also carried out in Gwandara people of Deddere in Obi L.G.A. The reason here was over farmland which both the parties claimed. The information at hand was that, the Eggon met the Gwandara in the farm trying to stopped them from farming and at the process one among the Gwandaras they met at the scene was killed by the Eggon youth (Ombatse) and consequently, according to the information gathered, the Eggon Ombatse mobilized themselves in mass numbers penetrating inside the town (Deddere community) killed and destroyed houses and shops including the Palace of their paramount ruler "the Sangeri of Denddere". The people were completely deserted as well as displaced.

In the similar manner, attacked was also carried on the Fulani people living in a village or a community call Barkin-Abdullahi popular know and called B.A.D. reason from the information at my own disposal was transferred of aggression/anger by the Eggon Ombatse who were severely beaten and killed by some Fulanis elsewhere. The Fulanis who were in B.A.D. right from the time immemorial even before some of these youths were born have been slaughtered, injured to death. There thatched houses, cows and rest of their properties ransacked by the Eggon militia Ombatse group.

2014 Agatu/Tiv and Fulani Conflict in Doma L.G.A.

In a similar development, such issue also happened between the Tiv, Agatu and Fulani in Rukubi and Agbashi in Ekye development Area in Doma Local Government of Nasarawa Sate in 2014. The problem that sparked off the crisis between the Fulani and Tiv/Agatu was as a result of crops damage.

From the available information gathered from the two ethnics groups was lack of tolerance among other. It was confirmed that the Fulani first damaged the farm produce belonging to the people. This group of Fulani armed herders damaged crops intentionally, mostly at night, and attacked any farmers who tried to resist them. These immature young pastoralists beat and most atimes killed the farmers in the process.

Ezekiel Obuje, confirmed this that the conflict that took place between Agatu and Fulani in Agbashi was as a result of this. The Fulani boys flocked cows into the already harvested Guinea corn in the farm awaiting conveyance to the house and when the children in the farmer trying to or prevent them from entry the farm, this young pastoralist Fulani beat them and macheted the senior among the children in the farm and before he was rushed to the hospital but died in the process. The problem that arose is how to identify them since they quickly moved away from the scene as they committed this atrocity and the other innocent cattle rearers become the victim of circumstances by the aggrieved farmers and the entire people of Agbashi community who attacked all Fulanis they came across. It is due to this unholy relation that triggered the crisis between the Agatu in Agbashi and the Fulanis in the area before peace was finally restored back with the intervention of the government and stakeholders from the both sides.

2015 Tiv and Fulani Conflict in Awe L.G.A.

Another dimension of the ethnic clashes in the zone was in 2015 between the Tiv and the Fulani in Tunga Community of Awe Local Government Area was the issue of crop damage as a result of grazing by the Fulani pastoralists. From the information gathered from both sides Tiv and Fulani, it was evidently that it is one of the immediate causes of the conflict between the two parties was the crop damaged by the cows of the Fulanis. This damage attracted quick reaction by the Tiv people.

Ibrahim Maharbi from Kyekura, a community very close to the scene of the crisis confirms that, the Tiv reported the incident to the Fulani elder for settlement but there were no tangible efforts made by the Fulani's elders and the Tiv people have no choice than to attacked and killed one cow that belong to the pastoral Fulani and the Fulani in turn reacted by killing one of the Tiv people. The Tiv people in anger retaliated and killed another Fulani. It is as a result of this backdrop that war escalated between the Tiv and the Fulani in the area leading to lives and properties destroyed by the both sides.

However, the devastating effect of this crisis is more pronounced on the Tiv people who lost all their farmer products, houses and at the same time displaced.

It is as a result of this ugly situation that the government of Nasarawa state, the traditional rulers in Awe Local Government and beyond, the stake holders from the both parties and beyond intervened to see that the matter was brought to a bearable minimum.

Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Post Crisis Period in the area

It was noted that, the ethnic nationalities that occupied the southern part of the state or the study area namely; Alago, Eggon, Fulani, Gwandara, Tiv, Agatu among others that participated in the crisis in 2001, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 has been interacted with each other peacefully before the crisis despite some hitches/skirmishes among other. It is also confirming that the good relations that existed before the conflict deteriorated to the extent that most of the ethnic's groups in the area found it difficult to live and interact with each other until the recent times. It was also gathered that, the timely intervention by Governor Abdullahi Adamu in 2001 after the murder of the Chief of Azara and the conflict that took place in 2012 and 2013 between the Alago/Fulani/Gwandara/Koro Mighili and the Eggon (Ombatse) by Governor Umar Tanko Al-Makura and other sympathizers/well wishers contributed heavily in normalization of the socio-economic and political activities in the area. Indeed, this relationship that has been restored betweens these ethnics group that clashes before, seriously improved booming in the area of agriculture, commercial activities, social relations such as inter marriages, birthday visit among other things.

The Impact of the Conflict in the study Area.

The impacts of the conflict in the area have been highly devastated for the both ethnics groups that involved in the crisis. Since 2001, 2012 2013, 2014 and 2015 the conflict claimed several lives and properties destroyed. The people are still dying as a result of shock and other pains arising from death of their relations and property destroyed. Another dimension of this impact was the destruction of houses, shops, vehicles. Some of the victims of these crises up to now have not regained their losses and could not even afford to pay their children school fees and hospital charges and most of them turn to be beggars on the streets. Several

people were lynched, slaughtered like goats and sheep. The area was further marked and identify on the social map of Nigeria as a crisis zone that will hardly attract future commercial men and women. The menace if not properly checked by the government will seriously affected the caliber of staff and students in the areas considering the presence of the Tertiary Institutions in the area.

These are; Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia, School of Nursing and Midwifery and College of Agriculture Lafia, others include; Federal Ministries, Parastatal/Agencies and Financial Institutions. It was confirmed that both students and staff in College of Agriculture, Nasarawa State Polytechnic and the Federal University Lafia ran away for their lives when an attacked was launched on Kwandere a community very close to Nasarawa State Polytechnic and College of Agriculture Lafia. As a result of this attacked many parents relocate their children/wards from the two Institutions mentioned. Closely related to this, the primary and secondary schools in the affected area were virtually closed down during the mayhem for more than three, four or five months and even a year. Some parent has to change their pupils' schools to enable them continues their studies.

The conflict has displaced so many people leading to the creation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) centre at Shabu, Kwandere, Dunama Primary Schools Lafia. Others to their various relations houses in Lafia town, their ethnic group towns and village as refugee camps.

The alarming impact of the crisis was the persistent robbery in the affected areas and beyond. They took the advantage of the arms and ammunitions at their own disposal to blocked road intimidating people and do away with their monies and any resistant from the victims was death penalty. In another development, the Assakio areas both the Alago, Koro and the Eggon who were seriously farming yams could not afford to produce yams because of the crisis. The yam was so scarce and available ones is not easy to buy due to the limited ones found in the market. The conflict between the Alago and Eggon in Assakio Chiefdom seriously affected the Assakio booming market as a result of the establishment of new market in Ashige District Market at Ashagwa. The Eggon further ordered all their people to bring all their farms products and other businesses to Ashagwa market instead of Assakio market they usually attended. Despite the unification of the ethnics group in these crises, their relationship is still occasioned by the suspicious, fear, distrust and hatred. However, efforts are seriously making by their traditional rulers, stakeholders, youths, women among others for forgiveness among themselves.

To forestall or ameliorate future currencies of this mayhem among the various ethnic nationalities mentioned above, will request both short- and long-term approaches:

Conflict Management Resolution/The way forward.

It was gathered that the violence that erupted in the areas among the various ethnic's groups discussed above is mostly traceable to the failure of leaders and the government and its institutions. On the part of the leaders, there was no serious effort made in the area of socioeconomic and political welfare, and the problem of inequality among the masses. All that is interested of the leaders was to buy arms and ammunitions for the youths to engage in the restiveness. And on the part of government failure to quickly intervention or taking side against other groups for political or religious reasons.

- (i) As a matter of urgency, the Nasarawa State Government should implement in total the recommendations/decisions of the commission of enquiry to investigate the crisis that engulfed the area in 2012 and 2013 in Assakio, Agyargu/Gwandenye, Kwandere B. A. D., Ana among others affected communities and anybody who have hand in the crisis with their sponsors should be brought to book. This is to serve as deterrence to others.
- (ii) Reconciliation, Arbitration and Reconstruction: The Government should as a matter of urgency sworn in a reconciliation committee to reconcile the aggressive parties with a view to reconstruct all the damages done at various places in order to reduce some pains in the part of the victims. A non-partisan third party supported by the Nasarawa State Government and Federal Government to convene a series of peace talks among the stakeholders, the youths of the affected communities. The term of reference of the committee should be on problem resolution rather than apportioning blames on who is wrong on right. They should further encourage the disputed groups to drop their anger/hard positions and ready to address the issue holistically. The venue of the peace talks should be move away from parties' communities that were involved in the crisis. By so doing by the mediators, the matters could be natural solved through concessions from the affected parties and permanent peace could be anticipated.
- (iii) Youth Empowerment/Employment: As a way of sustaining and consolidate parties, the government should quickly address the issue of youth empowerment/employment opportunities on the warring communities and beyond. Because youth are the vanguard of violence been used in every societies today. Some of them were not afraid of being killed since he or she is jobless. Until these youths are fully employed, problems would likely to resurface in the area. (God forbid).
- (iv) The Fulani leadership (Ardo) of that community/The Local Government leadership of the Miyetti Allah cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) should urgently inform, the traditional rulers/leaders of that community, law enforcement agencies on the arrival of new Fulanis in that particular community so as to checkmate the trouble ones.
- (v) The need for Government, Traditional Rulers, Elites, cooperate bodies, Individual groups and Peace ambassadors to persistently organize peace conflict management training workshops, conferences and symposiums all the time for the various youth movement, students of tertiary and secondary schools in the affected communities or areas and beyond so that some of them could not develop into a generation of avengers. This will also go a very long way to maintain peace in area.
- (vi) The Religious Leaders should also be involved in peace keeping: This must be done through preaching in our various Churches and Mosques telling their followers the implications of their actions or any sins or crime committed against your neighbours. This is because both Christian and the Moslems forbidden crime against humanity and at the end everyone will account for their actions. Reason being that most of these youths that mostly involved in this deadly and ungodly act are neither Christians nor Moslem and at the end return back to their various places of worships. This will go a very long way to reduce such menaces in our various society.

- (vii) The security agents must also live up to expectation and should never compromise their work at the detriment of people live in either collecting money to release arms/ammunitions to the particular side on the grand of religious or affiliated ethnic nationalities so that people should not take advantage of that in taking the law into their hands. The paper further advise government to strengthen and restructure the various security agencies where necessary precisely in the area of intelligence gathering and necessary training at home and abroad. This is because intelligence report in Nigerian security system is almost going comatose (zero level) while the militia, criminal and youth restiveness almost taking the day. The paper further discourages the fire bridged style of handling crisis in the affected areas.
- (viii) The Government must almost imbed the spirit of good Governance. A government that commits themselves to provide justice and equality, fighting corruption and illiteracy which is more pronounced in the area should provide for the welfare of the people so that youth who were always use should continue to be a willing tool in the hands of mischief makers to earn their living. In a similar development, government should give more priority to sustainable development and more prevention tactics to ameliorate or prevent conflict which is caused by economic depression and poverty. In this regard government most create sound infrastructural development programmes that will not only pave way for economic growth and development, but shall creates employment opportunities for the teaming youths.
- (ix) Poverty eradication programme should be introduce by the government. The government need to come out with some sound programme such as skill acquisition programmes for the youths through training in various areas of endeavors so that after the training, the trainers could be engaged in the one business or the other. The government and financial institutions can also give soft loan through macro finance banks to the victims of such crisis and the Youths who were always use to fight against their neighbours in business activities to divert their attention for any plans to retaliate.
- (x) The need for cattle Ranches for Fulanis. The bulk of all these crises enumerated above are faced with the issues of crop damages in the farm by the Fulanis. The Government should liaise through the Nasarawa State House of Assembly to make a law that should favour the issue of Ranches by the Fulanis to avoid frequent crisis between the farmers and the pastoralists. Just like farmers in the areas and beyond have their farmland located in a particular place so that Fulanis should follow suit. This will go a long way to checkmates all these daily troubles between the pastoralist and the Agriculturalists in no distance time.
- (xi) The Government needs to encourage and put a committee of dialogue and negotiation between the affected groups by appointing representatives of each ethnic's groups in the conflict and beyond to frequently check the access of their people and report back immediately to the central committee held by a Chairman or the Security agents so that the situation can be resolve before it go out of hands. This is also another means of resolving disputes and differences between them.

CONCLUSION

The problem emanating from the inter-ethnic relations and crisis in contemporary Nigeria today has come to attract immense interest, in that, it is closely related to the question of national unity and cohesion so that, in the event of frequent crisis of this magnitude, the whole sense of the socio-economic and political relations and the Nigeria state will be clearly defeated. This dangerous reinforces divisions and persistent tensions and offer violent mutual interest and experiences of peaceful co-existence is always tantamount to suicide and therefore detrimental must be stopped. Following this, there are other forces of social interaction/integration that can renew the existed relation, this can be done through interethnic marriages, cultural festivals among others. In the interim, the paper has actually deciphered the detailed forces that account for emergence of the various inter-ethnic violence in the study area and Nigeria state at large.

Inter-ethnic conflicts in Nigeria defy resolutions and seem unending because they are intractable conflicts which are sustained largely because they serve the socio-economic and political interest of the ruling elites or political leaders in other to achieve their political ambitions under the mask of ethnicity. Behind these obsession and love for ethnic values and dogma shown by the leaders lies the domination of ethnic values by the political leader's selfish economic and political beliefs. Inter – ethnic relations identities in themselves do not create conflicts; it is the politicization of these identities. Such identities become problematic when access to opportunities in the political system in the political system in terms of power and resources are dependent on membership of a particular ethnic group, as well as when the state is relatively weak in terms of its capacity to protect its citizens and provide for their basic needs. The Nasarawa State and Southern Zone experience as it relates to ethnic conflicts has become a major phenomenon as socio-economic and political activities are defined along ethno-religious basis.

It is my sincerely hoped that, the government, individual, elites, the youths, traditional rulers among others can adequately give their attention to some of the recommendations raised above so that, the study areas, Nasarawa State and Nigeria at large can forge ahead in the area of socio-economic and political development.

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