

Bassa-Egbura Conflict, The Elites And The Struggle For Political Space In Nigeria

Musa E. Umar

PhD, Senior Fellow,
National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru

Abstract: Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with many of the ethnic groups sharing similarities and ironically a lot of diversities. The major challenge since independence has been how to harness the similarities of the various constituent units and groups for national unity and manage the differences to ensure harmony. This has made the Nigerian state a theatre of ethnic conflicts and the country has in the last two decades has demonstrated a high propensity of violent conflicts. The Bassa-Egbura conflict is one of such the many conflicts that protracted for more than two decades. This discourse is anchored on the premise that understanding class/elite action gives insight to the Bassa-Egbura conflict. The ethnic elites played prominent role in mobilising ethnic identities and sustaining the conflict for two decades. The position of the paper therefore is that for Nigeria to attain national integration, it should go beyond centralising and sharing power and national resources among the federating units, to include attaining social cohesion amongst the peoples. The issues of governance: equal participation and access to political power and resources need to be addressed. The political and ruling elites need to transcend primordial affinities and become national rather than just ethnic leaders.

Keywords: Ethnic Conflict, Elites, Political Space

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with many groups spread all over the various States of the Federation. Many of the ethnic groups share some common similarities such as language, culture and migration patterns even as there were distinct differences between many of them. Post-independent Nigeria therefore emerged as a conglomerate of ethnic nationalities. The challenge since then remains that of harnessing these similarities and diversities for national integration. The process of integration has been characterised by the rise and ebb of tension manifesting in inter-regional rivalry and contestations between and amongst different ethnic and religious groups. Making the Nigerian state an arena of conflict and a major target of ethnic and group competition.

Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria are not recent phenomenon. However, in the last two decades they have posed as major challenge to the nation. Characterised by destruction of lives and property and displacement of persons, ethnic conflicts have raised issues of contestations such as citizenship rights,

human rights, separatist movements, resource control, national integration and unity that have perceptibly challenged the nation-building process. Of recent, there has been the move for resurgence of Biafra Republic in southeast Nigeria, the quit notice for Igbos to leave the northern part of Nigeria by "Arewa Youth", the call for restructuring the Nigerian federation and many issues amidst ethnic, herdsman and farmers conflicts, and the prolonged fight against insurgency in the northeast challenging the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation.

The Bassa-Egbura conflict, was one of such major conflict with devastating impact on socio-economic development of the communities in the Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State (McGregor, 2013; Nadi, 2013). The conflict was not only violent, but has witnessed a variety of policy responses and peace-building efforts employed, but yet pervasive. About 12 panels and commissions of inquiry were also set up by the government (state and federal) to find lasting solutions to the conflict.

The problematic being interrogated in this discourse therefore, is the extent to which ethnic elites influenced the Bassa-Egbura conflict, specifically the struggle for political space. It is emphatic that there were key actors that influence every social environment in which the state operates. This is done through the promotion of class, elite or social group interest or agenda above that of the other and with motive of influencing the state behaviour. The protracted nature and intractableness of the Bassa-Egbura conflict suggest that there were key actors or social groups that have kept the momentum thereby making it to last for more than two decades. It against this background that this discourse is constructed. The next section attempts to examine some conceptual and theoretical issues for the purpose of understanding why ethnicity has been a vital instrument in the hands of the elites (ruling and political) in the struggle for political space and in attempt to influence the actions of the state.

II. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

A. ETHNIC, ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

Ethnic or ethnic group is considered here to refer to a group of people who share common and distinctive cultural traits, such as national, racial, linguistic, or religious heritages even though all of them may not necessarily be residing in the same geographical location. The ethnic group serves as a symbol of identity of people who have common descent and are bonded culturally and biologically. Ethnicity on the other hand, refers to ethnic affiliation or distinctiveness. It is a collective consciousness of an ethnic group that creates in the people a sense of belonging based on their membership of a group by reason of their common descent and culture. It is largely the manifestation of ethnic consciousness in relation to other groups.

Ethnic conflict refers to the contradictions, opposition or disagreement that arise between two or more social entities or parties as a result of differences in ideas, principles, behaviour, phenomena or tendencies. In other words, it's the absence of cooperation between social entities due to incompatible desire or goals. It sometimes involves the use of force, threat or intimidation by one or more groups to express or drive certain perceptions on another group(s). Such situation may sometimes involve the use of force, threat or intimidation or all by a group against another to put across their desires.

Social science scholars have produced several theories for the study of ethnic conflicts. However, some of the theoretical perspectives in this study are grouped into five major categories; Primordial, Modernization, Elite/Instrumental, Social Construction and Marxist. These categorisations are in no way exhaustible, nevertheless, they are adopted for the convenience of this inquiry.

The primordial school of thought (which includes biological, cultural, anthropological and psychological perspectives), sees ethnic conflict from point of view of ancient hatred, hostility and intolerance. Ethnic identities are seen as historically rooted, deeply embedded in a people's culture, reinforced by collective myths and memories, social

institutions and practices, and perpetuated inter-generationally by early socialisation and therefore likely to persist over time. It recognises that ethnic communities, families, and extended kinship groups together response to common threats or opportunities. Ethnic identity is therefore seen as essentially a "biologically given", or "natural" phenomenon (Easman, 2004; Taras and Ganguly, 2006). This approach suggests that hostility between two groups result from real perceived conflicting goals that generate intergroup competition (Yagciolu, 1996). However, this school of thought has not been able to account for observed changes over time in the degree to which people feel the pull of ethnic loyalties and how individuals relate to other communal groups. It has not adequately explained how different identity groups could be at peace within a country at a particular time and the next time at war (Sekuli, Massey and Hodson, 2007). It is apparent that ethnicity constitutes the major nature of conflicts in some multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria; however, ethnic heterogeneity does not invariably produce conflict.

Modernisation school of thought like the Primordial perspective, attributes ethnic conflicts to plural character of society, thereby assuming that the multi-ethnic African state is inherently characterised by conflict and the suggestion is often that stability requires "tribalism" transcending through modernisation (Amoo, 1997). The imperative is that a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria needs to transform the various ethnic groups into an integrated and consolidated polity by eliminating the residual set of values, norms and structures of the "tribal man" and institutionalising a new set of modern and progressive values (Amoo, 1997). While one cannot deny the functional utility of ethnicity in the competition for the scarce values in society, it is a mystification of the social reality to cost every demand on the state in communal terms as prompted by the modernisation perspective (Gana and Egwu, 2003).

The Elite/Instrumentalist school of thought argues that the elites which are found within ethnic groups and classes often play critical role in ethnic mobilisation (Egwu, 1999). The elites mobilise ethnic group, culture or race to advance their selfish adventure in terms of political power or material interests. As Sekuli et.al (2007) observes, this theoretical consideration focuses on political entrepreneurial perceived opportunities, cultivate fear and pursue ethno-nationalist goals in order to advance their own political and material interests. Politicised ethnicity therefore is the constructions of elite, who draw upon distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent (Taras and Ganguly, 2006). The issue is how and why people who presumably behave rationally should allowed themselves to be so deceived and manipulated, unless they harbor some underlying sentiments of group identity and solidarity. Individuals can be manipulated by self-serving elites, but only if such manipulation appeals to and draws on a priori sentiments of collective identity and group solidarity (Easman, 2004). This perspective denies essentially the dynamic nature of class struggles as vehicle of change and replacing it with the political inertia in which the elites confront the mass (Egwu, 1999).

The Constructionist category is opposed to the notion that ethnic group is either a naturally given phenomenon or simply

a tool that is invoked and manipulated by ethnic entrepreneurs for individual and collective political ends. Ethnic identities are seen as products of human actions and choices, rather than biologically given ideas whose meanings are dictated by nature (Taras and Ganguly, 2006). Ethnic solidarity is therefore an invention of the human imagination, an intellectual construct, not an objective reality. Ethnic identity hence, is not biologically given but socially constructed. Conversely, it is erroneous to simply dismissed ethnic solidarity as not an objective reality and that it is imagined and can also be unimagined. Ethnic consciousness, in most cases has a long history significantly influencing individual's and group's perception of society and people; the reasons why it could easily be manipulated by elites

Drawing inference from classical Marxism, Egwu (1999; 2015) argues that it is possible to suggest that the ethnic even though could be seen as element of the superstructure, is capable of asserting its relative autonomy in the course of social action. Marxist perspective therefore sees ethnicity as ideology or a form of false consciousness. False consciousness does not imply that ethnicity is unreal and that those who use the ethnic weapon are engaging in deliberate falsehood. As Egwu argues, it is an ideology or false consciousness in the sense that the extent of its intervention in the social process hides from the people who suffer its consequence reality. The Marxist theory locates the analysis of ethnic conflict within the framework of material interest of all actors in the ethnic situation. All actors including the masses who respond to ethnic appeals, there is material interest to be served. Accordingly, the next section examines the role of elites in ethnic conflict.

B. ELITES IN CONFLICTS

Class or group interests and how they are pursuit is fundamental here as they determine the action of the classes and social groups in relation to the state. Caporaso and Levine (1996) argue that there is causal relationship between material interest and class or group action. It is the economy that defines the social positions; majorly, those owing or not owing capital. In a Capitalist state, class interests are conflicting and certainly underlying link between class interests and politics. Carew (2006) has also seen the Post-colonial state as the seat of hegemonic interests. If the state is managed by people, it is obvious that people have both personal and collective interests since they are members of varied groups. Thus in every conflict, it is necessary to interrogate the interests of those who control the state, as well as those outside the state.

The Nigerian State's over-bearing role in the economy and over politicisation of social life is an issue that hinges on class action in conflict. The state is most coveted prize which contestants for power must capture at all cost because it is the source of patronage and only viable instrument for accumulation. Consequently, the political class or elites are engaged in using political power in their hands to create economic base to secure class or group interest. Sha and Choji's (2011) argue that during the Colonial period, while the Nigerian political class was united on the issue of independence, their struggle was much about capturing power to serve as a foundation for domination. Consequently, their

pattern of mobilisation was characterised by politicising ethnic, religious and regional identities. The mobilization of ethno-religious identity in Nigeria as Egwu (2015) contend, should be seen as part of the prevailing system of seeking power and authority, and a strategy of attaining material and psychological survival. He sees ethnicity as a tool deployed by political elites or class in the quest to capture, spend and keep power. They are conscious class actors who have masked their real interests in ethnic demands and agitations. In the next section, the Bassa-Egbura conflict is examined to understand the role of the elites.

III. THE BASSA-EGBURA CONFLICT

The relationship between the Egbura- Bassa dates back to the Pre-Colonial period. While the conflict between these two ethnic groups is not a recent phenomenon, it became prominent in the 1980s most especially because of the level of violence involved. Before the mid-1980s, there was no record of violent clashes between the ethnic groups. However, the 1976 Local Government Reform and the consequent merger of some villages regenerated tension between the groups. The return to civilian rule in 1979 and the Second Republic politics seemingly sharpened the ethnic divide between the Egbura and Bassa.

The Egbura always linked their origin to the ancient Kwararafa Empire that flourished in the 14th and 18th centuries. Opanda Kingdom of the Egbura was claimed to be founded first in the 11th Century and ultimately in 1750 by Ohimi Negedu, the first King of Opanda (Egbura Traditional Rulers, 1986; Egbura National Development Association Zaria, 1998). This predated the jihadist Nasarawa Emirate. The intrusion of the Fulani jihadist led by Makama Dogo eventually led to the collapse of the Opanda Kingdom (Wilson-Haffenden, 1930). There was also reference to the Bassa Ikereku Kingdom during the Pre-Jihadist and Pre-colonial period (Baikie, 1854; Laid in Crowther 1854 and Hutchinson, 1855). The Bassa claim that the Panda and Ikereku Kingdoms existed side by side until the attack by the Fulani jihadists led by Dogo Makama in the early 19th century which led to the ruin of both Opanda and Ikereku Kingdoms (Bassa Community, 1998). With the fall of the Opanda and Ikereku the Toto area was brought under the hegemony of the Nasarawa Emirate.

With the advent of British colonisation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the Nigeria area, the Nasarawa Emirate under Emir Muhammadu Danwaji surrendered to Sir F.D. Lugard in 1900 and Nasarawa subsequently became the Headquarters of the Province (Gazetteers of the Northern Provinces, 1972; Mairiga, 2008). Colonial administration adoption of indirect rule system in Northern Nigeria made the Toto District to be administered through the Nasarawa Native Authority. Consequently, the Egbura village heads were engaged by Nasarawa Native Authority as emissaries or "jekadus" to oversee the District and also collect taxes (Morgan, 1916). In 1914, Bassa of Ogba Pati District (later amalgamated with Umaisha District) were reported to have rebelled against oppression of the Egbura District Heads and the Jekadus who they alleged to be dishonest. It took a

military patrol from Lokoja to quell the rebellion (Feasey, 1932). This was the only major clash between the Bassa and Egbura recorded during the colonial period.

The Bassa have been writing petitions since the early 1970s complaining about their marginalisation, oppression and exclusion in the affairs of the Toto area by the Egbura (Plateau State Government, 1995; Plateau State Government, 1996a). The 1976 Local Government Reform led to some of the villages in Umaisha and Toto Districts being merged thereby generating tension between the Bassa and Egbura. The Reform also made some of the village heads to be placed on fixed salary per annum and others on tax commission. It was therefore supposed that those on fixed salaries were superior to those on tax commissions. Furthermore, they petitioned that they were not represented in the Electoral College for the selection of Districts Heads of Toto and Umaisha (Plateau State Government, (1985). Even with the creation of Plateau State in 1976, the complaint of marginalisation and exclusion of the Bassa in the affairs of the Toto LGA continued and consequently led to the refusal of the Bassa to pay taxes through the Egbura Village Heads.

The contestation between the two ethnic groups was heightened with the return to civil rule in 1979. During the Second Republic, the two ethnic groups were divided along different party line. The majority of the Egbura were sympathetic to the NPP that was the ruling party in Plateau State, and the Bassa identified with NPN, which had control of the Federal Government. During the 1983 political campaigns, there was a clash between the Bassa and Egbura in which several people sustained injuries and houses burnt (Egbura National Development Association, 1998). The Plateau State Government in 1981 and 1983 respectively, upgraded the District Heads of Umaisha and Toto to the status of recognised chiefs. The government action was seen by the Bassa as politically motivated to favour the Egbura and perpetuate their hegemony over them. This further aggravated the allegation of the Bassa that they were marginalised and sidelined even when they constituted the largest population in the local government and also their claim as the first settlers in Umaisha and Toto District. They saw no justification why the Egbura would have two officially recognized paramount rulers while they had none. The Bassa therefore blamed the then Plateau State Government for generating the conflict situation between them and the Egbura (Bassa Community in Toto, 2001).

In 1984 the Bassa in Egbura-dominated villages reacted against what they alleged as being relegated to the "background in the scheme of things" in the then Nasarawa LGA by resisting to pay tax and other government levies through the Egbura Village Heads (Plateau State Government, 1986a). The Plateau State Ministry of Local Government failing to pacify the Bassa in the end came up with a Financial Memoranda that allowed the Bassa community leaders to pay their taxes and levies direct to the Local Government authority. The Egbura alleged that the financial regulation memo NLG/S/LAC.25/Vol. 1/385 of 29/11/84 which allowed the Bassa to pay tax and levies to the local government treasury was a rebellious action endorsed by the Sole Administrator, Alhaji Musa N. Mohammed. Furthermore, the Sole Administrator was accused by the Egbura for "illegally

and unilaterally" creating and upgrading two Bassa village area heads which was "the genesis of the civil disobedience" (Egbura Community in Toto, 1998).

In addition, the Bassa refused to recognize the authority of Egbura leaders especially the Ohinoyi Ogye of Toto and Ohimege Panda of Umaisha ("Plateau State Government," 1986a). Eventually, this development led to the escalation of the antagonism between the ethnic groups. The persistence of petitions by the Bassa and the deteriorating relationship between the two ethnic groups led the Plateau State Military Government under the leadership of Navy Captain S. B. Atukum to set up an Administrative Committee on Local Administrative Structure on 25th June, 1985 to look into the administrative structure of Toto and Umaisha Districts of then Nasarawa LGA. A major recommendation by the Committee was the call for the restructuring of the communities that would allow the participation of all ethnic groups in traditional and political affairs of the area. It is worthy of note that tension between the groups since 1981 has been building up between the two ethnic groups.

The non-release of government white paper on the report of the Administrative Committee of Inquiry headed by Dr. Haruna Abdullahi increased the apprehension between the Bassa and Egbura. It was alleged that while the Bassa were full of expectations from the report, the Egbura were said to have boasted that the report will never see the light of the day since the then Plateau State Military Governor Colonel Mohammed C. Alli is Egbura (Plateau State Government, 1986a). The non-implementation of the Abdullahi Report was seen as contributing to the escalation of the antagonism between the Bassa and Egbura.

The installation of Ohimege of Panda was also seen as a remote cause of the 1986 violent conflict. The Bassa assumed that the installation of traditional rulers was suspended until the release of Dr. Haruna Adamu's committee report. This therefore heightened the tension between the two groups. The dispute between the Ohimege Usman Idrisu and one of the contestants to the Ohimege throne; Alhaji Usman Ahmed was also a factor to the outbreak of violence. The alleged illegibility of Usman Idrisu to contest for the throne of Ohimege on the assertion that he was not from a royal family or belonging to any of the four ruling families; Ohengaze, Ohabutu, Ohidoku and Ohagabu was raised by Alhaji Ahmed. He claimed that about ninety-nine percent of the kingmakers were members of the NPP and manipulated the election of Ohimege Usman Idrisu against him who was associated with NPN. In spite of all the petitions he wrote and taking the matter to court he claimed that there was no action taken by government (Plateau State Government, 1986b).

The 1986 clash has roots in the perceptions that were already developing between the Bassa and Egbura in the erstwhile Benue Plateau State. The Bassa alleged that of the thirteen village areas in Umaisha District, seven have Egbura village heads, even when they were in the majority in the villages or surrounding wards and hamlets. Also in Toto District, of the twelve recognised village areas, 11 have Egbura as their village heads despite the large concentration of Gbagyi in the village areas of Kuru and Ukya (Plateau State Government, 1987). The Bassa opined that having the largest population in these areas, they were supposed to head twenty-

three of the twenty-six villages in Toto and Umaisha Districts (Plateau State Government, 1986a). The constitution of the village areas as claimed by the Bassa was in favour of the Egbura who were the minority. They therefore demanded for a restructuring and reorganisation of the village areas. They argued for the creation of new village areas where the Bassa were in majority and to have exclusive control. Another demand made by the Bassa was the restoration of the salaries of the Bassa Village Heads who were on tax-commission and placing more Bassa Village Heads on State Government payroll ("Plateau State Government," 1986b; Plateau State Government, 1987). These issues were seen as a major factor in the deteriorating relationship between the Bassa and Egbura, which eventually culminated in the outburst of violence in 1986 (Egbura Traditional Rulers, 1986). The violent conflict led to several lives loss and property destroyed properties and some Egbura were expelled by the Bassa from their villages and fled to neighbouring Kwara and Benue States.

In response to the conflict the Plateau State Military Government Colonel MC Ali set up the Panel on the Civil Disturbances in Umaisha/Toto Chiefdoms headed by Lt. Col. Alex Ogomudia with four other members. One of the major task of the Panel was to unravel the "original inhabitants" or "first settlers" in the Toto area. The Panel reported that Egbura provided historical evidence to support their assertion as first arrival in the Toto area before 1750, while the Bassa could not support their claim of being the first arrival with historical evidence in 100 A.D. While the Panel did not categorically state who the first arrival in the area between the Bassa and Egbura, it however, stated that the two groups were indigenous to the area. The Panel recommended administrative restructuring of Toto and Umaisha Districts and the need to give opportunity to all the ethnic groups to have village areas under their control.

Sequel to the recommendations of the Abdullahi and Ogomudia Panels, the Plateau State Military Government under Colonel Lawrence Onoja, in 1986 set up a 5-man "Administrative Panel on the Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts and Review of the Issue of the Ohinoyi Chiefdom in Toto District" headed by Mr.J.M. Samci. The findings of the Panel claimed that there was as no evidence (oral or written) to support the claim by the Egburas that they were the first to settle in the area, but that both ethnic groups were all existing independently in the area. It recommended that the headship of village areas should be vested in the ethnic group that has the largest population as reflected in the tax-payer population. Where there is no ethnic group that is predominant, village headship be rotated among the majority groups. The post of the Ohinoye Ogye according to the Panel was superfluous and therefore dysfunctional to the administration of the area and should be abolished. The Ohinoyi Ogye be replaced with the title of either "Chief of Toto" or "Sarkin Toto" with eligibility open to any adult male from the three major ethnic groups in the district.

There was another clash between the Bassa and Egbura in Ugya in 1994 after the demise of the Sarkin Kasuwa (Market Overseer) of Ugya, Alhaji Adamu Madaki, an Egbura. The Bassa however, saw this as an opportunity to fill the vacant position, but the Egbura were not willing to relinquish the

position to a non-Egbura. The Egbura claimed that as the founders of Ugya, they have over the years occupied the position and not "settlers". The expectation of the Bassa, therefore, was that at the demise of the Market Overseer, his deputy, a Bassa, should have assumed the office, but that was not the case. The Local Government Authority appointed Mallam Muhammad Buba an Egbura in an acting capacity. The reaction of the Bassa was to set up a parallel market in Ugya on 22nd January 1995. This led to escalation of tension and consequently the outbreak of violent clash between the ethnic groups. It was estimated that about a hundred lives were lost and property worth over N13 million lost (Plateau State Government, 1995).

Following the outbreak of violence, the Military Administrator of Plateau State, Colonel Muhammad Maina in February 1995 set up the Committee on Communal Clash between the Bassa and Egbura at Ugya under the chairmanship of Thomas Niagwan to determine the causes of the re-occurring clashes between the Bassa and Egbura in Toto Local Government Area. The Committee at the end of its exercise made similar conclusion like the previous Panels that the Bassa were excluded from the grassroots administration and recommended that the government adopt the Samci Panel recommendation on re-organising the village administration, establishing a chiefdom for Bassa with a second class status and discontinuing the title of Ohinoye Ogye and adopt "Sarkin Toto" to be open to all indigenous ethnic groups within the chiefdom. Like the previous reports, government never implemented the Niagwan Panel Report.

Since the 1995 conflict at Ugya, there has been mounting tension between the Bassa and Egbura. The violence between the two ethnic groups was said to have broken out on November 14, 1997 and continued with backlashes up to March 1998. It was estimated that about 3,000 persons were alleged to have lost their lives, several property destroyed and more than 100,000 Bassa became internally displaced persons (Adamu, 2000; Adamu, 2002; Sanda, 2003). Consequent to the insecurity in the area, the 1999 General Elections were suspended in Toto LGA for security reasons.

The Toto Local Government Council Elections, was claimed to be the immediate cause of the 1997/8 clash. In the elections; a Bassa, Samson Samtani Daudu, won the chairmanship of the council and also three councillorship positions were won by Bassa. It was claimed that this victory was a new wave of political ascendancy of the Bassa in Toto LGA and a threat to the Egbura (Bassa Community Toto, 1998; Bassa Community Umaisha, 1998; Toto LGA, 1998). It was also supposed that the Egbura attacked the Bassa as a revenge of the 1995 conflict in Ugya which they suffered defeat in the hands of the Bassa and had to fight to restore their lost glory (Gbagyi Gbegun, 1998). The Egbura attributed the conflict to the aftermath of the elections in which an Egbura councillorship aspirant from Shege ward, Abubakar Sadiq Ibrahim on his way from Shege to Toto was kidnapped at a roadblock mounted by Bassa at Ugya. He was supposedly killed and his body never recovered (Egbura National Development Association, Zaria, 1998). The Egbura Youth Movement (1998), alleged discrimination against the Egbura in Toto LGA under the Chairmanship of Samson Samtani Daudu. It was claimed that local government employees of

Egbura origin had their appointments terminated and replaced by Bassa.

The Military Administrator of Nasarawa State, Wing Commander Abdullahi Ibrahim in January 1998 set up the Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto LGA under the chairmanship of Kasimu Idris. Some of the findings of the Committee include: lopsided nature of chieftdom, district and village administration in favour of Egbura; the negative impact of Fulani rule and later British colonial rule with the indirect rule policy which maintained the Fulani hegemony or imposed new leadership structure in the area with regards to history of the people in the area; advent of politics and the contest for political space which generated tension in the area; and, insufficient development to provide the basis for people to independently face the challenges of the times rather than resorting to ethnic chauvinism. Among other things The Committee recommended the restructuring of the traditional administrative arrangement.

Concern with the persistent conflict between the Bassa and Egbura, the Nasarawa State Council of Chiefs voluntarily constituted a 7-man Technical Committee in 1998 under the chairmanship of Alhaji (Dr.) Isa Mustapha Agwai I, the Emir of Lafia. The Committee was to broker peace between the conflicting ethnic groups as well as to look into the restructuring of the existing village areas in Toto and Umaisha Districts. The Committee recommended the creation of Bassa chieftdom with a proposed headquarters at Ugya out of Toto and Umaisha Districts.

The Nasarawa State government under Governor Abdullahi Adamu that came to power on 29th May, 1999 set up the Committee on the "Return Home and Resettlement of Bassa Community of Toto Local Government in Nasarawa State in 2000" (Adamu, 2001). The returnees were the Bassa displaced after the 1998 clash with the Egbura. The six-man Committee was specifically saddled with the responsibility of resettling the displaced Bassa in Toto LGA. The Committee was able to settle the returnees in four camps; Ugya, Gadabuke, Toto and Kenyehu. The first batch of the returnees arrived the LGA on 3rd July, 2000 in a grand ceremony witnessed by Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Atiku Abubakar. While the displaced persons were settling at the camps, there was another outburst of violent clash between the Egbura and the Bassa. The resettlement camps were attacked by the Egbura youths and the Bassa were again sent on exile (Nasarawa State Government, 2001). The killing of the Village Head of Shafa Abakpa, Baba Alhassan at Tudun Adabu which the Egbura accused the Bassa as responsible, was considered to have contributed to the immediate cause of the outburst (Best, 2004).

The 2003 elections and politicking provided another opportunity for a new round of violence in Toto LGA. The Bassa believed that they were disadvantaged as a group because most of them were on exile due to the previous conflict and were not favourably disposed toward participating in the elections and therefore petitioned Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). However, the elections seem to be auspicious for the Egbura and Gbagyi since the Bassa who constitute the largest population were on exile. While other elections, Presidential, Gubernatorial and the National Assembly, took place peacefully, the Nasarawa State House of

Assembly Elections led to the eruption of violent conflict between the Egbura and Gbagyi. The Nasarawa State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Youth Development, Mrs. Maimuna J. Katai was a casualty of this violence. Several other persons were killed and two of Gbagyi villages, Zokutu and Yewuye were destroyed (Best, 2004).

The Federal Military Government under General Abdulsalami Abubakar in 1998 set up the Flash Point Committee with Air Marshal Daggash as the Chairman. The Committee was mandated to look into the various conflict flash points nationwide as part of the preparation for the return to civil rule in 1999. The Committee after its visit to Nasarawa State recommended that the 1999 Elections should not hold in the Toto LGA. Other Committees set up by the Nasarawa State Government include the Ja'afaru Ango in 1999, Isa Mustapha Agwai, and Ahmadu Tanko, 2002. It is significant to note that efforts were made by the government at all levels to intervene in the prolonged conflict in the Toto LGA. This include the involvement of the security agencies, particularly the police and the military at every outbreak of violence.

IV. THE ELITES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL SPACE

It is apparent that the major issues in the contestation between the Bassa and Egbura identified include settler-indigene, the upgrading of Umaisha (Opanda) and Toto (Ohinoye) Chiefdoms, marginalisation, oppression and exclusion, autonomy and 'self-determination', socio-cultural factor and land issue. The settler-indigene issue revolved around the claim of the first to arrive the Toto area. Government action of upgrading the Umaisha (Opanda) and Toto (Ohinoye) Chiefdoms to the status of recognized chiefdoms by Governor Solomon D. Lar administration in Plateau State in 1981 and 1983 respectively was also identified as a major issue. For the Bassa, the government policy was politically motivated and was a deliberate attempt to impose Egbura hegemony on them. The Egbura on the other hand saw the government action as historically based on the erstwhile Panda Kingdom. Marginalisation, oppression and exclusion of the Bassa in local governance were issues identified in the contestation.

The Bassa and Egbura political and ethnic elites including businessmen, government officials and retired military and para-military officers were alleged to be perpetrators of the conflict. In the various submissions to the Panels, both the Bassa and Egbura identified several politicians, civil servants, ex-servicemen, business persons as responsible for mobilising their people, acquisition of arms and perpetuation of violence. Some of the respondents also agreed that the political and ethnic elites play key role in the outburst of violence. The Panel on Civil Disturbances in Umaisha/Toto Chiefdoms (1986) for example reported that:

Reports by security agents two days before the incident (May 1986 clash) also indicated that Adamu Gimaza and Daniel Tukura had organised their people, the Bassa, to cause rampage...As regards Daniel Tukura, he is suspected to have been involved in one way or the other with the clash, not only because of his position as the community leader who could

have taken reasonable steps to save the situation or prevent his people (the Bassa) from embarking on the disturbance, but also as a result of his provocative and inciting remarks during the sittings of the Abdullahi's Panel ("Plateau State Government", 1986a, p. 21).

The Bassa made some of the following allegations against some Egbura elites:

He (Alhassan Mohammed Diyo) is a major link in the hiring of the mercenaries. Using his military knowledge as a former Customs Officer, he camped and positioned the mercenaries in Shafan Abakpa (Sofiyo) and other places. He actively participated in the killings and leading the mercenaries from one village to another in a pick-up vehicle. He is a major brain behind the crisis ("National Association of Bassa Students", 1998, p.8).

The elites were also responsible for writing petitions, instituting court actions on behalf of their communities and influencing government decisions in "favour" of their people.

The Bassa and Egbura leaders rather than coming together to find common solution to the problem between their people, they were busy trying to justify their positions. Most of them do not even reside in the communities but in urban centres. They come home and incite their people to fight for what belongs to them. They wrote all sorts of letters to government making different claims and demands. I believe that if these leaders of both Bassa and Egbura had come together and dialogue and come to common agreements, the problem would not have resorted to violence as we have experienced over the years (Male Respondent in Keffi, 2013 as cited in Umar, 2015).

According to the Report of the Administrative Panel of the Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts:

The Panel noted that following this announcement (upgrading of the Districts Heads of Umaisha and Toto) several petitions poured into the Political and Chieftaincy Affairs Division of the Governor's Office. Notable among the petitions was that of the former Chairman of the defunct Toto Local Government Mr. S. D. Nyanssa...The most important petition, the Panel notes was the one written by 13 Traditional Rulers of Toto District against the creation of this chiefdom...("Plateau State Government", 1987, p.49).

However, some of the respondents also stated that there were other elites who played significant role to ensure peace in the area. According to a respondent:

While most of the community leaders of both ethnic groups were busy acquiring arms for their people to fight, there were very few of them that were running to government and traditional and religious leaders to find way how the differences could be resolved. These are the people who understood that the Bassa and Egbura had lived together as family for years and should not allow themselves to be manipulated by some selfish individuals (Male Respondent, Toto, 2013 as cited in Umar, 2015).

Traditional/community leaders of both the Bassa and Egbura were also identified as major actors in the conflict. Some of the respondents stated that the traditional and community leaders needed to have been more proactive by bringing the people to dialogue and explore all other peaceful means to resolve the issue. Rather, some of them were

sentimental in their involvement and in some cases making provocative utterances that fueled the conflict. The Report of the Panel on Civil Disturbances in Umaisha/Toto Chiefdoms states:

There were reports from the Bassa and Gbagyi communities within Umaisha Chiefdom and also from some Egbura that the Ohimege Panda, Alhaji Usman Idrissu is high handed. It was alleged that the Ohimege boasted that no change would be effect in any way within the chiefdom, and that Dr. Abdullahi's report would be thrown into the waste basket because the Military Governor is their son i.e. an Egbura. He was also alleged to have stated that though the State Government had ("Plateau State Government," 1986a, p.49).

Nasarawa Emirate was also recognised as another major actor in the conflict from the time of the incursion of the Fulani Jihadists into the area through the colonial period and to the 1980s when violent clashes began. The Report of the Panel on Civil Disturbances in Umaisha /Toto Chiefdoms reports thus:

The Bassa community has alleged that the Nasarawa rulers and the Egbura colluded to subject the Bassa to all forms of discrimination and exclusion in the affairs of the Local Government and this collusion started during the reign of Makama Dogo, the first Emir of Nasarawa...But the Egbura alleged that right from the time the defunct Toto Local Government was carved out of the Nasarawa Local Government Area, up to the creation or restoration of Panda Chiefdom and the upgrading of the Ohimege Panda...the Emir of Nasarawa has openly rejected this separation and has openly regarded the same as reduction in the area of his control and jurisdiction. The Ohimege Panda, Alhaji Usman Idrissu himself informed the Panel that during a meeting of the Nasarawa Local Government Traditional Council, the Emir of Nasarawa stated that he would not recognize any other paramount chief in the Local Government Area and that he would ensure that there was no peace within the domain of the Ohimege ("Plateau State Government", 1986a, p. 46).

There is an apparent intention by traditional rulers to get interested in the activities of domains other than theirs and this has always led to suspicion and hatred which is not in the over-all interest of the State. The relationship between the Nasarawa Emirate and Umaisha chiefdom could have contributed to the remote causes of this clash and this is not healthy ("Plateau State Government", 1986a, p. 52).

The rise of violent conflicts since the return to civil rule in May 1999 agrees with the claim by some works (Alubo, 2004; Zabadi, 2004; Abdullahi and Saka, 2007; Abdu, 2010; Alubo, 2011) that democracy liberalises the political environment which allows individuals and groups to seek to practice their rights. Thus, it created opportunities for competition for space between the Bassa and Egbura in Toto LGA. Despite the fact that the agitation between the Bassa and Egbura persisted for decades, there was no outbreak of violence until the return to civil rule in 1979 and 1999. The democratic process provided the platform which the groups used openly to express their agitations and mobilise for common goals. Bassa elites who felt they were hitherto marginalised saw this as an opportunity for a change of the status quo. On the other hand, the Egbura elites who had some advantages for a long period felt

threatened by the space created and wanted to sustain their dominance in the political arena. Given such situations, the elites of both groups through various actions were involved in creating an uneasy environment and sometimes even engaging in mischiefs in the pursuit of their agitations.

Some government policies, specifically, the 1976 Local Government Reform and the merger of some villages escalated the apprehension between them in the 1970s. Policy decisions have potentials to shape or redefine the identities of the populations they govern (Hoddie, 2006). The government actions were influenced by elite interests and for the benefit of the group they represented. This is fundamental in the case of Nigeria where the 'capturing' of the state by ethnic groups provides them the privilege to access opportunities and resources.

The Bassa and Egbura elites were involved in the assemblage of the various materials and positions of their people. There is the probability that their ulterior motive is to gain political and economic advantage for their groups and themselves. Similarly, the position of the constructionist school of thought (Eastman, 2004; Taras and Ganguly, 2006) that ethnic identity is not biologically given, but socially constructed seems to feature here. There is also the possibility that the ethnic solidarity as demonstrated in the conflict might be an invention and construction by the Bassa and Egbura elites and likely politicised and used for socio-political action to access political positions and resources. Like most identity crises in the country, it is all about inclusion and exclusion in governance. When a government fails to provide an enabling environment that allows the equitable inclusion and participation of citizens in governance, it is creating potentials for violent conflict.

Ancient hatred, hostility and intolerance were actively used in the conflict. Ethnic identities were historically rooted and deeply entrenched in cultures of the Bassa and Egbura and were reinforced by collective myths and memories. Consequently, this hindered integration between them and thus the protraction of the conflict. Autonomy and self-determination featured prominently in the contestation as propagated by the elites of both ethnic groups. However, there were several levels of the agitations for autonomy and self-determination in the Toto area that were noticeable for close to a century and as sustained by the elites. The Egbura resented the Fulani Nasarawa Emirate hegemony over them as a result of the 'treacherous' invasion of the Opanda Kingdom in the 18th century. The situation was further made complex when the whole of the Nigerian area fell under British colonial subjugation. The Egbura elites saw the Nasarawa Emirate as symbol of Fulani feudalistic domination and oppression and later as agent of colonial suppression. Under the Colonial Rule and during the Post-Colonial era, the Egbura elites believed they were excluded from governance and being oppressed by the Nasarawa Emirate.

It was also evident that the Bassa as the largest ethnic group wanted a level of autonomy and the right to determine its destiny over the years. This agrees with the constructionist position (Easman, 2004; Taras and Ganguly, 2006), that ethnic identities are socially constructed and gets politicised and becomes a variable socio-political action to gain resources and privileges. There was no doubt that for decades, the Egbura

had dominated local governance and there were agitations by the Bassa for political re-adjustment. As the ethnic group with the largest population they wanted realignment of village administration so that they would not be under the suzerainty of Egbura Chiefs and Village Heads. It is apparent therefore that whenever there was a democratic process that the struggle for autonomy and self-determination intensified for the purpose of securing political and economic base. They perceived that in the Toto LGA even though they had a large population, they were not able to use their population to exert greater influence in local governance. For the Bassa political elites, joining the NPN during the Second Republic will assure their getting local government and consequently guarantee their freedom from Egbura domination. However, this was not possible as NPN even though won elections at the national level lost the gubernatorial election in the then Plateau State. The elites used ethnicity as a rallying point to muster the people for the struggle for political space. The Egbura elites who had some advantage for a long period may have felt threatened by this development. While the Bassa elites wanted to use their ascendancy to power to exert their dominance, there was also reaction by the Egbura elites want to sustain the status quo as the dominant force in the political space. It is obvious that this scenario created an uneasy and tense environment that eventually led to outbreak of violence.

The political and ruling elites (military, elected political officers, public officers etc.) of both ethnic groups were not responsive to the need of the people and conducted their affairs without recourse to the citizens. Most social services, especially water and light do not function efficiently in Toto LGA. There were very limited infrastructure in the area and high number of unemployed youths who were victims of elite manipulation. Ethnicity was a vital platform used by the political class and elites for their political ambition as they present themselves as "champions" and "defenders" of "their people". This is a confirmation of the argument by Caporaso and Levi (1996) that the social order which is preserved and protected by the state relates to the interest of one class and therefore the interests of other classes and social groups are denied which threatens social order. Elections into Toto Local Government Council and Nasarawa State House of Assembly that triggered violence were part of the elites' mobilisation on ethnic sentiments, rigging and manipulation and refusal to accept election verdicts.

The capacity of the ethnic elites not only to destabilise the potency of the state, but also weaken its capacity through instigating conflicts was demonstrated here. The Bassa and Egbura elites were able to mobilise people, resources, mercenaries and arms to destabilise the state for their selfish gains for more than two decades. The elites felt marginalised and pressure sets in, and therefore precipitated crisis to confront the situation. It was not really the competition for political space between the Bassa and Egbura that generated the conflict along ethnic lines, but the ability of the elites to manipulate old ethnic rivalries that have been there over a century and sustained it for two decades. The political class and elites use advantages gain over time to mobilise along ethnic lines for struggles that will eventually secure their political and economic base.

The issue of leadership as represented by class and elite struggles and competition, makes the Nigerian state a seat of hegemonic interests (Caporao & Levi, 1996; Sha & Choji, 2011). The competition between the Bassa and Egbura political leaders and elites politicised the social life of their people. Thus, making the Nigerian state to want to protect a particular interest at each given time and therefore constituting threat to social order. As a result of this irreconcilable conflict of interests, the leaders have not been able to mobilise development for their people. The government (local, state and federal) and traditional/community leaders of both Bassa and Egbura were unable to anticipate flashpoints and make prognoses for resolving the conflict even before it escalate. The leaders before the several Panels of Inquiry were engaged in apportioning blames to individuals and group for two decades rather than mobilising their people for peace. Communal conflicts are settled through dialogue and consultation among conflicting parties rather than identifying culprits, ring leaders. The various leaders in Toto LGA, traditional/community, political and ethnic elites were unable for two decades to dialogue and find lasting solutions.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bassa-Egbura conflict was a product of deep-rooted mutual distrust and suspicious that has existed even before the advent of colonialism and specifically after the jihadist invasion of the Toto area. This perceived distrust and suspicion eventually transformed into a form of social and economic stratification, raising issues of marginalisation, discrimination and struggles for self-determination. The Bassa-Egbura conflict was basically identity-based; who is indigene and who is settler. The issues in the contestation revolved around the unresolved citizenship crises of inclusion and exclusion in governance. Discriminatory citizenship therefore featured prominently and also determined political participation, political appointments, employment opportunities, access to land, access to national resources etc. in Toto.

The relationship between the Bassa and Egbura in the conflict is in the context of how each of the groups relate to the Nigerian state or even their position in the configuration of the state. While, the Egbura attempt to maintain a dominant position in the community, the Bassa struggled for autonomy. This is the scenario within which the Bassa and Egbura elites played critical role in the conflict. They were engaged in mobilising and utilising ethnic identities thereby politicising the social life of the people. The lack of neutrality of the Nigerian state in the conflict was basically a result of the influence of ethnic elites. The conflict protracted for almost two decades because of the role of the ethnic elites particularly in mobilising people and resources.

The agitations in the contestation between the Bassa and Egbura brought to fore the need for the Nigerian state to address the issues of governance: equal participation and access to political power and resources. It is apparent that democracy has potentials to address the issues of governance and practice of citizenship as it is supposed to provide equal opportunities for all categories of social groups within a

society. Governance in Nigeria should not be a reserved of few but provide much space for popular participation. Citizenship participation is critical in building a strong and solid foundation for democracy and national integration. The political and ruling elites in Nigeria need to transcend primordial affinities and become national rather than ethnic leaders. National leaders that should be able not only to challenge the status quo, but changing what ought to be changed for the sake of national integration and peaceful co-existence among all communities.

Community and religious leaders in Nigeria should be actively engaged in reconciliatory and mediative roles. Not only should they be non-partisan in every conflict situation, they must provide responsible leadership and distance themselves from issues that will jeopardise community or national integration. Nigerians should learn to respect individual rights and be tolerance and have respect for laws of the land. Aggrieved communities or groups should seek redress within the confines of law, order and justice and also embrace dialogue. The CSOs as non-state actors are also critical in peaceful and harmonious co-existence within and between communities. They should be engaged in sensitising citizens the culture of tolerance and also building the capacity of communities on conflict resolution and management.

Nigeria's integration cannot be viable without addressing the numerous conflicts and issues of sustainable development in the context of globalisation. The numerous conflicts in the country suggest that there is still much to be done in conflict resolution and management. National integration can only be achieved if the Nigerian State is viable and conflicts are comprehensively addressed, particularly, investing much in conflict prevention, resolution and management.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdul, H. (2010). Clash of identities: state, society and ethno-religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Kaduna: DevReach Publishers.
- [2] Abdullahi, A.A. and Saka, L. (2007). "Ethno-Religious and Political Conflict: Threat to Nigeria Nascent Democracy." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Volume 9, Number 3.
- [3] Adamu, A. (2000). The triumph of good over evil. An address on the formal reception of Bassa displaced persons, Toto.
- [4] Adamu, A. (2002, January). The lingering feud between the Egbura and Bassa ethnic groups in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Paper presented at the Presidential Retreat on Conflict Resolution, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru.
- [5] Alubo, O. (2004). Citizenship and nation making in Nigeria: New challenges and contestations. *Identity, culture and politics: An Afro Asian dialogue*, CODESRIA, ICES, 5(1), 171-204.
- [6] Alubo, O. (2011). Ethnic conflicts and citizenship crises in Central Nigeria. Ibadan: PEFS.
- [7] Amoo, S. G. (1997). The challenge of ethnicity and conflicts in Africa: The need for a new paradigm. New York: UNDP.

- [8] Baikie, W.F. .Narrative of an Exploration Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue commonly known as the Niger and Thadda in 1854, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. London, 1966.
- [9] Bassa Community, Toto LGA. (1998). A memorandum submitted to Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia, Nasarawa State.
- [10] Bassa Community, Toto LGA. (2001, April 9). Genocide in Toto local government area of Nasarawa State: Only truth and justice can heal the wounds. The Punch, (Lagos).
- [11] Bassa Community, Umaisha, Toto LGA. (1998). A memorandum submitted to Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia, Nasarawa State.
- [12] Best, S. G. (2004). Protracted communal conflict and conflict management: The Bassa-Egburra conflict in Toto Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
- [13] Caporaso, J. A. & Levine, D. P. (1996). The theories of political economy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Carew, G. M. (2006). Democratic transition in postcolonial Africa: A deliberative approach. New York: The Edwin Millen Press.
- [15] Easman, M. J. (2004). An introduction to ethnic conflict. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [16] Egbura Traditional Rulers of Toto. (1986). A memorandum submitted to the Administrative Panel on the Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts as well as review of the issue of Ohinoyi (Toto) Chiefdom in Toto District, Nasarawa Local Government Area of Plateau State.
- [17] Egbura Community of Toto LGA. (1998). A memorandum submitted to the Committee Investigating Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia.
- [18] Egbura Community of Toto LGA Resident in Jos. (1998). A memorandum submitted to the Committee Investigating Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia.
- [19] Egbura National Development Association, Lafia Chapter. (1998). A memorandum submitted to the Committee Investigating Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia.
- [20] Egbura National Development Association, Zaria Branch. (1998). A memorandum submitted to the Committee Investigating Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia.
- [21] Egwu, S. G. (1999). The agrarian question, politics and ethnicity in rural Nigeria. CASS Monograph, 10. Port Harcourt: CASS.
- [22] Egwu, S. G. (2015). Technology of power and dramaturgy of politics: ethnicity and democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Jos: University of Jos.
- [23] Feasey, G. G. (1932). Bassa Komo re-organisation. (A memo from Acting Resident, Kabba Province to the Resident Benue Province). Ref. No.17/1932/1 1932. Divisional Correspondence Jacket C17. National Archives Kaduna.
- [24] Gana, A. T. & Egwu, S. G. (2003). Introduction. In A.T. Gana & S. G. Egwu (Eds), Federalism in Africa: Framing the national question, Vol. 1, Trenton: Africa World Press.
- [25] Gazetteers of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria (1972). Nasarawa Province. London: Frank Cass.
- [26] Gbagyi Gbegun Cultural and Development Association, Toto LGA. (1998). A memorandum submitted to the Committee Investigating Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia.
- [27] Hoodie, M. (2006). Ethnic realignments: A comparative study of government influence on identity. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- [28] Hutchinson, T.J Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, and Benue Exploration, Frank Cass, 1966.
- [29] Laird, M. et.al Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa by the River Niger, Vol 1, Frank Cass, London 1971
- [30] McGregor, A. (2013). Ombatse: Nigerian religious cult joins war on the state in Central Nigeria". Terrorism Monitor II 10 (17). Retrieved from <http://www.jamestown.org/single>
- [31] Mairiga, I. J., Mohammed, Z. D., Abdullahi, M. S. & Abdullahi, S. (2008). Historical perspective of Nasarawa emirate. Jos: Matchers
- [32] Morgan, W. (1916). Assessment report on Umaisha District. File No. AR/ASS/N/14. National Archives, Kaduna.
- [33] Nadi, D. (2013, March 3). Nigeria: How to end Nasarawa's incessant communal clashes. Leadership (Abuja) Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/20130304822.html>
- [34] Nasarawa State Government. (2001). Updated report of the Committee on the Return Home and Resettlement of Bassa Community of Toto Local Government in Nasarawa State, Lafia.
- [35] National Association of Bassa Students, Nasarawa State Branch.(1998). A memorandum submitted to Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto LGA, Lafia, Nasarawa State, Lafia.
- [36] Plateau State Government. (1985). Administrative Committee to Inquire into the Local Administrative Structure of Toto and Umaisha Districts of Nasarawa Local Government Area Plateau State, Main Report, Jos.
- [37] Plateau State Government. (1986a). Report of the Panel on Civil Disturbances in Umaisha/Toto Chiefdoms of Nasarawa Local Government Area, Main Report, Jos.
- [38] Plateau State Government. (1986b) Report of the Panel on Civil Disturbances in Umaisha/Toto Chiefdoms of Nasarawa Local Government Area, Oral Evidence, Jos.
- [39] Plateau State Government. (1987). Administrative Panel on Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts as well as the Review of the Issue of the Ohinoyi Chiefdom in Toto District of Nasarawa Local Government Area Plateau State, Main Report, Jos.
- [40] Plateau State Government. (1995). Report of the High Powered Committee on the Communal Clash between the Bassa and Egbura at Ugya of Toto Local Government Area. Main Report Vol. 1, Jos.
- [41] Sanda, J. G. (2003). Bassa-Egbura conflict in Nasarawa State. In T. A. Imobighe (Ed), Civil society and ethnic conflict management in Nigeria, Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

- [42] Sekuli, D. Massey, G. & Hodson, R. (2007). Ethnic intolerance and ethnic conflict in the dissolution of Yugoslavia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (5), 797-827.
- [43] Sha, D. P. & Choji, I. D. (2011). The political class and the challenges of democratic development in Nigeria. In M. O. Maduagwu, M. Jumare, A. A. Aja & O. J. Paramallam (Eds.), *Nigeria's 50 years of nation-building: Stock-taking and looking ahead* (pp. 159-178). Kuru: NIPSS.
- [44] Taras, R. C. & Ganguly, R. (2006). *Understanding ethnic conflict: The international dimension*. New York: Longman.
- [45] Umar, M.E. (2015). *The Nigerian state and the Bassa-Egbura conflict in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria, 1986 – 2013*. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Economy and Development Studies in the Department of Political Science, University of Jos, Nigeria.
- [46] Wilson-Haffenden J.H. *The Redmen of Nigeria*, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. London, 1967.
- [47] Wright, A. (2008). Ethnic identity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In D. Kotze & H. Solomon (Eds.), *The state of Africa: Post-conflict reconstruction and development*. Pretoria: African Institute of South Africa.
- [48] Yagcioglu, D. (1996). Psychological explanations of conflicts between ethno-cultural minorities and majorities. In Susan Allen (Ed.) *Windows to conflict analysis and resolution: Framing our field*, VA: George Mason University.
- [49] Zabadi, S. Z. (2005, April). Sources of communal crisis in contemporary Nigeria. Paper presented at National War College, Abuja, Nigeria.

IJIRAS