

THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE INDIGENESHIP DICHOTOMY: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

It is expected that the plurality and diversity of the Nigerian State would be sources of strength in all facets of socio-economic and political life of the country but the reverse has been the case as this unique feature of diversity has become one of the banes of the country's efforts at national integration and peaceful co-existence. The study therefore seeks to unravel the ramifications of indigene-settler syndrome, citizenship question, and the deficiencies in the constitution as well as its attendant crises among citizens of the Nigeria State as against their fundamental rights and privileges. It interrogates the roles of the state in mediating this dilemma and discovers that the various ethnic political elites have further exacerbated the citizenship dilemma by fanning the embers of tribal and religious sentiments as basis for mobilizing the so called indigenous peoples for political and economic reasons. The communitarian theory of citizenship forms the theoretical framework of analysis. Relying on secondary sources of data, the study employs the content technique of analysis. It recommends for a review of the constitution to provide more accommodation for settler rights that would be enforceable under the law and de-emphasize the state of origin syndrome. It also recommended that; the Nigerian State should play the role of a neutral arbiter and guarantee the rights of its citizens residing in any part of the country.

Keywords: Citizenship, Indigeneity, Migration, Indigene-Settler.

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world and endowed with human and natural resources, enormous enough to make the country one of the greatest in the world, and a major pride of the African continent. Essentially, evidence from the over 350 ethnic nationalities that constitute the Nigerian state shows that the country is a highly pluralistic entity (Afolabi, 2016). To this end, Nigeria, like many of its sub-Saharan African neighbours struggles to accommodate ethnic and religious differences among its people. Chief among one of the lingering contradictions of the Nigerian state is the phenomenon of indigenes and non-

indigenes or natives and settlers among the same people who lay equal claim to Nigerian Citizenship, and who have been engaged in cultural, religious, economic and political exchanges for over 100 years (Ehusiani, 2012).

From the foregoing, suffice it to state that, as man's history is essentially a story of movement of conquest of land from nature and from fellow men; people cannot but move out of their place of birth and upbringing in search of greener pastures or as a result of circumstances beyond their control. While Nigerians who find themselves in areas other than their native communities believe that they should be accorded the same rights and opportunities available in the socio-economic and political spheres as those that were born in the area in question because they are the same citizens of Nigeria; the so called indigenes however question such aspirations, as people always see the difference between "we and them" particularly in terms of political and economic allocation of resources (Scott 1972 and Yakubu; 2005). Sadly, dozens of communities, the administrative line government draws to help manage diversity also fuel violence.

Laying more credence to the role of the government in further entrenching the indigene-settler dichotomy and its attendant violence, Sayne (2012) aptly noted that officials use this slippery term of "indigene" to limit access to public resources, such as land, schools and government jobs. State and local governments, nation-wide grant indigenes preferential access over settlers to the aforestated resources. Though settlers can still be Nigerian citizens and thus not completely stateless but discrimination against them can provoke serious violence. Human Rights Watch (2021) and Reuters (2019) estimate that clashes between rival ethnic and religious groups in troubled Plateau State alone killed perhaps four thousand over ten years. A single outbreak in Kaduna state claimed two- thousand lives. Ehusiani (2012) and Aflolabi (2016) specifically identified the flash points of indigene-settler wide spread violence to include but not limited to those among the Tiv and Jukun of Taraba state, among the Urhobo and Itshekiri of Delta state, among the Ebira and Bassa of Nassarawa state, among the Hausa and Berom or Angas of Plateau state and among the Hausa and Igbo of Kano state. Sticks and machetes were once the weapons of choice; now the worst conflict zones see attacks with AK-47, rocket launchers and timed car bombs while use of mercenaries and ethnic militias continue to take centre stage. The resulting chaos has opened up space for organized crime such as kidnapping, smuggling and banditry.

This paper is an attempt to situate the recurrent decimal of indigene-settler violence in many parts of the Nigerian State within the context of political manipulations by the elites largely encouraged by the structural disjuncture in the constitution. To do this, it reviews the current state of thinking and public policy regarding indigene-settler syndrome and questions the practical unwillingness of the State to properly define citizenship in the constitution, particularly as the country now consolidates its democratic experience. The study is therefore made up of five sections viz: section one dealt with the general introduction and the problematique. Section two ventures into the conceptualization of key concepts, Section three delved into methodology and theoretical framework of analysis. Section four captured the analytical aspect of the study while section five wrapped it up with conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarifications

For a proper analysis and understanding of the various contentious theoretical issues connected to the subject under study, we therefore deem it imperative to conceptualise and clarify the following thematic concepts.

Citizenship

Although, the concepts of state and citizenship have changed in time and space, the idea of modern citizenship is still closely connected with that of a state. Thus, citizenship is tied up with the evolution of the state. Etymologically, the concept of citizenship derives from the French word – *citoyennette*; to describe the relationship between a person and the city. The concept originally connotes “the free man of the city”; it was conceived in the context of the town particularly the medieval and ancient city-state and hence it historically has an urban orientation (Longva, 1995; Afolabi, 2016; Adejumbi, 2001). Arrays of scholars have laid more credence to a holistic conceptualization of citizenship. Thus, as a form of symbolic relation between the individual and the state, Marshal (1950) avers that citizenship connotes a regime of rights, privileges and duties which could be broken down into civil, political and social rights, which include; the right to speech, association, due process, and equality before the law, franchise and social welfare. Baubock (2002) conceives citizenship as a status of full and equal membership in a self-governing political community that entails rights and

obligations and supported by certain virtue; which means that citizenship connotes nationality – a formal affiliation to a state. Tilly (1996) viewed the concept of citizenship from four analytical perspectives of: category, role, tie and identity. As a category, citizenship designates a set of actors- citizens-distinguished by their shared privileged position in a particular state. As a role, citizenship includes all of an actor's relations to others that depend on the actor's relations to a particular state. As a tie, citizenship identifies an enforceable mutual relation between an actor and state agents and, as an identity, citizenship can refer to the experience and public representation of category, tie or role. In his own conception, Adejumobi (2001) maintains that citizenship is a mutual agreement between the citizens and the state for reciprocal privileges and rights, and obligations, loyalty and commitment; with the role of law as the umpire and justice and fairness as the watch words.

From the foregoing, Riesenberg (1992) in his emphasis on the essence of citizenship, argued that citizenship is a moral choice and action that had been extolled by so many different societies, Pagan and Christian, because it has been viewed not only as an instrument useful in controlling the passion and attenuating private concerns, but as a means, well suited to draw the best in people. It is deducible from the above, that citizenship entails a form of social pact in which through the dual elements of reciprocity and exchange between the individual and the state, allows the individual (citizen) to enjoy those rights and privileges which no other social or political organizations offer; and reciprocally gives his obligations, loyalty and commitment to the state. The implementation of the pact therefore does not presuppose class, but civic equality- equality of access and opportunities in social institutions and structures, and fairness and justice in the interactions between the state and individuals and amongst individuals in a political community.

The Concept of Indigenous Peoples

The concept “indigenous” is derived from two ancient Greek words “indo”, meaning inside or within and “geneous”, meaning birth or born and also race. Etymologically, indigenous thus denotes “native” or “born within”. Its literal meaning in English language is – any given people, ethnic group or community may be described as indigenous in reference to some particular region or location that they perceive as their traditional tribal land claim. The Webster Universal Dictionary/Thesaurus defines an indigene simply as “Native” while the

Human Rights Watch (HRW) Report defines an indigene as “somebody who can trace their ethnic and genealogical roots back to the community of people who originally settled there”. Other concepts used to underlined indigenous populations are aboriginal, native, original, first, and heredity owners in indigenous law. Besides, the use of the term “peoples” in association with the term “indigenous” is derived from the 19th century anthropological and ethnographic disciplines in Merriam-Webster (Nwagwu, 2016).

From the foregoing, Jones (2012) defined the term “indigenous peoples” as referring to the original or native inhabitants of areas that have been colonized by Europeans, especially in Africa, Asia, America and Australasia. The category of indigenous populations was adopted for the first in international law by the International Labour Organization in ILO Convention no. 107 of 1957 concerning the protection and integration of indigenous and tribal populations in independent countries. There is also international and national legislation definition of the term as peoples having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory and their cultural and historical distinctiveness from the populations that often politically dominants. The legislation is based on the conclusion that certain indigenous people are vulnerable to exploitation, marginalization and oppression by nation state form from the colonizing populations or by politically dominant different ethnic groups. Thus, the concept was often used to refer to all non-European natives conquered and colonized by European powers (Nwagwu, 2016). Be this as it may a disturbing phenomenon is that the interaction indigenous and non-indigenous societies throughout history of mankind has been complex, ranging from outright conflict. The contentious issues usually revolve round cultural and linguistic preservation, land rights, ownership and exploitation of natural resources, political determination and autonomy, environmental degradation and incursion, poverty, health and discrimination.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Communitarian theory of citizenship as its theoretical framework of analysis. According to Miller (1995) the communitarian theory considers the concepts of citizen and citizenship as contractual exchanges between individuals and the community. In essence, citizenship status therefore becomes a concept used to qualify the relationship established based on agreements which define the rights and obligations of the powers and

duties of the State (Omemma, 2006; Miller, 2006). The chief exponents of the communitarian theory include Hannah Arendt-“Human Condition” (1958); Gad Barzilai-“Communities and Law: Politics and Cultures of Legal Identities” (2003); AmitaiEtzioni-“The New Golden Rule” (1996); Charles Taylor-“Sources of the Self” (1992); and Michael J.Sandel-“Liberalism and the Limits of Justice” (1998).The communitarians point of view is anchored on the emphasis on community belonging. A society is made up of a community, which in turn is made up of individuals. The Communitarians believe that when individuals feel that that they belong to such communities, the society will prosper. An individual’s sense of identity is generated when he or she becomes a socially-embedded citizen, meaning when he or she feels part of the community that he or she belongs to (community belonging). In order to achieve this, the individual must bring about active citizenship; a citizen who must contribute to the common welfare, the economy and wealth production, and most importantly to take part in attaining the rights and responsibilities toward each other and that of the community at large.

From the foregoing, Etzioni (2012), one of the leaders of the American Communitarian Movement , pointed out that communities can be defined with reasonable precision as having two characteristics : first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals , relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another as opposed to one-on-one or chain-like individual relationships; and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values , norms and meanings , and a shared history and identity-in short a particular culture (Etzioni,1996). The import of the Communitarian theory of citizenship becomes germane for a holistic understanding of the subject matter especially when taking cognizance of deep seated community-laden identities crisscrossing the length and breadth the Nigerian State .Citizenship in Nigeria finds more meaning and attachment to sub-national identities and indigeneity whereby high premium is placed on one’s genealogy as basis for access to state resources and essential rights, a practice that ridicules Nigerian Citizenship. Against this backdrop, Adujie (2009) reiterates that, in ideal sense , a citizen of Nigeria is citizen of the locality and state which such Nigerian has adopted and where such Nigerian has lived in, meaningfully ,and where such Nigerian may choose and such Nigerian has demonstrated and indicated, whether he or she is Adamu, Bola or Chima. This conception notwithstanding, what is in practice is a situation where a Nigerian whose father or grandparent did not come from his place of residence will find it difficult if not impossible to get elected or even

appointed to a political office, even though he or she was born or has lived in that area for the whole of his or her life.

Methodology

The need to arrive at the objective of this study necessitated the adoption of appropriate research design for the study; therefore the study adopted the descriptive qualitative research design. The choice for this type of research design was basically informed by the fact that the study has enough qualitative data that are readily available and accessible to use in relation to the subject matter under study. The use of the above research design enabled the research to critically examine the incidences indigene versus settler dichotomy and controversy in Nigeria. Essentially, secondary sources of data were utilized. Secondary sources of data entails that the study extracted the research relevant data from existing studies such as: archives, journals, articles, textbooks, internet materials, newspapers, official reports, and government gazettes for the purpose of qualitatively analysing them.

The method data analysis was content analysis method. Being a non-experimental research, the use of content analysis set out to analyze the data that were generated from. The content analysis method formed the anchor for data analysis as we focused on the manifestations of citizenship controversy and its attendant indigene-settler unrest in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Constitution and Indigeneship Controversy

Without doubt, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria confers citizenship on every Nigerian on equal basis and both the 1979 and 1999 Constitution guarantee that every Nigerian is free to reside in any part of the federation without hindrance. As explicitly expressed in chapter III, section 25, 26 and 27 of the 1999 constitution, the citizenship of Nigeria could be by birth, registration and naturalization (FRN, 1999). The provision for citizenship in the constitution coupled with the provision for human rights in chapter IV of the same 1999 constitution are instituted with the aim of promoting the national political objectives of building a united and free society for all Nigerians, and as much as possible promote reciprocal obligations between state and citizens. These objectives re-echo in many important national documents such as the second National Development Plan. The second National Development Plan clearly stated that the goal of national development is to build a

strong and buoyant economy, a free democratic and egalitarian society in which no one is oppressed on the basis of sex, ethnic and religious differences (CFRCR, 2002).

Be the above as it may, Afolabi (2016) decried that in implementation and application, citizenship in Nigeria has become problematic. It could be likened to a mere nominal phenomenon, as Nigerians are largely denied citizenship rights. It is this experience that has made people to make sub-national identities the basis of support and identification. To further buttress this, Ojukwu and Onifade (2010: 12) opine that:

Citizenship is an important notion because it defines the constitutive elements of the democratic state and elaborates the relationship between state power and individuals. It spells out procedure and sets of practices defining the relationship between the nation-state and its individual members.... Unequal equal class and status relation is derived and a structure and ideology of common objectives are superimposed. Citizenship in Nigeria infers on equality (of rights) bestowed on all who are Nigerian citizens backed up by adequate constitutional provision in order to ensure that this is so.... in principle, all Nigerian citizens are equal no matter the circumstances of their birth and either or not they reside in their places of origin. But in practice, one is a Nigerian citizen only in his state of origin. Outside one's state of origin, he is not a citizen.

Citizenship therefore in the Nigerian context has a dual derivative and the consequences of this, is the indigene-settler syndrome with its attendant socio- economic and political struggles as found manifest in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in many parts of Nigeria. Meanwhile, suffice it to state at this juncture that perhaps the most problematic of the citizenship question in Nigeria is the constitutional ambiguity that is conspicuous with regards to who is a citizen of the country. The indigeneity clause in the 1979 constitution was used to legitimize discriminatory practices against Nigerians of certain ethnic and linguistic backgrounds living in states other than their own. An attempt to remedy this citizenship problem by the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is further truncated by the surreptitious inclusion of the indigeneity clause regarding the appointment of some public office holders such as Ministers. The intention might be to forge for national cohesion through the operation of the federal character principle; but the implications it has for the proper implementation of citizenship rights as provided by the same constitution makes it ambiguous (Afolabi, 2016).

As lucidly stated in section 147 of the 1999 Constitution in sub-section (3):

Any appointment under sub-section (2) of this section by the president shall be in conformity with the provisions of section 14 (3) of this constitution; provided that in giving effect to the provisions aforesaid, the president shall appoint at least one Minister from each state, who, shall be an indigene of such state (FRN, 1999).

Thus, the 1999 constitution recognizes that there are indigenes and settlers in Nigeria. Similarly the 1999 Constitution also compounds issues when a closer look is made on its narrow definition of citizenship and indigeneship. Thus, when it specifies three ways of obtaining Nigerian citizenship, i.e by birth, registration and naturalization. While the birth option derives from genealogy, registration and naturalization citizenships are obtained through marriage and domiciliation (but in this case for foreign nationals); how does one become an indigene? The claimers to ownership of their “native” homes are emboldened by the provisions of the constitution and operation of same by the Nigerian state which is not in line with the universal application of citizenship and the rights accruable to the concept. In the same vein, it therefore follows that since indigeneship is only obtained through genealogy, how will a naturalized citizen become a minister. Are we to have citizens who cannot be ministers, people who are foreigners in their country? (Obomanu, 2010). As observed by the Citizen’s Forum for Constitutional Reform, CFCR (2002) more often than not, so-called indigenes and natives are pitched against settlers in deadly confrontations over access to local power resources and question of identity. The scenario described above is epitomized in the Ife/ Modakeke conflict, Zango-Kataf crisis, Bassa/Ebira conflict, Tiv-Jukun conflict, Hausa-Fulani-Berom conflict in Jos and other ethnic-communal strife that have dealt a heavy blow in the stability of the Nigeria state.

Factors Reinforcing indigene-Settler Syndrome in Nigeria

Without doubt, the perennial problems of inter-communal and ethno-religious rivalries in various parts of Nigeria seem to have defied all known conflict resolution strategies. At best, the insurgence seems to have gradually overwhelmed government coercive apparatuses as the crises are simply being managed rather than resolved. Having said this, it becomes imperative for the study to identify and analyse other fundamental factors outside the constitutional

ambiguity that reinforce this intractable phenomenon of citizenship controversy and indigene-settler syndrome as below.

- **Land Ownership**

In Nigeria, indigeneity is associated with land ownership. This is not only limited to Nigeria but land ownership is an issue all over Africa. As such, anything that affects the land affects the people and must be resisted by all means. Awa (1985) supports this view when he asserted that indigeneity is strong in Nigeria because people are seeing the land as a primary form of property in the traditional society and its source as a form of wealth. For instance, Danfulani (2005) maintains that the crises in Plateau state are first and foremost a struggle over land as peasant farmers or workers in the civil service while the settlers, mainly Muslim minorities are Hausa dry-season farmers and cattle rearers; while the Igbo, Urhobo and Yoruba, are dominating the business life of the state. Similarly, (Nwagwu, 2016) posits that the Zango-Kataf conflict in Southern Kaduna is traceable to the imposition of aristocratic rule of Muslims from the Zaria Emirate upon the native Atyaps. The imposition facilitated superior external forces to annex and control Atyaps land which belong to Kataf peasants.

- **Pattern of Regime Responses**

The volatility of any conflict actually depends on the pattern of the regime responses. In other words, the institutional mechanisms of government play crucial roles in conflict avoidance, conflict preservation and tension reduction as maintenance of peace and orderliness is essential to ensuring security of lives and properties. This is critically underscored as a principal responsibility of government in section 14(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federation to the effect that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. Conversely, in situations where the institutions of government remain quite unconcerned or indifferent or non-challant, the possibility is the graduation of conflict signals to full-scale explosive conflict scenario. In the alternative, where government or any traditional institution is sensitive and responsibly responsive, the possibility of a conflict scenario turning into explosive crisis is remote (Akpuru-Aja, 2007). Against this backdrop, Nwagwu (2016) decried that the partisan disposition of successive regimes and their deceitful stance on sensitive and explosive issues bordering on state security involving Hausa/Fulani and other ethnic groups in Nigeria casts doubts in public minds on the sincerity of the government in maintaining egalitarian state where preference is not given to any

particular ethnic group or religion against others. It is further observed for instance that the seeming support of the government on the Hausa/Fulani claim of traditional authority of the Zaria Emirate, superiority in power and entrepreneurship over the inhabitants and residents of the Zango-Kataf, imposition and extortion of taxes from the Atyaps indigenes by the Hausa ethnic group; the condemnation of retired military officer, ZamaniLekwot (an Atyap) to death by the panel of inquiry headed by the Hausa/Fulani extraction as aftermath of the crisis; and the partisan disposition of the state Governor over the crisis were not meant to resolve the conflict, rather to exacerbate the ethno-religious conflicts in the area for cheap popularity.

- **Elitist Manipulation and Power Contestation**

In the political arena, the phenomenon of indigene-settler syndrome and its attendant conflict has been manifest. Elite political groups have continued to rely on this illogical and ambiguous understanding of migration and citizenship dynamics as available strategy to sensitize and mobilize people for socio-economic and political gains. For instance, the second immediate cause of the 2001, Jos crisis was the appointment of AlhajiMuktar Usman Mohammed as the chairman of the Local Government Monitoring Committee of the National Poverty Eradication for Jos North Local Government. Muktar's appointment was greeted by a lot of grievances and vehement oppositions. The Judicial Commission of inquiry into the crisis reported that all these protests are unanimous not only in their condemnation of the appointment on the basis that Muktar is not an indigene of Jos North Local Government Council, but also in their demand that he be removed and replaced with an indigene (Afolabi, 2016). Similarly, Bayne (2012) further reiterates that not every indigene- settler clash has direct ties to politics. But the most protracted conflicts-Jos, Warri, Kaduna, and Benue- all have elite political malfeasance at their roots whether be it election rigging, divisive use of identity politics, graft, land grabs, or high-level organized crime. With emphasis on the Jos indigene-settler conflict, former Plateau state Governor, Joshua Dariye quoted in Saturday Champion) (2004: 5) avers:

Jos is owned by the natives, simple. Every Hausa man in Jos is a settler whether he likes it or not.....We are in one state but that does not change the landlord/settler equation, no matter how much we cherish peace. Our problem here today is that the tenant is becoming very unruly. But the natural law here is simple: if your tenant is unruly, you serve him quit notice! This unruly group must know that we are no

longer willing to tolerate rubbish they give us. The days of over-tolerance are gone forever.

The above remarks captures the extent to which power tussle and elite contestation has contributed to further entrench indigene-settler dilemma in the fabrics of Nigerian polity; a development that has resulted in incessant wanton destruction of lives and properties, stifling of foreign direct investment and institutionalizing economic chaos.

- **Religious Intolerance**

The indigene- settler syndrome is explosive because it reinforces, and is reinforced by the factor of religion. Since the return of democracy in 1999, the majority of Nigeria's worst episodes of violence have straddled religious or ethnic lines or both. The country's middle belt- a "geopolitical term" for six states in central Nigeria (Bauchi, Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba) where the majority Muslim North butts up against the Christian and Animist South- is probably the worst ethnically diverse part of Nigeria and historically the most violent (United States Institute of Peace, 2019). Troubled Plateau state alone has about forty ethnic groups. Parties to indigene-settler conflicts often use racist, separatist, clash-of-culture rhetoric to justify their actions. One bloody communal clash in Kaduna, for instance, was called a "war against political Islam" and a "clean-up campaign against ignorant monkeys" and "second-class citizens" (Sayne, 2012). According to Emina (2015) Much as the elites try to down play the religious factor in the whole saga, religion remains a sore point, such that the law enforcement officers who were promptly drafted to quell the conflagration were alleged to have taken sides depending on what faith they professed.

In the same view, Momoh (2020) captured it more vividly that the so called settlers are Muslims and they so-called natives are Christians. So when one group is organized by the cults that bounce on one another, these managers of chaos tell the world that the people are fighting because of their religious difference. Following from the above; the crises in the country shows that religion being an emotive thing, the people therefore are easily manipulated into fighting all in the name of God while this is so stated, its reinforcement and bifurcation is a creation of the elites who do this for economic or political advantage.

- **Government Sanctioned Discriminatory Identity Practices**

It is also worrisome to note the point that the issue of indigene-settler syndrome is to a large extent sanctioned by the institutions of the state and its operators. Whereas the so-called settlers or non-indigenes are part of the society in every respect, worshipping with, socializing with, trading with, paying taxes with and marrying the so-called indigenes but when it comes to sharing of resources, including ownership of land, scholarship, placement of children in colleges and universities, employment in the civil service and political appointment, the indigene-settler syndrome is thrown up and the so-called settlers often suffer the grave injustice of discrimination and persecution. Emina (2015) aptly noted that this is practical when a person must prove beyond reasonable doubt that he or she is an indigene of a place by, for instance, get a letter of identification from a traditional ruler or councillor before a local government council or a state could issue a certificate of indigeneship not citizenship.

In a more succinct note, Ehusiani (2012: 8) captures it thus:

Many of us remember the injustices, the pains and dislocations that attended the creation of states and local government areas in this country, where many people have to move, not because they wanted to, but because they were told they had no place in the new state. The most ruthless examples of social dislocation as a result of state creation include the Anambra-Enugu saga after the creation of Enugu state; the Enugu-Ebonyi saga after the creation of Ebonyi state, the Oyo-Osun saga after the creation of Osun state and the Ondo-Ekiti saga after the creation of Ekiti state. On these occasions, so-called non-indigenes were treated so shabbily that you would think they were illegal aliens.

Similarly, former resident Jonathan during the 13th session of the OsigweAnyiamOsigwe lecture organized by the OsigweAnyiamfoundation decried that “our diversity is our strength, it is time for change. A situation whereby a Nigerian child has to travel many distances to pick a state of origin form because they are not recognized where they live is not good. The indigene-settler syndrome is a threat to our nation and we must not tolerate it”. This is a clear pointer to the magnitude of the phenomenon as it affects all facets of the country’s national life.

Summary of Findings

The fundamental findings of the study include that:

1. One major contradiction of the Nigerian state is the phenomenon of indigenes and non-indigenes or natives and settlers among the same people who lay equal claim to the Nigerian citizenship.
2. Indigene-settler violence in Nigeria is further compounded by the ambiguity surrounding the indigeneity clause as enshrined in both 1979 and 1999 Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, clause that further ridicules naturalized or registered citizens of Nigeria and effectively deprive them of political, economic and social rights.
3. The worst hit in the whirl wind of indigene-settler violence in Nigeria include the states located in the middle Belt of Nigeria where ethnic and religious diversity are the major triggers of conflict. These states are Bauchi, Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Nasarawa which have witnessed the worst lethal experiences of indigene-settler induced crises in Nigeria's annals of history.
4. Government at various levels in Nigeria have contributed to entrench indigene-settler syndrome and citizenship confusion by drawing such administrative lines like indigene and non-indigene in the distribution of public resources.
5. Land, religion and elite political manipulation constitute the most reinforcing factors than pitch natives against settlers in Nigeria. The political class therefore uses this as basis for mobilizing sentiments and support for the ultimate actualization of political ends.
6. The state and its forces are often seen taking sides in matters of grave state security as evidenced in the partisan disposition of successive regimes' seeming support of the Hausa/Fulani claim of traditional authority and superiority over the inhabitants and residents of Zango-Kataf in Southern Kaduna.

Conclusion

This paper has decisively examined the issue of indigene-settler syndrome and its associated conflict. It is observed that the constitutional ambiguity surrounding citizenship and indigeneity further complicates the issue. Serious thinking about how to prevent or resolve Nigeria's indigene-settler violence and citizenship controversy has barely started. As often in the country, existing analyses are stronger on problems than on solutions. Deadly conflicts end only when individuals and the state make new choices. The type of initiative discussed in this study can be challenging and costly but without such deep investments, indigenes and settlers living in the thick of violence may never start to imagine and trust in the new ways of living together. One way to get started is to flesh out immediate, intermediate and final goals. Both the people and government must work towards this and failure to do the needful will spell doom for the country that is already heated up by other centrifugal forces.

Recommendations

1. It is expedient that the 1999 constitution be amended to properly define citizenship of Nigerian state in line with universal application of the concept; expunge such thing as indigene or expand the meaning of indigene to include people who are either born in a place or are resident in a place for a reasonable number of years, and make it a criminal offence to have dual citizenship.
2. Government must hold perpetrators accountable to reduce indigene-settler violence. This is because communities hit hard by indigene-settler violence will rarely see lasting peace without justice. The Nigerian state seldom punishes those responsible for indigene-settler violence especially the elites.
3. The role Nigeria's security forces play in quelling indigene-settler violence must be seriously monitored. Allegations of arbitrary arrests, excessive use of force, torture, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, theft and extortion are common. Other security undoings that must be addressed include poor intelligence and training, institutionalized corruption, and divided loyalties to the Federal and State Governments as well as private bosses.
4. A state policy granting the so-called indigenes and the so-called settlers' equal access to schools and public jobs should be enacted and enforced nationwide. The idea and practice of discriminatory tuition fees in public schools, colleges and universities does not do much good to nation building project.

5. More holistic understandings of justice are also needed. The worst hot spots will need a wide menu of well-planned interventions. Options include securitization, criminal prosecution, mediation and dialogue, truth commission, victim compensation programme, public health trauma assistance, education and communication work.

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