# Indigene-Settlers Conflict and the Socio-Economic Development in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State, 2000-2016

## KEFAS, Matakhitswen

Department of Public Administration, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State

Corresponding Author: matakhiaudu10@yahoo.com

**Abstract**

This paper intended to delve into the effect of indigene-settler conflict and the socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The Indigene-settler conflict in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State have had a profound effects on the areas socio-economic development, giving rise to a pressing and multifaceted problems. The interplay between these conflict and socio-economic development encompasses a range of interconnected issues that demand attention and intervention. Indigene-Settler conflicts is a conflict between the people who are the first to have settled in a place and the settler are the people who move to a new area. This conflict in Nigeria is mostly caused by competition over access to land, other natural resources and political interests and is a key barrier to any community development effort. The main objectives of the study is to examine indigene-settler conflict and the effect of the conflict on socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The Frustration-Aggression theory by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower and Sear was used to underpin the study. This study relied on secondary sources of data which in turn was analyzed using descriptive and explanatory qualitative approach to explain Indigene-Settler conflict and socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area. The study reveals that Indigene-Settlers conflict in the areas has serious effects on the socio-economic development. The study therefore recommends that there is needs for the government to sensitize the people about peaceful coexistence and developmental programmes among others.

**Key words:** Conflict, Indigene, Settlers, Wukari, Taraba State

# Introduction

Conflict is a precarious phenomenon that poses serious challenges to peace and security. The prevailing predicament of conflict has remained a contentious issues of underdevelopment in many nation of the world today. Many nations, states, countries, and communities of the world today have witnessed and are still witnessing the outbreaks of several cases of communal, ethno and farmers-herders conflict. Conflict is one of the oldest realities in human universe, it occurs where two or more parties (individuals, groups, nations, etc.) disagree with each other over a particular issue or aims. Human history is full of many examples of violent conflict and the oppression along with the rise and fall of civilizations (Jeong, 2000). In the early European civilizations, the Greek city states fought with the Persia, to control the Mediterranean, and in the modern era, contemporary international systems has been characterized by conflicts at the national,

regional, and international levels such as the French revolution, Balkan conflicts, first and second world war one and two. The incidence of conflict are regarded as global phenomena as they occur in almost every part of the world especially within or among countries that had at one time experienced colonialism, (Abubakar, 2008 as cited in Mohamed & Kim 2020).

The history of Africa is characterized by conflict and this conflict have manifested itself differently as ethnic, religion, Indigene-Settler conflict, etc. According to Taylor (2008) conflict in Africa countries like Chad, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote devoir, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon have experience and still experiencing either Indigene-Settlers conflict, ethno-religious or communal conflict. Lijiphart (1984) as cited in Sunday & Piate (2019) submitted that most Africa countries are multi-ethnic in nature and are divided along religion, cultural, linguistically and ethnic lines. These division are made up of separate sub-societies in which most societies operate as interest group that can result into violent conflict with any opposing groups.

The issue of Indigene-Settler conflict or contention, antagonism has remained for many generations as the source of communal conflict in Nigeria. As a result of this strife, many communities have been destroyed, many properties and lives have been destroyed and many millions of people were displayed. Indigene-Settlers feud is one of the contentious challenges that has been ravaging the peace of many parts of Nigeria. Nwagwu, (2016) opined that in human

history, issues bordering on communal conflict, Indigene-Settler conflict, and inter-ethnic crises are common phenomenon as conflict is a reality of social relations at the individual, group, organizational, community and societal levels.

Conflict is not a stranger in Nigeria, there are many cases of conflict in the present day Nigeria and these conflict have destroyed many lives and properties, and have displaced many people from their ancestral homes and communities. Some of these conflicts are the Jukun/Tiv conflict, the Ife-Modakeke crisis, Sagamu crisis of 1990s, Bassa/Egbura crisis, Herders/Farmers conflict in Nasssarawa, Aguleri-Umuleri crisis, Zango- Kata crisis, Jukun-Fulani crisis, among others, all these conflicts arise as a result of different or varieties of factors as connected to land, boundary, chieftaincy, disputes, urbanization, population, indigene-settler, issue of ownership, identity politics, and cultural prejudices etc (Egwu, 2006, Asiyanbola, 2007, Okoli & Uhembe, 2014). In the same vein, Nwanebo et al (2014) submitted that most conflicts occur as a result accumulated grievances, anger and frustration arising from suspicion, mutual distrust, and manipulation.

Taraba state is one of the heterogeneous state in Nigeria that have continue to experiences violent (ethno-religious, communal, indigene-settler) conflict that have been causing serious devastations in the socio-economic development of the state. It is the oldest realities in the human universe, it occurs where two or more parties (individuals, groups, nations, etc.) disagree with each other over a particular issue or aim.

Wukari is one of the 16 local government areas in Taraba State that is prone to conflict. It has become phenomenon in the lives of the people within the locality. Wukari has witness a degrees of conflict from (1959, 1964, 1976, 1990-1992, 2000-2001, between Jukun and Tiv which is mostly indigene-settler conflict), 2006 (between Jukun and Fulani), (2010, and 2013-2016 between Jukun Christian and Jukun Muslim and Hausa, these conflict occur as a result of accumulated grievances between the two groups or more groups). These mostly occur or it usually emanate as a result of ethno-religion, indigene-settlers, boundary disputes etc. as the conflict continue to occur and re-occurred, the search for sustainable peace has remain the major focus of political leaders and the stakeholders in Wukari and Taraba State at large.

## Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, Indigene – Settler conflict have been a major treat to the socio-economic development. The Indigene-settler conflict in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State have had a profound effects on the areas socio-economic development, giving rise to a pressing and multifaceted problems. The interplay between these conflict and socio-economic development encompasses a range of interconnected issues that demand attention and intervention. Indigene-settler conflict has a negative or bad effect on socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area. Lack of development or socio-economic development in the area has a great problem in Wukari as more people continue to suffer.

These conflict have posed a great challenges in the community and these has prevented the area from attaining basic needs such as livelihood, access to water, food, shelter, health, education and others which increases the vulnerability and risk of the inhabitants residing in the area. The socio - economic development of Wukari have being impacted negatively because development cannot thrive in an environment constantly experiencing violent, instability and insecurity and this have serious impact such as poverty, death, displacement, crisis of food, among others.

The adverse effect of Indigene-settler conflict on the socio-economic development, livelihood of the inhabitant in the Wukari community has led to loss of human, reduction of local investors, reduction in the farming activities, commercial activities in areas receives low patronage, relocation of some business to other neighboring states or areas etc. As previous reports has shown that Indigene-settler conflicts in Wukari Local Government Areas has led to massive destruction of lives (approximately 16,747), about 6677 houses and properties (most houses and properties within the township in Wukari have being destroyed), eight wards and twenty-five villages were affected, disruption of the economic, social, political lives of the larger population. However, there exist series of crises in Wukari Local Government Areas in Taraba State despite the efforts of government at the resolution of the conflicts, they appear to have become difficult to control. Looking at the occurrence and re-occurrence of the conflict and the state failure

in the maintenance of the peace and order in the state generally and in Wukari Local Government Area, it is probably that there exist issues, problems, challenges and factors that need to be interrogated in order to unravel the nature of the problem.

The paradox between the indigene-settlers conflict and the socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area, has triggered the question as to why there still exist occurrence and re-occurrence of Indigene-settler conflicts in this area? It is against the background that this research possess the following research questions

i. What were the causes of Indigene-Settler conflict in Wukari Local Government Areas of Taraba state?

ii. How has the Indigene-Settler conflict affected the socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Areas of Taraba State?

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of Indigene-Settler conflict on socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area. However, the specific objectives of the study are to: Identify the causes of Indigene-Settler conflict in Wukari Local Government Area and to examine the effects of the Indigene-Settler conflict on socio-economic development of Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This section deals with the review of relevant literature aimed at positioning the study within its theoretical framework. The literature was reviewed along the concept of conflict, indigene-settlers concept, concept of development and socio-economic development, empirical review, nature and history of conflict in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State and the theoretical framework.

### a. Concept of Conflict

Different scholars under different ideological, historical and cultural influences have defined the concept of conflict. Chiristopher and Ndubisi (2018) sees conflict a as condition in which one identifiable group of human begins in a given environment (whether tribal, ethnic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, political, among others) is engaged in conscious opposition to or more identifiable human groups because these groups are pursing what are or appear to be incompatible goals. In the same vein, Francis (2007) defined conflict as the pursuit of incompatible interest and goals by different groups. Coser (1956) as cited in Cinjel & Onah, (2015) perceive conflict in terms of the struggles between parties over desirable values. He further stated that is a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desire values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. This may take place between individuals and collectivities. That is to say that, conflict involves the presence of two or more parties or actors striving to secure something of value in which the gain by any party will amount to a loss or deprivation by other party.

According to Miller (2002) as cited in Olundare et al, (2015) defined conflict as a confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. Martin et al (2018) asserts that conflict is a situation which two or more human beings desire goal, which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both. That is to say, each party is mobilizing energy to get a goal, desired object or situation and each perceives the other as a threat to that particular goal. To Jeong (2008) the key element of conflicts is the existence of resource scarcity where the wants of all actors cannot be fully satisfied and where the quests for such resources results in conflict behavior.

Miall (1992) as cited in Fadeyi and Mohammad, (2015) opines that is a contractions arising from perception where a clear contradiction exists or is perceived to exist between the participants who view the outcome of such conflicts could be seen as violence, clash, or crisis that ensure as a result of contentious disagreement between parties or actors over central vital issues, it is on this ground that Oyesholar (2005) argued that conflict occurs when there is a clear disagreement between divergent ideas, interest or people and nations.

In general terms, conflict can be refers to as when parties are competing over a resources, when there is unfairly distribution of resources, and lack of happiness within the political, economic, and social institution.

## b. Conceptualization: Indigene-Settlers and the Nigerian State

The word indigene is derived from two Greek words, 'indo' and 'genous' which both means inside/within and birth/born/race respectively. Indigene is a concept employed to distinguish between the indigenes or natives of a state or locality and those who are referred to as non-indigenes or settlers, Cinjel and Onah, (2015). Indigenes are essentially a group of people which has common identity, a common descent or lineage and cultural identity Kyernum and Agba, (2013), while Jones, (2012) sees indigenous people as the original or native inhabitants of areas that have been colonized by European, especially in Africa, Asia, America, and Australia. Plotnicov (1972) as cited in (Olakunle et al 2016) report that the 'owners of the land' is a terminology used in Nigeria to describe indigenous people of an area, even when they are politically sub-ordinate there; while 'strangers' (settlers) covers people of aliens origin who are permanently settled among these indigenous people. That is to say, indigenes are group of people with the same ethnic, traditional and cultural background of a place, region, community or country. Settlers are group of people who move to a new place, region, country and sometimes establishing new communities.

In another dimension, Plateau State Conference (2004) sees indigene ship as 'been peculiar to a people who are the first to have settled permanently in a particular area and who are often considered as natives'. Section 2 of the Federal Character Commission Act of Nigeria sees indigene as:

(a) An indigene of a local government is a person either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents was or is an indigene of the local government concern.

(b) An indigene of a state means a person who is an indigene of one of the local government in that state.

In the Nigeria context, indigenes are people who have settle in the place first, they are the real 'natives' or the 'son of the soil' as mostly referred by the people. Settlers or non-indigene are the people or strangers who established themselves in new areas.

Nigeria is a pluralistic and heterogeneous society with diverse ethnic groups. Nigerians are more affiliated to their ethnic, regions, states and religion. This plural nature has causes sentiment on the basis of individual interest over the general interest of the country (Cinjel, 2022). Indigenes and settlers scenario as seen today in Nigeria, can be traced to the colonial period. The introduction of regionalism by Richard Constitution of 1946 and other series of changes in leadership 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 (Ibrahim, 2007) as cited in Cinjel and Onah, (2015). The indigene- settler divisions has been worsened in time past due to the politicization of Federal Character Principles as stated in the1999 Nigerian Constitution. Section 142 (b) of the 1999 Constitution states that 'the president shall appoints at least one minister from each state, who shall be an indigene of such state. However there is gap or challenges from the constitution as there are not clear explanation on who is an indigene. Olakunle et al, (2016) asserts that the political class in Nigeria often capitalizes on the Indigene Clause and the Federal Character Principle in order to gain control over the economic resources and dictate who gets what when and how at a given time. Cinjel and Onah, (2015) sees it as a weapon in the hand of political elite in the struggles for state powers and resources. This issues has breeds issues of indigene-settler misunderstanding in Nigeria.

Indigene-Settler conflict is a form of violence that is perpetrated across ethnic, indigene and settlers lines, it includes conflict, riots and other forms of violence between indigene and settlers of different religious faith or ethnic origin. It can also be referred to as non-state armed conflicts fought between two or more social groups. They exhibit significant variation in type and scale, some lead to death, destruction of properties, and damage in transportation while others easily reach the level of a small civil war. Indigene-settler conflict is the kind of historical and ongoing struggles between the indigenous peoples and the settler's societies, often resulting from displacement, land right, resources, cultural differences, power imbalance, injustice and discrimination.

From the foregoing, conflict are driven at both social and physical levels. It is a threat and disagreement that occur between two or more ethnic engaging in a fight which usually causes destructions and there by undermining the socio-economic development of a community or societies.

What then is development and socio-economic development?

## c. Concept of Development

The word development usually connotes an improvement over a particular situation or condition, development in this sense, can be view from the perspective of economic factors, social, cultural, administrative factors, and technological factors. It means a step towards an improvement or a positive change. It could be a change from simple to complex, or from low level to a higher one. It is a movement towards a more desirable state.

According to Todaro, (1977), development should not be limited to economic alone, even though the economic factors are for development, he maintain that development is a multidimensional processes involving the re-organization, re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. He further maintain that development must be view from the holistic, this means that development involve radical changes in institution, social, and administrative structures as well as people's attitudes and sometime even their custom and belief.

To Goulet (2002) development means obtaining the good life, he identified three elements, which he refers to as a core values of development;

a. Life sustenance- the ability to provide basic needs such as housing, clothing, food, healthcare and minimum education etc. Development must

have the objectives of providing these basic needs.

b. Self –esteem- this has to do with feeling of self-respect and independent. To him, individual and society must be able to relate on equal terms.

c. Freedom-this has to do with freedom from servitude. According to him, development must eliminate all forms of servitude be it gender barriers or gender inequality, political, economic, social etc and nations must be to relate with each other on equal terms.

According to Walter Rodney (1972), for development to occur, the individual mind must be developed, because it is when you develop the mind of people that they will in turn develop the society at large. In the same vein, Seer (1972) poses three basic questions about the meaning of development when he asserts that the question to ask about a country's development is therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development.

From the above definitions, development is viewed as a multi-dimensional process involving the political, cultural and economic transformation of society. In other words, development is a total change or improvement in the lives of

people in society. Indigene-Settlers conflicts stands as a recurrent and significant issue playing the socio-political landscape of Nigeria, posing setback to development. The aftermath of conflicts are extensive destruction and leaving the task of rebuilding.

Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. Its purpose is to maintain the social, and material wellbeing of the nation and its people with the aim of achieving the highest possible level of human development. Chrisman (1984) as cited in Ijere (2024) sees socio-economic development as a process of societal advancement, where improvements in the wellbeing of people are generated through strong partnership between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society.

We can infer from the forgoing definitions that socio-economic development is the improvement and advancement in the general wellbeing or standard of living and the economic life of citizens.

### d. Empirical Review on Indigene-Settlers Conflict in Nigeria.

Cinjel and Onah (2015) conducted a study on Indigenes and Non-indigenes conflict: A study of Jos North local government area of Plateau State, 2000-2014. The study adopted a combinations of methods, the secondary and primary sources of data collections. The Frustration Aggression Theory was adopted and utilized as the theoretical framework of the study. The study reveal that the conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State is more of ethnic and politics than religion and

the study recommends the creation of good political platform, thorough education of Nigerians to accept the pluralistic nature of the society, strengthening of the political participation, constitutional amendment among others.

Nwugwu, (2016) carried out a study on Indigenes and Settlers conflict in Nigeria: A negation to national integration and nation building. Qualitative method for documentary evidence and content analysis was applied as a method of data analysis. The study revealed that lopsided redistribution of societal benefits and unhealthy struggle for scarce economic resources, cultural heritage syndrome and distrust are the main causes of Indigenous claim and settlers discrimination.

Dusu, and Oni (2020) conducted a study on understanding the indigene-settlers conflict in Plateau State: towards the integration of primordial and instrumental theoretical frame works in Nigeria. The study adopted explanatory research design as a secondary method of data to explain an account for the indigene-settler conflict in Plateau State. The Primordial Theory of Ethnicity, Instrumental Theory of Ethnicity, and Integrative Model were used to underpin the study. The study suggested that there should be conscious efforts in the development and integration of comprehensive theoretical frameworks, applied to understanding the conflicts aimed at fostering scholarship and policy that allows for making effective and holistic interventions for perpetual peacebuilding.

Agbu, Zhema & Agbu (2020) carried out an investigative study into the causes and effects of ethno-religious conflicts on women and children in Wukari and Ibi Local Government Areas of Taraba State, Nigeria, 1991-2020, they adopted a multi-disciplinary approach. They adopted primary and secondary sources of data and they study reveal that ethno-religious conflicts in the study areas have severe effects on women and children, causing not only deaths of husbands, children, siblings and loved ones, but destruction of their homes, amenities, among others.

Cinjel and Kefas (2024) conducted a study on Mwaghavul arable farmers – Fulani herdsmen conflict and socio-economic development in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State. The study is anchored on the Cumulative Frustration and Reaction Theory of conflict. They used a non-experimental research design for the study. Emphasis was based on survey research design and precisely, a cross sectional research design. The sample size was 474 and purposive, random and cluster sampling were used. The study also generate data from both primary and secondary data. They revealed that conflict has adverse effect on socio-economic development (schools, businesses, mutual trust, agricultural product, etc.)

e. **Nature and History of Indigene-Settler Conflicts in Wukari Local Government Area**

The nature of indigene-settler conflict in Wukari has been for ages and have been occurring and re-occurrence in nature. The history of indigene-settler conflict in the area have their basis from several factors or causes and at different periods and different actors are involved. According to Agbu and Varvar (2017) the historical link between the Jukun and Tiv predates colonial period. During that period, their relationship was cordial, however, between the colonial and post-colonial periods at different occasions their relation went sour resulting in outbreak of conflict and clashes beween the two goups. The first conflict was that of 1959 which occurred between the Jukun and Tiv. The major cause of the conflict were said to be traceable to the advent of British in Nigeria, there were massive influx of the Tiv in the area who were perceived as immigrants and those who have not regards to the Jukun constituted authority. The census of the 1946 and that of 1956 which shows dominance of the Tiv in the area and the Jukun were not even listed as one of the ethnic groups in the division that was created by the British (Best, Idyorough & Shehu, 2004). In addition, the 1964 and 1976 also witnessed another political and economic conflict. The creation of Wukari Federation Local Council, the roles of the political parties played at that time, the appointment of Dr Samuel Tor as the Commissioner, the Tiv alliance with the Hausa (under the NPC), the securing of the deputy chairman and counsellors seats.

The 1990-1992 witnessed another conflict in Wukari Local Government Area. This conflict was however more devastating and fierce in nature and it affected majority of villages in the area. According to Best, Idyorough and Shehu, (2004), the causes of this conflict were the political issues (political participation in and control of Wukari Local Government Council as well as political

appointments and other resources), others were the involvement of the Tiv in the Wukari Traditional Council, land, rapid population increase of Tiv, renaming of some settlement in Tiv dialect among others. The impact of the conflict were huge as many people were killed, many villages were also burnt. Agbu, (2012), opined that there were an encounter between the Fulani herders and Tiv farmers, but later involve Jukun when Chonku a Jukun settlement on the border between Benue and Taraba States was attacked by the Tiv on the reason that the Jukun were supporting the Fulani.

Furthermore, in 2000, anther conflict erupted between the Jukun and the Tiv. The major cause of the conflict were attributed to: economic land, agitation for political and traditional appointment. The crisis also recorded widespread devastation, many villages were burnt, hundreds were killed, agricultural products and household items were taking away. In same vein, there was another conflict between the Jukun and the Fulani in 2006, this crisis started in Bypyi village in Wukari Local Government Area. It was gathered that a Fulani man invaded one of the farm with his cattle, which belong to a Jukun man and the man was later killed by the Fulani. This singular incidence heightened Fulani and Jukun tension within the area and the neighboring villages which eventually engulfed the entire Local Government Area.

In August 2010, conflict between Christians and Muslims occurred arising from controversy over construction of a Mosque at the Wukari Police Divisional Headquarters along Ibi road. Violent confrontation between the antagonistic religious groups-Christians and Muslims. The incident recorded mass destruction of lives and properties.

Another conflict erupted between the Jukun Christian and the Jukun, Hausa Muslim in 2013, it was more of ethno-religious conflict. According to Sa'as, (2013) a disagreement among youths over a football match provoked one of them which led to killing of Jukun Christian by Muslim mate not long after; the town of Wukari was thrown on fire with lives and property destroyed. This conflict further reoccurred more than five times, many houses were destroyed, and many killed, among others.

The last conflict that occurred in Wukari local government area was the 2019 violence. According to Agbu, Zhema and Agbu, (2020), the violent conflict erupted between Jukun and Tiv from Kente in Wukari Local Government and the conflict engulfed the whole of Wukari, Takum, Ibi and Donga Local Government Areas. The major cause of the conflict was an accusation by the Tiv on Jukun on the account that Jukun were aligning with Fulani to attack and chase Tiv from there settlements. This led to destruction of many lives, properties and there were serious devastation on agricultural production, socioeconomic development of the area.

## Theoretical Framework

There are so many theories of conflict some of which are; economic theory of conflict, the Marxist theory of conflict, frustration and aggression theory of conflict etc. Frustration Aggression theory was used to underpin the study.

## Frustration and Aggression Theory of Conflict

This paper is anchored on Frustration Aggression theory. This Frustration and Aggression theory is adopted to enable us understand clearly the major causative factors of Indigene- Settler conflicts in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

This theory was propounded by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower and Sear in 1939. The theory attempt to explain why there are conflicts in the society and the causes of conflicts. The underlying ideas and assumption of this school of thought is that frustration is a major source of conflict (Dollard et al, 1939). A feeling of frustration is a feeling of disappointment, aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal. The proponents of the theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. This school of thought argues that individuals becomes more aggressive when they perceive obstacles or challenges to what they can achieve or to success (Gore, 1996). This theory argues that when individuals or groups are not given access to livelihood or are constantly deprived of livelihoods for no justifiable reasons, they are bound to react with anger and aggression, which will invariably led to conflict (Berkowitz, 1989).

When people are deprived of their basic needs in the society, there is a tendency and the chance to be anger and this anger can generate violence in the society. Cinjel and Onah, (2015) explains the differences between the expected need satisfaction (what an individual is expected)

## Application of the Theory to the Study

The application of frustration aggression theory to this study will be viewed from the fact that, it is frustration by the groups (Indigenes-Settlers) that always causes most of the conflict in Wukari local government area of Taraba State. It was adopted based on the fact that conflict in Wukari Local Government Area mostly occur as a result of frustration which has been nursed by the conflicting groups in the area. The Settlers have perceived constant deprivations of their livelihoods in the areas of politics, economic, and the social aspect by the Indigenes.

The indigenes often sees these settlers as groups that want to deprive them of their political, economic, and social activities of their areas. The settlers in Wukari Local Government Area are aggrieved whenever they refer them as settlers or non-indigene in Wukari Local Government Area, knowing fully that they have resides in the area for a long period, and the believed that they have high populations in the area, which can help them to succeed at any period of time. These disagreements between the indigenes and settlers that stand as an obstacle to their success or achievement is what often causes anger and aggression which will invariably led to conflict between the two, indigene and the settlers in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

This study assumes that:

(a) The struggle for control of economic land, power and other resources in Wukari local government led to the indigene-settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

(b) Marginalization, population growth, fear of domination and ethno-religious sentiment have also created a problem of indigene-settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba state.

## Research Methodology

This study relied on secondary sources of data which in turn was analyzed using descriptive and explanatory qualitative approach to explain Indigene-Settler conflict and socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area. The paper depends on secondary sources of data mostly from journals, textbooks, materials from the internet, articles, government reports etc. to make inferences and deductions about the variables. The criteria for the selection of data was based on the important words. Explanatory and deductive methods of analysis were employed to justify the data gathered and reviewed.

Furthermore, internet were adopted for the online materials and information such as articles, theses, journals, etc. on Indigene-Settlers conflict, unpublished theses and projects on conflicts etc. The secondary source of data were used as a basis for drawing up a comparison and to further establish the relationship between effect of Indigene-Settlers conflicts and the socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. In addition, the secondary sources of data generated help in literature review.

**Examination of the Causes and Effects of Indigene-Settler Conflict on Socio-Economic Development in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State**

**a. Causes of Indigene-Settler Conflicts in Wukari Local Government Area**

There are not enough available data for the empirical analysis of the causes of the indigene- settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area, however, there are some relevant discussion provided in the literature to show the causes of this conflict and its effects on the socio-economic development in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. Some of these factors are:

- **Economic Factors:** This is one of the major root cause of conflict in Wukari Local Government Area. There are so many economic opportunities in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State ranges from the vast fertile land, bodies of water for fishing and irrigation farming among others. Most of the population in the area depends mostly on cultivation or farming and there is a high demand on land and any little encroachments by the indigene or settlers often lead to conflicts. For instance, Jukun are mostly known for farming and fishing, the Tiv are also known for farming, while the Fulani engages on grazing and all these groups engages on the scare or limited land for economic activities. Corroborating on the above Oji and Eme (2012) studies reveal that a reasonable number of conflicts in Africa and Nigeria communities are traceable to

land scarcity, territorial disputes and competition for the use of land resources. There is also unclear boundary between Wukari Local Area of Taraba State and Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, this unclear demarcation of land boundary often causes conflict between these areas, Goshit (2004), Dunumoye (2003), Akpaeti argues that conflicts is fueled or cause by increasing boundary dispute or land dispute, and the resultant effect of this often affect the socio-economic development of the populations of Wukari Local Areas.

▪ **Political Factor**: This is another factor responsible for Indigene-settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area. The settler often cry that the indigene are marginalizing them over political affairs in area like the chairmanship seat, State Assembly and even the traditional ruler ship. When a local government or community has a people with varied identities and opinion on politics, the consequences are likely to be adverse or devastating, furthermore there is also political violence or crisis among different political parties in the area. The Settlers often complain of some level of marginalization in the aspect of politics in the area of political participation, representation and control of Wukari Local Government Council as well as political appointments and a traditional positions or leadership.

▪ **Increase in Population and Environmental Challenges:** Demographics changes or increase is another causes of Indigene-Settler conflict in Wukari Local Government Area. There is high increase in population of both the Indigene and the Settlers in the area, these has also increase the activities of farming, grazing, fishing and other economic activities. Smith, (2019) opined that population explosions is a global phenomenon characterized by an unprecedented increase in the number of individuals. This surge in population has raised concerns about its impact on the environment, leading to environmental scarcity issues (Brown, 2020). Nigeria's population is on an increase. The National Bureau of Statistics, (2020) has estimated the population of Nigeria at 206 million. Wukari has a population of 325, 600 by the National Population Census (2006), and the projected population of 374,800 (Annual Population Change, 2022). These population mostly depend on land for farming, grazing and other economic activities. Increase in population in the area has increase the quest of farming by both Indigene and the Settler, these farming activities has expanded and most farmers has encroached into the land that were earlier earmarked as grazing routes and reserves, water points and cattle routes have been infringe by farmers. In addition, Fulani's cattle's hardly find a clear root to follow for grazing, these feud

mostly led to conflict. To buttress point, Akpenpuun, (2018) opined that demographic changes, including population growth have heightened pressure on limited resources, leading to increased dispute.

- **Kidnapping and Armed Robbery**: There were serious kidnapping and other related criminalities activities along Wukari-Takum, Wukari-Katsinala Roads, Wukari-Kente roads, Wukari– Tsonkundi roads. There were general accusation by the Jukun who were the major victims of kidnapping that the Tiv and the Fulani are the one perpetrating these criminal activities. These perception by the Jukun fueled most of the Indigene- Settler violence in the Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. There are challenges of kidnapping and robbing in most of the roads that links to Tiv and Fulani settlement in the area and that must of the Jukun have the perception that either Tiv or Fulani are major suspect of kidnaping activities and many of their captors are mostly from Jukun tribe.

- **Diversity:** This is another root cause of Indigene-settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area. Diversity is the quality of being varied. The indigene and the settlers' have differences in opinion, beliefs, views, perceptions, interests, goals or needs. Any little encroachment of these differences mostly trigger conflict in the areas. Most of the occurrence and reoccurrence of the conflict in the areas is as a result of differences in the belief and perceptions of the people.

- **Illiteracy level:** Illiteracy is considered to speak about people who are either uneducated, unable to read, and write or who considered to be below the level of ability that is functional within any particular society. Illiteracy is a common problem in Wukari local government areas, majority of the population (especially the youth) of the areas do not understand the meaning of peace, or crisis and the implication of the clashes on development or social-economic development and that is why any little argument can lead to Indigene - Settlers conflict. In addition, the implication of this illiteracy in the areas are reduction in the quality of standard of living, which has worsened the hope of the survival owing to problems such as lack of access of basic education, school, water, etc.

**b. Effect of Indigene - Settlers Conflict on the Socio-Economic Development.**

The indigene -settler's conflict has so many negative impact on the socioeconomic development of Wukari Local Government Area. Some of the effects are:

- **Displacement of People from their Communities:** The various conflicts in Wukari since 2006 to 2016 has been disastrous. There were heavy humanitarian crisis on the people in Wukari Local Government Area. Thousands of people were displaced from their various communities and

areas. Many were killed, many residential houses and shops were burnt. This displacement of people from their areas, villages and communities has caused untold hardship in the Local Government Area as many people rely on their family members for support.

- The effects of Indigene-Settler conflicts in Wukari Local Government Area is enormous as report shows that approximately 16,747 persons were displaced from their ancestral home, and approximately 3,185 lives were lost, about 6,677 houses, and other properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. In addition, out of the 10 wards in Wukari Local Government Area 8 wards and 25 villages were affected (Nigeria Red Cross Society, 2013) The effects are so devastating to the extent that it affected the socioeconomic development of the area in terms of education, businesses, agricultural activities etc. The effect of the conflict on agriculture are more devastating as some of people cannot cultivate in a large quantities due to the fear of unknown or of the future, some of the investors and the buyers are also scare of visiting the areas as a result of unforeseen circumstances or the further occurrence of the conflict in the area.

- **Reduction in Agricultural Productivities**: This is another effect of Indigene-Settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area. Indigene-Settlers conflict in Wukari local government area have often led to the lost in production of agricultural products. Wukari is known as a home for agricultural products such as Yam, Maize, Groundnut, Millet, Rice among others. This lost or reduction in agricultural product has led to decreases in family income, affect the education of the children, low food supply in the market. Although there is not reliable statistic to show the loss in the agricultural productions of the area. The conflict in Wukari Local Government Area has affected agricultural activities, most people are afraid to go to the far areas for farming and some villages like Bakyu, Asa, Chunku, Deke, Agena, etc. are deserted due to the conflict.

- Most of the people were killed in most of the conflicts were male which forms the major workforce of agricultural activities in the area, and most of the farmers cannot longer cultivate in large quantities because of the future occurrence of conflict in the area and cannot invest largely on agriculture. The conflict has affected food crises not only in Wukari but Nigeria as a nation.

- **Youth Engagement in Drugs, Stealing, kidnaping:** This is another effect of Indigene-Settlers conflict in Wukari local government area. Majority of the unemployed youth now engaged in drugs and stealing of goods (both agricultural and non-agricultural) product to make a living. This have devastating effect on local government area. These are link to unemployment of the youth in the area. The effects of the conflicts are devastating and challenges as almost all the areas in Wukari has a joint were majority of the youth take drugs and there is high rate of stealing and other social vices.

### c. Summary of Findings

From the analysis, conclusion were drawn in line with the objectives of study. The findings shows that land, political, kidnapping, and stealing, fear of domination and diversity are the major causes of indigene- Settlers conflicts in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. This is in line with the reports of Manu et al, (2014) and Alabi, (2017) who identified competition over land, struggles for leadership positions, culture, poverty and differences in values are the common causes of conflicts in Nigeria. Onyemeachi, (2014) which link ethnic violence to poor governance and competition for land, and power by ethnic groups and that most of the ethnic crisis in Nigeria can be traceable to politics. In addition, Olayoku, (2014) reported that some cases of conflicts in Benue, Taraba, Nassarawa states among the Jukun and Tiv, Tiv and Fulani, Egbira and Bassa, Affo and Agatu are triggered due to the pursuit of access to the limited resources which includes chieftaincy position, powers, rivals status, grassland, water spots and grazing route for animals, markets, claim to land and political positions among others.

The Indigene – settlers conflicts in Wukari Local Government Area has great effects as many lives were lost, destructions of properties, reduction of agricultural activities, increase in stealing, drugs, cattle rustling and kidnapping. This is in line with the report of Adekunle and Adisa (2010) that there were loss of lives, farmlands, animals, crops, has much security, social political and economic implications, including impacts on agricultural products in Nigeria. These has led to decrease in family income, education, social amenities, and the rest. These effects has significant relationship with the socioeconomic development of the study area.

## Conclusion

From the above analysis, the study has examined the effects of Indigene-settlers conflict on the socio-economic development of Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba state. Several issue has been identified as the real causes of the Indigene-settlers conflict such as economic factor, diversity, political factors, illiteracy kidnapping and armed robbery, unemployment and poverty among others. It has been noted that the occurrence and reoccurrence of indigene-settlers conflict in Wukari Local Government Area has negative effect on the socio – economic development of the area, as many people were killed, houses were burnt down, must of the youth now engaged in illicit drugs and stealing, and there is general reduction in agricultural products among others.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered:

i.  Government should develop a plan or frame work that will lead to safe returned of the displaced communities and villages in the areas as there are so many villages such as Bazaga, Nwukan, Nwuban, Bakyu, among others that are yet to return to their villages. Assistance should be giving to those that were affected so they can rebuild, engage in meaningfully agricultural practices and other trades so they can reduce the level of poverty and

advance standard of living in the local government area.

ii. Enlightenment of the youth – Government at the various level should engage the youth on meaning things such as skills acquisition, loans for the youth to engage in trading, farming which is the main source of income in the area. In addition, National Orientation Agency should also sensitize and enlightens the citizens on the dangers of conflict and the benefits of peace, peace building, and tolerance in the society. Stakeholders should also ensure there is consistency and sustained orientation programme that will change the lives, culture and conduct relationship among the various groups in the area.

iii. Government should constitute peace committees to intervene or mediate in conflict so as to avoid occurrence and re-occurrence of conflict in the area. Peace committees should be comprised of government representative, communities' leaders, religious leaders and some members from the affected areas.

iv. Government should strengthen the mechanism for conflict resolution in the state to regulate and prosecute offenders violating the law set up in the state to regulate the challenges of indigene-settlers conflict.

v. Government should properly check the activities of kidnapping and armed robbery within the area. They should also strengthen law enforcement and security infrastructure in conflict prone areas. Security personnel should be adequately and properly trained on conflict sensitive approaches and community policing to

enhance their ability to prevent and respond to incidents.

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