

TOWARDS EXPLORING INDIGENES/SETTLERS CRISIS IN SOUTHERN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

Ekanem, Ekanem Asukwo (Ph.D), Celestine Okafor

Department of Political Science Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

Department of Political Science Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: This paper on, “Towards Exploring Indigenes/Settlers Crisis in Southern Taraba State, Nigeria” aimed at analyzing the factors that trigger divides among people in Southern Taraba State, Nigeria. The study relied on secondary sources of data collection (books, journal articles, monographs, internet materials among others) which was analyzed qualitatively. It also used Marxist conflict theory, as its framework of analysis. Again, findings reveal that economic, religious and political factors trigger the indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State. The crisis has impacted negatively on lives, property as well as social co-existence among the people. Government has made use of both hard and soft measures in addressing the indigenes/settlers crisis in the Southern Taraba State. Regrettably, none of the measures has been able to abate the indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State. The paper, therefore, suggests the replacement of certificates of origin with certificate of citizenship, strengthening of Nigeria Police Force, as well as employment opportunities for the teaming youths as panacea for the indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Indigenes, settlers, crisis, economy, politics, religion, Southern Taraba, Nigeria security.

I. INTRODUCTION

Taraba State is one of the 36 states that constitute the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The state was created out of the defunct Gongola State by General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd) on 27th August 1991. In terms of its geographical location, Taraba State is bounded on the west by Plateau and Benue States, on the east by Adamawa State and Republic of Cameroun, on the north by Bauchi and Gombe States. The state is nicknamed “nature gift” due to abundant natural resources that are abundant in it. According to Nigeria Conflict Security Analysis Network (NCSAN) (2015):

The agrarian nature and rich alluvial soil found in most parts of the state makes Taraba conducive for cultivating all types of food and cash crops; such as cassava, yams, potatoes, cocoyam, rice, maize, coffee, tea and cocoa. The state has vast lush grassland that supports cattle grazing, while the various rivers/lakes hold great potential for development of fisheries (p.10).

Due to its natural endowment, especially the central and southern part of the state, it becomes an attractive zone to the migrating herdsmen and pastoralists. It also serves as an economic gateway to southern Nigeria from the northeast, in the area of transportation of cattle and other products to the south. Thus, being a fertile land and a gateway, Taraba State, (especially Southern Taraba) is now a hotspot for ethno-religious crisis among various groups of people living in it. Nwanegbo, Odigbo and Ochanja (2014) hinted that:

The crisis led to massive human and material destruction. Till date, the numbers of casualties have not been ascertained; especially when evidences on ground surpass the number of people reported to have been killed. The crisis dislocated many families, shut down businesses and property worth millions were destroyed. And even more disturbing fact, is that residency in Wukari town is now patterned along religious divide. While the Christian/traditionalist Jukuns occupy the part of the town (regarded as the main Jukun land), the Jukun Muslim/Hausa settlers occupy the other parts (regarded as settlers’ quarters) (p.9).

Furthermore, Taraba State has 16 local government areas. The 2006 National Population Census maintained that the state has 2,300,736 (two million, three hundred thousand, seven hundred and thirty six) people. Even though, religion was not part of the census count, Taraba State has about 55% Christians, 32% Muslims 12% African Traditional Religion adherents as well as 1% self acclaimed free thinkers (Nigerian Conflict Security Analysts Network, 2015). Though, this analysis is highly arguably, the fact remains that Christians are found in Northern, Central and Southern Taraba. Even though, Muslims are also found in the

three senatorial districts, their numbers are marginally smaller than that of Christians. This assertion has been manifested in gubernatorial elections conducted in the state since 1999. For instance, Jolly Nyame, a Cleric of United Methodist Church and an indigene of Zing Local Government Area, ruled the state from 29th May 1999 to 29th May 2007, under the platform of Peoples' Democratic Party. Danbaba Danfulani Suntai, a Christian and an indigene of Bali Local Government Area, also ruled the state from 29th May 2007 to 29th May 2015, under the platform of Peoples' Democratic Party. In the same vein, the current Governor, Darius Dickson Ishaku, also Christian an indigene of Takum Local Government Area, assumed power on 29th May 2015 under the platform of Peoples' Democratic Party. Considering this, Nigeria Conflict Security Analysis Network (2015) declared that:

The reality of mutual distrust between Christians and Muslims in Taraba State gubernatorial elections since 1999 has always been inference by religious affiliation in the state. As such, voting patterns in 1999, 2007 and 2015 have all been dictated by religion and the contestation of political power between Christians and Muslims. Since Taraba is a Christian majority state, Christians have always been elected governors since the period 1999-2015 (p.11).

The Southern Taraba in particular that comprises 7 local government areas; Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Takum and Wukari has many ethnic groups. The ethnic groups include Jukuns Tivs, Kutebs, Hausa among others. The locals, especially Jukuns, Kutebs and Tivs are the Christians while the Hausas settlers are the Muslims. The ethno-religious division among the people of Southern Taraba has brought a lot of disharmony among the people. Nwanegbo, et al (2014) opined that:

...for the Christians Jukuns and the traditionalists, the Jukuns/Hausa Muslims are settlers and should be prevented from playing central role in the affairs of the Jukuns and/or partaking in opportunities meant for the Jukuns. Conversely, Jukun Muslims or those with Hausa blood (regarded by the Christian/Traditionalist Jukuns as Hausa people) have equally, strong claim to the Jukun society as land of their parental or maternal ancestry...(p.9).

Equally important is the fact that, the ethno-religious crisis in the Southern Taraba that occurred in 1959, 1980, 1990, 1974, 1991, 1992, 2001, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2019 to mention but few between Jukun and Tivs, Kutebs and Hausa, among others could be explained within the context of many issues. Osaghae and Suberu (2005) identified poverty and unemployment as factors that trigger conflict in Southern Taraba. In their view, Osaghae and Suberu (2003) opined that:

This ethnicization and militarization of Nigerian youth... has been promoted significantly by: widespread socio-economic frustration and alienation (including relatively high levels of youth unemployment); the legacy of state repression and impunity since 1984, and the sheer failure of inability of the national police and security agencies to fulfill their basic obligation to maintain law and order or protect lives and property (p.28).

International Crisis Group (2012) shifted the blame to the colonial authorities. "The British colonial authorities were the first to articulate a formal distinction between indigenous and non indigenous communities... They enforced a policy of rigid residential segregation between natives and settlers – as evidenced by the so called Sabon Gari" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p.3).

The major questions that require immediate answers are:

- (i) Which theoretical framework can adequately explained the indigenes/settler crisis in Southern Taraba State?
- (ii) How does economic factors foster indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State?
- (iii) Has religion triggered indigene/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State
- (iv) What role has politics play in igniting the indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State?
- (v) What are the impacts of indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State
- (vi) How does Nigerian government manage indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State.

Apart from the Introduction, the first part of this paper explained the Marxist conflict theory, while the second part highlights economic factors that fosters indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State. The third section analyses religious factors that triggered indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State while the fourth part explains political domination that ignites indigenes/settler crisis in Southern Taraba State. The impacts of the indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba State, constitutes the fifth part, while the management of indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba is six the part. The Concluding Remarks constitutes the seventh and the last part before the References of this study.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – MARXIST'S CONFLICT THEORY

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was the first proponent who identified materialism as the foundation of social conflict in every human society. In the Marxian world, there are two basic structures of every society. The first structure is the "base" (substructure) and the second structure is the "non base" (superstructure). The

substructure of every human society is the economy while the superstructure comprises politics, law, religion, culture and moral. Marx believed that “reason or spirit” could not be the moving forces in history, but that those factors which determine political and social changes should be brought in line with “material conditions.” By material conditions, he meant the forces of production and distribution of wealth (Mukhi, 2007, p. 173).

According to Marx, it is the substructure that controls the superstructure, hence, declared that:

in the social production which men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will. These relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of the society, which is the real foundation on top of which arises a legal and political superstructure to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness (cited in Ritzer, 2012, p.65).

Marx regarded the mode of production as the economic base of every human society and it is the foundation of social conflict. The mode of production consists of forces of production (land, labour and capital) and the social relations of production which is made up of the intimate relationship that man enters into with one another for the purpose of producing goods and services. Unlike the Hegelian’s philosophy, that centred human existence on idea, the Marxist’s philosophy maintained that man and his history are anchored on materials. Marx further believed that reason or spirit could not be the moving force in the history; rather those factors which determine political and social changes should be brought in line with the material conditions. He also opined that religion, or spirit did not change the course of history, but economic factors only change history. In addition, cultural life of a nation depends on its economic life, social justices (law), love, charity and humanity are all interlinked with the forces of production. Indeed, it is not the consciousness of men that determine their social existence, but on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness (Mukhi, 2007). Furthermore, the material condition of man leads to class struggle between those that have (bourgeoisie) and those that have not (proletariat). Citing Marx, Bhatia (2003) restated that:

The history of all existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on interrupted, now hidden, now open fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending class (p.291).

Marx further observed that conflict arises between two opposing classes – bourgeoisie and proletariat, when the later become aware of their exploitation. Murkherjee and Ramaswamy (2003) also confirmed that:

In every society, there are two classes, the rich and the poor, one that owned the means of production and the other that sold its labour. During different historical phases, these two classes were known by different names and enjoyed different legal status and privileges, but one thing was common, that in the course of all these phases, their relationship had been one of exploitation and domination.

Linking indigenes/settlers crisis in Nigeria generally or Southern Taraba in particular to the Marxist’s Conflict Theory, one will appreciate the fact that the crisis focuses on the economy. The issue of indigene and non indigene is largely attached to land ownership. As Nwanegbo et al (2014) confirmed that, “between October 2001 and January 2002, land dispute between the Tivs and Jukuns culminated into a total breakdown of law and order. The Jukuns declared their Tiv neighbours are settlers hence are not entitled to any land in Jukun communities” (p.13). Again, the Jukuns see themselves as indigenes (bourgeoisie) who owns the land and everything in it, while the Hausa-Fulani who are largely Muslim are settlers (proletariat) hence do not merit to inherit anything. NCSAN (2015) revealed in its findings on Wukari Crisis (Southern Taraba) that:

Attacks are conducted by Hausa-Fulani Muslims’ herdsmen who are well organized and well armed, with a specific goal, to mainly displaced indigenous Christian farmers and occupy their land, their houses and their farms. Farm produce from Christian farms and fields are harvested and turned into animal feed. Sometimes, these actions are carried out by Hausa-Fulani Muslim...(p.66).

Similarly, another economic dimension of indigenes/settlers crisis is poverty. According to Alubo (2006), issue of poverty and inequality has made young unemployed men and women vulnerable to the dictates and manipulations of politicians. Thus, the high incidence of state and politically motivated assassinations, thuggery and violent ethnic and communal clashes can be traced alongside with various social and economic dislocations, which people have experienced under the new socio-economic and political dispensation. Most fighters that engaged in Wukari crisis were hired and adequately paid for. Those that lost their lives, their families were compensated, while the injured were treated by the community. This indicates the level of poverty that is prevailing in Nigerian society. Therefore, government must do something to curtail hardship in the land.

III. ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT FOSTER INDIGENES/SETTLERS CRISIS SOUTHERN TARABA

Unarguably, economy is one of the factors that foster indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba. The general economic down turn in the country coupled with the environmental degradation are factors that affect every segment of Nigerian society. As International Crisis Group (2010) noted, “environmental, demographic

and economic factors also underlie these conflicts” (p.22). It is no longer a hidden fact that the climate change has led to Sahelian drought with negative implications for the entire Lake Chad region. Indeed, desertification has diminished grazing lands, ruined pastoral livelihoods, displaced many from far North, and even from neighbouring countries such as Chad and Niger including Senegal and Cameroun. This displacement from the desert prone area to the grassland, especially the Middle Belt triggers constant clashes between farmers and herdsmen (International Crisis Group, 2010). Added to this, John (1981) maintained that:

Currently, northern Nigeria is estimated to be going through extreme problems of environmental degradation...deforestation and low rainfall. It is a region that lies on the edge of Sahara desert, with a scanty savannah belt, suffering from desert encroachment, shortage of water and soil erosion. In contrast, however, Taraba State shares the environmental features of the Middle Belt Region and Southern Nigeria; it has plenty of vegetation, with abundant rainfall and arable land for cultivation (p.187).

Based on the above, the public opinion here in the Northern Nigeria as directed by their governments’ policy makers, media houses; including some international organizations suggest that the violent conflict in Taraba State is due to environmental degradation, migration and contestation over grazing and farming fields in the state (NCSAN, 2015, p.50). In an exclusive interview with a senior member of Muslim Council, Taraba State (name withheld) on 16th June, 2015, the interviewee maintained that “anyone who tells you that the conflict in Taraba state is between Christians and Muslims is lying. This conflict is not religion, rather it is about land. It is about people refusing to allow others to come into their land and settle” (cited in NCSAN, 2015, p.51).

Furthermore, even though the environmental degradation could be seen as a key factor in Southern Taraba crisis, the rate of poverty that is existing in this part of the country fosters constant conflict between the herdsmen and the farmers. Though it is established fact that herdsmen destroy farms, farmers also steal cows. It should be recalled that in July, 2008, the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Chukwuma Soludo lamented that, “persistently high levels of poverty in the country had become “a northern phenomenon” (cited in International Crisis Group, 2010, p.10). The people of Taraba State are mostly farmers and the state has no industry. Indeed, there is high dependence on government as the sole source of largesse and dispense of patronage. This alone intensifies conflicts between various ethnic and religious groups for the control of public offices; which are generally scare. Gur (1970) argued further that, “people become dissatisfied if they feel that they have less than they should and could have, ... overtime, such dissatisfaction leads to frustration and then rebellion (cited in Ogbosor, 2016, p.15). Council on Foreign Relations (2014) also decried that:

Nigeria’s economy is growing but the standard of living is falling. Nigeria population is categorized as living under the poverty level with an estimate of 73 percent poverty rate in the rural area... Poverty affects more than half of Nigeria’s population, despite the abundant oil wealth, a malaise. ICG(2006) referred as “want in the midst of plenty” (cited in Ogbosor, 2016, p.13)

Therefore, the present “ethnic and religious unrest and the Boko Haram’s insurgency in Nigeria are the manifestations of the falling standard of living...”(Council on Foreign Relations, 2014, cited in Ogbosor, 2016, p.4).It should be recalled that, Tony Blair, the former British Prime Minister equally opined that, “the dragon’s teeth of terrorism are planted in the fertile soil...of poverty and deprivation” (cited in Krueger, 2007, p.13). In the same vein, James Woltensohn, the former President of the World Bank also said that, “the war on terrorism will not be won until we have to grips with the problem of poverty... the source of discontent” (cited in Krueger, 2007, p.12).

Furthermore, the table below explains the rate of poverty in the North Eastern Nigeria, which Taraba State is part of it.

Table 1: Poverty Profile in Nigeria by Regions (1980-2004)

S/N	Regions	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
1	South South	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.2	35.1
2	South East	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.7
3	South West	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0
4	North Central	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.7	67.0
5	North East	35.6	54.9	54.0	70.0	72.2
6	North West	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.2	71.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2011).

The above figure shows that poverty affects North East and North West zones of Nigeria more than any other zone of Nigeria. For instance, in 2004, the North East poverty level rose to 72.2% as compared to South East with only 26.7 percent. Taraba is one of the states in North East, and the level of poverty here is high. The actors (perpetrators) also benefit from the crime. This prompts Alfred (2014) to lament that:

anytime there is a crisis, looting of business and other lucrative targets are norm...and in ethno-religious crisis, these lootings are well organized because the proceeds of the looting are use to finance the next crisis. Even when the looting was not organized, individual fighter are aware that part of the loots and the booties of a particular crisis must be kept... (p.26).

IV. RELIGIOUS FACTORS THAT TRIGGERED INDIGENES/SETTLERS CRISIS IN SOUTHERN TARABA CRISIS

Though the general assumption in Taraba State is that, Christians are more than Muslim, despite this, Muslims are dominating the entire state. The history of their domination could be dated back to 19th century (1804-1856) when Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) waged a Jihad (holy war) against non Muslim and conquered the former Hausa States, including the entire northern bank of the River Benue (Nupe, Nassarawa, Bauchi and Zaria emirates) including the non Muslim areas of Southern Kaduna (Young, 1966). Worthy to note is the fact that Kwararafa Kingdom was in existence before the Jihad, hence a keen resistance between the indigenes who inhabited the kingdom, against the Muslim invaders. Abdulkadir (2011) posited that in 1854, the Aku of Wukari (Head of Kwararafa Kingdom) paid tributes that included 33 to 40 slaves to the ruler of Muri. Aku also gave corn, horses, slaves, cloths and many other things to the Emir of Bauchi, for the purpose of allowing his subjects to maintain their traditional religious belief.

Similarly, it should also be recalled that the Emir of Muri, Burba dan Hamman (1869-1873) waged though unsuccessful military campaigns in 1860 and 1870 against the indigenous people of Southern Taraba, Tiv and Jukun who rejected Islam in favour of Christianity. The colonial administration also favoured Islam at the expense of Christianity. However, in line with the Dan Fodio legacies, the Emir in the Northern Nigeria, adopted political and diplomatic negotiations with the British to maintain Islamic institutions, and the right of Muslims (either Hausa-Fulani Muslims or indigenous Muslim) to rule over traditional societies in most places of Northern Nigeria that do not have Muslim as majority.

All these affirm, Nnoli (1978) assertion that “the political salient identities evolved within the context of the contemporary Nigerian state, and some of the conflicts that have ensued in the country have remote origins in the patterns of pre-colonial migration, conquest and control” (cited in Osaghae &Suberu, 2005, p.15). Arguably, colonialism set the stage for the explosion of violent religious conflict not only in Taraba State, but the entire Northern Nigeria generally. Ethno-religious crises, such as Kafanchan-Kaduna crises in 1987 and 1999, Zangon-Kataf riot of 1992, Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 and 2000, the Kaduna Sharia riot of 2000, including Jos riot of 2000 have their roots in colonial legacies. Though colonial legacy is a factor for tense relationship between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, the diverse attitudes of the followers of these two religions do not promote national unity. International Crisis Group (2010) decried that:

Some Christian preachers openly portray Islam in a negative light. This includes detailed refutation of the Quran and denigration of specific practices. Some Muslims have replied in kind, for example, through detailed analysis designed to show the errors of the Bible, leading to a highly dangerous and protracted tit for tat polemics. The use of converts in large public preaching sessions (generally called “crusades”) by the Christian is particularly inflammatory. They are presented as having been “saved” from other religion and invited to provide a detailed renunciation (p.13).

Therefore, it is the combination of all these, coupled with the old Islamic legacy of darul Islam, the principle of Dan Fodio Jihad and the need to dominate the Middle Belt region of Nigeria that led to unabated indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba. NCSAN (2015) equally recorded that, “it is alleged that Dan Fodio was intent on going as far as Atlantic Ocean in order to dip the Quran into the ocean as a sign of victory” (p.54).

V. POLITICAL DOMINATION THAT IGNITES INDIGENES/SETTLERS CRISIS IN SOUTHERN TARABA

Political domination is one of the key factors that ignites indigenes/settlers crisis Southern Taraba. The Middle Belt generally, which Southern Taraba is inclusive, has been dominated politically by the Hausa/Fulani elites. The Hausa/Fulani who are mostly Muslims dominate other ethnic groups (Tiv, Jukun, Kuteb, Kaka etc) who are Christians and animists. The history of their domination could be dated back to early 1960s, immediately after Nigerian independence. Sir Ahmadu Bello, the premier of the Northern region, had stated in 1960 that:

The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather, Uthman dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future (cited in NCSAN, 2015, p.55).

Balogun (1989) also stated that Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, believed that one of the ways Islam could dominate the Northern region would be through political control. “To fulfill this goal, Ahmadu Bello saw himself as heir to Uthman Dan Fodio, with the manifest duty to ensure that Nigeria

particularly the Northern Nigeria became Islamized. Ahmadu Bello also sought for assistance from Muslim countries such as Libya, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, including Sudan on ways and manner of governing multiethnic and cultural groups. Indeed, the ultimate aim of Ahmadu Bello leadership in the Northern Nigeria was to propagate and institutionalized Islam throughout the entire region, irrespective of ethnicity. NCSAN (2015) also quoted him saying during his visit to Jalingo on 16th October 1965 that:

The father of enlightenment and good in this land is the prophet, Uthman dan Fodio, and the work of salvation for all people which... has now been handed over to me. I dedicate myself totally to its completion... Taraba territories had not yet been fully dominated by Islam. Consequently, there was a need for a clear political agenda on how to conquer the Taraba territories. Political power will avail... the platform to implement an Islamic agenda (p.54).

Okpanachi (2002) also cited a similar comment made by the current President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari on 24th September 2001 that:

For Muslim in Nigeria, at least twice, we are overrun by the colonialists and our way of life was drastically changed. One of the things we lost is the freedom to practice our religion as it is. But God in his infinite mercy brought this independence back to us through a democratic system of government. What remains for Muslims in Nigeria is for them to redouble their efforts, educate Muslims on the need to promote the full implementation of Sharia Law and there should be nothing to be afraid of (p.16).

The truth is that every Muslim leader aims at converting his subjects to Islam by force. In view of this, Muslim must ensure that they emerge leader by all cost. In Taraba State, for instance, out of the 17 recognized traditional rulers in the state, 14 are Muslim, 2 animists and 1 is a Christian. The table below explains better.

Table 2: List of Taraba State Traditional Rulers and their Areas of Jurisdiction

S/N	Name	Title	Religion
1	His Majesty, Dr. Shekarau Angyu Masa Ibi, Kuyon II	Aku Uka of Wukari, Wukari LGA	Traditionalist/Animist
2	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abbas Njidda, Tafida	Emir of Muri, Jalingo LGA	Muslim
3	His Royal Highness, Dr. Stephen Banyong	Gara of Donga, Donga LGA	Christian
4	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Sambo	Kpanti Zing, Zing LGA	Muslim
5	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Hamman Gabdo Mohammed Sambo	Lamido Gashaka, Gashaka LGA	Muslim
6	His Royal Highness, His Majesty Dr. Shehu Audu Baju	Chief of Mambila, Sardauna	Muslim
7	Vacant stool, (the former is deceased)	Ukwe Takum, Takum LGA	Traditionalist/Animist
8	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Giddado Mohammed Misa	Chief of Bakundi, Bali LGA	Muslim
9	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Yusuf Manga	Chief of Dakka, Bali LGA	Muslim
10	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abdul Mohammed Baba Chiroma	Chief of Old Muri, Kari Lamido LGA	Muslim
11	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abubakar Haruna	Chief of Wurkum, Karim Lamido LGA	Muslim
12	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abubakar Sadiq Umar	Chief of Lau, Lau LGA	Muslim
13	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Yakubu Idris Chiroma	Chief of Gassol, Gassol LGA	Muslim
14	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Suleiman Kachalla	Chief of Mutum Biyu, Gassol LGA	Muslim
15	His Royal Highness, Mallam Adamu Mazang	Chief of Mumuye, Yorro LGA	Muslim
16	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abubakar Salihu Bawuro	Chief of Ibi, Ibi LGA	Muslim
17	His Royal Highness, Alhaji Buba Nyala	Chief of Kwajji, Yorro LGA	Muslim

Source: Taraba State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, 2019.

Similarly, at the 7th National Assembly, there are 4 Muslims and 2 Christians in the House of Representatives while the senate has 2 Muslims and 1 Christian. The table below illustrates it clearly.

Table 3: Names of Taraba State Federal House of Representatives Members and Senators in the 7th Assembly, 2011-2015

Constituency	Candidate's Name	Religion
Jalingo/Yorro/Zing	Mallam Ibrahim Aminu	Muslim
Takum/Donga/Ussa	Albert Tanimu Sam-Tsokwa	Christian
Wukari/Ibi	Ishaka Mohammed Bawa	Muslim
Ardo-Kola/Lau/Lamido	Jerimon Samuel Manwe	Christian
Gashaka/Kurmi/Sardauna	Ibrahim Tukur El-Sudi	Muslim
Bali/Gassol	Haruna Manu	Muslim

Senators of the 7th Assembly from Taraba State

Constituency	Candidate's Name	Religion
Taraba North Senatorial District	Aisha Jummai Alhassan	Muslim
Taraba Central Senatorial District	Abubakar Tutare	Muslim
Taraba South Senatorial District	Emmanuel Bwacha	Christian

In the same vein, at the 8th National Assembly, there are 3 Muslims and 3 Christians in the House of Representatives while the Senate consists of 2 Muslims and 1 Christian. The table below also indicates vividly.

Table 4: Names of Taraba State Federal House of Representatives Members and Senators in the 8th Assembly 2015-2019

Constituency	Candidate's Name	Religion
Jalingo/Yorro/Zing	Aminu Ibrahim Malle	Christian
Takum/Donga/Ussa	Shiddi Usman Danjuma	Muslim
Wukari/Ibi	Aminu Ibrahim Malle	Muslim
Ardo-Kola/Lau/Lamido	Baido Danladi Tijos	Christian
Gashaka/Kurmi/Sardauna	Danasabe Charles Hosea	Christian
Bali/Gassol	Garba Hamman Julde Chede	Muslim

Senators of the 8th Assembly from Taraba State

Constituency	Candidate's Name	Religion
Taraba North Senatorial District	Alh. Sani Abubakar	Muslim
Taraba Central Senatorial District	Alh. Marafa Bashir Abba	Muslim
Taraba South Senatorial District	Emmanuel Bwacha	Christian

Though one can also argue that at the state level, the sitting Governor has always been a Christian. Jolly Nyame, a cleric ruled the state from 29th May 1999 to 29th May 2007. Similarly, Danbaba Suntai, another Christian ruled the state from 29th May 2007 to 29th May 2015. Regrettably Danbaba's period was full of instability following a plane crash that he had on 25th October 2012. Garba Umar (Deputy Governor) who acted as governor during his medical trip to Germany was a known member of radical Islamic sect called Izala. The sect, Izala was established in Jos, Plateau State in March, 1978 by the followers of Shaikh Abubakar Gumi, a former religious adviser to Sir Ahmadu Bello. According to Umar (1993):

The sect was named "Jama'atu Izal-atil Bid'a wa Iqamatal-Sunna"(society for the eradication of innovation and the reinstatement of tradition) shortened to Izala. The members of this sect see themselves as the followers of the prophet Mohammed and his companions (al-salaf al-shih) and dedicate themselves to the rejection of innovation in Islam...including the rejection of any form of authority that is not derived from the Quran (p.178).

Garba Umar did not hide his dissent to other ethnic groups living in Taraba. NCSAN (2015) reported that, "...Acting Governor Garba Umar had used state funds to assist Hausa-Fulani Muslims herdsmen entering the state to resettle in various parts of Taraba. He assured them of grazing lands as long as they would displace the huge Christian communities of the Southern and Central Senatorial Districts" (p.62).

The Supreme Court judgment of 21st November 2014 replaced Garba Umar with Abubakar Danladi, the first Deputy Governor to Danbaba Suntai, who was impeached by the Taraba State House of Assembly. On 29th May 2015, Governor Darius Ishaku, a Christian was sworn in as a new Governor of Taraba state under the platform of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Though this government has enjoyed little stability yet the state is divided between the Muslims and Christians. The oppositions are mainly the Muslims who constitute majority in All Progressive Congress (APC). In Taraba State, religion is now a means of capturing power. As Bouchat (2013) rightly stated, "religion... is a fast, easy way to obtain and manipulate power in Nigeria (p.22).

VI. IMPACTS OF INDIGENES/SETTLERS CRISIS ON SOUTHERN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

The indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba has impacted negatively on the following.

(i) LIVES

Findings by NCSAN in 2015 revealed that between December 2013 and July 2015, the total number of lives that were lost in Southern Taraba as a result of indigenes/settlers crisis was 1,484 people, while 2,388 people sustained injuries. The break down indicated that Bali recorded 246 deaths with 462 injured, Donga had 220 deaths with 311 injured, Gashaka had 65 deaths with 122 injured, Gassol recorded 275 deaths with 569 injured, Ibi had 175 deaths with 227 injured, Takum recorded 125 deaths with 219 injured while Wukari had 378 deaths with 478 injured.

Table 5: *Estimated Number of Christians Killed and Injured in Seven (7) Local Government Areas of Taraba State*

S/n	Name of LGA	No. of Christian Men killed	No. of Christian Women killed	No. of Christian Children killed	Total No. of Christians killed	No. of Christian Men injured	No. of Christian Women injured	No. of Christian Children injured	Total No. of Christians injured
1	Bali	83	67	96	246	206	162	94	462
2	Donga	87	74	59	220	136	104	71	311
3	Gashaka	21	26	18	65	55	47	20	122
4	Gassol	88	107	80	275	248	180	141	569
5	Ibi	65	53	57	175	93	86	48	227
6	Takum	49	35	41	125	105	69	45	219
7	Wukari	139	145	94	378	226	169	83	478
	Total	532	507	445	1484	1069	817	502	2388

It is important to note that this information came from Christian Community in the Southern Taraba. The Muslim did not disclose any information on the number of people killed as a result of crisis in Southern Taraba between the years 2013 to 2015, as cited in the Nigeria Conflict Security Analysis Network (NCSAN).

(ii) CHURCHES AND PROPERTY

The NCSAN (2015) also collated information from 6 Local Government Areas from Southern Taraba, such as Bali, Donga, Gassol, Ibi, Takum, and Wukari. The information focused on the number of churches, including other properties like houses, shops/business, family compounds, farmland, as well as goods that lost as a result of crisis in Southern Taraba, between 2013 and 2015. In Bali, 101 churches were burnt, Ibi lost 10 churches, Takum lost 2 churches, while 49 churches were burnt down in Wukari, between 2013-2015. The table below explains more even though, the number of mosques destroyed were not disclosed to NCSAN.

Table 6: *Overview of Items Lost or Destroyed in Different six (6) Local Government Areas.*

LGA	Churches	Houses	Shops/ Business	Family Compound	Farmland	Gods and Properties
Bali	9				48 yam fields	4 grinding machines, small cattle and food items
Donga		14				
Gassol	101	239				
Ibi	10	24				
Takum	2		39	15	Many fields	Many properties
Wukari	49	37			Much farmland	Many goods and properties
Total	171	314	39	15	Much	Many

(iii) INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)

The indigenes/settlers crisis that erupted in the Southern Taraba has led to the displacement of about 11,898 people (NCSAN, 2015). There are Internally Displaced People's camps in both Central and Southern Taraba State. The camps are in Bali with 2,400 people, Jalingo with 1,372 people, Ibi with 690 people, Takum with 4,739 people as well as Mutum Biyu with 2,696 people. The good thing here is that, the camps comprise both Muslims and Christians.

According to NCSAN (2015), "the inclusion of Muslims in the Mutum Biyu camp is not surprising, because as the conflict ranged, there were fears of reprisal attacks by Christian groups against Muslims" (p.13). The table

below indicates Local Government Areas, Place, Name of Camps, Population and Religion of the Internally Displaced Persons.

Table 7: Taraba State IDP camps and the Number of IDPs

LGA	Place	Name of Camp	Population	Religion
Bali	Bali Town	Total number for four camps:	2,400	Christians
		NKST Church Camp		
		St. Paul's Catholic Church Camp		
		Legislative Quarters Church Camp		
		Tiv Traditional Hall Camp		
Jalingo	Jalingo Town	NKST Jalingo Camp	1,373	Christians
Ibi	Ibi Town	Ibi Camp	690	Christians
Takum	Peva	Peva Camp	2,889	Christians
	Jato	NKST Jato Camp	1,850	Christians
Mutum Biyu	Wukari-Jalingo Way	Mutum Biyu Camp	2,132	Christians and Muslims
	NKST Church	NKST Church Mutum Biyu Camp	564	Christians
Total			11,898	

Regrettably, International Crisis Group (2016) observed that, “neither National Emergency Management Agency nor its State-Level Counterpart has the funds or the capacity and experience to manage a prolonged, large-scale humanitarian operation” (p.21).

Lives in these camps are unbearable. Access to the basic needs like shelters, food and nutrition, health and hygiene, security as well as education is difficult.

Commenting on the health condition in most of the camps, Abdulazeed (2016) lamented that, “there were hardly any drugs for specific ailments, not even for the most common ones like fever, malaria, and diarrhea...”(p.12). Indeed, the Taraba State government has not taken adequate care of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The reason could be lack of fund. Again, even the federal government has not help matter due to series of security challenges in other parts of the country that require financial assistance.

(iv) SOCIAL LIFE

The ethno-religious crisis in Southern Taraba as led to segregation and polarization among various groups in the state. In Wukari, for instance, the 13th March, 2013 crisis has forced people to live according to their religious faith. Christians are living with Jukuns and Traditionalists who share the same faith with them, while Muslims are living with Hausa/Fulani who believe in Islam. Even, the commercial activities have been polarized. Muslims only buy from Hausa/Fulani while Christians buy from the Jukuns/Traditionalists. This segregation warranted International Crisis Group (2012) to decry that:

...greater spatial polarization and segregation tend to accentuate social and political divisions between Muslims and Christians...along ethnic lines... these development has reduced formal meeting points or spaces where different groups can interact, build bridges and share ideas about how to end the mutually destructive violence (p.20).

VII. MANAGEMENT OF INDIGENES/SETTLERS CRISIS IN SOUTHERN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

There is a popular opinion that Nigerian state cannot provide adequate security to its citizen, especially during violent crisis. As Onyemaechi (2014) lamented that:

The inability of the government to effectively perform its core functions of providing or guaranteeing security for the people as well as act as a regulator has ...led to a weakening of its bargaining power and capacity in relation to the ethnic and religious group...infact, it has been observed that loyalty to ethnic or religious cleavages is being placed far and above the nation, as people prefer to be seen and described, based on the ethnic or religious groups they belong rather than their status as citizen of Nigeria (p.127).

Government on its part had allotted the blame on the Nigerian populace. The former President of Nigeria, Chief Obasanjo, once said, “the frequency and ferocity with which these clashes have spread across the country have made many Nigerians wonder to what extent the generality of Nigerians are appreciative of our hard won democracy” (cited in Alubo, 2002, p.10). The truth is that government has been responsive to most of these crises, though critics may claim that it has not done enough. Alubo (2002) mentioned:

most governments response to include, condemning the act and the perpetrators, and sometime sympathizing with the victims as well as their families (p.26).

This is often followed by a declaration of curfew, deployment of troops to the site, a visit to the site of conflicts, a threat to arrest the manipulators, promises to support victims with relief materials, as well as setting up of a panel of inquiry to determine the immediate and remote causes of the conflict and recommend ways to prevent future reoccurrence (Ukiwo, 2003)

Despite public pronouncement by the government, in terms of condemning the act and setting up of panel of inquiry, the truth is that government response and management of indigene/settlers crisis in Nigeria is often weak. Ukiwo (2003) lamented that:

results of panels of inquiry have been left to gathered dust on the shelves, because implicated actors are usually influential citizens or groups that government may not want to confront for political reasons, and the perpetrators of violence are let off the hook... Divisions within government circles make it impossible for the government to be coherent in its response as different factions of the ruling party and component groups that make up government have divergent interest to protect during such conflict (p.128).

Though disagreement often erupt among those in government on the proper measure to be taken during crisis, Nigerian government always adopt both hard and soft approach in managing ethno-religious crisis. The hard approach to ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria is through the deployment of soldiers to the conflict zones. The soldiers normally put on roadblocks and checkpoints, involve in cordon and search operations of the criminals, including mass arrest of the hoodlums. Regrettably, most scholars (Ukiwo, 2003, Alubo, 2002, Onyemachi, 2014) opined that tactics employed by the government to tackle indigenes/settlers crisis are counterproductive, it rather fuelled the crisis. Citing United States' Government Official Statement, CAN (2015) restated that, "Nigerian troops are not adequately resourced or equipped to counter insurgency and crisis. Soldiers on the front line complain that they do not receive sufficient logistical support and that they are not being paid in a timely manner. Their equipment is insufficient..." and much of what they do have, has fallen into disrepair (p.45). Government has tried to address these issues by increasing the defence budget. It should be recalled that in 2010, government allocated 100 billion naira to defence, and in 2011, 1 trillion naira was allocated. Over the last two years, government has improved the capacities of its military and other security services. According to International Crisis Group (2014):

"more emphasis has been placed on retraining of personnel in urban warfare, counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency...as well as equipment for close quarter combat, intelligence and amphibious operations, demolition and explosive breaching, tactical communication and civil-military relations" (p.31).

Similarly, government a times takes soft approach in handling indigenes/settlers crisis. A good example is the establishment of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000, implementation of 13 percent derivation formula to oil producing state as well as the establishment of Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in 2000 by Chief Obasanjo's government (Ukiwo, 2003). Duruji (2010) also cited the establishment of Federal Character Commission as another soft approach that aims at ensuring equal representation of various ethnic groups in the national decision-making process. This provides opportunity for every segment of Nigerian society to have a sense of belonging. Regrettably, all these measures have not been able to mitigate the indigenes/settlers crisis in Nigeria generally nor Southern Taraba State in particular.

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The problem of indigenes/settlers crisis in Southern Taraba can only be resolved through collaborative effort of the people and the government. There is no gain saying the fact that, this issue of identity has a direct link with the ethno-religious differences which Southern Taraba is noted for. Osaretin and Akor (2013) explained further that, "such identities tend to become problematic when access to opportunities in the political system in term of power and resources are dependent on the membership of a particular ethnic or religious group as well as when state is weak in terms of its capacity to protect its citizens and provide for their welfare" (p.358). The paper, therefore suggests, opening of political space to accommodate both indigenes and settlers alike. This could be done easily through revoke of certificate of indigenes which Local Government Areas issued, rather adaptation of certificate of citizenship which Federal Ministry of Interior should be mandated to issue. The certificate of citizenship would guarantee Nigerians rights to live in any part of the country and enjoy equal rights with the indigenous groups without any discrimination. The amendment of the Nigerian constitution is needed, in order for it to have legal backing: Indeed, this would unite the nation more and ensure unity in diversity.

Similarly, the federal government should strengthen the capacity of Nigeria Police Force. There is need to recruit more Nigerians into the Police Force, and those who have been assigned to protect politicians should be withdrawn with immediate effect. There is no sense in sending police to protect politicians when the majority is dying of insecurity. Nigeria Police is for all, not for a specific group.

International Crisis Group (2018) further added that, “Security services must also improve on their ability to farther intelligence and predict attacks through closer engagement and communication with local residents. Moreover, the police should put to better use information gleaned from interrogation of arrested armed group...” (p.27).

The association with the locals would help in gathering useful information on the arrest of those who foment trouble.

Finally, the federal government should address the issue of poverty with seriousness. Indeed, there is a linkage between poverty and insecurity, regrettably, the present government does not think toward that direction. Burton (1997) cited in Ogbozor (2016) argued that, “if the basic need are not met, it cause frustration, and people seek alternative to satisfy them (p.15). Similarly, George Bush (2017) cited in Crueger (2007) decried that, poverty, lack of education and failed government are conditions that gave rise to terrorists...terrorism are planted in the fertile soil...of poverty and deprivations” (p.13). The truth is that poverty is everywhere in Nigeria, but the northern dimension is alarming. Oluseyi (2020) reported that, “the World Bank has estimated that 87% of all the poor people in Nigeria are in the North” (p.1). Perhaps, it is interesting to note that most of those youths that engage in communal crisis are doing that for their immediate economic benefits. They involve in lootings and snatching of valuables from owners whose survival depends on their mercy. Government should create job opportunities for the teeming youths. This will enable them to feed themselves and divert their attention from crisis.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adebayo, R. (2010). Ethno-Religious Crisis and the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Nigeria, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(1), 16-25.
- [2] Alfred, C., Christopher, A., & Wununyatu, D. (2014). War Economy of Ethno-Religious Crisis; A Study of the Wukari Crises of Taraba State, Nigeria; *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2(1), 28-33.
- [3] Alubo, O. (2006). *Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crisis in the Central Region*, Lagos, Eddy Asae Nigeria.
- [4] Frueger, B. (2007). What makes a Terrorist: *Economics and the Root of Terrorism*. Lionel Robbin's Lectures, USA, Princeton University Press.
- [5] Bhatia, H. (2003). *History of Economic Thought*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing Research Science.
- [6] Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2015, 1-19.
- [7] Ilesanmi, A. (2014). Ethno-Religious Crisis and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria; Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward; *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, 9(1), 18-36.
- [8] International Crisis Group (2010). Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict, *Africa Report* No. 168, 1-36.
- [9] International Crisis Group (2012). Curbing Violence in Nigeria (1); The Jos Crisis, *Africa Report* No. 196, 1-38.
- [10] International Crisis Group (20th Feb. 2018). Stopping Nigeria's Spiraling Farmer-Herder Violence. *Africa Report*, No. 262, 1-42.
- [11] Madu, Y. & Ibrahim, G. (2013). Ethno-Religious Conflict in Taraba State and its Implications on Socio-Economic, Political and Educational Development of Youths; *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*. 4(3), 14-28.
- [12] Mukherjee, S. & Ramaswamy, S. (2005). *A History of Political Thought*, New Delhi, Prentice – Hall.
- [13] Mukhi, H. (2007). *Political Thought*. New Delhi, Sbd Publisher.
- [14] Nigeria Conflict Security Analysis Network (2015). Violent Conflict in Divided Society; The Case Study of Violent Conflict in Taraba State (2013-2015). *World Watch Research*, 1-65.
- [15] Nwanegbo, J., Odigbo J., & Ochanja, N. (2014). Citizenship, Indigeneship and Settlership Crisis in Nigeria: Understanding the Dynamics of Wukari Crisis, *Journal of Research in Peace, Gender and Development*, 4(1) 16-31.
- [16] Ogbozor, E. (2016). Causes and Consequence of Violent Extremism in North East Nigeria, *HICN Working Paper*, No. 227, 1-22.
- [17] Oluseyi, A. (2020). World Bank: 87% of Poor Nigerians are in the North. Retrieved from.....
- [18] Okpanachi, E. (2000). Ethno-Religious Identity and Conflict in Northern Nigeria: Understanding the Dynamics of Sharia in Kaduna and Kebbi States; *Institut Francais de Recherche on Africa IFRA*, 1(1), 16-35.
- [19] Osaghae, E. & Suberu, R. (2005). A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria, *Crises Working Paper* No. 6, 1-18.
- [20] Osaretin, I. & Akor, E. (2013). *Ethno-Religious Conflict and Peace Building* in Nigeria: The Case of Jos, Plateau State, *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(1), 349-36.

- [21] Otite, O. (2001). On Conflicts, Their Management, Resolution and Transformation in Otite, O. & Albert I. (eds) *Community Conflicts in Nigeria, Management Resolution and Transformation (16-30)*. Ibadan, Kenbirin Press Ltd.
- [22] Ritzer, G. (2012). *Sociological Theory*, New York, MCGraw – Hill.
- [23] Suberu, R. (1996). *Ethnic-Minority Conflict and Governance in Nigeria*, Ibadan Spectrum Book Ltd.