

INDIGENE-SETTLER CONFLICT AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN LOKOJA NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The issue of indigene and settler rivalry has remained for many decades the principles sources of intractable intra/inters communal violent conflicts in Nigeria. This issue of indigene and settler conflict has been posing a lot of danger to the cooperate existence of the Nigeria state. Many communities have been destroyed, case of colossal loss of lives and properties have been recorded and millions of internally displaced person has been vulnerable to abuses, hunger, infection, epidemics and other related consequences. The objective of this research work is to examine the root causes of indigene-settler conflict and the challenges of national integration in Nigeria with reference to the Lokoja metropolis. The study employs the survey design method using questionnaire to gather data for the study. Primary and secondary sources of data were used and data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23), which was presented in frequency table and percentage. The Taro Yamane arithmetic formula was employed to determine the sample size of respondents under study, which were one hundred (100). The study findings revealed that indigene and settler phenomenon has not generated into open armed conflict between the indigene and the settler. The finding also revealed that political position is the major bone of contention between the settlers and the indigene. The study therefore, recommended that though the incidents in Lokoja metropolis may not have yet degenerated into open armed conflict, there is need to take substantive measures so as to prevent future escalation of the conflict.

Key Words: Indigene-Settler Conflict, Politics of Indigene/Settler, Nature of Nigeria, Nigerian Constitution and National Integration

Introduction

The increasing relevance of indigeneship can be traced to the nature and character of the Nigerian state, her unwieldy and somehow underdeveloped political super-structure, low level of development of productive forces and the cake-sharing syndrome. It is a known fact that the country, as at present is experiencing very stiff and keen competition among various groups over available state scarce resources (Ejikeme, 2016). And such competition has propelled various ethnic groups, indigenous groups and sectional constituencies to continue to engage in intense struggle with one another for access to state power and the benefits accruing there from. Indigeneship is a very serious issue affecting the survival of Nigeria as a geo-political entity. There is a deep attachment of Nigerians to their states of origin, regardless of whether or not they are residing there. The importance of indigeneship is manifesting in employment, admission into schools and colleges and appointment of people into positions (Omotoso, 2014).

The way and manner the Nigerian nation came into being encouraged and promoted indigeneship and the problems of citizenship. The people who inhabited the different geographical areas now constituting Nigeria saw themselves differently and were independent of one another. The various nationalities had existed as autonomous socio-cultural, political and economic units. But the 1884/85 Berlin Conference started the unholy process of bringing together discrete and diverse nationalities under one state umbrella without the consent of the people concerned. Owing to this development which culminated in the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates by Lord Lugard in 1914, the Nigerian peoples so brought together saw the emergent state not only as alien but also as a forced contraption. Instead of being patriotic by supporting and respecting the state, they see it as an abstract object, a European formation and therefore an evil arrangement that denied the people of their freedom. Because of this enduring notion of the Nigerian state by the people, they have had recourse to their various indigenous societies which to them are capable of protecting and guaranteeing their individual rights, privileges and advancement in the Nigerian state (Caroll, 2000).

The problem of settler-indigene conflict has more than any other one has posed a lot of difficulty to the Nigerian-state. Governments at all levels seem to be helpless and hopeless in the resolution of the crises and conflicts arising from it. Most Nigerians who had lived peacefully together for years will suddenly take arms against themselves on issues bothering on indigene or non-indigene status of those concerned. Land, political and economic interests of the elite are at the heart of this problem. In Africa, land is seen as a major inheritance, as such, Africans do not joke with it. Therefore, anything that threatens their accessibility to land is seriously viewed. In addition to this is the economic interest of the elite. Due to their desire for political power and governmental patronage elite will always instigate the masses to stave off those they perceive to constitute an obstacle to this desire. It is based on the forgoing that this study seeks to explore the problems posed by the issue of indigene-settler phenomenon and challenges of national integration in the country with references to the Lokoja metropolis. It is based on the forgoing that this study is poised at examining settler-indigene conflict and the challenges of National integration in Nigeria with reference to Lokoja metropolis North central Nigeria, and to evaluate how indigene-settler conflict has become a threat to national integration in Lokoja metropolis, challenges to national integration caused by settler-indigene conflict possible solution to challenges facing national integration in Lokoja metropolis

Literature Review

The discourse on indigene-settler conflict has been a subject of debate from various scholars. A lot of books and journal articles have been writing by various scholars from different fields as to the causes of indigene-settler phenomenon in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large. Sometimes those scholars have consensus views as to the causes of indigene-settler phenomenon while other time they have a conflicting view.

Nnoli (1978) in his book titled ethnic politics in Nigeria traces the genesis of indigene-settler conflict in Nigeria to the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate by the British Imperial power. He contended that the British imperial power from outset had an agenda, and the agenda is to introduce a "divide" and "rule" strategy to heighten "ethnic and regional sectionalism in order to curb Nigeria nationalism and to maintain colonial power. Nnoli (1978) noted further that the colonial state seized every available opportunity to spread the propoganda that Nigerians did not have a common destiny, because they were separated by differences of history and tradition. Its policy was to secure individuality, nationally and chosen form of government, and the peculiar political and social institutions that was presumed to have evolved from the wisdom and accumulated experiences of the previous

generations. Therefore instead of achieving unity in diversity as Babalola (2013:44) argued, the various ethnic groups are pulled apart through the heightened consciousness of their differences rather than features that bring them together. Since then, till independent and up till today, ethnicity and the indigene-settler syndrome among citizens across all states of the federation has been an unresolved issue in Nigeria federalism.

Nnoli contended that, in Nigeria, the problem is not actually with the Nigeria people, but the political elite. He argued that the problem is not the cultural differences among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. In addition, it is neither their geographical differences, nor their socio-economic differences. The differences among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria ethnic question arise from the degree to which emergent identity has been manipulated. Thus, the amendment of Section 147 of the 1999 Constitution needs to be revisited because it encourages indigeneship. It is an irony for a constitution to discourage discrimination against individual, but still encourage elements that strengthen discrimination. In addition, meritocracy should become the only criteria for the appointment of political posts and employment in the country.

Ejikeme (2016) in his article titled Indigenes and settlers conflict in Nigeria (a negation to national integration and nation building) sees the intractable conflicts emerging from the saga of indigene-settler in various parts of Nigeria as stemming from the conception, definition and perception of the character of who is an indigene and who is a settler; which defines what rights indigenes have over non-indigenes. He explained further that, when an Africa indigene claims that he is "son of the soil", he simply means that his origin could be traced to a particular indigenous family of a specific clan which belongs to a particular ethnic group with ancestral history. Thus, no matter how long a particular person has reside in such society, he/she will remains settler as far as he/she cannot lay claim to be part of any clan which belongs to a particular ethnic group with ancestral history. Ehusani (2003:1 cited in Ejikeme N.J. 2016) observed that one of the lingering contradictions of the Nigeria is the phenomenon of natives and settlers among the same people who lay equal claim to Nigerian citizenship, and who have been engaged in cultural, religious, economic and political exchanges for over 100years. Ehusani also argued that where as the so-called, settlers are part of the society in every respect, worshipping, socializing and trading, paying taxes and marrying the so called indigenes, but when it relates to sharing of resources, including ownership of land, the indigene-settler sentiments is whipped-up and the so called settlers often suffer gross injustice of discrimination and prosecution.

He noted that a nation that laid its foundation on sentiments of ethnic nationalities, primordial political ideologies and insensitivity on matters of national interests is bound to disintegrate due to mistrust, suspicion, fear of domination and political marginalisation. The attitude of fanning indigenes and settlers bloody conflict to gain cheap political popularity amongst a people is the least character expected from a patriotic statesman. So, the government should take a decisive action to curb the excesses of any tribes in its efforts to foster peace and unity, security and national growth. There is also need for the entire citizenry to positively unite and harness our difference in religion, diversity in culture, linguistic, varying history of a heterogeneously constituted black populous nation, to build a virile state full of potentialities.

Femi Omotoso (2014) in his article titled indigene-settler phenomenon in the Nigerian federalism outlined four causes of indigene-settler phenomenon in Nigeria. These includes

1. Land Issue

In Nigeria, indigeneity is associated with land ownership. This is not only limited to Nigerian, land ownership is an issue all over Africa. As such, anything that affects the land

affects the people and must be resisted by all means. Eme Awa (1985) supports this view when he asserted that indigeneity is strong in Nigeria because people are seeing the land as a primary form of property in the traditional society and its source as a form of wealth. Hence Danfulani (2005:3) contented that one of the crux of the matter between the indigene and the settlers in plateau state is access to land. The crises in plateau state are first and foremost struggle over land as majority of plateau state indigenes are Christians who tied to the land as peasant farmers or workers in the civil service while the settlers, mainly Muslim minorities are House dry-season farmers and cattle rearers; while the Igbo, urhobo and Yoruba are dominating the business life of the state.

2. Political Patronage/Competition

One of the major factors that triggered the indigene /settler crisis in Nigeria is political exclusion. The return to civil rule in 1999 saw indigenous people using their population advantage by voting massively for their fellow indigenous political candidates in an election as well as supporting their own indigene in the area of political nomination while the settlers are finding it difficult to occupy position of authority as a result of their minority status. Hence Higizi (2011:16) support the above argument by contending that the opening up of political space under civilian rule has been accompanied by intense ethnic competition at all levels in the state. The indigenous elite have consolidated their power and control of the state excluding the settlers particularly on the basis of religion and ethnicity.

For example the creation of Jos North local government (plateau state) in 1991 by Babangida administration was the major issue that sown the seed of discord between the indigenous people and Hausa/Fulani settlers. The new local government was created to cover the area inhabited by the Hausa/Fulani settlers. The indigenous population saw this as an affront and a deliberate plot by Northern Muslim domination military regime to legitimize and legalize the indigenous status of the Hausa-fulani settlers. In the real sense of it; it seems this was in the mind of the military top brass since such thing was not replicated in other areas. For example in Kano state, there is an area known as Sabongari solely inhabited by the settlers'-such as Yorubas, Igbo e.t.c. but instead of creating a separate local government, since they have more than required number of people to make up a local government, the military government divided the area into different local governments. In such local governments, the settlers are in minorities and cannot be seeking to occupy any major political position. Thus while the indigenes seek exclusive control of existing social and political rights at the expense of the settlers the latter seeks to resist their perceived unjust deprivation, exclusion and humiliation and when such are restricted, it leads to destruction of lives and property.

3. The Nature and Character of Nigeria State

Nigeria is a country with extra ordinary diversity. It has more than two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups with each socio-ethnic boundary manifesting unique character. However, socio-economic considerations have resulted in many waves of human movement within the country. The heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state has lead to distrust amongst tribe, most natives are ill-informed, issues are based on ethnic sentiments to foster struggle for resource control, and each ethnic group fight to have undue advantage to federal or state benefits. The indigene status provides indigenes the identity, benefits, recognition, affinity and measures of individual members of the group acting individually or collectively to defend group interests. The non-indigene on the other hand wages war against host communities to defend themselves.

To situate the phenomenon properly, it is necessary to point that the current central paradigm of Nigerian politics allows the state to have dominating and unchallenged sole distributive clearing power for economic and political spoils and as such, enormous resources

at the disposal of any state has led to intense competition for power leading to wide spread use of money and armed thugs.

4. The Problem of Nigerian Constitution

No doubt, the crisis in Lokoja metropolis has opened a renewed debate on the use of the term “settler” and “indigene” in the nation’s 1979 constitution, the phrase belong or belonged to a community indigenous of Nigerian was used in the definition of citizenship section 23, sub section (1) (a) while the phrase “federal character” also entered Nigeria constitution in 1979 to denote a principle of minority group inclusion in federal government and its affair (Ostien 2009: 4). Section 147 (3ii) of the 1999 constitution also state that “... the president shall appoint at least one minister from each state, who shall be an indigene of such a state” (FRN 1999). Thus the 1999 constitution recognizes that there is indigene/settler in Nigeria. Ordinary, one would have been put to rest by the constitutional provision of section 25 (1a) that defined citizenship in Nigeria as: every person born in Nigeria on or before the date of independence, either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents belongs or belonged to community is indigenous to Nigeria.

The learning retention of both the concepts of settler/indigene phenomenon and federal character into protect minority interests but their fears remains unabated. (Danfulani 2002:7) opined that the federal character in Nigerian refers to distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging in the nation irrespective of where they find themselves. But the reverse is the case as such provision has been manipulated by the political elites to gain political advantage. In like manners, (BBC, 5 may, 2004 cited in IDN: 2005) reported that many observes in Nigeria believes that the roots of the violence across the country are not religious or cultural. They say that conflicts are created and stoked by politicians both at local, state and national levels, all that seek to gain advantage from established social division and once triggered, the violence naturally generate its own momentum.

Indigene-settler crisis is aggravated by so many factors such as land issues, political patronage/competition, and constitutional problems among others. To resolve this menace, it is important for government to be decisive, bold and courageous in solving the crisis considering the numbers of lives wasted and property destroyed. The ability of government to muster enough courage to deal with those fuelling the crisis will spell doom for the country. Both the people and the government must work towards ensuring peace and stability in the country. It is important to note that without peace, there will be no progress and development.

Adeleye Oyeniya (2011) in his article titled Ethnicity and Indigene/Settler conflict also noted that indigene-settler conflict is one of the regular features of the third world societies. He contended that Africa has had more than lion share in indigene/settler induced wars and violence. The issue of Indigene has become the most viable factor, which explains the social reality of post-colonial Africa. During colonization of African people, colonialists failed to put the issue of cultural differences of various ethnic groupings into consideration before lumping them together in (Colonial) state formation. The oversight has constituted and remained one of the greatest challenges of post-Colonial Africa. Horowitz (1985, cited in Adeleye .O 2011) also noted that, in the past decades the experience in Africa has shown that the continent has recorded a long list of ethnic, Indigene-Settler violence and hostilities. Some of these wars may include the one in Sudan, Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Angola, among other.

In Nigeria for example, the Tiv-Jukun conflict is among the numerous indigeneity conflicts that have blotted stability and instigated economic and social dislocation in Nigeria. The conflict is one of the protracted inter-ethnic fends (Egwu, 1998: 65; Irin, 2001: 2) that have

occurred in 1959, 1980, 1990 and 2001. Like for conflicts such as the Zango-Kataf conflict in Kaduna state, Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra state, the Mango-Bokkos conflict in plateau state, the Ife-Modakeke fend in Oyo state and so on has land factor as the major discourt that triggered the conflict. The land factor is also one of the central issues stimulating clashes between the Tiv and the Jukun people (Egwu, 2004:56). The reason why land remains a predisposing factor in the escalation of violence as noted by Egwu (2004) is the role played by the use of the indigene-settler divide as a tool for claiming their ownership to it. In the case of the Tiv and Jukun in Taraba state, the Jukun claim the Tiv are settlers and have no ownership to the land they occupy. The Tiv on the other hand, argue that they have been living there for long and therefore claim both land ownership and political rights in the state.

In addition, the 2011 Abyei conflict in sudan is also attributed to land ownership dispute. In May 2011, ahead of South Sudan's scheduled independence, tension rose around the status of the Abyei Area, an oil-rich region that was statutorily part of both south Kordefan and Northern Bahr el Ghazal state. As South Kordofan was slated to remain with the North while Northern Bahrel Ghazal was seceding together with the rest of what was then Southern Sudan autonomous Region, the status of Abyei was unclear and both Kartoum and Juba claimed the area as their own.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide could also be attributed to colonialism, Newbruy (1995) argued that, throughout the pre-colonial period, the Hutu and the Tutsi were one people who spoke the same language and live amongst each other. When the Belgian colonists arrived in 1916, they treated the Hutu and Tutsi as separate groups. The colonial power further polarized the groups by classifying Rwandans into ethnic groups and making it obligatory for them to carry ethnics' identity cards classifying people according to their ethnicity. The Belgians deemed the Tutsi to be superior to the Hutu and Tutsi were favored in administrative positions, education and jobs in the modern sector. They described the Tutsi as Alien, the superior ethnic group, and as natural leaders who should thus makeup the entire ruling class, while the inferior Hutu, the indigenous people, should become a permanent underclass. Consequently, Hutu chiefs were systematically demoted and Tutsi were promoted. Admission to schools that prepared government leaders were reserved predominantly for Tutsi, only a handful of Hutu could go.

Thus, when power eventually fell into the hands of the Hutu after the abolition of the monarchy, ethnic divisions were reinforced and manipulated for political purposes. The policy of discrimination and hatred towards the Tutsi population became the cornerstone of the Hutu ruling regimes. The Hutu now became the privileged group in the entire domain of the country. Tutsi were considered enemy of the Hutu, outsiders, invaders, and oppressors of Rwanda. This is the crux of the matter that culminated into 1994 genocide violence in Rwanda.

He noted that, it is paramount for the people and government of Africa to live above primordial sentiments and subjective perception as well as enemy-image among various ethnic nationalities that dominate the state of affairs on the continent. It is no gainsaying that the problem of ethnicity can be regarded as a veritable source of underdevelopment and bad governance on the continent. The inter-ethnic bloodshed and genocide that greeted Rwanda in the early 1990s dominated world headlines at the time. The genocide situation was responsible for the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent Tutsi civilians and moderate Hutus. Several other atrocities were also committed by Rwandan government at the time.

It is a known fact that conflict has been at the forefront of international political debates for the past decade, which aroused concerns about practical solutions to reconcile diverse ethnic conflict and the impact of variables such as governance, civil-military relations, economics and religion on ethnic identity in Nigeria, advocacy for a power-sharing model that promotes integration and cooperation will serve as a means of overcoming differences and

establishing a basis for dialogue. On a global scale, the world has recorded many indigene-settler conflicts as in the United States of America when the Native American Indians were being forcefully herded into reservations. In Europe, Moldova Ukraine, Poland, and Yugoslavia suffered the ravages of ethnic conflict up till the end of the Second World War (Silas B: 2005:5).

German attempt to annihilate the Jews during the Holocaust under Hilter, Chinese operations in Tibet and the Bangladeshi war against the Bangalis are examples of such conflicts. With the collapse of the USSR, the Karabkh, Chechnya, Abkhazia and others were embroiled in ethnic conflagration, and the Indonesian problems in East Timor still persists.

The citizenship conflict in United Kingdom after Brexit also manifest the issue of Indigene-Settler phenomenon Ikpek Demir noted that since it launches 2005, those who need to apply for British citizenship or settlement in the UK have to take a test called the 'Life in the United Kingdom (LIUK) test, known as the citizenship test. As Brook's report (2013:4) underlines: the test does not fulfill its aims of providing satisfactory information that will facilitate integration into society or general knowledge about British laws rendering the test impractical.

The task of finding a solution to the legal status of non-British European Union (EU) citizens living in UK after Brexit is exercising the best minds in the European Union at the moments. It should be noted that many EU states like Germany and Netherlands among others do not permit dual citizenship. For instance, the Germany authorities have enacted the constitution stating that those who take the Oath of allegiance after the Brexit stands to lose his/her German citizenship. The Brexit saga has erupt citizenship and settler issues in Britain.

Indigeneship and the Nigerian State

Indigeneship is simply a discriminatory concept employed in the Nigerian state to distinguish between the indigene or natives of a state or locality and those who are referred to as non-indigene or settlers. For example, an Ebira man living in Ekiti state for over 25 years making necessary contributions to the development of the state is not regarded as an indigene of the state. Irrespective of the member of years he has spent in Ekiti state, he and all members of his family are still regarded as settlers and non-indigenes hence, they cannot have access to or benefit from what is purely reserved for the indigenes, even if such indigenes have not been in Ekiti state for over 30 years.

Indigeneship, according to Abdullahi Adamu (the former executive governor of Nasarawa state, Nigeria) is a biological term that has assumed serious social and political meaning in Nigeria and around the world. Indigeneship is used in Nigeria to distinguish natives of a particular place from other Nigerian citizens found in that locality. It is also used to confer special privileges which are beyond the reach of non-relatives on the natives. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is a pluralistic multi-national state. Hence, there is deep attachment of Nigerians to their states of origin, regardless of whether or not they are residing there. The concept of the Nigerian state does not offer much attraction to Nigerians; what give them hope are mostly their ethnic groups to which they owe more allegiance and loyalty. Some of the founding fathers demonstrated aptly the notion of the Nigerian state in the consciousness of Nigerians. For example, Kazah-Toure noted that the Nigerian state is a mere geographical expression (Kazah-Toure, 2000). He observed that the establishment of the Nigerian state is the mistake of 1914. These notions about the Nigerian state are still as real as those nationalists saw them then.

It needs to be noted that the introduction of regionalism by the Richards Constitution in 1946 and the subsequent state reorganizations in 1963, 1967, 1976, 1987, 1991 and 1996 in the country have not only encouraged sectional consciousness, loyalties and sentiments but have also made these states centers of attraction to Nigerian citizens. Indigeneship is seen as a weapon commonly employed by various groups depending on the degree of scarcity of resources

and the centrality of indigeneship to Nigerian state, Ellsworth, (1999) attributed it to the cake sharing syndrome and the distributive pressures associated with Nigerian federalism. Indigeneship is a weapon of the elite for the access to the resources of the state. In other words, indigeneship has become a powerful political weapon in the hands of the political elite in the struggle for state power and resources.

One of the things that make the issue of indigeneship deep-rooted in Nigerian is the factor of land. Land ownership is a matter of life and death in Nigerian in particular and Africa in general. Africans and indeed Nigerians see land as an inheritance from God and, as such, nobody wants outsiders to encroach on his inheritance. Land is handed over from one generation to the other. In Nigeria, the state and citizenship have little or no appeal in the consciousness of the people.

As such, they are not bothered about what happened to the Nigerian state and their citizenship status. In other words, people see the state as highly incapable of guaranteeing and protecting their rights and offering them privileges. And where the state fails the indigenous groups excel. No matter the status of an individual in this country, he has more attachment and loyalty to his indigenous group than to the nation itself. This is as a result of the fact that indigenous groups offer a lot of assurance and protection to the individuals. Indeed, the elite seek protection and advancement from their indigenous groups rather than the state itself. What is worse, Nigerians do not have any rights to indigeneship outside the state of their parent's birthplace. Owing to this phenomenon, many Nigerians who are linguistically and culturally assimilated into a community different from their parents own are denied indigene of the place, irrespective of the number of years of living in the place.

The Politics of Indigene/Settler Conflicts in Nigeria

Aishatu A.A. and Mohammed .I.S. (2014) in their work titled "Indigene/Settler and Ethno-religious Conflict in Northern Nigeria argued that Nigeria and Nigerians have deeply sunk in what is now commonly referred to as politics of ethnicity/indigene/settler. This is so because Nigerians now use and mis-use the indigene/settler/ethnicity syndrome for self-centred gains and inflicting damage, marginalization of others, mis-management and re-allocation/diversion of resources, subversion of government policies to their personal, collective but selfish ends. This is manifested in many states and local governments across Nigeria especially on the northern part such as Kafanchan, Zangon-Kataf, Tafawa Balewa, Yelwan Shendam, Barikin-Ladi, Wukari and Ibi et cetera.

To them, the major causes of indigene/settler conflicts are inter-related and woven such that one reason hinges on another at a time. But generally, indigene/settler and ethno-religious conflicts are more associated with civilian democratic regimes as observed by (Jega, 2007 and Alubo, 2007) that within the first three years of Obasanjo's first tenure (1999-2003), there were more than forty ethno-religious clashes and again, between May, 1999 and 2004 there have been more than 89 recorded cases of indigene/settler and conflicts that were all violent and fatal. Meanwhile, conflicts related to indigeneship and ethnicity is associated with micro-psychological processes, individual and group experience, competition and socialization processes and power relations which may result in hostility, annihilation of a particular tribe e.t.c. (International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, 2008:10). And as maintained by Alubo (2007), more than 50 out of those ethno-religious and indigene/settler conflicts occurred or recurred in the North region especially the North-Central states. The major causes of such conflicts include:

1. Religious Inclination:

A major cause of indigene/settler conflict is religious inclination. In most of the indigene/settler conflicts around Nigeria especially on the northern part, the conflicts turn religious only as a cover to be hidden under to achieve other ends since neither of the two major religions (Islam and Christianity) accepts discrimination, hatred, or resentment to fellow human beings. The Glorious Qur'an (Chapter 49: V 12) states that: O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another...'. The above

verse confirms the Islam's condemnation of ethno-racial differences and or superiority of one tribe, language or people over any others.

2. Fear of Domination

Many of the indigene/settler and ethno-religious conflicts arise as a result of feeling by those who have lived longest in a particular place or perceived indigenes that they may be dominated and consequently over powered by those they consider as settlers.

3. Failure of State to Regulate the Citizens' Behaviours

Failure of the governments at all levels to effectively regulate the utterances, actions and behaviours of individual citizens and groups especially those who have proved to be a threat to the state powers (such as the Ombaitse cult murder of more than 100 officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force in Lafia, Nassarawa State (see Weekly Trust of May 11, 2013) has overtime increased the tendency to recurrence of indigene/settler and ethno-religious conflicts. Several recurrences of Tafawa-Balewa, Kaduna, Jos, Barikin-Ladi, Wukari, Ibi et cetera conflicts and each time such recur, new committees, panels or commissions of inquiry are set up but upon submission of reports, everything is buried without punishing anyone or implementing recommendations made.

4. Hatred

Many of the indigene /settler and or ethno-religious conflicts are influenced by hatred i.e. prejudice to one or some by others on the bases of religion, tribe, economic prosperity of or other differences and sometimes turned to such conflicts just to find a justification. This particular prejudice/hatred leads to serious consequences and commission of offenses (including murder) and is mostly committed by Africans (Alubo, 2006:75 and Reid, 1997:237).

5. Poor Development Planning, Management and Control

Most authorities at federal, states and local levels have failed to ensure strict compliance with development plans and control. In many of such conflicting areas, there are no proper forecast and plans to mix up settlements among the various ethnic groups and religious adherents so as to deemphasize ethno-religious differences among the people. A practical observation shows that in places like Kaduna, Jos, Tafawa-Balewa, Yelwan-Shendam, Wukari et cetera, the settlements have been established and or divided along ethno-religious lines and the authorities have not and are not doing enough to provide the populace with basic social amenities on a balanced manner.

6. Divide and Rule Politics

From re-emergence of politics and fourth republic in 1999, there have been losses of thousands of Nigerians lives and properties due to indigene-settler violence (Alubo, 2004:135-161), in the history of Nigeria, political antagonism between especially Muslims and Christians are in most occasions associated with ethno-cultural and sectional tensions. Nigerian politicians are ever tactful and always renew their methods, techniques and strategies of votes catching devise and indiscriminately use all possible means available to secure political legitimacy/votes. One major devise now employed among most of them especially in pluralized areas is the use of ethno-religious and regional tendencies to convince and woo people. The April, 2011 elections became heated as politicians used mosques and churches to appeal to voters and as campaign machineries to most candidates especially the presidential election. The politicians use, mis-use religions and their adherents to divide and rule people. Rodee (1975) concluded that politicians, especially those on the margins of political system, identify such divisive, particularistic and conflicts as vehicle for achieving and promoting their political influence. Indigene/settler tied to religious conflicts are ignited or fuelled by politicians to achieve their desired ends. This is observed by Jega (2007:117) that: "...competitive partisan

political activities are being used as avenues through which groups are exploited, identities rigidly reinforced, often infused with excessive religiosity. Violent youth gangs militias are formed and armed, and ethnic tensions and conflicts are thereby facilitated".

Gap in Literature

The above reviewed literatures all point to the fact that they have been settler/indigene crisis in Nigeria since the colonial period and are still a serious contending issue in Nigeria which most at times is used to gain favor particularly as it relates to political appointment. Most of the scholars reviewed have provided various perceptions on the concept of settler indigene phenomenon using various approaches, but none of these authors have carried out an empirical investigation on settler indigene conflict in Lokoja Metropolis, the causes and effects of this crisis in the metropolis and the degree at which it has affected national integration. It is based on the foregoing identified lacuna or gap that this study is poised at bringing to lime light the causes, effects and challenges of national integration as caused by settler-indigene conflict in Lokoja metropolis via empirical investigation.

Research Methodology

This research work adopted survey research method and made use of primary and secondary data as the main source of data collection through the instrument of structured and unstructured questionnaire. The study randomly selects 100 respondents using. Data obtained were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistical method. The questionnaire sought information on questions that were relevant to ethnic conflict and challenges of national integration in Lokoja Metroolise, Kogi state, Nigeria. The Data obtained were analyzed with both Qualitative and Quantitative method via SPSS.

Sample frame for questionnaire distribution

Koto karifi	30
Felele	20
Adankolo	20
Kabawa	30
Total	100

From the table above, 50% of the questionnaire would be administered to the indigenes out of which 30% would be administered in Kotokarifi and 20% in Felele while the other 50% of the questionnaire would be administered to the settlers out of which 30% would be distributed in Kabawa and 20% in Adankolo. The reason why Kotokarifi and Kabawa have the highest percentage of questionnaire distribution is due to the fact that both the indigenes and the settlers largely inhabited the aforementioned places.

Result and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	60	60.0
	Female	40	40.0
	Total	100	100
Age (in years)	18-27 years	14	14.0
	28-37 years	40	40.0
	38-47 years	16	16.0
	48-57 years	10	10.0
	58 years and above	20	20.0

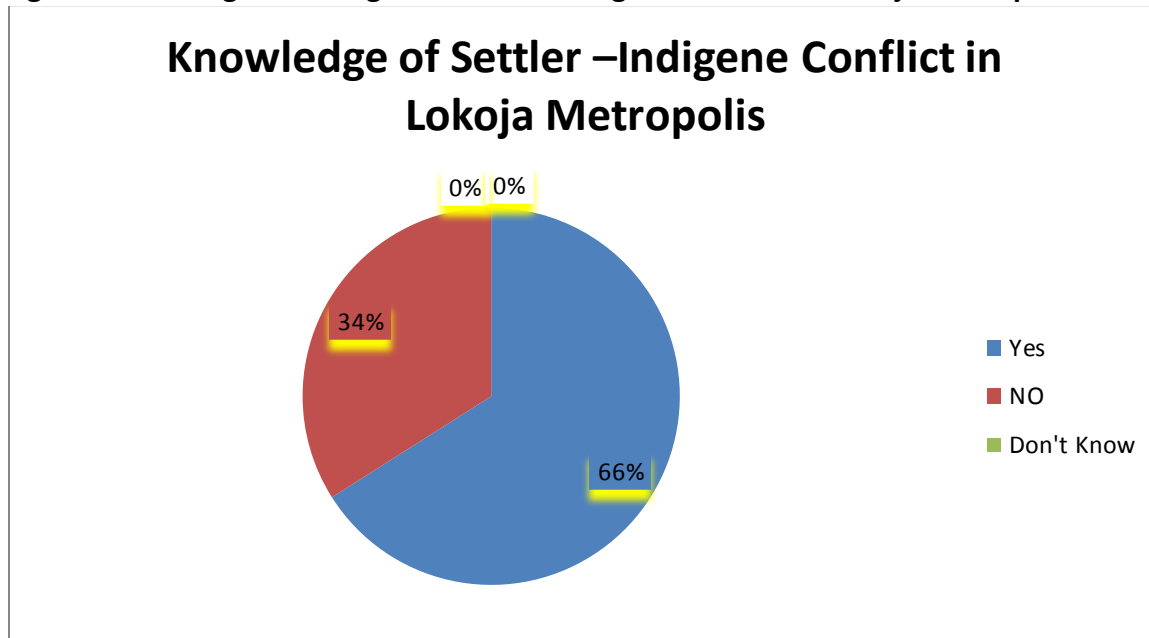
	Total	100	100
Marital Status	Married	59	59.0
	Single	41	41.0
	Divorced/Separated	0	0
	Total	100	100
Educational Qualification	Primary	8	8.0
	Secondary	33	33.0
	Tertiary	59	59.0
	Total	100	100
Religious Affiliation	Christianity	43	43.0
	Islam	57	57.0
	Traditional African religion	0	0
	Total	100	100
Occupational Status	Civil Service	41.0	
	Studentship	8.0	
	Self-Employed	51.0	
	Total	100	100
Years of Residence	Less than 6 months	8	8.0
	1 year	9	9.0
	2-5 year	33	33.0
	5-10 years	8	8.0
	10 years above	42	42.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

Table 1, shows that majority (60%) of the respondents was male and minority (40%) was female. Furthermore, majority (60%) of the respondents were within the age range of 28-37 years, 14% were within age range 18-27 years, 16% were within age range 38-47 years, 10% of the respondents were within age 48-57 years and 20% were within age 58 years and above. 59% of the respondents had tertiary education, 33% had secondary school certificate and 85 of the respondents had primary school certificate. This shows that majority of the respondents were educated which made it easy for the researcher to administer the questionnaire to them. In addition, 43% of the respondents were Christians and 57% also were also Muslims while none of the respondents were traditionalist. 41% of the respondents were civil servants, 8% were students and 51% of the respondents were civil servants. Also, 8% of the respondents had resided in Lokoja for less than 6 month, 9% for a year, 33% for 2-5 years, 8% for 5-10 years and 42% for 10 years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents are acquainted with the study area which is necessary for the purpose of this study.

Settlers-Indigene Conflict and the Challenges of National Integration in Lokoja North Central Nigeria

Figure 1 Showing Knowledge of Settler –Indigene conflict in Lokoja Metropolis



Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

Figure 1, shows that majority of the respondents had knowledge of settler indigene conflict in Lokoja metropolis. This is good for this research work since majority of the respondent is familiar with the key component of the research.

Table 2: Showing Responses on Ethnic Conflict as a result of Settler-Indigene Phenomenon in Lokoja Metropolis

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	41	41%
No	59	59%
Void	0	0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

Table 2 shows that 59% of the of the respondents disagreed that settler-indigene Phenomenon has led to ethnic conflict in Lokoja Metropolis while 41% of the respondent agreed that settler-indigene Phenomenon has led to ethnic conflict in Lokoja metropolis. The incidence of settler-indigene Phenomenon leading to ethnic crisis in Lokoja Metropolis has not generated to open violence and animosity (Blood Shed).

Table 3: Showing Responses on Political appointment and position based on settler-indigene conflict in Lokoja Metropolis

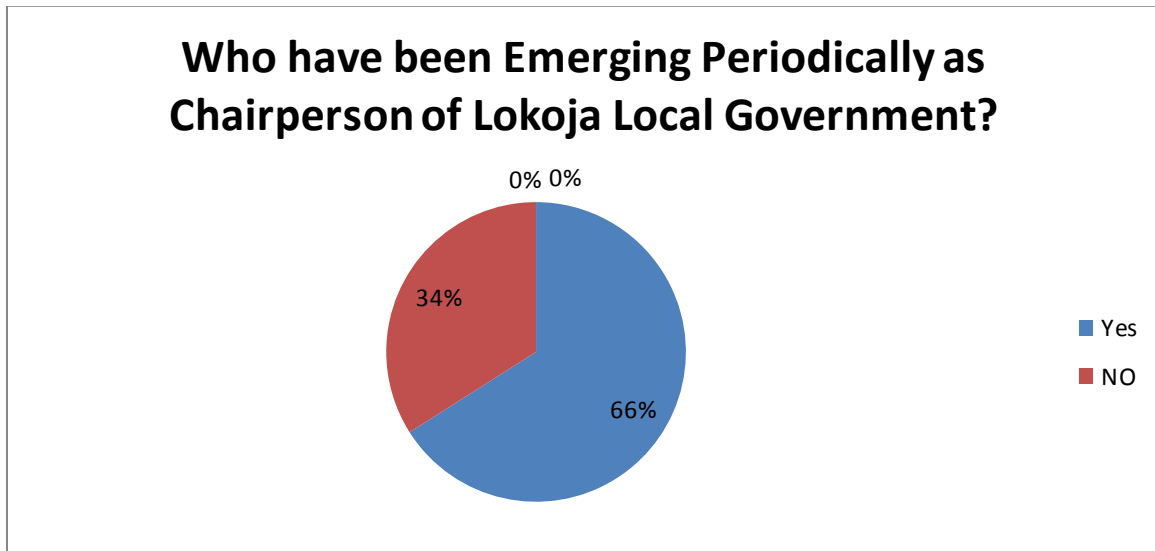
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	66	66%
No	34	34%
Void	0	0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

The result shows that 66% of the respondents agreed that political appointment and position in Lokoja metropolis is based on settler-indigene conflict in Lokoja metropolis while minority with 34% disagreed that political appointment and position in Lokoja metropolis is

based on settler-indigene conflict in Lokoja metropolis. This shows that political appointment and position in Lokoja metropolis is strictly based on settler-indigene phenomenon.

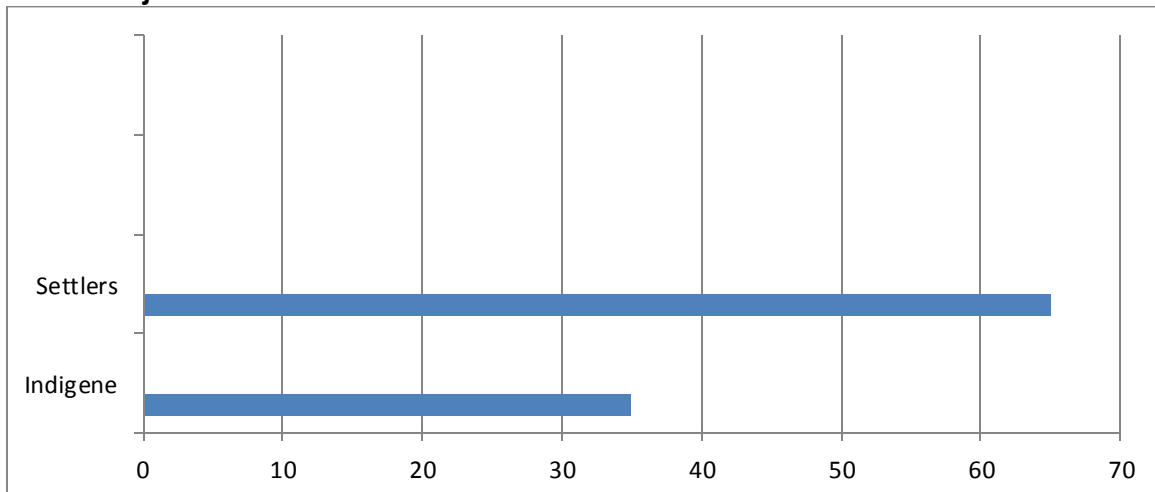
Figure 2 Showing: Who have been emerging periodically as Chairperson of Lokoja Local Government?



Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

Fig 2 shows that the settlers have been emerging periodically than the indigene as chairperson of Lokoja Local Government. This often justify why political position is at the heart of the crisis between the indigenes and the settlers.

Figure 3: Who have been emerging periodically as Member of Kogi State House of Assembly from Lokoja Local Government?



Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

As shown in figure 3, settlers has emerged more as Member of House of Assembly representing Kogi State more than indigenes. From figure 2 and figure 3, it can therefore be asserted that Political offices in Lokoja Local Government Area of Kogi State are dominated by settlers.

Table 4: Showing Responses on Indigenes Satisfaction on the Level of Integration between various Groups of Lokoja Metropolis

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	17	17%
No	83	83%
Void	0	0%

Total	100	100
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Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

Responses from table 4 show that the level of integration between the various groups of Lokoja metropolis is low with majority (83%) affirming to this. It may be deduced that the various ethnic group in Lokoja metropolis are likely to be enduring themselves rather than integrating properly.

Table 5: Showing Responses on the Effects of Settler-Indigene conflict on National Integration

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	27	27%
Negative	73	73%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, March 2018.

Majority of the respondents (73%) agreed that the effect of settler-indigene conflict crises is negative on national integration. The negative effects of settler-indigene conflict crises on national integration according to the respondents includes; the minority been dominated by the majority, over population, the opening up of the little job opportunity between the indigenes and the settlers, political marginalization and competition for land and water. While the minority (27%) of the respondents agreed that indigene-settler conflict has positive impact on national integration. They argued that the phenomenon of indigene-settler on national integration has led to inter-ethnic marriage, job creation and large market, sharing of language and culture, and increase in the population of Lokoja local government.

Summary of Research Findings

The main purpose of this study was to bring to the lime light on settler-indigene conflict and the challenges of national integration in Lokoja north central Nigeria. The finding from the research shows that; the respondents had knowledge of settler-indigene conflict in Lokoja. According to the respondents, this is usually caused by the struggle political power and appointment. Judging from the questionnaire collected from the respondents, it is seen that the settler are the one who has always been emerged periodically as either chairperson or as a member of Kogi State House of Assembly while the indigene are often relegated to the lowest ebb. In addition, other causes of the indigene and settler crisis are struggle for ownership of land and access to water for fishing. Although settler-indigene conflict haven't led to any conflict since the issue is quickly curbed before it escalate to serious issue.

Conclusion Remarks and Recommendations

Conclusively, settler-indigene conflict has no positive impact on national integration in Lokoja metropolis, despite the fact that key political offices has been held on several occasion by the settlers, this has not resulted to open armed conflict as the crisis is been managed. The major factor that triggers rivalry among indigenes and settlers in Lokoja is political competition as well as the struggle over access/or ownership of land and access to water for fishing. The effect of settler-indigene conflict on national integration was perceived by the majority of the respondents to be negative. Finally, the study shows that there is significant relationship between settlers (Nupe) and indigenes (Oworo). National integration is a critical building-block for the harmonisation of the socio-political as well as the economic life of a heterogeneous society into one whole entity to enhance rapid sustainable development. It is the feeling of oneness that comes from an atmosphere of integrated and harmonious co-existence of the diverse ethnic nationalities and culture. In a rainbow nation, such as Nigeria, national

integration can only be built on the pedestal of true recognition and respect for the nation's diversities which will in turn engender a true sense of nationhood. Though the phenomenon of indigene and settler crisis may not have yet degenerated into open armed conflict, experience has shown that every other conflict manifested by indigene and settler phenomenon have at one point been peaceful as in the case of Ilokoja metropolis, but due to lack of adequate measures, lack of political will cum government inability to resolve the conflict resulted in the escalation of the conflict.

Therefore, the following measures could help in abating or preventing the issues of indigene-settler conflict in Ilokoja metropolis from degenerating into open arm conflict in the future.

The first is the idea of power sharing formula. This would aid in the rotation of key political position between the indigene and the settler thereby reducing the agitation of the indigene and it would also help curb the fear of the minority being dominated by the majority in the political and economic affair of the area. Second measure to prevent the future outbreak of the conflict is that, meritocracy should become the only criteria for appointment and employment. Finally, Leaders should work to rekindle the faith of people in communal harmony by dwelling more on those public policies that will bolster the ebbing sense of community. Everything possible must be done to restore the lost values back to our national life.

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