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THE EFFECT OF ETHNIC CONFLICT BETWEEN WAJA AND LUNGUDA ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF GOMBE STATE (2020 - 2023)

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Abstract
This study examined the incessant ethnic conflict between the people of Waja in Balanga Local Government Area and Lunguda in Guyuk Adamawa State and some parts of Gombe State. These two ethnic groups were living peacefully since the creation of Gombe State in 1996. However, recently the hitherto peaceful communities turned enemies by engaging in conflict leading to destruction of lives and property. Therefore, this research is an attempt to examine the causes, effect as well as solutions to the conflict. In specific term, the research well on factors that caused the conflict, the socio-economic effects as well as measures taken by government to resolve it. Relevant Literatures related to this study were reviewed to establish research gap in the previous literature. The research which is anchored on Instrumentalist Theory and used descriptive survey design relied on Primary data where first-hand information were gathered from those conflicting societies about what led to the conflict as well as its effect on those societies. A total number of 100 questionnaires were administered to the research area in order to get information from the population of the study. The findings of this research revealed that land issue was the prime cause of this conflict. It is understood therefore this conflict had led to destruction of lives and properties worth millions of naira and thus the study recommended concerted effort from the government to provide a clear demarcation so as to avoid future conflict in the area.
Keywords: Conflict, Ethnic Conflict, Socio Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

Globally, ethnic related conflicts remain one of the fundamental challenges in human society, causing much damages and serving as threat to human existence. According to Reuter (2015) International peace and security has been mainly threatened by ethnic clashes. The clashes in Balkans, Rwanda, Chechnya, Iraq, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Darfur, as well as Israel where the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, are the worst examples of the late 20th and 21st centuries. Ethnic chaos is the widely known result of unstable province, states and most of the case, the whole region. These incidents are associated with ethnic clashes, multitude human right violations, genocide and crimes against humanity, all make the economic to fall to the lowest, state failure and refugee crises. Chaos in ethnic clashes often lead to huge human hardship.

According to the UN Chatter (2015) more than 600 million young people live in volatile and conflict-prone areas. Young people are disproportionately affected by the multiple and often interlinked forms of violence such as political violence, organized crime and terrorist attacks which exact human, social and economic costs. In the past decade, the recruitment of

young people into violent and extremist groups has made some to view youth as a threat to global security and stability. Moreover, a growing body of evidence suggests that youth can and do play active roles as agents of positive and constructive change, and the recently adopted Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security highlights this fact. It is a formal recognition of the positive role youth can play in the maintenance of international peace and security (UN, 2015).

Many African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi and many more have experienced series of conflict, that occurred between communities, ethnic groups and religious groups and Nigeria is not excluded. Conflict have been linked to ethnicity and this have led to serious loss of life and property in many areas of the country. Africa in the 1990s which have raised concern that ethnic cleavage and overlapping affiliations of religion and race may undermine prospects for socio-economic and political development in much of Africa (Osinubi, 2006).

The surge and spate of such conflict in Nigeria since the return to democratic dispensation is increasing by the day. The disturbing history of colonialism generated hatred and conflict among different ethnic groups. The Southern and Northern protectorates were forcefully amalgamated into one country called Nigeria without the people's consent. This was a major seed of conflict that is still troubling Nigeria today (StudyMode Website, 2013).

The circumstance continued to impact negatively on the forces of national integration and cohesion in ethnically divided Nigeria. A country that is troubled with series of ethnic difficulty can only face enormous loss of lives, destruction of property and refugee crisis, that frequently redirect the attention of government from the business of governance to crisis management (Nnenna, 2014).

Gombe state in particular has witnessed a fair share of all forms of violence and crisis ranging from political/elections violence, boundary adjustment induced crisis, the communal clash, religious conflict etc. That has in one way or another affected the socio-economic development. One may wonder whether the continuous destruction of lives and properties worth millions of naira has not diminished the nature as jewel because jewel is kept safe to avoid damage and destruction.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Despite continuous efforts of trying to unite people of different cultures and ethnicity in Nigeria and Gombe state in particular, people have continued to be divided along ethnic and religious lines. The communal conflict between the Waja and Lunguda in Gombe state without doubt posed threat to the peaceful co-existence and it has great implications on the development of those societies as well as socio-economic growth and development of Gombe State and Nigeria at large. This conflict occur and reoccur despite many efforts by government geared towards resolving the conflict.

Therefore, it is against this background that this research examines the Waja and Lunguda ethnic conflict by dwelling on its causes as well as effect on the socio-economic development of Gombe State.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has the following objectives:

To examine the factors responsible for the conflict between Waja and Lunguda.

To find out the socio-economic effect of the conflict on the people of these communities (Waja and Lunguda), Gombe State.

To identify he measures taken by governments in solving the conflict.

To proffer solution to the incessant conflict between the people of Waja and Lunguda.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Conflict is confrontation between two or more parties aspiring towards incompatible means or ends (Miller, 2005)

Ethnic Conflict: can be seen as organized large scale violent conflict among ethnic groups of which at least one has not achieved statehood or is not in possession of state apparatus (Angstrom, 2000).

Socio-economic Development: This Means any positive change that lead to improvement in social and economic sectors

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research adopted the instrumentalist theory of ethnic conflict whose major proponent include: Karl popper (1902-1994) and John Dewey (1859-1952)

According to the instrumentalist thoughts, ethnic conflict does not emerge directly from differences in ethnic identity. Rather ethnic conflict arises only when ethnic identities are politicized or manipulated to generate political and socio-economic advantages for an ethnic group at the cost of depriving or neglecting other ethnics. Accordingly, instrumentalists point to factors other than ethnic identity to explain ethnic conflicts. These includes security concern; Competition and inequality and greed (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Sentiments of discontent underlying these factors suggest that ethnic conflicts, under instrumentalism, are commonly motivated by grievances and frustration (Ellingsen 2000). Therefore, this theory explain the fact that the conflict between Waja and Lunguda was motivated by economic benefit which land perceived by conflicting group as an important thing.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO WAJA/LUNGUDA

The Waja people claimed to have originated from the east and precisely "Yemen". According to their tradition of origin, they migrated from Yemen through Mecca and then to Egypt where they settled for a period of about hundred years. From Egypt they continued to move westward until they arrived at a place called Gibi, then to Ngazargamu, and then moved southward to Biu and then to Shani from where they moved and occupy Dele Hill before dispersing to their present settlements, as a result of differentiation in place of abode they came to have the Plain Waja (Bo'nga) and the Highland Waja (Derwo). They inhabited the east-southern corner of Gombe state, occupying the present Balanga local government area of the state (Higazi *and Lar* 2015 Abdullahi, 2017).

Longuda or Nunguraba believed they migrated from Yemen in their attempt to discover the location or point where their god i.e. the sun, sets in the west. They passed through Kukawa from where they continued southward until they get to Wanda a plateau in the vicinity of present day Nyuwar where they stayed for a long period of time. Having failed in their mission and their inability to return to Yemen, the people decided to settle down. However, owing to shortage of cultivable lands in Wanda, various clans moved out and founded new villages at different locations which constitute Longuda land.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Presentation on the cause of the ethnic conflict between Waja and Lunguda

Table 1: Do you agree that Tribal sentiments and religious differences were responsible for the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	19	21.1
Agree	33	36.7
Disagree	35	38.9

Strongly disagree	3	3.3
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows that 38.9% of the respondents disagreed that Tribal sentiments and religious racism are part of the causes of the conflict, meanwhile 36.7% agreed, 21.1% strongly agreed while 3.3% strongly disagreed.

Table 2: Do you agree that Electoral Malpractice and Political Intolerance were responsible for the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	42	46.7
Agree	10	11.1
Disagree	27	30
Strongly disagree	11	12.2
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table revealed that 46.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that Electoral Malpractice and Political Intolerance are part of the causes of the conflict, 30% disagreed, 12.2% strongly disagreed and 11.1% agreed out of the respondents.

Table 3: Do you agree that Unguided utterances of religious leaders were responsible for the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	10	11.1
Agree	11	12.2
Disagree	61	67.8
Strongly disagree	8	8.9
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above shows that 67.8% of the respondents disagreed that unguided utterances of religious leaders caused the conflict, 12.2% agreed, 11.1% strongly agreed and 8.9% out of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Do you agree that Land disputes was responsible for the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	69	76.7
Agree	3	3.3
Disagree	11	12.2
Strongly disagree	7	7.8
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table above, most respondents 76.7% strongly agreed that Land disputes is part of the causes of the conflict, 12.2% disagreed, and 7.8% disagreed while 3.3% out of the respondents agreed.

Table 5: Do you agree that Promoting one religion over the other was responsible for the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	19	21.1
Agree	28	31.1
Disagree	34	37.8
Strongly disagree	9	10
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above shows that 37.8% of the respondents disagreed that promoting one religion over the other played a role in causing the conflict, 31.1% agreed, 21.1 strongly agreed while 10% strongly disagreed, and 13.6% out of the respondents agreed.

How has the conflict affected the socio-economic development of the people of Waja and Lunguda?

Table 6: By weakening of the Waja/Lunguda economic development

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	40	44.4
Agree	14	15.6
Disagree	19	21.1
Strongly disagree	17	18.9
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table indicates that 44.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that the conflict has weakened the Waja/Lunguda economic development while 18.9% strongly disagreed, 15.6% agreed and 21.1% disagreed.

Table 7: Through Destruction of property and loss of lives

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	29	32.2
Agree	57	63.4
Disagree	4	4.4
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of respondents where 63.4% of the respondents agreed that the conflict affected the two communities by way of destruction of property and loss of lives, 32.2% strongly agreed while 4.4% of the respondent disagreed.

Table 8: Loss of democratic values and norms

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	29	32.2
Agree	32	35.6
Disagree	9	10
Strongly disagree	20	22.2
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above shows the data presentation and analysis of the respondents where 35.6% agreed that the conflict affected the two communities by way of loss of democratic values and norms, 32.2% strongly agreed and 22.2% strongly disagreed while 10% disagreed.

Table 9: Negative international image

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	23	25.5
Agree	13	14.3
Disagree	37	41.1
Strongly disagree	19	21.1
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table shows the data presentation and analysis of the respondents where 41.1% of the respondents disagreed that the conflict affected the two communities by way of showing negative international image, 25.5% strongly agreed, 21.1% agreed and 14.1% agreed.

Table10: Irreparable loss of human resources

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	45	50
Agree	36	40
Disagree	9	10
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of the respondents where most of the respondents 50% strongly agreed that the conflict affected the two communities by way of irreparable loss of human resources, while 40% agreed and 10% out of the respondents disagreed.

What do you think the government should do in resolving the conflict?

Table 11: Do you think the government and all stakeholders should unite themselves to promote peace and development between Waja and Lunguda?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	58	64.4
Agree	25	27.8
Disagree	7	7.8
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table above shows the presentation and data analysis of respondents where most of the respondents 64.4% strongly agreed that the government and all stakeholders should unite themselves to promote peace and development between Waja and Lunguda and 27.8% of the respondents also agreed while 7.8% disagreed.

Table 12: Should the government avoid escalating tensions by early interventions?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	76	84.4

Agree	14	15.6
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of respondents where most of the respondents 84.4% strongly agreed that the government should avoid escalating tensions by early interventions while 15.6% agreed.

Table 13: Should all security agencies be equipped, trained and retrained to discharge their duties more effectively?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	56	62.2
Agree	34	37.8
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above shows the presentation and data analysis of the respondents where most of the respondents 62.2% strongly agreed that all security agencies should be equipped, trained and retrained to discharge their duties more effectively, while 37.8% agreed.

Table 14: Do you think the government should make decisions that is void of favoritism and benefits everyone?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	72	80
Agree	18	20
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table above shows the data presentation and analysis of the respondents where most of the respondents 80% strongly agreed that the government should make decisions that is void of favoritism and benefits everyone, while 20% agreed.

What are the factors responsible for reoccurrence of the conflict?

Table 15: Do you agree that struggle for position and power was responsible for reoccurrence of the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	34	37.8
Agree	17	18.9
Disagree	6	6.7
Strongly disagree	33	36.6
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of respondents where majority of the respondent 37.8% strongly agreed that struggle for position and power as a factor for the reoccurrence of the conflict, 36.6% strongly disagreed, 18.9% agreed while 6.7% out of the respondents disagreed.

Table 16: Do you agree that unemployment among the citizens of Waja/Lunguda leading to poverty was responsible for reoccurrence of the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	43	47.8
Agree	37	41.1
Disagree	10	11.1
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of respondents where majority of the respondent 47.8% strongly agreed that unemployment among the citizens of Waja/Lunguda leading to poverty as a factor for the reoccurrence of the conflict, 41.1% agreed while 11.1% disagreed.

Table17: Do you agree that land has always been huge issue among the people of Waja and Lunguda?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	34	37.8
Agree	37	41.1
Disagree	6	6.7
Strongly disagree	13	14.4
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of respondents where majority of the respondent 41.1% agreed that land has always been huge issue among the people of Waja and Lunguda as a factor for the reoccurrence of the conflict, 37.8% strongly agreed, 14.4% strongly disagreed while 6.7% out of the respondents disagreed.

Table18: Do you agree that Illiteracy was responsible for reoccurrence of the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	22	24.4
Agree	30	33.3
Disagree	24	26.7
Strongly disagree	14	15.6
Total	90	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The above table shows the data presentation and analysis of respondents where majority of the respondent 33.3% agreed that illiteracy among citizens is a factor for the reoccurrence of the conflict, 26.7% disagreed, and 24.4% strongly disagreed while 15.6% out of the respondents strongly disagreed.

FINDINGS

This study revealed that the major cause of this conflict was the issue of land ownership. Others include tribal sentiment and religious differences.

It is also discovered that this conflict has led to the destruction of properties and loss of lives Also revealed in this study is the lack of concerted efforts by the state government to provide clear land demarcation amongst these groups coupled with unemployment among youths are responsible for reoccurrence of this conflict

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of this study, it was discovered that majority of the respondents believed in the strategies needed to resolve conflict in Waja and Lunguda. Ethnic conflicts are protracted, widespread, complicated and dangerous forms of conflicts plaguing Nigeria today, especially the northern part of the country of which Gombe, Waja/Lunguda are located too. The Waja/Lunguda conflicts have lingered on for decades without solutions in sight. The aftermath of these conflicts led to the destruction of lives and property, physical and mental devastation, deprivation and dislocation of many people living in those communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of this research, the following recommendations are made:
There is need for government at all level to quip security agencies adequately train and retrain them to effectively discharge their duty
The state government should clearly demarcate the land between Waja and Lunguda communities

There should also be public awareness programme by the government on forgiveness, patience, moral responsibilities and respect for universal fundamental values.

Traditional leaders in Waja and Lunguda should set up an independent ethnic council comprising of members from both communities. The Council should be saddled with the responsibility of reconciling warring factions or groups.

Also traditional leaders should endeavour to give proper teachings and interpretations of their traditions tenets and dogmas to their followers in order to avoid extremism.

As rational beings, dialogue is a good and effective tool in solving ethnic conflicts. Sincere and open hearted dialogue becomes crucial when discussing ethnic issues. The people should all think more rationally, critically and appreciates the dignity of human person and the sacredness of life.

They should also work together in the areas where they find themselves in order to improve on their lives condition, fight against drug abuse, prostitution, HIV and AIDS and so on. Dialogue is the gateway to achieving sustainable peace in our conflict torn society.

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