

Dispersed Settlement as a Strategy for Land Grabbing among the Tiv in the Post-colonial Times

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Abstract

The paper investigates the nexus between land grabbing and Tiv dispersed settlement pattern with its attendant security challenges and underdevelopment. The paper explores both primary and secondary sources for proper and detail investigations. From theoretical structure, the paper was pillared on cultural ecology thesis to validate issues and arguments that has been generated. The paper establishes that Tiv disperse settlements undermine development in terms of infrastructural provision by the government, NGO's, FBO's and stakeholders. While numerous cases of communal conflicts have been rife in contemporary Tiv society as a result of this pattern of settlement. The study also links the vulnerability of present-day Tiv society from external attackers (Fulani herdsman), as a result of dispersed settlement pattern. Arising from these facts, the paper suggests the adoption of clustered settlement pattern for the entire Tiv nation. This could be achieved if the entire Tiv nation is willing to adopt a nucleated settlement template which it is hoped could surmount these challenges.

Keywords: Dispersed, Land Grabbing, Settlement, Security, & Development.

Introduction

Arguably, the Tiv people of Central Nigeria are among those ethnic groups who cherished dispersed settlement pattern. In the pre-colonial period, Tiv dispersed settlements were larger compounds known as the '*ikyar-ya*' settlements. The '*ikyar-ya*' settlements were consummation of family group headed by the '*orya*' (head of the family), who oversees the socio-economic, religio-political, and cultural spheres of all members of the

family. One among the reasons for this pattern of settlement was land grabbing and protection of ancestral land for agriculture production. Because of this reason, pre-colonial Tiv society was organised in dispersed fashion. The advent of the British colonial rule also introduced alien policies that in the final analysis had tremendous effects on Tiv settlements. Such policies led to the emergence of linear and nuclear settlements in places like Makurdi, Gboko, Katsina-Ala, Wannune, Aliade, Taraku, *et cetera*, while the British policy on agriculture production stimulated the dissolution of the '*uikyar-mbayar*' (plural) giving vent for '*uya-mbakiriki*' (smaller households) through systematic land grabbing process as shall be seen in the course of this study.

The paper is made up of several segments beginning with an introduction that is ongoing. Certain concepts like dispersed settlements, land grabbing, security and insecurity were constructed so as to unveil the scope and limits of the paper. The authors laid their foundation for elaborate analysis, and discussion of the underpinning issues from the lenses of cultural-ecology thesis which demonstrates that culture and environment of Tiv society are parameters for their scattered settlement pattern. The researchers also examined the dynamics for proliferation of such settlements in post-colonial era, and also established a link between Tiv security challenges with attendant underdevelopment. The final aspect of this paper marshalled out a settlement plan for the entire Tiv nation so as to avert further security quagmire.

Conceptual Issues

Disperse Settlements

The concept of dispersed settlement pattern would be used interchangeably with scattered settlement pattern in this work. This is because of their similarity in meaning and usage by geographers and environmental historians. A dispersed settlement is simply a scattered form of settlement. It is a term used for relative placement or composition of a collective of

human beings in a geographically defined territory. The concept of dispersed settlement also looks at how closely members of such a collective reside spatially in relation to other familial or social units. The concept also implies landscape with many farmsteads that are dispersed throughout the area. Dispersed settlements usually take place out of cities and towns where the land is mostly just fields. The look of a scattered settlement is houses and farms randomly spaced far apart from other buildings not following any pattern.¹ One way to look at the subject is to consider the concept of population density or how many individuals may be located in a given zone such as a square mile or square kilometre.² This kind of settlement pattern is found in some societies across the length and breadth of the Nigerian state including the Tiv, Ibo, Ibibio, Bassa-Komu, and other smaller ethnic groups in Central Nigeria. Among the Tiv for example, dispersed settlements consist typically of either modern zinc houses or round huts located in the individual land holdings. There is normally footpath coming from the major road or central places like church, school, market square, clinic, and farm yard which leads to a number of living quarters located far apart in the bush. Members of the extended family occupy dwellings on their individual plots within the lineage. Articulating the importance of a dispersed settlement; E. Mundi & S. Ogunnride asserts that:

It allows the farmers to practice mixed farming where environmental factors are favourable. This is because the farmers are always around to take care of their livestock. Farmers are settled on their farms and hence do not have to waste money and time travelling long distances between their homes and the farms. It gives room for proper town planning if the area has to be rebuilt or resettled. In clustered settlement areas, whenever modernisation comes, a new town altogether

1 See <https://www.slideshare.net/Allie02/geography> . Accessed on 10-04-2020.

2 See www.ehow.com>ehow>culture. Accessed on 10-04-2020.

has to be built (e.g in Lokoja, Zaria, Makurdi, Kano and Jos). It gives individual families some measure of privacy. It gives room for expansion – either in terms of extending the relocation or homestead. It encourages the use of household and farm yard manure in the farmlands surrounding the homestead which are usually utilised for raising vegetables and arable or food crops.³

The authors underscore the importance of scattered settlements and its impact on such communities. Among the Tiv for example, hitherto, dispersed settlement serve as a potent tool in securing ancestral land which the people are prepared to die for it. This strategy has encouraged plantation farm system and transforms the economic life of several people in the post-colonial Tiv society. Although, the disadvantages of dispersed settlement are also many and needs to be isolated for proper scrutiny in the proceeding paragraphs. Again, E. Mundi & S. Ogunride were not far from the truth when they established that:

Social amenities or services such as water, school, electricity, medical services, etc. cannot be supplied economically. When these are available, people have long distances to travel to avail themselves of such facilities. People living in isolated huts located in thick bushes tend to be relatively psychologically isolated. They are more suspicious of strangers, more superstitious and more conservative than those in compact settlements. As people live in relatively isolated homesteads, it is more difficult to bring them together for meetings and information on technologies (innovations) which tend to diffuse more slowly than in clustered settlements. People in scattered settlements are also more susceptible or prone to robberies and criminal attacks than those in clustered or nucleated settlements. It is usually complex for strangers to

³ Mundi, E. & Ogunride, S. *Introduction to Rural Sociology*, (Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria, 2008), Pg. 25.

delineate the village boundaries either for service purposes or research.⁴

From the forgoing, there is a security disconnect with dispersed settlements. This simply underscores the logic behind security challenges being it political, socio-religious and economic with such communities in contemporary times.

Land Grabbing

Land grabbing is not a new phenomenon but as ancient as the world itself. It is a lawful or unlawful, direct or indirect way of acquiring large scale land in a society. J.S. Borras & J. Franco assert that: land grabbing is the power to control large quantities of land and landed resources for capital accumulation in response to food security crises, short or long-term climate change impacts, and financial exigencies.⁵ This means, land grabbing is a subset of the much larger process of large-scale land acquisitions. It is in this wise that J. Franco *et al* argued that: 'Land grabbing is usually portrayed as an illegitimate seizure of land from a person or people that leads to their expulsion from the land'.⁶ Reinforcing this argument, International Land Coalition has defined land grabbing as: 'deals that lack free, prior and informed consent by land-users ... and are carried out corruptly and without proper democratic participation'.⁷ In the context of this paper, land grabbing is a tactical approach being it legal or illegal in acquisition of ancestral land for the purpose of agricultural production.

Security and Insecurity

Security is a fragile and significant issue which conveys different meanings to scholars, analysts, policy makers and organizations

⁴ Mundi, E. & Ogunride, S. *Introduction to Rural Sociology*, Pg. 26.

⁵ Borras Jr, S., & Franco, J. "From Threat to Opportunity-Problems with the Idea of a Code of Conduct for Land-Grabbing". *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal* Vol. 13, No 2, 2012, Pp. 507-523.

⁶ Franco, J. et al *The Global Land Grab A Premier*, TNI Agrarian justice Programme, 2013.

⁷ See International Land Coalition definition cited in Franco, J. et al *The Global Land Grab A Premier*, TNI Agrarian justice Programme, 2013.

across the globe. Fundamentally, security has to do with the presence of peace, safety, gladness and the protection of human and physical resources or absence of crisis or threats to human dignity, all of which facilitate development and progress of any human society.⁸ Agreeing with this position O. Ogaba opines that:

Security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people. Thus internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies, which could undermine internal cohesion, and the corporate existence of a country and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people.⁹

The concept of security on a very broader perspective encompasses both physical and psychological aspect of human existence. That is to say, the total wellbeing of man which include his material needs, free from all kinds of sickness, environmental dangers among others. S. Ochoche was more forthcoming when he asserts that:

Security is more than military security or security from external attacks. For many inhabitants in the developing countries, security is conceived as the basic level of the struggle for survival. Therefore, in order to provide an integrated African Security Assessment, the non – military dimension of security should be added. Henceforth, security as a concept should be applied in its broader sense to include economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, equality of life security and technological security.¹⁰

8 Afolabi, M. 'Concept of Security', accessed on: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303899299>. 07-04-2020. 19-05-2020.

9 Ogaba, O. "Security, Globalization and Climate Change: A Conceptual Analysis". in Osita E. E. & Ogaba O. (ed.) *Climate Change and Human Security in Nigeria*. (Lagos: NIIA, 2010), Pg. 35-36.

10 Ochoche, S. "Electoral Violence and National Security in Nigeria", in *African Peace Review*.(Vol. 1 No. 1, 2007), Pg. 27.

From the above quotation, the idea of security focuses basically on individuals having access to safe drinking water, shelter, food, security for every household, employment opportunities, eradication of poverty, social and political inclusion, good governance, environmental protection and access to quality healthcare services. One cannot say to be protected until one is economically, socially, educationally, medically, politically and environmentally protected.

Absence of security leads to insecurity which is simply characterised by absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe, among others.¹¹ These attributes connote the fact that there is vulnerability to harm, loss of life, property or livelihood. More elaborately, insecurity is a condition that exists due to lack of effective measures put in place to protect individuals, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. It also encompasses a situation in which individuals in a given society cannot go about their daily activities as a result of threat to and harmful disruption of their lives and property. Insecurity entails lack of protection from crime (being unsafe) and lack of freedom from psychological harm (unprotected from emotional stress resulting from paucity of assurance that an individual is accepted, has opportunity and choices to fulfil his or her own potentials including freedom from fear.¹² Therefore, a nation full of security challenges is bound to be underdeveloped hence development is antithetical to insecurity.

Theoretical Framework

To explain the link between Tiv dispersed settlements, and security challenges in post-colonial society, the Cultural Ecology

11 Achumba, I. C. *et al* "Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development" *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, (Vol.4, No.2, 2013).

12 Achumba, I. C. *et al* "Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development", Pg. 36.

thesis has been examined so as to drive home our arguments and submissions. In his contribution to the 'Method of Cultural Ecology', J. Steward emphasizes that culture and environment are not the separate spheres but are involved in the dialectic interplay or what is called 'reciprocal causality'.¹³ Two ideas are important in the reciprocal causality: the idea that neither environment nor culture is a given but that each is defined in terms of the other, and the idea that environment plays an active not just a limiting or selective role in human affairs. J. Steward also notes that the principal meaning of ecology is 'adaptation to environment'.¹⁴ It is on this premise that A. Rambo notes:

The low density and high degree of dispersal of the Shoshone population, their organization into small family bands with highly flexible residence and lack of territoriality, and their lack of permanent leaders, all reflected the inability of their simple technology to extract a larger and more stable supply of food from the thinly scattered and sporadically available resources of the Great Basin environment.¹⁵

The above argument reflects J. Steward and R. Murphy's idea of what cultural ecology entails.¹⁶ To them, the concept is the study of processes by which a society adapts to its environment. Thus, cultural ecology recognizes the social organization as an adaptive response to a group living in a particular environmental setting. Reinforcing this argument, J. Steward and R. Murphy further assert that "the theory and method of cultural ecology posit a relationship between the resources, the environment, the tools and knowledge available to exploit them

13 Steward, J. *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution*, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1955, Pg.30-41.

14 Steward, J. *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution*, Pg. 39.

15 Rambo, A. 'Development of Conceptual Framework for Human Ecology'. A Working Paper Series, No. 4. (Kualalumpur: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Malaya), 1979, Pg. 5.

16 Steward, J. & Murphy, R. *Evolution and Ecology*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), Pg. 44.

and the patterns of work necessary to bring the technology to bear upon the resources."¹⁷

Therefore, J. Steward and R. Murphy's concept of cultural ecology has been useful in providing a new perspective for comprehending how societies develop an adaptive response to the immediate environment. In understanding this man-environment relationship, the cultural-ecology thesis has provided a paradigm in comprehending Tiv disperse settlement. The cultural ecology thesis as used in this paper is double-sword. That is to say, the theory can be explained from two dimensions.

Firstly, from the cultural perspective, it is the contention of this paper that Tiv are agrarian people who because of land shortage and other factors left their ancestral 'Swem' homeland for the fertile Benue Valley. Tiv cherished and valued their land which is not saleable and is collectively owned by the family. T. Makar underscores the importance the Tiv attached to their land that:

Land was a natural property of the family group and the family regarded it as their most priced commodity for which they were prepared to die, should their right to it be threatened. Thus each family group considered its ancestral land as a natural endowment.¹⁸

To protect their most priced commodity (land), the Tiv prefer to settle on their individual family lands instead of gathering in a nuclear pattern. J.L. Nyagba corroborates this argument that:

The highly fragmented nature of the settlement patterns among the Tiv is largely due to their attachment to their farmland which they inherited from their ancestors, and each household prefers to live on their farmland and consequently establish their defacto claim on the

¹⁷ Steward, J. & Murphy, R. *Evolution and Ecology*, Pg. 22.

¹⁸ Makar, T. *The History of Political Change among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1994), Pg.46.

land and also measure of independence.¹⁹

The Tiv traditional culture which attaches much importance to their land, and protects it against intruders therefore fashions dispersed settlements hitherto found in Tiv society. This is systematically done through the occupation of the various family lands called the '*Utsa*' (fallow land). The '*utsa*' are by-product of shifting cultivation and they clearly define how family farm land is distributed culturally for the purpose of settlement.

Secondly, from the ecology standpoint the landscape of Tiv society falls within the Guinea Savannah Belt which is characterised by glass and scattered tress vegetation (both short and tall tress/glasses), resulting from persistent clearing of tress for farming purposes. There is also low rainfall and long duration of dry season in this area, while the soil type is tropical ferruginous which according to A. Lyam has low organic content and are generally lateritic and not too fertile.²⁰ Such soils are not capable of supporting a gainful intensive agriculture for long time resulting to the policy of shifting cultivation. The area is also generally low-lying however, this low-lying monopoly is intercepted by gentle rising hills such as: *Ikwe, Ushongo, Mkar, Mwange, Ibinda, Ngokuv* among others which in no way prevents scattered homestead. Therefore, the topography of Tivland easily accommodates all kinds of settlement including: disperse, linear and nuclear settlement as seen in pre-colonial to post-colonial Tiv society. Whereas, Tropical Evergreen Rain Forest Belt prevents scattered settlement pattern. The major strength and justification for adoption of Cultural-Ecological theory in this paper is its ability to situate Tiv dispersed settlement from the lenses of both demographic and cultural dimensions. In the final analysis, the theory x-ray

19 Nyagba, J. L. 'The Geography of Benue State: *Benue a Compendium: The Land of Great Potentials*. Denga, D. I. (eds.), (Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers Ltd, 1995), .

20 Lyam, A. "The Ecological Foundation of Communal Crisis within Benue and Its Environs" Bur, A. (Ed.) *Communal Relations Conflict and Crisis Management Strategies*, (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2002), Pg. 17.

why the Tiv settles in dispersed fashion in the Benue Valley in the post-colonial era.

Geographical Environment of Tivland

Tiv area of Benue State is located between lat. $6^{\circ} 35'$ and $8^{\circ} 10'$ N and long. $8^{\circ} 04'$ and 10° E, in the Benue plains of the East Central Nigeria, occupying an estimated landmass of about 29,300 square kilometres.²¹ The area is made up of 14 Local Governments with an estimated total population of 2,920,481 as 2006 census indicates.²² The major towns in Tivland are: Makurdi, Gboko, Katsina-Ala, Zaki-Biam, Vandeikya, Adikpo, and Aliade. The area is boarded in the North by Nasarawa State, in the North-East by Igalaland of Kogi, in the South-West and East by Obudu LGA of Cross Rivers State, and in the West by the Idoma people. It is further reveals that the North-Eastern part of Tivland shares border with Taraba State as clearly captures by the below map. (Fig.1)

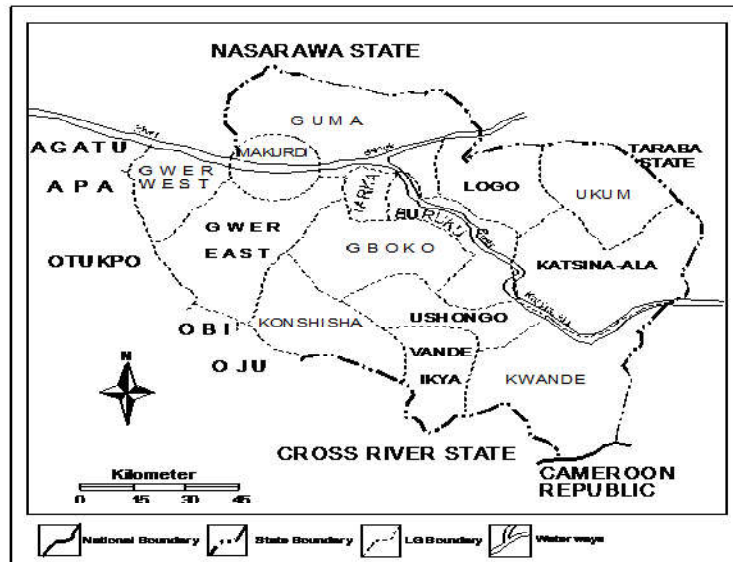


Fig 1: Map of Tivland Showing the 14 Local Government Areas.

Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey Makurdi (2012)

21 Tyubee, B. "Influence of Extreme Climate on Communal Disputes and Violence in Tiv Area of Benue State". In Gyuse, T. at al, (Ed.) *Conflicts in the Benue Valley*, (Benue State University Makurdi, 2006), P. 94.

22 See www.Nigerianstat.Govt.Ng, accessed on 09-04-2020.

The area is drained by two sets of Rivers: River Konshisha, Ambir, and Aya of Cross River Basin, and River Katsina-Ala, Guma, Nagi, Gwer, and Mu of River Benue Basin. The Relief is generally low lying except around the South-Eastern part where mountainous ridges are found.²³ The study area falls within the tropical wet and dry climate according to Koppens classification. The climate is primarily influenced by the seasonal migration of the inter-tropical discontinuity which also related to the annual movement of the Sun. The dominant soil in Tivland is the tropical ferruginous which is generally low in the organic matter, bases and cation exchange capacity. Tivland also falls within the Guinea Savannah vegetation characterized by varying proportions of trees and grasses.²⁴ The natural vegetation is under threat by deforestation through farming, logging, road construction, settlement and fuel wood harvest. Thus, agriculture is the main economic activity of the people while other primary activities like fishing, hunting, blacksmithing, and wood carving are still practiced. Livestock are also reared but on small and subsistent levels. Crop production takes place within the raining season which occurs between April to October. Crop harvest on the other hand occurs immediately after the cessation of the rains and by January, most of the crops are harvested for consumption, sale and storage.²⁵ During the hot dry season, farmers usually rest and prepare for the next commencement of farming season.

Dispersed Settlements as Land Grabbing

Tivland has been characterised by a great degree of dispersed settlements in post-colonial period. Larger compounds have disintegrated especially among Southern and Central Tivland where there is higher population densities. Because of this

23 See Uza, D. *Animal Resources Potential in Benue State Land of Potentials: A Compendium*, (Calabar: Rapid Educational Press), 1995, Pg. 126-138.

24 Tyubee, B. "Influence of Extreme Climate on Communal Disputes and Violence in Tiv Area of Benue State". In Gyuse, T. *at al* (Ed.) *Conflicts in the Benue Valley*, (Benue State University, Makurdi, 2006), Pg.96.

25 Tyubee, B. "Influence of Extreme Climate on Communal Disputes and Violence in Tiv Area of Benue State", P. 97.

reason, there is curiosity in acquisition of land resources using both formal and informal ways of land acquisition. One among the dubious and archaic ways of land acquisition among the Tiv is '*inya-kperan*' (loosely translated to mean; an aggressive way to acquire land resources).²⁶ Land as a factor for production is held with high esteem among the people because of farming. Therefore, occupation of empty vast lands in the post-colonial Tiv society has determined those kinds of dispersed settlements that emerged. Expatiating this point, it has been argued that land is fixed and scarce among the Tiv. This explains why people no longer like to settle in larger compounds and commonly use the land as it was the case in pre-colonial times. Tiv have preferred to occupy their individual households and make use of their '*kungur*' (backyard), for plantation farms and domestication of animals. Oral interview with Mayange Imande reinforces this argument that smaller compounds are evident in places where planting of commercial trees is done on a large scale as people in such places utilise their *kungur* (backyards) as orchards. He further averred that the Kunav, Gaav, Ukan, and Jemgbegh people have orchards behind their settlements. These orchards contains commercial trees like oranges, mangoes, pears, cola nut, *et certera* planted around the backyard of the individual households otherwise known as *kungur*.²⁷

Oral interview with Terwanger Asemakaa reinforces the notion that commercial trees have becomes steady source of money to Tiv farmers turning some into millionaires especially in Central and Southern Tiv regions.²⁸ Arising from this same line of reasoning A. Ahenakaa & I. Achineku chronicled the names of Tiv farmers in Kparev axis who made money from citrus farm.²⁹ Such farmers at the same time serves as mentors to the younger generation of farmers in Tiv society because of the huge amount of money they obtained seasonally from their

26 Oral Interview with Akeraga Abough, 28-10-2017.

27 Oral interview with Mayange Imande, 10-11-2017.

28 Oral interview with Terwanger Asemakaa , 11-11-2017.

29 Ahenakaa, A. and Achineku, I. *N.K.S.T. At Fifty the Journey so Far*, (Makurdi: The Return Press Ltd, 2007), Pg.

citrus farms.³⁰ Citrus is one of the most abundant commercial trees among the Tiv people. Others are: mango tree, Banana plant, Guava, peers, and so forth. Commercial trees give a lot of money to Tiv farmers in the post-colonial era making their owners wealthy men. Owners of such farms in Tivland are well known with assets like: zinc houses, stores, and commercial vehicles, among others but also encouraged aggressive land hunger among the people leading to proliferation of smaller households.

It should also be noted that other parts of Tivland like Ukum and Shitile as well practiced extensive commercial agriculture but '*uikyar-mbayav*' are still visible in some places. For example, the Tse Amoaior Agber and the Tse Shayange in Shitile are typical examples of '*uikyar-mbayav*' in this part of Tivland. In fact, there are a lot of larger compounds in existence among the Gaambe-ya axis of Shitile.³¹ The Ukum and Shitile people specialise in the production of yams, one of the major staple food crops in Nigeria. The magnitude of the production and trade in yams in these areas can be better appreciated if it is known that although the Zaki-Biam yam market is the biggest, there are other equally large yam markets at: Ugba, Anyiin, Gbeji, Jootar, Kyado, Peva, Tor-Donga, Abaji and Dan-Anacha. Even without statistics from these markets, it is easy to form a mental picture of the status of yam as the dominant commodity in the economy of Tiv people of this area.³² The idea behind land grabbing and proliferation of '*uya-mabkiri*' in most parts

30 Ahenakaa & Achineku chronicled the names of Tiv farmers with large orange orchards. In Gaav, the Zaki Kuma Cheren had over 10,000 stands of citrus, in Mbadede Ityovenda Igber had over 5, 000 stands of citrus, Akua Asen had over 2, 000 stands of citrus, Iyonguhime Yua had over 5, 000 stands of citrus, Zenda Ikyaaave had over 6, 000 stands of citrus, in Ushongo late Adaaku Aboshim had over 2, 500 stands of citrus, late I. Aatsav had over 2, 000 stands of citrus, P.I. Anzenge had over 4, 000 stands of citrus, Hon. A. Anembe had over 3, 000 stands of citrus, T. Ikyaa had over 2, 000 stands of citrus, in Mbagen Mrs Nguyilan Wombo had over 2, 500 stands of citrus, in Ipav Vaaswem Gbenda had over 3, 000 stands of citrus, in Yandev Tooche Genyi had over 2, 000 stands of citrus, while in Mbativ Hon. Orngu Dwem had over 2, 500 stands of citrus among others.

31 Oral Interview with Douglass Saaior, 15-11-2017.

32 Varvar, T.A. "A History of Tiv Rural Migrant Communities in Tivland and Neighbouring Areas, 1900-2000" A PhD Thesis, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2008, Pg. 168-169.

of Tivland is attributable to high population densities. Higher population coupled with commercial agriculture leads to proliferations of '*uya-mbakiriki*' in Tivland as D.E. Vermeer argued thus:

Increased cash crop production in densely populated areas, particularly the Southern Tiv areas, had overshoot the carrying capacity of the land and subsequently brought about a degraded environment which in turn, had by 1960, produced a new crop rotational sequence and also altered the crop systems as well as the settlement patterns (emphasis is mine).³³

The Kparev people, because of population explosion and competition over land resources have migrated to fertile alluvial soils of Eastern and Northern Tivland as well as Nasarawa, Taraba, and Plateau States in the post-colonial period. In Eastern Tivland, there is high concentration of migrant groups of Kparev extraction in places like:

Katsina-Ala, Abaji, Tor-Donga, Kasar, Senga, Peva, Abako, Amaafu, Gbor, Gondo-Zua, Tyogbenda-Udende, Ugba, Anyiin, Abeda, Zaki-Biam, Sankera, Ayati, Dyom, Gbeji, Agena, Chito, Gbagir, Afia, Vase, Kado, Tine-Nune, Jootar, Ato-Gbenda and Alabar, among others. In Northern Tivland, such centres included Agasha, Naka, Nagi, Aondona among others.³⁴

The position of this paper is that population explosion and competition over land resources have transformed the dispersed nature of Tiv settlements in the post-colonial period with glaring impact especially on Central and Southern Tivland, while significant number of people in these areas have migrated to other parts within and outside Tivland.

³³ Vermeer, D.E. Population Pressure and Crop Rotational Changes among the Tiv of Nigeria. *Annals Of Association Of American Geographers*, (Vol. 60, 1970), Pg. 299-314.

³⁴ Varvar, T.A. "A History of Tiv Rural Migrant Communities in Tivland and Neighbouring Areas, 1900-2000", Pg.173.

Oral interview with Iorbee Awua straighten this contention by elaborating on other dimensions involved in the '*inya-kperan* syndrome' among the Tiv that: 'even in places where land is vast, the elder would instigate his younger ones to occupy the extreme axes of their vast land and in this way, the *ikyar-ya* would be dissolved leaving it to become the '*iche*'.³⁵ He further describes this strategy as '*huwa u inyaa*' (land grabbing) in contemporary Tiv society. Iorbee's analysis has disputable issues that needs better explanations. What he described as avarice for land by contemporary Tiv people has being the policy of a Tiv man protecting any parcel of his ancestral land even in the pre-colonial era as rightly observed by a source:

The Tiv ... do not conceive their land simply as a tract of their earth on which they lived. For them land is sacred. It is the land of their ancestors ... it is understandable that they are usually serious about their land. They are always on the guard against encroachment on their land and they take every measure to protect their land.³⁶

Land as a factor of production is completely fixed and it is a source of most conflicts in contemporary Nigeria and the whole world at large.

Another factor for dispersed settlement among the Tiv in the post-colonial period is '*tsav*' (witch-craft), which is believed to have caused death. Therefore, sudden deaths within the '*ikyar-ya*' often leads to suspicion and accusation of some family members as '*mbastav*'. In certain instances, the '*igba*' (matrikins) would collect her people who were victimised by the '*mbatsav*' and by the time they return back to their '*ityo*' (patrikins), they would prefer to settle separately from their '*iche*' which before then was a very large compound.³⁷ And lastly is '*Iyuhe*' (jealousy/envy), which has being another potent factor that

³⁵ Oral interview with Iorbee Awua , 30-11-2017.

³⁶ Alubo, O. *Ethnic Conflict and Citizenship Crises in the Central Region*, (Ibadan: Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies, 2000), Pg. 138.

³⁷ Torkula, A. *Death and burial customs of the Tiv people of Central Nigeria*. (Jos: Midland Press Ltd, 2004), Pg. 17.

leads to dissolution of most 'uikyar-mbayar' among the Tiv in the post-colonial period. *Iyuhe* according to C.I. Utov: 'is prevalent in Tiv society to an unprecedented level'.³⁸ M. Jibo paints the picture of *iyuhe* elaborately:

A Tiv man does not wish to have another Tiv man to excel and, this *iyuhe* is only applicable to fellow Tiv. Anything will be done to block a fellow Tiv from achieving fame, wealth, position, prestige, land, large produce, children *et cetera* ... the truth is, when it comes to *iyuhe i eren* the Tiv probably have no rival! They are so adept at this that they have developed two prominent brands of it. The first is the naked type in which one goes out with a clear intention to thwart the progress of a fellow Tiv... the other type of *iyuhe* which is widespread among the Tiv is known as *bem iyuhe* (friendly envy). In this type the person using it poses as if he wishes to help the targeted individual.³⁹

The '*iyuhe*' syndron has truncated love, peace and unity among siblings dissolving existing '*uikyar-mbayar*' settlements into '*uya-mbakiriki*' as seen in the post-colonial Tivland. Most people today prefer to stay independently on their own rather than staying in larger compounds to avoid such kinds of family problems. This therefore explains the dynamic nature of dispersed settlements in the post-colonial Tiv society.

Tiv Dispersed Settlements and Security Challenges: A Nexus

Tiv society has been confronted with a lot of security challenges in the post-colonial period as a result of dispersed settlement pattern. For example, communal conflicts, kidnapping, and incessant Fulani herdsmen attacks. Others are lack of road network, pipe born water, electricity, network services, schools, hospitals, dispensaries and so forth. Communal conflicts for example arise from land hunger caused by commercial

³⁸ Utov, C.I. *The Underdevelopment of Tivland Through Land Disputes and Communal Clashes*, (Makurdi: The Return Press, 2000), Pg. 31.

³⁹ Jibo, M. *Tiv Politics since 1959*, (Kastina-Ala: Mandate International, 1993), Pg. 196-201.

agricultural production. Commercial agriculture is the by-product of British colonialism, and has determined the changing nature of dispersed settlements in the post-colonial Tiv society. Some of the reasons for these kinds of settlements is the desire to secure the existing few 'utsar' (fallow land), for the purpose of agricultural activities. Because of this reason, if a Tiv man has ten sons for example, he would prefer each of them to settle on all his 'utsa' rather than staying with him in a single compound. This practice is most common with the Tiv sons of 'Ipusu' (uncircumcised), in the post-colonial time. The Tiv sons of 'Ichongo or Ichongo Tiev'-the Masev, Iharev and Nongov- in certain remotest villages still maintain the Tiv traditional practice of settling in larger compounds or 'ikyar-ya' system. Although, such settlements are still dispersed in nature.⁴⁰ As already mentioned somewhere else in this paper, low population density has little influence on land resources while high population leads to competition and adoption of all strategies to grab land resources hence proliferation of dispersed settlements in such affected areas of Tivland.

Supporting the above arguments, G.A. Doki and A. Boh give the list of land related conflicts in the post-colonial Tiv society, and these conflicts are mostly among the 'Ipusu' sons of Tiv, they are as follows:

Ikyor-Mbayegh crisis; Utange-Mbagwaza crisis both in Ushongo Local Government Area; Ishangev-ya-Ugee; Uyough-Nyiev crisis in Kwande; Mbageva-Mbadim crisis in Gboko; Mbangur-Tsambe crisis in Vandeikya; Usar- Mbayegh crisis in Kwande; Mbaakar-Mbaagoho crisis in Ukum; Mbaliev-Mbakijime in Guma; MINDA-Ipusu crisis in Makurdi; Ukan-Ipav crisis in Ushongo and Gboko respectively and a host of other conflicts in Tiv land.⁴¹

40 Nyagba, J. L. "The Geography of Benue State: *Benue a Compendium: The Land of Great Potentials*". Denga, D. I. (eds.), (Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers Ltd, 1995), Pg.8.

41 Doki, G.A. & Boh, A. "Theatre for Development and the Management of Land Conflicts Amongst the Tiv of Central Nigeria" *Working Paper Series No. 4: Arts, Peace and Conflict*, (Liverpool: Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies, 2008), Pg. 13-14.

Reinforcing this argument A. Bur gives more cases of conflicts which have occurred especially among the 'Ipusu' sons of Tiv. He posited that:

Ikyurav-Tiev (Katsina-Ala LGA) versus Kusuv (Buruku LGA); Mbagen (Buruku LGA) versus Utange (Kwande LGA); Mbagen (Buruku LGA) versus Etulo (Buruku LGA); Mbakijime (Vandeikya LGA) versus Mbatie (Vandeikya LGA); Tsambe (Vandeikya LGA) versus Mbera (Vandeikya LGA); Uyoo-Nanav (Kwande LGA) versus Nyiev (Kwande LGA); Usar (Kwande LGA) versus Mbayegh (Ushongo LGA); Utange (Ushongo LGA) versus Mbayegh (Ushongo LGA); Mbawa-Nyiev (Makurdi LGA) versus University of Agriculture, Makurdi; Tombo-Mbalagh (Buruku LGA) versus Ugondo (Logo LGA); Kaambe (Guma LGA) versus Mbakor (Tarka LGA); Masev (Gwer LGA) versus Shangev-Tiev (Konshisha LGA); Mbashian (Buruku LGA) versus Wuav (Buruku LGA); Ishorov (Buruku LGA) versus Ipav (Gboko LGA); Mbaivende-Ukan (Ushongo LGA) versus Ipav (Gboko LGA).⁴²

All the above mentioned conflicts occurred as a result of land hunger especially among the 'Ipusu' sons of Tiv who settles in much smaller and scattered patterns in the post-colonial era. The scattered nature of Tiv settlements has led to land grabbing in the post-colonial time by few individuals resulting to communal conflicts.

Another dimension of security challenge in the post-colonial Tiv society as a result of dispersed settlement pattern is the issue of Fulani herder's attacks. The soar relationship between these two groups in recent times lies with competition over land and water resources. A Tiv community of 500 persons may be scattered across tens of square kilometres and such settlements are vulnerable to Fulani herdsman attacks as epitomised in; Guma, Logo, Makurdi, Katsina-Ala, Gwer-West, Gwer, Buruku,

⁴² Bur, A. "Communal Crisis and Its Impact on Community Development". in Bur, A (Ed.). *Communal Relations Conflicts and Crisis Management Strategies*, (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2002), Pg. 13.

Kwande, and Tarka LGA's of Benue State. The below table clearly demonstrate those areas that Fulani herdsmen have attacked, killed, kidnapped and destroyed Tiv houses and farms.

Table 1: Dispersed Villages Attacked by Fulani Herdsmen in Tivland, 2011-2014

S/N	Villages attacked by Fulani Herdsmen	Local Government Area
1	Tor-Anyiin, Tor-Ataan, Binev, Mbaya, Mbatsaase, and Mkovough.	Buruku
2	Mkovur and Ortese.	Gboko
3	Mbalom, and Mbahimin Village	Gwer
4	Sengev community, Tse Igba-Uke, Utim, and Aganyi.	Gwer-West
5	Akor village, Tse-Ormeagh, Tse-Kondom, Tom-Ayiin, Iyordye villages, Tse-Torkula, Angyom village, Tse-Usenda, Kasyo, Tse Ortom-Adorogo, Tom-Atar, Bakin Kwata village, Agba-Uko, Azege village, Tse-Aga village, Mbasenge village, Ukpam, Ngorukgan, Tse Chia, Deghkia, Nhumbe, Tse-Nule, Tse-Jonyi, Bam, Pekema, Uge, Iye, Sumaka, and Anbua.	Guma
6	Gbise, Abako, and Asaku.	Katsina-Ala
7	Jato Aka, Ikyoawen Community, Imande Bebeshi, Anyiase, Nyamado Village, Moor, Alaba, Nzaav, and Tyonongu.	Kwande
8	Ayilamo, Anyii, Turan, Ngambe-Tiev, Tse-Akaa, Tse-Orlalu, Ugondo, Iorza, Wachin, Genyi, Ibav, Tse-Gusa, Gafa, Ukura, Pev, Ngorukgan, Tse-Chia, Deghkia, and Nhumbe.	Logo
9	Adeke, Adaka, Shaorga, Orkpe, Tiza, and Kudi.	Makurdi
10	Mbaayo, Tse-Damkor, Avande, Adede, Tse-Ali, Angbaaye, Kotien, Tse-Tiah, Awenebo, Chieke, Tse-Ayange, Tiontyu, and Ukinakya	Tarka
11	Vaase, Gbeji and Mbagum	Ukum

Source: *Save Benue Nigeria, 'Urgent Appeal to Stop the State-Sanctioned Genocide of, and Crimes against Humanity, against the Benue People of Nigeria by Fulani Militant Herdsmen Acting for Powerful Cattle Owners in Nigeria'*, Pp. 8-13. *Diary of Fulani Militia/Herders Attacks on Tarka Local Government Area of Benue State, 2015-Jan.2018.*⁴³

43 Read more at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/04/benue-clashes-natives-herdsmen-settlers>.
Read more at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/01/herdsmen-kill-50-coordinated-attacks-six-benue-communities>.

The above table clearly demonstrates that Guma, Logo, Gwer-West, Buruku and Kwande LGA's were mostly attacked by Fulani herdsmen in Tivland. These are boarder LGAs. Gwer-West, Guma, Makurdi and Logo LGA's boarder with Nasarawa State in the North; while Kwande LGA boarder with Taraba State in the South. Oral sources have shown that the herdsmen took advantage of porous borders to attack Tiv dispersed settlements in these boarder LGAs.⁴⁴ Tyoapine Agar reinforces that they were often assisted by the Alago people residing on the border of Benue and Nasarawa States in Doma town to laid siege on Tiv villages in Benue State.⁴⁵ They were several reports from oral informant that the Fulani herdsmen took refuge in Nasarawa State to terrorised Tiv people in Benue State. The attacks led to displacements of thousands of Tiv people, indiscriminate killings of women and children, rape, torture, destruction of farms and property amounting to billions of naira.

Another security challenge faced by Tiv in the post-colonial era is a disconnect between dispersed settlement and socio-economic infrastructure. It has been established worldwide that in an organised social setting, the government, individuals, corporate organisations, non-governmental organisations, faith based organisations and the likes provide economic and social infrastructure for the development of the society. This therefore means that social and economic infrastructures are best and easily provided where there are nucleated settlements rather than dispersed pattern. It has been observed from fieldwork studies that contemporary Tiv compacted settlements (linear and nuclear) enjoy economic infrastructure (e.g. rural electrification and rural roads), provided by the government. This therefore serves as a catalyst for provision of social infrastructure to such areas by individuals, NGOs, and the government. While Tiv dispersed settlements does not warrant both social and economic infrastructure provision. This is because, houses are scattered or spread in a pattern that rural electrification or road network is practically impossible.

44 Oral Interview with Tertsegh Kai, 27-01-2018.

45 Oral Interview with Tyoapine Agar, 10-01-2018.

Tsenongo Abancha, the then Special Adviser on Rural Development and Cooperatives to the Benue State Government during Governor Gabriel Suswam's administration corroborates this argument:

The scattered settlement pattern of the Tiv people became a major challenge to the government ... it was difficult to bring infrastructural development to them because they are not living in clusters. We are planning a resettlement pattern that will encourage the rural people to live in clusters for development purposes ... it was easier for government to provide amenities such as electricity, water and roads network in Idoma land than in the Tiv areas because the former lived in clusters.⁴⁶

Tsenongo underscores the relevance of clustered settlement against the dispersed pattern of the Tiv. As Akaafele rightly observed, a Tiv community of 500 persons may be scattered across tens of square kilometres while a similar one in the South or North may live in just one or two square kilometres.⁴⁷ To further sustain this argument, J. Tsuwa practically demonstrated how the Tiv people of Quaan-Pan in Plateau State settled dispersedly. His words are captured below:

The Tiv in Quaan Pan practice a segmented settlement pattern where families are divided and settled occupying little portions of land giving room for large empty portions of land for farming activities. In most cases, a father separate from his children giving a gap of between 5-10 kilometres or even more.⁴⁸

Arising from the forgoing arguments and analyses, this paper takes a deeper look into the implications of Tiv dispersed settlements in the post-colonial period with special spot light on development in diverse folds. First, the highly segmented

46 *Daily Trust Newspaper* of September 7th, 2015.

47 See <http://www.iambenue.com/tiv-settlement-pattern>. accessed on 13-04-2020.

48 See <http://www.academix.ng/demo/search/preview> . accessed on 13-04-2020

settlement pattern of Tiv people especially in the post-colonial period made difficult for the government to situate projects such as hospitals, schools and also provide basic amenities such as electricity, water amongst others. This is because the distance between these compounds or homes are too far that it is usually difficult to identify who is to benefit these projects and in many cases, they are beyond the consumption of small households.

Second way is that, many Tiv farmers' in the post-colonial era refuse to give out their farm lands for the citing of economic and social infrastructural projects as a result of dispersed nature of settlements which has been sealed with burial tombs of ancestral lineages. This in essence has continued to deny Tiv people of basic social and economic amenities in the post-colonial period. This in the final analysis has rendered Tiv society underdeveloped in the post-colonial period.

Conclusion

Tiv society is organised in dispersed fashion. One among the factors for Tiv dispersed settlements is land grabbing, and this has defined the dynamic character of Tiv settlements in the post-colonial epoch. Dispersed settlement pattern has done more harm than good in the sense that it has undermined security and development of Tivland. In this wise, there is every need to surmount this challenge so that Tiv society could move forward just like other societies in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper advocate clustered settlement pattern for Tiv society. This is because when people settle in clusters it is always difficult for them to be attacked especially by external invaders. This fact is underscore on the premise that the government often establish security apparatus to protect such organised communities. Furthermore, the locales also take security of their community with seriousness through various means like organisation of vigilante groups and so forth. Apart from this aspect of security, the government easily engage in rural provision of socio-economic infrastructure like: rural electrification, rural road network, rural water projects, and rural health care *et cetera*. The Igbo's, Hausa's and Yoruba's have taken cluster settlements

seriously as such had development even in remotest villages. Having said all this, we therefore suggest that the Tiv traditional institution through the Office of the Tor Tiv should design a template that could accommodate Tiv in clustered fashion. While the academia, religious bodies, and the media would enlighten the entire Tiv nation on the relevance and importance of clustered settlements. This strategy would go a long way in changing the present form of Tiv vulnerable dispersed settlement pattern and enhancing her security and development status in the 21st century.

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