

## **The Media, Conflict Resolution and Indigene-Non-Indigene Relationship in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Indigene and non-indigene issues have been of global concern, with Nigeria having her fair share of the challenges. The distinction between indigenous people and settler groups, even in ancient kingdoms and primordial communities attest to this. However, in the contemporary Nigerian society, the strained relationship between indigenes and non-indigenes has assumed a dangerous dimension leading to the main objective of this study, which is to explore the role the media play in reducing the indigenes and non-indigenes conflicts in Nigeria. The scope of the study covers economy, politics, conflict and education. The paper was anchored on Culture Conflict Theory. The findings revealed that the unhealthy struggle for scarce economic resources and the discrimination in the economic and political spheres between the indigenes and the settlers in the various States of Nigeria create distrust that threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria as one united and indivisible nation. Based on the findings, we recommend that the Nigerian media should set agenda on this issue to emphasise the need for Nigerians to live together in harmony and that we can co-exist as one united entity.

**Keywords:** Discrimination, Conflict, Disunity, Crises, Settler, Indigene Relationship, Co-Existence, Conflict Resolution

### **Introduction**

The indigene-settler' dichotomy is a burning controversial issue in recent years in Nigeria. The issue today is highly volatile and threatens national integration and unity of the country. It is one of the major factors that affect the operation of federalism and the attainment of national cohesion in a multi-ethnic State called Nigeria. The problem was institutionalised by the way and manner in which the Nigerian State had been

nurtured based on ethnicity and religious affiliations through colonial legacies (Musa & Manu, 2013).

Nigeria is a country of many tribes, each with its own peculiar culture, religion and economic interests to protect. The extraordinary diversity of Nigeria is reflected in the more than 250 ethnic groups, many of which had no meaningful relationship with one another before being shoehorned into the same colony by the British government in 1914 (Human Rights Watch, 2017) when the Northern and Southern protectorates were amalgamated under the Sir Lord Lugard's administration as the Governor General of the British colony (Olakunle, Iseolorunkanmi & Segun, 2016).

The British arrangement that gave birth to Nigeria was to the detriment of the indigenous people of the space now called Nigeria because the diverse ethnic groups that were joined together never shared common affinities and were never consulted on the issue of amalgamation. Britain went ahead with her self-interest as far as Nigeria coming together was concerned.

Shortly after independence, Nigeria was engulfed in series of political turmoil fuelled by ethno-religious politics that led to the abrupt end of the First Republic. Nigeria experienced a bloody 30 months Civil War (1967-1970) as a result of the then Eastern region's secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Despite the re-unification of Nigeria in 1970, ethnic rivalries and religious sentiments remained key features of the Nigerian society (Olakunle, Iseolorunkanmi & Segun, 2016). Within the Nigerian State, indigene-settler dichotomy became a recurring decimal. Currently, the over 170 million Nigerian population is composed of 36 states and 774 local government areas (LGAs). Within these States, sharp differences in language, religion, culture and ethnicity contribute to the indigene-settler dichotomy.

Many of the pre-colonial relationships that existed between Nigeria's different groups were antagonistic and left scars that have yet to fully heal. This is especially true in Nigeria's central "Middle Belt" region, where numerous Christian minority groups have a historical tradition of resistance to conquest and oppression by the Hausa states (Albin-Lacky, 2006).

The British colonial authorities were the first to articulate a formal distinction between indigene and non-indigene communities (Human Rights Watch, 2006). The colonialists began to "categorise Nigeria linguistic groups as tribes and attributed to them differences in culture, environment and abode based on artificial partition of boundaries" (Musa and Manu, 2013, p.35). The three major ethnic groups that formed the three regions were divided into more States without concern to their cultural and religious differences. This transformation from one stage to another was forced by the hues and cries of perceived domination and marginalisation of one ethnic group

against another, leading to inter-ethnic violence and threat of secession. The formations triggered a sense of ethno-geographic sentiments and ethnic bias (indigene/Non-indigene dichotomy). By virtue of this early colonial categorisation therefore, we would agree with Osadolor (2003) that colonial conquest had altered the pattern of inter-group relations in Nigeria.

However, the idea that "host" communities are entitled to maintain a certain distance between themselves and migrant communities was not a colonial invention. Many Nigerians have long believed that some sort of distinction between indigenes and non-indigenes is necessary in at least some cases, primarily as a way for smaller communities to preserve their culture and traditions - and in some cases their land - against the pressures of migration from other parts of the country (Albin-Lacky, 2006).

The differences that exist between the indigenes and the settlers resulted in crises of various dimensions and consequences. These include the Zangon-Kataf crisis in Kaduna State between the Atyaps (natives) and Hausa/Fulani tribes; the Tiv-Jukun - Wukari conflict in Taraba State; the Aguleri and Umuleri conflict in Anambra State; the Itsekiri-Urhobo-Warri inter-community conflict in Delta State; the Ezza-Ezillo communal conflict in Ebonyi State; the Ife-Modakeke communal conflict in Oyo State; the Hausa/Fulani and Berom/Anaguta/Afizere crisis in Jos, Plateau State; the Niger Delta conflicts (which primarily borders on economic deprivation, environmental degradation, political marginalisation, government driven impoverishment and underdevelopment of the region); the scourge of faceless Boko Haram sect with no ideological base; the Tiv and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Makurdi, Benue State (2014); the herdsmen attacks in Benue State and a litany of other recorded and unrecorded incidents of indigenes and settlers conflicts in families, villages, and communities in Nigeria (Nwagwu, 2016).

The number of people who are not recognised as indigenes of the places where they reside has increased steadily since Nigeria gained its independence, and millions of Nigerians now make their homes in communities or states that label them as non-indigenes. In 1960, most Nigerians could expect to be treated as indigenes anywhere within one of Nigeria's three large regions. One result of the gradual proliferation of states and local government areas in Nigeria since independence is that with each new round of state creation, Nigerians who had lived their whole lives as indigenes of their place of residence have found themselves transformed into "strangers" literally overnight because their ancestral roots lay in land that had been cut away to form part of a new state (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

The saga of indigene/non-indigene has been expressed in Nigeria especially in areas like securing of jobs, political positions and inequality in educational opportunities, and these problems led to a statist situation (Njoku, 2015). This is against the provision of the Nigeria Constitution on the right to freedom from

discrimination. Section 42, subsections (1)(a)-(b) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), under this subheading,

provides that a citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person: (a) be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religion or political opinions are not made subject; or (b) be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any such executive or administrative action, any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to Nigerian citizen of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religion or political opinions (FRN, 1999).

Subsection (2) stipulates that “no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth.” The Constitution is sufficiently explicit in determining who is a Nigerian and who is not, as it stated that any person born in Nigeria before 1st October, 1960, either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents belong or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria (Nwagwu, 2016), is a citizen of the country. In some countries, indigenous people are even protected by international organisations, thus reinforcing the indigene – non-indigene conflicts and the battle that is taking place for natural resources everywhere (Mowforth, 2014). For instance, Mowforth (2014) noted that indigenous groups are now represented globally by a range of international organisations – the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Assembly of First Nations, Survival International, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Environmental Network – and by many national organisations, along with a host of declarations on indigenous issues by UN agencies and international groups.

In Nigeria, these issues must be resolved if the country is to build a nation out of her diversity. Managing ethnic diversity is a prime concern of almost every government in Nigeria. When the danger of disintegration is looming ominously over multicultural countries, it is obligatory on the media of the countries concerned to exercise its social responsibility role and present their reports in the ways that will help to forge national cohesion.

In Nigeria, the democratically designed decentralised system among people that are not homogenous present a volatile situation for disunity, especially when any part of the decentralised government feels marginalised. In this kind of circumstances, the mass media need to accept the challenge of presenting their stories in ways that will help to reduce tensions and build sustainable relationship among the constituent groups

that make up the nation. It is against this background that the researchers explore the role of the media in resolving the indigene and non-indigene conflicts in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarification of Indigene and Non-Indigene**

The population of every state and local government in Nigeria is officially divided into two categories of citizens: those who are indigenes and those who are not. The indigenes of a place are those who can trace their ethnic and genealogical roots back to the community of people who originally settled there; everyone else, no matter how long they or their families have lived in the place they call home, is and always will be a non-indigene (Albin-Lacky, 2006). Human Right Watch (2006) defined an indigene of a particular place as a person who can trace his or her ancestry back to a community of people who were among the original inhabitants of that place. In practice, however, this definition can be extremely difficult to apply and is most often simply used as a way to express tribal and ethnic distinctions.

The concept of “indigene”- the idea that there is a meaningful distinction to be made between "host" and "settler" communities - is not entirely an artificial construct. Nigeria is a nation of more than 200 million people, but many Nigerians belong to ethnic communities so small that they fear being absorbed into the larger populations around them and losing control of their identity as a community. The distinction between indigenes and non-indigenes may help to guarantee Nigeria's more than 250 ethnic groups the power to preserve their unique identities - their culture, traditions and traditional institutions of governance - by maintaining some cultural distance between themselves and other Nigerians (Human Right Watch, 2006). However, this rationale has been twisted and assigned a different meaning by states and local policies, often unsupported by any law or other form of legal justification, that marginalise and exclude non-indigenes in ways that have nothing to do with the preservation of cultural identity and autonomy (Albin-Lacky, 2006).

Most concretely, many Nigerian communities use the distinction between indigenes and non-indigenes as a way of demarcating the boundaries between people who are eligible to hold chieftaincy titles in a particular place, and participate in traditional institutions of governance more generally, and those who are not. Indigeneity also serves as a way for communities to keep land within the hands of their own group - a goal that is controversial but important to many Nigerians whose ethnic identity is tied to a small geographic area. In a broader and more amorphous sense, indigeneity reflects the communities' efforts to keep track of who their members are by placing an emphasis on the historical memory of individuals' familial connection to a particular place (Human Right Watch, 2006).

Similarly, Plotnicov (1972 cited in Olakunle and Iseolorunkanmi, 2016) states that “owners of the land” is a terminology used in Nigeria to describe indigenous peoples of an area while “stranger” (settlers) covers people of alien origin who are permanently settled among these indigenous people. Indigenes are essentially a group

of people which has common identity, a common descent or lineage and cultural identity (Kyernum & Agba, 2013). The Plateau Peace Conference (2004, p.12) defined indigeneship as “being peculiar to a people who are the first to have settled permanently in a particular area and who are often considered as „natives'. Such people have rights to their lands, traditions and culture. Settlers or non-indigenes are regarded as aliens, visitors, strangers and second-class citizens in the host communities they reside.

The Nigerian Constitution contains no clear definition of "indigeneity" even though a broad range of policies at every level of government make use of the concept. The Nigerian Constitution makes use of the term and even requires that the President's cabinet to include at least one indigene of each of the country's 36 states, but does not explicitly define the word. The federal civil service takes great care to allocate positions more or less equitably among indigenes of each Nigerian state but leaves it to the states to decide who their indigenes are. State governments generally pass that discretion further on down the line, leaving local officials with unfettered discretion to determine who the indigenes of their community are. Local officials' power to grant or deny indigene status to their residents in turn gives them de-facto veto power over any individual's attempt at attaining federal government employment (Human Right Watch, 2006).

The indigene-settler distinction is also explosive because it reinforces, and is reinforced by other identity-based divides in Nigeria. In many cases, differences in ethnicity, language, religion, and culture also separate indigenes from settlers. Since the return of democracy in 1999, the majority of Nigeria's worst episodes of violence have straddled religious or ethnic lines, or both (United State Institute of Peace, 2012), adding to the intransigent strained relationship between the indigenes and non-indigenes.

The unfortunate aspect of this citizenship debate is that the framers of the constitution have consistently failed to recognise and address the pertinent issue. A situation whereby someone who had lived in a place for over 20 years, paying taxes and performing his/her civic duties and responsibilities to the „host State', suddenly finds that his/her children (including those born in the State cannot gain admission, enjoy a scholarship or even obtain employment in the State is unacceptable (Mowforth, 2004). Some States go to the extent of stipulating different school fees which are usually higher for non-indigenes.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on Culture Conflict Theory propounded by Thorsten Sellin (1938). Culture Conflict theory is one of the earliest conflict theories used to explain what causes crime in society, and for Sellin (1938) crime in society was the result of conflicting conduct norms. Homogeneous societies are characterised by a high

percentage of shared norms and values, and therefore a consensus model of the law is an accurate model (Black, 2014). As homogeneity decreases, and heterogeneity increases, the law is less likely to represent a common set of values. Hence, crime is greater in heterogeneous societies because of fewer shared conduct norms. Crime rates are lower in homogeneous societies because more people share the same conduct norms (Black, 2014).

Relating culture conflict theory to the dichotomy between indigenes and non-indigenes in Nigeria, Sellin (1938) argues that different groups have different conduct norms and that the conduct norms of one group may conflict with those of another. The conduct norms of indigenes in Nigeria are different from the conduct norms of the settlers or non-indigenes mainly due to the ethnicity and tribal characteristics of the heterogeneous groups of people integrated into one country and called Nigeria by the British colonial master.

Conduct norms are norms that regulate people's daily lives – rules that reflect the attitude of the groups to which each member of the society belongs (Anon, 2016). The purpose of conduct norms is to define what is considered appropriate or normal behaviour and what inappropriate or abnormal behaviour is.

Culture conflict is a complex process, with both primary and secondary culture conflict (Black, 2014) contributing to indigene/non-indigene conflicts. Two forms of culture conflicts are discernible: primary culture conflict and secondary culture conflict. Primary cultural conflicts are those that occur between two distinct cultures (i.e. when norms of two cultures clash), and can occur in three ways: (i) as a result of colonisation when the coloniser replaces colonised groups' norms with their own; (ii) at border areas, where divergent groups cross into each other's territories (and normative structures); or (iii) as a result of migration, when members of an outside group enter into the dominant group's territory (Black, 2014).

Secondary cultural conflict processes are virtually the same; however, it occurs through conflict between different sub-cultures, or between the dominant culture and one or more sub-cultures (Black, 2014), that is, when a single culture evolves into a variety of cultures, each with its own set of conduct norms (Anon, 2016).

This theory was considered appropriate for this study because of two reasons: the theory explains why strained relationship develops between the indigenes of a particular culture and the non-indigenes with conduct norms different from those of the indigenes; the theory accommodates conflict arising when a single culture evolves into divergent cultures each with different conduct norms.

## **Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in a Multicultural Society**

Since the end of the World War II, the world has witnessed the renewal, amplification, and obdurate persistence of ethnicity as a major concern in politics, a pivot of popular political mobilisation, and a plausible source of interstate and intrastate conflicts

(Mukherjee, 2020). Most scholars are of the opinion that conflict usually reflects a class of interest or goal between parties, which may be individuals or group of individuals, or ethnic groups or states.

Conflict according to most scholars occurs “when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals (Abbas, 2018). The author further explained that conflict emerges whenever one party perceives that one or more goals or purposes or means of achieving a good or preference is being threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more parties.” Put together, in conflict parties perceive or treat each other as a stumbling block that results in frustrating the other in attaining a set of goals, or even furthering one's interest through their attitudes, behaviours or actions (Akpuru-Aja, 1997).

Generally, conflict has been considered an obstacle to progress, political stability, economic prosperity and overall socio-economic development of any society because of its destructive impact (Abbas, 2018). This therefore means that conflict must be timely averted or managed properly as failure to do so will reflect a determined action or struggle over a goal, which may be overt or subtle; manifest or imaginary. While it is not easy to classify conflicts in a categorical way, not all conflicts in Nigeria are of the same kind as can be seen from dimensions of ethnicity, religion, politics and economy, etc.

In ethnic conflict, Nigeria is a country of many nations with hundreds of tribes and ethnic groupings. The relationships between, for instance, political parties in underdeveloped nations like Nigeria are likely to be more conflictual than those in advanced polities (Tyoden, 2016). Given the social differences in Nigeria, the quest for power mostly depends on the existing nature of the relationship between these sectoral groups. It is therefore no wonder that the visibility and relevance of the Afenifere, the Ohaneze N'digbo, the Arewa Consultative Forum, the Southern Leaders Forum, and the Ijaw National Congress etc- each is articulating its own agenda for the ethnic groups they belong instead of the overall development of the country (Abbas, 2016).

Lending credence, Jega (2002) earlier asserted that the major aspect of the most ethnic conflict in Nigeria is the contesting hegemonic power used in making members react negatively in given situation. With regards to political conflicts, since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, most incidents of political conflicts have been associated with appointments, national population census, resource allocation and electoral processes leading to election rigging, vote buying, corruption, the use of political thugs and other electoral malpractices as well as unfair sharing of political gains.

In the electoral process, according to Abbas (2013) from 1999 to date political violence has continued to assume an alarming dimension, including assassinations and abductions, inter and intra party conflicts, religious intolerance which created

suspicion and acrimony leading to many communal and sectarian violence. As Onuoha (2003) further argued, those interested in retaining power or winning at all costs, and especially actors who were in control of the instrument of the state simply “fixed” the result of the elections they desired to win leading to protests. The reasons for such do or die politics is not farfetched from the fact, since the state is the major means of capital accumulation in Nigeria and considering the prevalence and ubiquity of poverty and dependence in the country, the struggle for the control of the state and its resources, take on a life-and-death struggle.

Simply put, in Nigeria access to political power is seen as access to economic power. Economically, looking at the Nigerian society and its environment, the quest for control and distribution of economic resources is majorly the basis for many conflicts among the citizenry with the relationship between parties taking cues from this basic consideration. It is in this similar view that liberal structural theorists such as Galtung (2011) saw conflict as a phenomenon that is built in human societies according to how they are structured and organised. That is to say conflict emanates as a result of deep-rooted structural dysfunction which looks in to problems such as the inequality in the distribution of income, endemic corruption, injustice, poverty, illiteracy, high unemployment rate, hunger, disease, inflation, exploitation and tax havens on citizens, high rates of crimes, overpopulation and general economic underdevelopment. Galtung (2011) argued that whenever economic and political discrimination and lack of tolerance in plural societies are embedded in human relationships, conflicts are bound to occur higher than the societies where opposite socio-economic relationships are established (Abbas, 2018).

Conflict resolution includes a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation. By conflict resolution, the deeply rooted sources of conflict are expected to be addressed and resolved and the behaviour is no longer violent, nor are attitudes hostile any longer, while the structure of the conflict has been changed (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2016).

Furthermore, at this level, the outcomes of the resolution are to be mutually acceptable by parties concerned for sustained peace. However, there are differences in the approach to conflict resolution depending on the culture and civilisation of the people and their society. For instance, the African Traditional Dispute Resolution (ATDR) differs from the Western Alternative Dispute Resolution (WADR). Although in Africa, the approaches differ from one culture to another most communities have traditional leaders known as Chiefs or Emirs and have some traditional powers conferred on them to solve disputes. On the other hand, the WADR promote the use of non-violent means to the conflict including grassroot community based activities through good governance, communication collaboration, negotiation, and mediation etc. It can be said that in principle conflict resolution connotes a sense of finality,

where the parties are mutually satisfied with the outcome of a settlement and the conflict is resolved in a true sense (Abbas, 2018).

There are also other ways to resolve conflicts such as surrendering, running away, overpowering the opponent with violent acts, filing a lawsuit, etc. Beyond the ones explained above, the current movement toward Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), sometimes referred to simply as conflict resolution, grew out of the belief that there are better options to resolve conflict than using violence or going to court.

Over the years, the terms ADR and conflict resolution are used somewhat interchangeably and refer to a wide range of processes that encourage nonviolent dispute resolution outside of the traditional court system. The idea is about the search for an application of “non-conventional” peaceful methods of settling the dispute and solving conflict situation using the least expensive methods and that satisfies both parties as well as ways to preserve and protect the relationship after settlement have been reached (Abbas, 2018). In most societies, this approach usually promotes peaceful coexistence after solving the conflict. Beyond the ATDR, WADR, ADR as earlier explained, there are other forms or approaches to conflict resolution the world over. This may include negotiation which is a discussion among two or more people with the goal of reaching an agreement.

It may also involve mediation seen as a voluntary and confidential process in which a neutral third-party facilitator helps people discuss difficult issues and negotiate an agreement. Basic steps in this process include gathering information, framing the issues, developing options, negotiating, and formalising agreements. The parties in mediation create their own solutions and the mediator does not have any decision making power over the outcome. Arbitration is also another option which is a process in which a third-party neutral, after reviewing evidence and listening to arguments from both sides, issues a decision to settle the case. Arbitration is often used in commercial and labour/management disputes. A hybrid that combines as explained earlier is Mediation-Arbitration. In this case, prior to the session, the disputing parties agree to try mediation first, but give the neutral third party the authority to make a decision if mediation is not successful (Abbas, 2018).

Also of relevance is Early Neutral Evaluation which involves using a court-appointed attorney to review a case before it goes to trial. The attorney reviews the merits of the case and encourages the parties involved in the case to attempt resolution. If there is no final resolution, the attorney then informs the disputants about how to proceed with litigation and gives an opinion on the likely outcome if the case goes to trial. Another approach is the Community Conferencing which is a form of structured conversation involving members of a community (offenders, victims, family, friends, etc) affected by a dispute or a crime (Abbas, 2018). Using a script, the facilitator invites people to express how they were affected and how they wish to address the harm inflicted.

Another one is the Collaborative Law which is a process for solving disputes in which the attorneys commit to reaching a settlement without using litigation. Also important is Negotiated Rulemaking considered as a collaborative process in which government agencies seek input from a variety of stakeholders before issuing a new rule. Finally, Peer Mediation involves young people act as mediators to help resolve disputes among their peers. In most cases, such young mediators are trained and supervised by adult.

### **Underlying Causes of Indigene/Non-Indigene Dichotomy in Nigeria**

Discrimination between indigenes and non-indigenes in Nigeria is a product of several factors, among which is a structural ethnic consciousness/ethnicity, colonial factors and unhealthy competition. Among these factors, colonialism is seen as the cardinal and pivotal context which gave rise to other issues that precipitated ethnic rivalries and conflict situations in Africa (Oyeniyi, 2011). Consciousness of one's ethnic origin or background is a psycho-sociological reality that is largely universal in nature. Ethnic consciousness may be described as that sub-conscious or conscious identification with one's ethnic background. Such identification may sometimes be unobtrusive, subtle and largely unnoticed by others (Oyeniyi, 2011).

On the other hand, it may be obtrusive and crudely insensitive. Ethnic consciousness amongst people can be found in many multi-cultural societies in varying degrees, in conflict or coexistence with other forms of consciousness such as class, religious or national consciousness (Ikeazor, 1996 as cited in Oyeniyi, 2011). This infers that a high degree of ethnic consciousness or unguarded ethnic consciousness can result to ethnic tension and conflict where two opposing views converge. Depending on the direction of consciousness, national consciousness may be a strong factor towards nation building. Also, ethnic consciousness may entirely be divisive and of parochial form.

The Zangon-Kataf crisis remains one of the crises in Nigeria that was largely influenced by ethnic consciousness. Zangon-Kataf is located in southern part of Kaduna State. The population is largely Christians, with Hausa/Fulani in the minority. Nwagwu (2016) stated that the Atyaps claim ownership of Zangon-Kataf since 1850s; while Hausa/Fulani claim traditional authority of Zaria Emirate over Zangon-Kataf. The imposition of aristocratic rule from Zaria Emirate on Zangon-Kataf enthrone political domination over the aborigines (Nwagwu, 2016). These undesirable forms of consciousness have, particularly in their unfettered forms, plunged many nations into quagmires of blood-letting strife and instability (Oyeniyi, 2011).

Similarly, the causes of the Hausa/Fulani and Berom/Anaguta/Afizere Crisis in Jos are not unconnected with claim of which group are the aboriginals and therefore the owner of the land. According to Nwagwu (2016), the Berom people are the

indigenous ethnic group of Jos, Plateau State in Nigeria. Within the State, they are concentrated mostly in the local government areas of Jos South, Jos North, Barkin Ladi (Gwol), and Riyom. Berom has a population of 1,083,000 out of which 96% are Christians, according to the 2006 census.

However, the Jos crisis is multicultural, multifarious, and multilateral in nature and scope (Nwagwu, 2016). It has many ethnic group contenders for indigeneship of the land “Jos”, particularly the Jos North Local Government Area. Berom tribe is one of the contenders, who claim that Jos is their ancestral inheritance. They claim that Berom settled and secured Jos along with Anaguta people prior to the advent of the colonialists who made Jos the administrative centre of their government by conquest (Nwagwu, 2016). Berom settlers and Anaguta people argue that Hausa/Fulani people were brought into Jos by British colonial masters as cheap labour in the Tin mining activities, which was the main commercial activity in the area then (Sampson, 2012).

The Anaguta, people in Jos, corroborates with Berom and Afizere ethnic groups that Hausa/Fulani groups are settlers in the land. Therefore, they have no portion in Jos to claim as theirs. Anaguta community agreed that the Hausa/Fulani people have been committed to the development of Jos, but this does not translate to a right of ownership of Jos (Nwagwu, 2016). They consider themselves as the true indigenes of Jos not other claimers. Anaguta claims that its tribe was first to arrive at the place called “Jos”. This ethnic group dismissed the idea of Hausa chiefs being rulers of the area, and considered their claim of having ruled Jos from time immemorial as baseless assertion because the immigrants migrated to Jos not by conquest before, during, or after colonialism (Sampson, 2012).

The Afizere, another ethnic group in Jos, corroborated Berom’s claim that Hausa/Fulani people in Jos are settlers and non-indigenes of Jos, who do not appreciate and reciprocate the hospitality showered on them by their host communities. The Afizere considers Hausa/Fulani as a group that has no right to claim the traditional authority and land in Jos. They debunk claims of Anaguta and Berom ethnic groups as the owners of Jos. Afizere claims that Jos belongs to them and there is ample evidence to prove their stance. According to Afizere, the boundary between them and Berom was located at the Bukuru Low Cost Bridge; but Colonial administrators joined Afizere land to Bauchi Province and Berom acquired most parts of Jos without resistance (Nwagwu, 2016).

Hausa/Fulani groups claim that they established Jos from nothing and nurtured it into what it is today without the help of the so-called indigenous ethnic groups. The central issue of their argument is that Jos was established around the nineteenth century out of a virgin land with none of the indigenous groups near the vicinity they now claim to be theirs respectively (Nwagwu, 2016).

The existence of States has also raised the issue of “statism” and the meaning of Nigerian citizenship. Since the beginning of colonial rule, Nigerians have felt free to move around and work and live wherever they find the right opportunities. Every State has the population of persons who have come to it from other States. It is their States of residence that they pay tax and other levies imposed on them by successive governments. In recent years, these kinds of people have been discriminated against across the country. They are regarded as non-indigenes.

The current resurgence of ethnic and religious violence going on throughout the country, and which has been taking different forms and dimensions, can directly be linked to the growth of population and development of communication, which have widened the political and economic awareness of the people of Nigeria and resulted in competition for the available scarce resources. For instance, whenever jobs are scarce or admission chances are few there will be likelihood of increase in discrimination against non-indigenes. In this case, discrimination of non-indigene reduces competition and encourages segregation and hostility.

Many Nigerians also see the increasing importance of the indigene/settler divide as resulting from the increasing levels of poverty and deprivation brought about by decades of poor governance and rampant corruption, along with environmental factors such as an increasing scarcity of land caused by population growth and desertification (Human Rights Watch, 2006). Government at all levels has failed to provide for the needs of ordinary citizens, and state and local governments have sought to placate restive local opinion by reserving the increasingly scarce benefits of citizenship for their indigene "sons of the soil" (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

Discrimination against non-indigenes is also seen as being part of a high-stakes competition against other groups for political influence and resources at the national level. One conflict analyst at the government-run Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Abuja argued to Human Rights Watch that a primary rationale behind state policies that set discriminatory school fees for non-indigene students lay in an effort to frustrate their academic opportunities so as to ultimately "block them from political participation" (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

Popenoe (1977) has summarised three factors as responsible for non-indigene syndrome. These factors include cultural, personality and socio-economic factors:

**Cultural Factor:** Children are taught to hate, fear, shun and ridicule people whose customs, religion and ethnicity are different from their own (Njoku, 2006). These stereotyped attitudes are transmitted from generation to generation through socialisation. Cultural instilled stereotype behaviour has helped in magnifying discriminative tendencies in the life of these children, which in turn affect their behaviour in adult (Njoku, 2006).

**Personality Factor:** Most often due to frustration and aggression, people tend to discriminate against others who are non-indigenes. Discrimination, however, could be

induced by the feelings that the other is extremely powerful and experienced and so to stage an open attack could result to self-destruction, hence discrimination seems to be a solution (Okeke, 2002). In addition to this, inferiority complex is considered a factor in non-indigene discrimination. In some given states such as Ebonyi, non-indigenes who seem superior to others are regarded as suspects who if not properly checked could overthrow the indigenes (Njoku, 2006). The fear of this makes some people feel more comfortable with their own people because values differ from place to place.

**Socio-economic factor:** Discrimination could be caused by poor economic forces. For instance, whenever jobs are scarce or admission chances are few there will be likelihood of increase in discrimination against non-indigenes. In this case, discrimination of non-indigene reduces competition and encourages segregation and hostility.

### **Implications and Consequences of Indigene-Non-Indigene Rifts on National Integration and Development in Nigeria**

Indigenes-settlers or non-indigenes has been identified as one of the major causes of communal conflicts in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part of the country. Indigene/non indigene conflicts threaten tolerance and peaceful co-existence among people (Musa and Manu, 2013). Where there is no peaceful co-existence, there is disintegration of people, and where there is disintegration of people, poverty and underdevelopment takes place (Musa and Manu, 2013). In this case, conflicts such as indigene-non indigene conflicts affect national integration and economic development. The consequences of the indigene/settlers' rift in Nigeria can be seen from its negative effects on employment, education and politics:

**Employment:** Employment discrimination appears to rank first among all forms of discrimination practiced in Nigeria (Njoku, 2015). Employment discrimination means denial of equal opportunities in economic order as a citizen of Nigeria (Mckee, 1979). Discrimination in employment has reached the extent that a Nigerian cannot secure job in Nigeria without certificate of indigeneity or origin. Such denial could be interpreted as embittering reality that permeates every facet of life. For instance, people are limited to job opportunities in the state outside their own on the ground of state of origin (Njoku, 2015). In most cases, available employment opportunities are shared among executive officers who usually fill in the vacant positions with their relatives whether qualified or not to the discredit of better qualified non-indigenes and possibly indigenes whose relations are not in sensitive position in office (Njoku, 2015).

As a matter of government policy, many States in Nigeria refuse to employ non-indigenes in their state civil services, and most if not all of Nigeria's thirty-six states deny non-indigenes the right to compete for academic scholarships (Albin-Lacky,

2006). This deprives such States from securing the services of well-educated and competent hands to manage the public sector and sometimes the private sector

Non-indigene discrimination has led to unskilled cheap labours in the employment sector. Most often only the mediocre are employed to work especially in our primary, secondary schools and ministries on the ground of statism. Merit brings sense of respect, discipline, tolerance, peaceful co-existence and success among people in organisation. Where loyalty or indigenship criterion overrules merit in employment, mediocrity which replaced merit leads to the employment of incompetent workforce which is detrimental to national development.

**Education:** In the education system in Nigeria, discrimination exists in different forms. In Nigeria, non-members or non-indigenes are not accorded equal opportunity to study in the University of their choice (Njoku, 2015). Admission into tertiary institution is limited to certain class of people based on state of origin and catchment area. The phrase, catchment area is a polite form of exclusion criteria for denying people from certain States the opportunity of gaining admission into any university of their choice. Also, State universities generally discriminate against non-indigenes in their admissions policies and charge higher fees to non-indigene students who do manage to secure admission (Human Right Watch, 2006).

In addition, Onwuka (1994) states that admission into the Nigeria University as well as course of study depends greatly on quota system and who do you know. The author emphasised the effect of discrimination which he claimed could lead to physical hostility and rejection and even non-compliance by members of the group. Onwuka (1994) noted that equal education opportunity would go a long way to foster unity and peace in Nigerian society. Okeke (2002) observed that non-indigene syndrome especially in the field of education has contributed to half-baked graduates; hence people who are not qualified are given opportunities into areas they cannot study. Most tertiary institutions in Nigeria have got a legal backing on quota system and catchments area laws to discriminate against members of another ethnic or state group as a rule for admission.

**Politics:** In the area of politics, there exists discrimination in appointive positions. Discrimination in political positions refers to deliberate effort made by members of a given group to limit other non-indigenes participation in political offices or posts irrespective of their potentials, knowledge and experience (Njoku, 2015). Denial of political right caused by discrimination is a denial of opportunity to contribute to societal progress and access to better means of livelihood.

Throughout Nigeria, non-indigenes are forced to cope with state and local government policies and practices that exclude them from many of the material benefits of Nigerian citizenship (Njoku, 2015). Such discrimination reflects a widespread belief among many Nigerians that state and local governments exist not to

serve the interests of all their constituents, but only those of their indigene populations (Human Right Watch, 2006).

In addition to their direct human impact on the lives of non-indigenes, these discriminatory policies have served to aggravate inter-communal tensions that are dangerously volatile. Many Nigerians believe that this desperate competition between citizens for some basic level of economic security lies near the heart of most of the country's inter-communal conflicts. Onwuka (1994) emphasises the effect of discrimination which he claimed could lead to physical hostility and rejection and even non-compliance by members of the group.

It discourages and bridges preservation of cultural heritage thereby causing disintegration. Non-indigeneship has led to separation even in most of the Northern states in Nigeria. The Boko Haram sect in Islamic religion has insisted that the non-indigenes should relocate from their area to enable them Islamize the areas (CNN broadcast, January 12, 2012). This has led to increase in conflict and violence in our country. Sometimes non-indigene discrimination has created guilt and anxiety in the life of the discriminated persons. It has led to rejection, physical/verbal hostility and aggression.

### **Media Role in Indigene/Non-Indigene Relationship in Nigeria**

The mass media play vital role in any communication aimed at reaching large and diversified audiences. They help to promote the right things at the right time, and give the world information on what is right or what is wrong. The mass media make the strong aspects of the world known to people (Dwivedi & Ingitia, 2013). The media are expected to serve as instrument for promoting national unity or integration by presenting to the public objective reports of the causes of indigene/non indigene conflicts and bringing to the fore the need for peaceful co-existence between indigenes and non-indigenes in every State of Nigeria.

The world is moving toward progress in every step in life, but we cannot deny the fact that we all are bounded directly or indirectly with the load of social issues which are affecting the people (Dwivedi & Ingitia, 2013). Poverty, violence, corruption, bribery, suppression of human rights, discrimination, and now the indigene and non-indigene syndrome have for instance, come to add to the loads of these social problems. Under these circumstances, the media have crucial roles to play.

In tackling the issue of indigene/non-indigene conflicts, the media must present itself as the direct mirror-image of the society, particularly at this historical point when the problems arising from indigene and non-indigene dichotomy is generating tensions, sometimes, silent and damaging, and sometimes results in open confrontations that are inimical to national cohesion and development (Akpan, Ering & Olofu-adeo, 2013). The author suggests that the media should learn to develop a thorough understanding of the conflict and convey that understanding to their

audiences in a way that reflects the truth of the conflict in all its complexity. They should examine the context in which the dispute evolved and explain what caused the conflict and make suggestions on how the issues can be resolved to enhance national unity. At the moment, the media seem to be paying less attention to the discriminations settlers suffer in their land where they are at the same time looked upon as foreigners. As the dimensions of indigene and non-indigene divide widens, it is time for the mass media as the watchdog of the society to step in and educate the people on the consequences of discrimination.

The power of media is so extensive and huge; it can be used to educate the masses on the devastating effects of indigene/non-indigene divide. Through various forms of media whether it is radio, television, newspaper or internet, media practitioners in Nigeria can perform their agenda setting function by bringing the issue of indigene/settlers differences to the fore for discussion. In performing this function, it is important to bear in mind that “the kind of information the media disseminate is critical to sustaining peace and harmony in society and vice versa” (Akpan, Ering & Olofu-adeo 2013, p.2279).

It is understood that any issue the media harp on generate public discussions that can change the perceptions of the indigenes and non-indigenes to understand that no Nigerian should be regarded as a foreigner in any part of country. There is no gainsaying that no country can rise above its own media. By implication, the media provide a sense of direction for the State and its citizenry.

The mass media as an agent of national development can through mainstreaming of the needs to abandon employment discrimination based on „statism' bring about a common understanding and collective actions that foster national development. When competence rather than statism becomes the guiding principle for admission, national development could be fostered. At a time like this, it is the duty of the media to inform the public on the implications of introducing mediocrity in employment on the bases of indigene/settlers conflicts. The information that people get to know from the media has a great power associated with it (Mowforth, 2014). The communication form(s) should be such that it provides a good atmosphere to enhance the process of binding the society and not breaking the unity of the people. We should never forget that if the various communication forms play their respective roles honestly and cohesively, no one can either weaken the strength of our society or stop the development of our nation (Bansal, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

The issue of indigene and non-indigene in Nigeria is a crippling factor to the national development of the country. The discriminations and conflicts arising from the saga of indigeneity in Nigeria are depriving the nation of the benefits of unity in diversity. Diversity that should have been the strength of Nigeria has been turned into a cog in

the wheel of progress by the acrimonious relationship between the so-called indigene and non-indigene controversies.

The issue is a menace with a political undertone capable of causing tribal war, hatred, disrupting the unity of the country to mention but a few. The impact of this ugly trend is felt in the nation's education, socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious life of the people. Moreover, indigene/ non-indigene controversy could result in the disintegration of Nigeria as well as increase chances of violence. In a situation where other arms of government seem to be silent over this crucial matter, the media as the fourth estate of the realm are the last hope of Nigerian people to get this problem in the front burner of the public sphere and possibly get it resolved without further bloodletting.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the prevailing circumstances as suggested by the extant literature and the findings of the study, we recommend as follows:

First, the interest of the nation should be uppermost in the mind of reporters, whether in the newspaper, radio, television and even in the social media space. Ethnic groups or other affiliations should not influence mass media reporting. The unity of the nation is above the interests of the component States. The unity and peaceful co-existence of Nigeria will become stronger if non-indigene discrimination zeros down.

Second, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution as amended should be reviewed in order to solve the indigene-settler status by defining who an indigene/settler is. Amendment should be made on the 1999 Constitution in respect to section 42(1). Citizenship Clause should be used to replace the Indigene Clause in order to put an end to the gross abuse of power by those who have access to political and economic power in Nigeria. The replacement of the Indigene Clause with the Citizenship Clause will afford every Nigerian citizen equal opportunities. The Nigerian media should set agenda on this issue to make it important.

Third, the Nigerian government should sponsor, publicise, and enforce legislation that places clear limits on the kinds of distinctions that can be made between indigenes and non-indigenes and expressly outlaw the harmful discriminatory practices described in this paper.

Fourth, journalists in Nigeria should adhere to the canons of objectivity when reporting issues bordering on indigene/non-indigene conflicts. Objectivity in reporting seems to be a phrase which journalists have coined to make media consumers accept their reports as authentic (De Beer & Merrill, 2009). This important guiding principle is often neglected in many reports and the bias of the reporter takes pre-eminence over national interest. Reporters should be sensitive to the principle of objectivity in order not to provoke conflict between settlers and indigenes. This can be achieved by

reporters developing a synergy with community members to enable them get the facts before reporting details of any indigene/non-indigene crises.

Fifth, the media should give more coverage to the implications of indigene/non-indigene imbroglio in Nigeria. A situation where a person who is a citizen of Nigeria is declared a non-indigene in any part of the country is both confusing and embarrassing. There is need to give equal educational and economic opportunities to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of tribe or state of origin. Equal educational and economic opportunities would go a long way to foster unity and peace in the Nigerian society.

Sixth, indigenes-settlers dichotomy should be abolished on the basis that in a federation like Nigeria, every Nigerian should have a sense of belonging wherever they reside in as much as such citizens abide by the norms and values of their host communities (Shettima, 2017). The phenomenon represents a metaphor for a broken federation and the tragedy of a nation where its leaders accentuate differences and prejudices.

Seventh, there should be organisations (government and voluntary) established to oversee issues relating to relationship between indigenes and non-indigenes in Nigeria. Such organisations must be unbiased umpires, free from the influence of corruption.

Eight, press/media freedom and freedom of expression should be re-enforced in Nigeria to give the press unfettered access to information and reporting of information without any fear of intimidation by the government or government officials and/or any other agency. A situation where a reporter can be tortured or killed because he/she has the by-line of report that is not favourable to a particular ethnic group or even the government is unhealthy for national integration and development

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