

TIV-JUKUN ETHNIC CONFLICT IN WUKARI DISTRICT OF TARABA STATE
NORTHEAST NIGERIA: HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES APPROACH

RUTH YOHANNA JOSHUA

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to the glory of God, who has given me the ability, strength and wisdom to do it all. Also to my late mother Mildred Jabez who wished to see us excel in life.



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ABSTRACT

Nigeria has witnessed several types of conflicts such as ethnic, communal and religious those are caused by certain factors. This issue is not far from Tiv-Jukun conflict which has long history of perennial conflict. The conflict has been described as the most violent dispute in North-East Nigeria since the Nigeria Civil War. The Tiv and Jukun have had a history of political and economic relegation; however, there has over the years been persistent conflict between the two ethnic communities who had lived peacefully in the recent time. From history the Jukun were the early settlers in Wukari, while the Tivs are considered immigrants and should not have right in Wukari local government. This study used horizontal inequality as a conceptual framework to examine the factors responsible for the ethnic conflict of Tiv – Jukun in Gidan idi Wukari of Taraba state north east Nigeria, focusing on the social-economic factors which were responsible for the conflict. Ten (10) participants were involved in this study through interviews, using purposeful sampling and thematic analysis in order to obtain results. Finding shows there is horizontal inequality in education, economic and political factors between the Tiv-Jukun and none in-terms of health related matter. The impact of this conflict results in killing of people, huge burning of houses, business places, and schools, followed by looting of assets. The government set panel committee but could not settle the conflict. However this study recommends that there should be equal sharing formula in employment opportunities, education, and political positions. Land issue should also be addressed by making land a resource for mutual benefit.

ABSTRAK

Nigeria telah menyaksikan beberapa jenis konflik seperti etnik, perkauman dan agama yang disebabkan oleh faktor-faktor tertentu. Ini tidak terkecuali konflik Tiv-Jukun yang mempunyai sejarah bertahun lamanya. Ia merupakan konflik yang paling ganas berlaku di Timur Laut Nigeria sejak Perang Sipil. Etnik Tiv-Jukun mempunyai hubungan yang baik dalam bidang politik dan ekonomi, namun berlaku konflik yang kerap antara dua etnik ini sedangkan mereka telah hidup dengan aman dan harmoni pada awalnya. Berdasarkan sejarah, etnik Jukun merupakan peneroka awal di Wukari. Etnik Tiv bermigrasi dan etnik Jukun berpendapat mereka tidak sepatutnya mempunyai hak ke atas Wukari LG. Dalam kajian ini, ketidaksamaan horizontal sebagai kerangka kajian telah digunakan untuk meneliti kesan konflik ini terhadap etnik Tiv-Jukun di Gidan idi Wukari yang terletak di Timur Laut Nigeria dengan memberi fokus terhadap faktor sosio-ekonomi yang terlibat. Sepuluh (10) orang responden telah terlibat dalam kajian ini dan melalui kaedah temubual, persampelan bertujuan dan analisis bertema telah digunakan untuk mendapatkan keputusan dalam kajian ini. Kajian mendapati berlaku ketidaksamaan horizontal dalam bidang pendidikan, ekonomi, politik termasuk hal-hal berkaitan kesihatan di antara etnik Tiv-Jukun. Kesan daripada konflik ini menyebabkan pembunuhan beramai-ramai, pembakaran rumah, premis perniagaan dan sekolah serta kecurian aset. Pihak kerajaan menubuhkan panel jawatankuasa namun tidak dapat menyelesaikan konflik ini. Bagaimanapun kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa mestilah terdapat formula berkaitan peluang-peluang pekerjaan, pendidikan dan kedudukan politik yang adil. Hal-hal berkaitan pemilikan tanah dapat diatasi dengan menjadikannya sebagai sumber kepentingan bersama.

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PTTA UTHM
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>APC</i>	Arewa People Congress
<i>HIS</i>	Horizontal Inequalities
<i>IPC</i>	Igbo People Congress
<i>IYC</i>	Ijaw Youth Congress
<i>LTTE</i>	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam
<i>MASSOB</i>	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
<i>NDC</i>	National Democratic Congress
<i>NPC</i>	Northern People's Congress
<i>NPP</i>	New Patriotic Party
<i>OECD</i>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<i>OPC</i>	Odua People Congress
<i>PD</i>	Prevention Diplomacy
<i>USAID</i>	United States Agency for International Development
<i>WHO</i>	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Globally, peaceful co-existence among nations is more challenging than ever before. In fact, Nigeria as a nation had witnessed a serious number of national ethnic-conflicts ever before the independence but the menace has aggravated in the last five decades (Adegbami & Uche, 2015; Nwankwo, 2015). The historical development of ethnic conflict (communal wars and violence) can be trace from within (internal) national rivalry to external (physical). Subsequently, it is not very far from power rivalry and decision making over economic assets and other significant human aspect such as political power, land disputes and socio-cultural fanaticism (Egbefo & Salihu, 2014). Essentially, ethnic conflicts has inflicted on the economic, physical and human well-being of the nation and all efforts made by government, communities and private individual to checkmate it seems to have produced few positive solutions (Anthony, 2014; Egbefo & Salihu, 2014).

Aggestam (2014) and Grimm and Leininger (2012) stated that every society cannot exist in isolation and interaction between such societies have created more ethnic conflict than peaceful co-existence. In addition, literatures have shown that conflict can be small or big, noticeable or buried, and short-term or long lasting in a given society. As a matter of fact, it is occurrence could be international, national or locally motivated among ethnic groups. In a community, conflict do happen in prolonged or acute tension between ethnic, religious and community clusters (Dave-Odigie, 2011). For example the Israel versus Palestinian's conflict is the case of

chronic conflict. Despite of the United Nation reconciliation process the attainment of a peaceful co-existence is more of a fallacy rather than a reality (Smith, 2010).

However, Douglas (2014) noted that the term 'conflict' is a concept tantamount with human behaviour. As long as man cannot exist in isolation, then in the course of relating with other members of the public there will be disagreements and confusion. More so, such disagreement or misunderstanding occurs in form of agitation. Common motive for conflict could be as a result of cheating or struggle for a favorable goals (identity, fear of dominance and for economic gains) that have resulted into a conflict.

In the Nigeria case, it is not far from the global perception on the socio-political and cultural conflict challenges experienced in other part of the world. Even though, some conflicts are less frequent but their consequences are acute with high devastating impact. In Nigeria context, commonest of the conflict is political rivalry that has caused more destruction of lives and properties. Particularly, 1979 Western-political hoodlum, General Babangida brutalism of political annulment in June 12, 1993 and 2011-post-election violence in northern Nigeria have witnessed loss of lives and properties (Alemika, 2011). Though, reasons for conflicts could be for constructive or destructive purposes in any given community (Hannum, 2011; Obi, 2010).

According to Gambo and Omirin (2012), both communal and ethnic conflict have bedeviled Nigerian society since 1980s, particularly the nineteen (19) states of the northern Nigeria. In fact, almost all northern state that has witnessed one form of disputes or another in recent time. Even though, Tiv - Jukun is historical in nature (Okereke, 2013). Ever since from the middle of 1980s the torrent of crisis had increase, and subsequently led to losses of lives and destruction of properties. This disputes has continued to demonstrate ethnic and religious patterns which have delineated clear expression of law breaking and frustration among Nigeria communities (Gambo & Omirin, 2012).

In particular, Tiv - Jukun conflict is amid frequent socio-ethnic violence that devour the economic and political stability in Nigerians' peaceful co-existence in recent time for national development (Egwu, 2004; Egbefo & Salihu, 2014; Alimba (2014). In fact, this is one of the prolonged inter-ethnic conflicts that have repeatedly arisen since 1959 to date. Likewise, Zangon-Kataf; Aguleri-Umuleri; Mango-Bokkos and; the Ife-Modakeke conflicts were few of the common feuds in the Nigeria communities. Egwu (2004) and Othman (2015) emphasized land dispute as the central Themes thought-provoking clashes between the Tiv and the Jukun

individuals/communities. Anthony (2014) stated that up to date the struggles and efforts made by past and present government and the entire stakeholders to provide a lasting solution to the adamant clashes and conflicts among Tivs - Jukuns' communities seems to have produced few positive resolutions (Egbefo & Salihu, 2014). Therefore, it is the interest of this research to appraise the horizontal inequality factors that cause conflicts and to provide a comprehensive framework for the peaceful co-existence between Tiv - Jukun communities.

Alimba (2014) stated that the crisis have produced high tension that is generating danger to the national security of Nigeria as a nation. Also, Nigerian citizens have resulted to violation of the human rights and social injustices, particularly, the women and children. A lot of people feel dissatisfied or unfairly dealt with as a result of injustice and failure of the government authority to institute legal action against those who carry out harmful actions of these crisis. Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria have resulted into deaths and vandalism, several people suffered injuries of various stages and others lost all they possess worth millions of Naira to the hands of looters. Some remained permanently displaced and psychologically traumatized because human minds control it all as conflict start in the hearts of men; so also peace begins in our hearts. The implication is that the same citizens that start conflicts have the capacities to achieve peaceful resolution but these could only be attain through the communities' socio-cultural, political and economic factor assessment.

Saleeman et al. (2015) noted that not all conflicts are negative in inclination. Some conflicts could serve as a foundation for peace-building initiatives. More so, if conflict is non-violent that is constructively and cooperatively approached it could manifest a positive change for the correction of injustice among communities. Nevertheless, literatures have provided wealth of information on the consequences of communal conflicts in many nations, particularly in the recent Nigeria's Boko Haram violent and Tiv - Jukun socio-political battles occurrences. In addition, scholars have provided both empirical and theoretical evident that the damage of conflicts might not be immediate but it could have lifelong impact on the unborn generation (Usman, 2013; Adetoye & Omilusi, 2015). Subsequently, Le Billon (2009) stated that history, governance and economic factors are the root causes of conflicts. The approach for the development of any possible resolution must therefore attend to specific causes in the specific settlement/community/ethnic group in order to reach an amicable conflict's resolution. Le Billon (2009) further outlined the other causes of conflicts such as land

resources, political position, and fear of domination. In addition, citizenship identity, religion and most importantly poverty as factor were listed in the studies of Le Billon (2009; Salawu, 2010).

Imobighe (2003) asserted that ethnic conflict strategic management in Nigeria can be analysed through assessment of roles, beliefs and attitudes of people in the conflict situation. Hence, it includes an assessment of interests and purposes liable for the occurrence of conflict and defines the cause response and avenging actions of aggrieved people. He emphasized that to resolve any conflict situations, it is useful to uncover the historical antecedent to place, the root causes of the crises and solution should evolved within the people involved before reaching a position that would offer amicable settlement.

On a practical note, Nigeria's ethnic conflict connote a circumstances where relationship between different ethnic group ethnic or religious groups in a diverse-ethnic, religious or multi-cultural societies is regarded by absence of affectionateness, mutual mistrust and anxiety, and a propensity in the direction of violent hostility. Salawu (2010) asserted that in Nigeria today, ethnicity and religious intolerance has turn out to be the pivot of countless ways of nationalism varying from claim of language, cultural self-government and religious control to request for local political autonomy and self-determination. All these have caused some kinds of prejudice among communities on the basis of distinguished schemes of socio-cultural signs, religion and economic. Consequently, common mistrust and lack of friendliness between different ethnic groups describes the reason why ethno-religious conflicts have turned out to be lasting feature of Nigeria as a country since 1980s until now. Salawu (2010) elucidated that there is no practical difference between ethnic and religion conflict in the Nigeria context. In fact, most conflict that started as ethnic or political conflict mostly ended as a religious calamity and vice-versa. This showed why Nigerian government has a paramount interest in a research of this nature.

Consequently, this research is crucial because the various political, traditional, ethnic leaders and religious scholars, in most communities of conflict, particularly, Tiv - Jukun leaders barely meet to deliberate the root causes of conflict. More so, is to develop an assessment framework for peaceful co-existence and how to reduce/avoid future ethnic, political and socio-economic conflicts in Nigeria.

Sequel to the above, the utmost aim of this research is to critically appraise the horizontal factors responsible for the Tiv - Jukun ethnic group conflict. More so, to

develop a multi-directional model for the Tiv - Jukun's conflict management strategies that could enhance peaceful co-existence particularly for Nigeria with a bad history of ethnic conflicts. The outcome of this research could provide better understanding for bridge-building framework for establishing common self-reliance that could sustain Nigeria's diverse-ethnic societies. At the same time, the proposed Tiv-Jukun conflict strategic management framework could be adopted or adapted for the ethnic conflicts' resolution in other region in Nigeria and beyond.

1.2 Tiv – Jukun conflict

Taraba state is located at the north east of Nigeria, with the population of 164,728,600 and Wukari has 257,470 (Gani & Adeoti, 2011). The contest that happened in Taraba state, which takes on for years, is primarily among the Tivs, and the Jukuns. Jukuns tribe constitutes the mainstream in Taraba, whereas the Tiv form the bulk in Benue. At hand are likewise Tiv minorities in Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau states, as well as a small Jukun lesser in Benue. The Jukuns comprise of both christian and moslem religion, with very few who practice traditional religion. While the Tivs are mainly christians with few moslems and traditional religion. The contest happening Taraba among the Tivs and the Jukuns has incline on focus on struggle on land property, as suitably as dominance over economic possessions and political post. Political clashes so intense especially about the control of Wukari and Donga the customary Jukuns' areas. Around has remained struggle above the sitting of the border among Benue and Taraba States, deference (or disrespect) for border separations, and political dominance of the boundary towns and settlements.

Now general positions, the Jukun assertion to exist the unique citizens of Wukari, or "indigenes" also deliberate the Tiv as "settlers". The Tivs discard this opinion, on the foundation that they also must been existing there for numerous generations and so have equivalent privileges; they criticize of being relegated and leftward out in Taraba. Similarly, the Jukuns few in Benue also protest of relegation, deficiency of occupation openings, and anxiety. The Tivs, who are perceived as "settlers" are disadvantaged of various privileges given to native individuals, such as depravation in schooling, political representation, economic chances, employment,

etc. The Tiv thus say they are belligerent for equal privileges which they believe they are authorized to as native of Taraba state.

Tiv - Jukun contention emerged amid 1990 and 1993. Beginning the first week of September 2001 forward, in specific, there were manacles of fight and counter aggression by Tiv - Jukun militant factions on a weekly, and occasionally a daily basis in the border townships and settlements. There are persistent into December 2001 and January 2002. Tiv grumble of maltreatment in Taraba in addition claim that the Jukun incident these aggression was intentionally to safeguard a political benefit in Taraba in the run-up to each election as in the scheduled 2003 polls (Ukiwo, 2003).

Contention happened in the years 1959, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1990 and 2001. Major Contention happened in 1959 lead the National Votes in Nigeria that year and exemplified Tiv protests alongside the colonial powers that be, their dogmas, the Northern oligarchy and Northern People's Congress which the Jukun mostly recognized through which the Tiv saying as the indication of their coercion and supremacy (Horowitz, 1985).

Some analysts link the dispute between these two groups and north central Nigeria in general to political difficulties courting back to the expatriate period. Throughout this era, the British gave power above this massive area occupied by several racial subgroups to its associate, the Hausa-Fulani Muslim oligarchy that seized control in several shares of northerly Nigeria. The Tiv strongly reject Hausa-Fulani power, causing in main explosion of contention as early 1960s that requisite military intrusion to enclose. Whereas the Tiv favored partisan associations with southern political group, the Jukun joined up per the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), organized by the Muslim medieval oligarchs from the north (IRIN, 2001). The political proportions of the contention are dual: old-style and modern. The previous worried of control of Wukari metropolitan and partisan post and further possessions. The last concentrated on the Jukuns rejection to embrace any Tiv in Wukari Traditional Assembly where resolutions are made that touch their social life.

Another issue is Land which is regularly called as reason of the contention. Whereas land is repeatedly stated, it is of a fact that is one an aperture aimed at political and further forms of encounter. While it is regularly believed that the Tivs who are predominately farmers are intruding on the agriculture land possessed by the Jukuns it revolved out that the actual problem is that the Tivs are suspect of not enduring by the customary laws of land organization, which necessitate them to gain approval from the

community leader, constituency head, district head, and dominant monarch before preparatory to cultivate on a section of land. Rather, the Tiv would not agree that they are “immigrants” and do not distinguish the Jukuns as unique native (Akintola & Yabayanze, 2017).

An additional issue in the dispute is the great inhabitants’ growing of the Tivs, which generates a want for additional farmland and political control. The Tivs are often blamed of inviting relations from neighboring Benue region, which raises the mandate for parcel, as well as the numerical power of the Tivs. The Jukuns sensation that in their opinions, of which they are particularly honored, are being challenged by the influx of Tiv and ensure embarked upon a “rejukunisation” course. These countless reasons, distant and direct have directed to an tremendously fierce hostility among the Tivs and Jukuns (Moti, 2010). Tribal faction are said to contain in vehemence when they impression ambiguous about their confidence or danger resulting the depriving of a control base during a common election. Tribal entrepreneurs are said to drudge on this disturbance to strengthen communal unity thereby hastening distrust and divergence (Roe, 2004).

In summary, tribal factions are believed to involve in ferocity when they sense ambiguous around their safety or danger. Nigeria is a society with diverse languages, religion and cultures as a result of poor and inadequate controlling of contention rising from these differences, the delinquent of nationhood has known system to calamity that has persist the subject of the argument Moreover this does not despicable we cannot be as one country, even though the circumstance that certain Nigerians are disadvantaged of their privileges in other shares of the nation. Therefore the denial of rights of citizen to reside in places other than their own should be addressed. This can only be completed through the legitimate adjustment that should plainly indicated that Nigerians have privileges of home, have access to social benefits such as employment, participate in politic, education and scholarships and own land to farm. By so doing it will reduce the tension amongst the diverse ethnic groups that are sparingly spread around virtually all cities and towns of the country. Land issue must be addressed in a circumstances wherever certain are deprived of right to use to land since they remain guest or settlers which can split the motherland separately rather than harmony, this is somewhere the role of traditional monarchs are relevant. However, in Nigeria, the age-old animosities between the various ethnic groups arising from conflicts over ownership and control of land appear to have been exacerbated by the ineffectual

nature of the Land Use Act of 1979 in the rural areas. While the Act provides that the Governor holds all land in the state in trust for the people, the reality is that traditional forms of ownership are better recognized among the rural populace. Prevention diplomacy (PD) suggests the greatest approach for working and supporting fights within Tiv land. The reasons of contention in Tiv land are difficult, and hence necessitate an approach that identifies this difficulty (Osegbue, 2017).

1.3 Statement of the problem

The conflict in Wukari of Taraba state that has been happening for years is mainly between the Tivs, and the Jukuns. The Jukuns being the major tribe in Taraba state, while the Tivs the major tribes in Benue state. Also there are Tiv minorities in Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau states, and few Jukun minority in Benue state. The battle in Taraba state between the Tivs and the Jukuns is likely to focus on struggle over land, control over economic resources and political or administrative position. Political clashes have been especially strong around the influence of Wukari long existing traditional Jukun centre. Land has been the major contributing factor of the incessant conflict going on in Wukari local government area. The respondents interviewed agreed that land has been their major problem between the two ethnic groups of Tiv - Jukun. The Jukuns are not ready to let the Tivs have access to the land by claiming that it is their own inheritance and therefore want to protect the land as their inheritance for their future generation. While on the other side the Tiv argued that land is not the problem but fear of domination. The Jukuns are so concerned that the Tivs' population is fast growing and will one day over power the Jukuns, that's why the Jukuns are denying the Tivs access to penetrate into their land.

Another contributing factor is employment opportunities, the chances of employment to both ethnic groups differ, the Jukuns are given upper hand and more opportunity when it comes to employment. The Jukuns believe to be the indigenes and will not allow settlers (Tivs) to take over offices in their land in which the Tivs refused to accept that claim. The Tiv also claimed to be entitled to job opportunity in Wukari of Taraba state, because they have been living there for decades. Therefore need to be considered. Some of the Tivs respondents interviewed argued that they cannot fold their arms to see all the lucrative jobs given out to the Jukuns. While the Jukuns

claimed is their right to be placed in the lucrative jobs being their own land. This has been causing a lot of problem between the Tiv –Jukun ethnic groups, that has been causing conflict up to today.

The ethnic conflict is global problem nowadays and its consequence is so huge on the nations' economic, political and peaceful co-existence of citizens. The world population is predominately within the age bracket of 30 years and the future hold that they stand to face great consequence of ethnic conflict if urgent attention is not given to this problem (WHO, 2009). In fact the peaceful co-existence of future generation societies/communities is at risk of being exposed to more violence that could affect their political and economic development. Also, United States Institute for Peace (2010) reported that ethnic conflict is a global problem, even though, its occurrence is more rampant in Africa and its consequences could be disastrous if not effectively managed. In this regard, no nation whether rich or poor, developed or under-develop is free of ethnics' violent devastating effects. However, there are several forms of ethnic conflict which includes: land disputes, discrimination, belief and value difference; socio-cultural disposition. Nevertheless, disunity, disharmony and bitterness are the outcomes of ethnic conflicts which hinder progress and development in any given society.

Today, Nigeria has more than two hundred and fifty (250) major ethnic groups which belong to different socio-cultural values. Since independence, Nigeria as a nation has been facing the problem of diverse ethnic-religious, socio-economic and political conflicts (David, 2012). The dilemma of the characterization and diversity of Nigeria ethnic populace has resulted into persistent recurrence of socio-ethnic and political violent. In fact, these have constituted different ethnic interest group with selfish goals such as Bakassi Boys in the eastern; O' dua People Congress (OPC) in the west and; the Boko Haram in the northern Nigeria. Dahida (2015) and Sampson (2012) stressed that the existence of divided interest ethnic groups have propagated communities/societal intolerance that have created more violent and bloody with more devastating loss of life and properties using the ethnic local paramilitaries as the perpetrators of ethnic conflicts' dogmatic plan.

However, many authors have stated that youth violent is one of the problems confronting Nigeria as a result of ethnic conflicts. Researcher such as Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) stated that over 60% of the ethnic conflicts are perpetrated by youths within the age brackets of 20 and 35 years in Nigeria. In 2003, 2007 and 2011, Nigeria

recorded more than 83,700 youths were killed in the ethno-religious conflicts, even though; most of these conflicts were politically motivated (Sampson, 2012; David, 2012). Also, in recent time in the northern Nigeria, over 13,000 young and old people were massacred (Usman, 2013); over 70% of these dead were males (Okereke, 2013) while their families (children and women) are living death to bear the grave consequence of these conflicts.

Presently, Nigeria is in the state of insecurity with political uncertainty and some ethnic regions are living in fear. According to Giroux and Gilpin (2014), majority of the northern youths are the ones caught up using sophisticated and dangerous weapons in both rural and urban areas of the country. The increased deaths of guiltless citizens have created more fear and insecurity than ever before.

In addition, it was observed in the literature that between the year 2005 to 2010, Nigerian police documented about 1.4 million conflicts/violent cases that truly occurred. Nwankwo (2015) and Aggestam (2014) stated that politics; religion belief and socio-cultural difference and; land resources disputes were the root causes of the ethnic conflicts (Federal bureau of investigation, 2011). On the contrary, economic factor and fear of domination were outlined in the study of Drobizheva *et al.* (2015) as the ground trigger of the ethnic conflicts. Giroux and Gilpin (2014) stated that in Nigeria ethnic conflict situation is ever evolving and there is urgent need to address it through rigorous empirical findings with the view to provide resolution for peaceful co-existence in Nigeria as a nation.

Furthermore, notable scholars buttressed this contention that numerous sections of the country today are convulsed in inter and intra-ethnic conflicts leading to loss of lives as well as the destruction of personal and government property. It is sad to note that gun begin to rule and ruin the country. Obviously, human lives seem worthless and all effort made by the various tiers of government to checkmate the wanton killings and destruction of property seem not to be yielding expected results, the problem is harmfully affecting the economic and social development of the nation. Essentially, the need to live in unity is nonnegotiable; hence, this inevitable march to perdition must be stopped.

Consequently, Ajayi (2014) extensive literature identified areas of challenges in the ethnic conflicts such as economic inequality; discrimination and mutual hatred and fear of domination. He further noted that ever since independent, "there exists persistent cavernous ethnic tension and crises engendered by horizontal inequality

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