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The Impact of Intra-Ethnic Conflict in Tangale Nation Up to 1990

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Abstract

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The paper examines the age long intra-ethnic conflict among the Tangale nation in present-day Gombe State area up to 1990. The Tangale ethnic group is the major nationality among the ethnic groups in Southern Gombe State and it is divided into two main group/clans- Tangale East and Tangale West who both claim supremacy over one another in terms of originality and ownership of the term “Tangale” itself. These Tangale groups share common language with very little dialectical differences, but for almost a century they have been in an unending conflict over land/border, location of headquarters, political as well as chieftaincy/traditional issues. The conflict over the years is said to be one of the major intra-ethnic clashes that defied various diplomatic approaches continued up to the 21st century in Gombe State area. It is against this backdrop and many other issues that this paper examines intra-ethnic in Tangale nation, with a view to adding to body of knowledge in understanding the historical issues in Tangale land and lay a solid foundation that can be used in proffering a lasting solution.

Keywords: Billiri, Kaltungo, Shongom, Tangale, Conflict

Introduction

Conflict is a natural phenomenon in human existence and it is generally agreed that no human society without conflict. Nigeria has been facing series of conflicts particularly in the late 20th century to present. The Jukun vs Tiv conflict in Taraba State, Hausa vs Birom in Plateau State, Hausa vs Kataf in Kaduna State, and Waja vs Lunguda in Gombe State are some of the famous ethnic clashes that consumed a lot of lives and properties worth millions of naira. However, the Tangale intra-ethnic conflict in Southern Gombe State differs mainly because it is an “in-house” conflict which spanned over a hundred years and still affecting the socio-economic and political life of the Tangale nation and other ethnic nationalities in Gombe State.

Origin of the Conflict

On the question of what led to the split among the Tangale nation; it should be noted that there is no single generally accepted reason. Different reasons have been put forward to explain the root cause of the split into East and West Tangale. It is more or less turning into the game of blames among the two divisions. However, all the accounts agreed that the split took place at the course of their

migration to their present location, while few accounts postulated that the division happened at Kalshingi, few others argued it was at Hinna or Kumbe, and a good number of other accounts contended that it took place at Tungo Hill.

One account suggests that the split occurred either at Hinna or Kumbe before the group reached Tungo. The reason given by this account was an internal dispute and that the East Tangale moved first. The Shongom and Kaltungo sub-groups settled southwest and northeast of Kwalgwari Mountain. The Ture sub-group moved further east, some settled at Ture hills and others advanced to Tula Plateau and intermingled with Tula Baule. This perhaps explains the close affinity between Tula and the people of Tangale East. The West Tangale who were left behind at Kumbe found themselves weak against Bolewa and thus, moved to Dikki Hills and then to the area of Billiri Hills where they settled around the volcanic dome of Ballin. This account has been criticised on the premise that the Tangale group as a whole seemed to have dwelled at Kalshingi which is farther south of Hinna (James B. Saliba, 2004).

Colonial written account of T. F. Carlyle and Oliver Howard attributed the cause of the

division to a treacherous act resulting in blood feud. However, the account did not provide the details on what this treacherous act was, neither did it state which side was responsible. In the same vein, A. B. Mathews in his contribution to the root cause of the problem made reference to a plague of insects that engulfed the area; that is the Tongo settlement which led to the disbandment of the group and their separation into two. The problems with this account are first, the Tangale still inhabit the Tongo area up till date and secondly, plague of insects does not sound convincing in explaining the bitter relationship that continued to exist among the Tangale nation.

According to Kaltungo oral sources, the quarrel which led to the division was traced to an incidence involving two suitors allegedly courting a lady from East Tangale clan. A day came when both suitors met at the lady's house and that the West Tangale suitor arrived to the lady's house at a time when the East Tangale suitor was intimating with the lady. This infuriated the West Tangale suitor who vowed to deal with his rival. The aggrieved West Tangale suitor was said to have settled his scores by murdering his rival. A tensed situation was said to have ensued as a result of attempts by the deceased relatives

to avenge his death. As a result of fear and insecurity, the Western Tangale moved away from the other section and occupied where they are found today. This account can be considered to hold water when examined from the point of view of the Tangale social system in the pre-colonial period. For example, the pre-colonial traditional system allows unmarried young men and ladies intending to get married, to sleep in the same hut in a practice known as *tid kabi* in Tangale language. However, sex was not allowed during this period. The conduct of the East Tangale suitor therefore, could be said to have violated the cultural practice, inciting the feeling of anger and jealousy in the mind of the West Tangale Suitor that caused him to kill his rival (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

Another variant account maintains that the split was caused by a Dikki woman who was at first married to a Dikki man, but got divorced and married a Tongo man. The account further states that the woman and her new husband visited her home one day in order to attend the lineage – *Kantilang* – annual festival. As they pass through Dikki, they saw her former husband and other men whom they refused to greet. This action was said to have angered the group, who decided to wait for the couple's return and see if the

behavior was intentional. As they suspected, the couple refused to greet them again on their return, as a result of this, the group of men stopped the couple and demanded an explanation. The Tungo man was said to have responded abusively and calling them names, which led to the men attacking and beating the couple to death. The *kantilang* lineage were said to have avenged the death of their daughter by killing two of the murderers. Tungo people on the other hand swore not to have anything to do with Dikki thus; they migrated southward to Shongom Hill (James B. Saliba, 2004). It can be deduced from the above that the two oral narratives are sentimental variants of the same tradition which looking at the nature of the hatred between the two broad Tangale sections, failed to provide the comprehensive and convincing explanation to the deep rooted antagonism beside, intermarriages, even though at suspicious and minimal level, still exist between Tangale East and West.

There is therefore reason to believe that the root cause of the conflict might have gone beyond the disagreement over a woman or as a result of plague of insects, especially looking at the contemporary nature of the conflict. One may be attracted to believe that the root cause of the conflict lies in the

politico-economic underpinnings. According to Baba Tuta, the root cause of the problem lies in power tussle at Kalshingi, which led to division of the group however, the details of this tussle was not provided (Baba Tuta, 2021). There is reason to believe that the root cause lies in the disagreement over authority from the colonial to post-colonial period between the two Tangale groups, especially the traditional authority. For example there is a record that no section of the Tangale was ready to accept the over-lordship of the other, when the colonialists tried to unite them under one *Mai*. The colonialists had to revert to the old order.

On the economic underpinnings, Brunk noted signs of settlement on the cragged elongated Tungo-Kolwa Hills which was the sixth and last collective settlement of the Tangale according to most accounts. It is observed that the space available could have only been habitable for a relatively small group of people. This suggests that as population grew, the demand for space also became paramount especially for economic activities (Abdu, Erastus, 2023). The primary economic activity of the Tangale was and is still farming and as suggested by Saliba B. James (2004), the split might have occurred due to the increasing demand for farmland for

agricultural purposes. This development however could not have happened peacefully. This interpretation can be further strengthened by the fact that land dispute has been one of the major causes of the conflict in the globe to this day. To add to this, by the time the Tangale were at Kalshingi (before reaching Tungo), the clan system along which they were divided and would later split was already formed. This include the seven West Tangale clans of Bare, Billiri, Tal, Todi, Kalmai, Banganje and Tanglang and the three East Tangale clans of Ture, Kaltungo (which took the name of the Tungo settlement) and Shongom. From the above, one may perhaps suggest that, the root cause of the conflict that led to the split might not be attributed to one factor; it could be the combination of socio-political and economic factors (James B. Saliba, 2004).

Another important factor to be considered is the increasing population of the Tangale people against the diminishing resources of their geographical environment. These resources especially land, which is held in high esteem among the people had continued to be a decisive factor in the history of this conflict. As family continued to expand, automatically the demand for land increases. Land will be needed for shelter and farming,

since it is prestigious among the Tangale for every family to have its farmland and shelter. It is shameful in the Tangale tradition for an adult male ready to marry, not having a house and farmland. It is on the basis that the explanation of the impact of population increase on the communal conflict in Tangale land can be ascertained.

Whatever may be the cause/causes of the cleavage, the nature of the conflict in the pre-colonial era is different from what was obtained in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Basically the communal conflict in Tangale land in the pre-colonial times was characterized by headhunting, harassment and counter harassment, suspicion and fear. It is important to note that during this period, communal wars were normally fought during the dry season, a unique feature that differentiates the nature of the pre-colonial conflict with the colonial and post-colonial. The site of the war was usually at *Pandin La Pe*, located between Billiri and Shongom hills (James B. Saliba, 2004).

Headhunting and head cutting during the Tangale wars, was not simple act of savagery, but psycho-social matrix for measuring and determining the bravery and social worth of adult males in the society. The bravery of a man which conferred privileges and honor on

him was measured by the number of heads he brought home during organized or private wars. Other means of demonstrating such bravery and achieving high social standard was the killing of strong wild animals such as Lion (*t: turum*), Leopard (*t: kungu*), Hyena (*t: lalutu*), etcetera. A warrior dance called *kol ki* was held to celebrate such show of bravery. During the dance, the celebrant was adorned with pink powder, animal skin and leaves. Beyond determining social standing, such acts of bravery served as security guarantees for the community in an era of incessant inter-ethnic warfare. This desire on the part of the adult male to prove themselves as warriors rendered difficult the resolution of inter-ethnic wars which continued until the coming of the colonialists. The Tangale wars took place mainly between the clans of Bare, Billiri and Tal on the western section and Shongom and Kaltungo on the Eastern side. The West Tangale and Ture in the East Tangale were accounted to have enjoyed cordial relationship through one Dangwaram, a warrior from Billiri who was a good friend of Ture. The death of Dangwaram and the participation of one Pukuma from Ture in one of the Kaltungo-Billiri wars battered the peaceful relationship between Tangale West and Ture (James B. Saliba, 2004).

Communal wars however was not always the situation on ground as there were friendly intermingling of the groups in many instances. In many cases, the inter-ethnic wars were exaggerated to justify colonialism, not only in Tangale land but in other places also. In fact, the conflict in Tangale land changed in nature and aggravated only from colonial domination of the area, which continued to escalate to the post-colonial era. Both people from East and West Tangale in the pre-colonial era moved into each other's territory. Similarly, there were intermarriages between the two communities. There were exchange of friendly visits between the warriors of Ture and Billiri. Even the end of the communal wars, there was usually a celebration whereby young warriors from both sides emit great yells and throwing themselves in hilarious intermingling of felicitations. There were also invitations from both sides for a drink (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

Communal Conflicts in Tangale Nation during Colonial Era

The colonial era in Tangale land, brought changes in the nature and dimension of the Tangale communal conflicts. In other words, the reorganization of the whole Gombe South under one single administration called the

Tangale-Waja Native Authority had great implication on the conflict in Tangale land. At the end of colonial rule, it will be realized that the colonial administration transformed the conflict, although they did their best to minimize the recurrence of the conflict for colonial interests, there was no meaningful consideration and interest to finding a permanent solution to end the conflict. Important to mention however, was the activities of the Christian Missionaries, which continued to build up the peaceful interaction among the Tangale.

Transfer of the Tangale-Waja Native Authority Headquarters

This is perhaps the first among the events in the postcolonial era that culminated to the 1990 clash. The headquarters of the Tangale-Waja Native Authority was first situated at Kaltungo but was later transferred to Tula in the 1930s because it was a source of restlessness to the chief of Billiri. Tula then provided a neutral capital for the three independent districts in addition to the fact that the weather in Tula was much more welcoming. Shortly after Nigeria's independence in 1960, the issue of transferring the Native Authority headquarters from Tula to a more suitable location gained ground. The reason given for

this relocation was that Tula was no more strategically located as the administrative headquarters of the Tangale-Waja Native Authority, because the road to Tula was rocky and bad. It was also argued that the mountainous nature of Tula would make expansion for administrative and economic activities difficult. Furthermore, Tula was said to be 25 kilometers off the Trunk 'A' road from Gombe to Numan. In addition, the British were departing the political scene and Tula's favorable weather was no longer important. However, these arguments failed to put into consideration what happened when the headquarters was first sited at Kaltungo (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

Committee was then inaugurated under the chairmanship of Shehu Awak to come up with an appropriate place for the relocation of the Native Authority's Headquarters. After its investigation, the committee suggested Kaltungo (the first place the headquarters was established). This was followed by address from J. C. Farmer, the then Resident of Bauchi Province and J. W. Mathew, Senior District Officer (S.D.O) Gombe, to the Tangale-Waja Native Authority in their council meeting No. 13 on 23rd June, 1961. In his briefing, J. C. Farmer explained the plan to transfer the Native Authority headquarters

from Tula to Kaltungo. He maintained that the issue was with the Minister for Local Government Affairs who was considering the cost such an exercise would entail. He went on to argue that Kaltungo had enough buildings which were erected by the Public Works Department (P.W.D) and they could be used as Native Authority offices. In addition, Kaltungo unlike Tula is located along the Trunk 'A' road to Numan. Farmer further contended that Tula was no longer suitable and the condition of the road was not in good shape and the position of Tula did not encourage long distant traders to come for trading purposes. At the end of his address, Farmer advised the council to consider the committee's proposal as it would enhance progress and economic development of the Native Authority generally. As expected, Farmer's address fell on deaf ears as the council was divided in support and against the proposal, this led to the suspension of subsequent deliberation on the subject (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

Instead of addressing the clash of interest with regards to the transfer of the Native Authority Headquarters in a diplomatic approach, politicking and lobbying on the subject matter ensued between the Billiri and Kaltungo communities. This debate was

finalized in the late 1960s, when the Tangale-Waja Native Authority Council voted in favor of Billiri as the new Native Authority Headquarters and on 1st April, 1970, the movement of the Native Authority headquarters from Tula to Billiri commenced. The government of the Northeastern State in anticipation of violence and in a move to prevent such from Kaltungo, dispersed a detachment of anti-riot police to ensure that calmness was maintained. To this effect, the movement was conducted peacefully, but the way and manner it was carried out aggravated the bitter feelings of the people of Kaltungo. For it was noted that the motorcade did not follow the one-way Trunk 'A' road to Billiri, but rather diverted and passed through the palace of the chief of Kaltungo from where it went through new and old Kaltungo town and then joining the main road to Billiri. In addition, the motorcade was accompanied by jubilant Tula traditional dancers who appeared to be very happy that the headquarters was leaving Tula for Billiri. This according to Abba Ezekiel (2021) was considered more of a mockery by the people of Kaltungo in collaboration with Tula people. One major aftermath of this was that the Kaltungo people sent a petition to the Northeastern State Government threatening

to withdraw from the Tangale-Waja Federation. The government after looking into the matter made effort to strike a balance between Billiri and Kaltungo. To this end, the Northeastern State Government made it a policy to site most government projects and institutions in Kaltungo. These included the establishment of the State Hotel, Government Lodge and Magistrate Court in Kaltungo. In addition, the state government took over the Mission Hospital and the Teachers College in 1973. Furthermore, the chief of Kaltungo was made the permanent Chairman of the Tangale-Waja Traditional Council. The council chamber was built at the palace of the chief of Kaltungo. In 1982, the chief of Kaltungo became the first chief to be upgraded to a second class staff of office in the Tangale-Waja area. These were all taken in order to minimize the tension and fear of marginalization. However, it did not went well with the other side as it evoked dissatisfaction in Billiri who saw the state government institutions and projects as being more important than the headquarters of the local government (Abba Ezekiel, 2021).

The Emergence of Daniel Alkali as Chairman, Tangale-Waja Local Government Council

Another incidence that contributed to the 1990 clash in Tangale land were the events that took place under the leadership of Daniel Alkali as the Chairman of the Tangale-Waja Local Government Council. It is important to note that, the emergence of this personality was not the problem, but the incidence involving the allocation of land to Army Roadstone Construction Company (ARC) Nigeria Limited. In fact the emergence of Daniel Alkali was smoothly carried out with the two broad Tangale communities of Billiri and Kaltungo working together. The 1988 local government election which was carried out on a non-party basis witnessed both communities forming an alliance and voting the famous son of Billiri, Daniel Alkali as the chairman. In his inaugural speech, Daniel Alkali promised to live up to the people's expectations and to cement the ties between the two communities. The genesis of the crisis under the new chairman of the Tangale-Waja Local Government Council started when land was apportioned to A.R.C Nig. Ltd to obtain quarry (stones), for its construction activities. The proposed quarry site is located on the boundary between Billiri and Kaltungo. This area has been the subject of incessant disputes between the two communities since the pre-colonial period.

The land dispute between these communities is as old as the chiefdoms themselves. In almost all areas they share border with each other, there is no clear demarcation of which land belongs to which area, thus causing dispute between them (Abba Ezekiel, 2021).

During the colonial period, the colonial administrators did their best to localize the land dispute between the two communities. In his touring notes of 1952, B. B. Phillips argued that a boundary would be ridiculous and pointless as the people would not themselves to their own area. As to the payment of tax, the prospective settler should be asked at the outset to who he would like to pay *haraji* (tax) – chief of Billiri or that of Kaltungo. Phillips further asserted that the matter was not a difficult one since it did not involve strangers. He concluded that the people of both side are Tangales and that the two chiefs must get together and trash the matter out, no boundary line should be marked. In any case, it was even more complex to define the area precisely as a result of the claims and counter claims by both parties. This was exactly what happened when land was allocated to A.R.C Nig. Ltd. The area sold to this company was claimed by one Reverend Yohanna Burutu of ECWA Church No.1. Billiri. On the 12th October

1988, payment was to be effected to Reverend Yohanna when a petition purported to have been written by one Mohammadu Duna of Kaltungo, was presented to Daniel Alkali, the Chairman of the local government council. The payment of the land compensation was then suspended pending on when investigation is carried out. To this effect, the chairman, Daniel Alkali wrote a letter to the quarry manager on 31st October, 1988 informing him that the area in question was not conducive for successful operation due to long standing boundary disputes between the two communities (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

To worsen the situation, while this was going on, a certain Kalorgu farming club from Kaltungo emerged claiming the ownership of the same piece of land. They cleared the land for their club farming activities. The club farmers were said to have insisted that the area was their ancestral land. On the other hand, some peasant farmers from Biliiri also emerged, challenging the Kalorgu club farmers in an attempt to claim ownership of the same piece of land – four parties laying claims on a piece of land. This situation brought about chaos and disorder at which police had to intervene and bar the group farmers and the peasant farmers from

stepping on the land. At the same time intelligence report reaching the Bauchi State Government necessitated the appointment of the Dr. G. K. Dagauda Committee on Land Dispute between the people of Kaltungo and Billiri on 22nd May, 1989. The two chiefs were advised to warn their people from going to the disputed land. This order was administered before the magistrate of Kaltungo by the two parties on the 6th and 12th of June, 1988 (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

The Ascension of Muhammadu Iliyasu as the Chief of Billiri

The tensed situation on ground was further complicated with the installation of the chief of Billiri as a Third Class Chief in January 1989 by his Excellency, Colonel Joshua Madaki, the then military governor of Bauchi State. For the first time in the history of Tangale-Waja, a highly learned personality with a university qualification was installed chief. Muhammadu Iliyasu succeeded the late chief of Billiri at that time, Mallam Iliyasu Maiyamba. The late chief had fought an unsuccessful battle to reclaim the fertile Tangale land under the firm control of the Jukuns of Pindiga and the Fulani of Akko. In a memorandum submitted to the Boundary Demarcation Committee in 1976, Mai Iliyasu Maiyamba argued that Koktok, Futuk,

Kashere, Pand-lasamu, Laber, Ladwang, Tukulma and Kumo belonged to Tangale and that they were wrongly placed under Bauchi and Gombe Emirates during the 1922 boundary demarcation exercise by one Morney D. C. (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

The ascension of Muhammadu Iliyasu as the chief of Billiri in January, 1989 witnessed a diversion; rather than to continue with the 1976 land campaign already started by his predecessor, the newly installed chief was said to have turned his expansionist policies against kinsmen – the East Tangale. Since the commencement of the land dispute, Mai Muhammadu Iliyasu has categorically stated that he would not meet the Chief of Kaltungo over the disputed land issue because the Chief of Kaltungo, bent on extending the boundaries of his territory, has shown no interest in finding a just and lasting solution to the land dispute between the two communities. However, the refusal of the newly installed Chief to meet the Chief of Kaltungo contradicted a bye-law made around 1973/1974, which necessitated the two Royal Highnesses to monitor and control any dispute arising from their areas. Instead, the Chief of Billiri continued to lay claim on the Shongom settlements located on the boundary between the two communities.

These settlements included Lashikoldok a stone throw from Billiri Local Government Secretariat; Lakalgubo, some 800 meters away from the palace of the Chief of Billiri and Lalaipido, an important economic center, where the famous Leggal Market is situated. These claims contributed to the restlessness and tension that is already building up between the two communities (Abba Ezekiel, 2021).

The Creation of Local Government Areas

The creation of local government was another factor that contributed in souring the relationship between the two Tangale communities. The quest for the creation of local government emerged out of the fear of marginalization between Tangale East and West. Since the relocation of the Native Authority headquarters from Tula to Billiri in 1970, the agitation for the creation of local government from Kaltungo continued to gain momentum. The first opportunity came in 1982 with the nationwide agitation for the creation of new local government areas, which led to the creation of more grass-root level of government by the politicians of the Second Republic. Four Local Government Councils were carved out of the defunct Tangale-Waja Local Government. These were Billiri Local Government, Kaltungo

Local Government, Waja Local Government and Yamel Local Government. These were however short-lived because when the military seized power in 1983, all the new local government councils were abolished, reverting to the former 301 local government councils (Abba Ezekiel, 2021).

In 1986, the General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida military administration in line with demands by various communities set up the Ibrahim Dasuki Commission on Local Government. The commission among other things made it clear that areas demanding local government councils were expected to prove that they had a population of not less than 250,000, ethnic homogeneity and stability. These requirements did not stopped agitators for local government. The Kaltungo people were not left out in the race. As a result, they submitted their memorandum in which they urged the commission to create a Kaltungo Local Government comprising of Tula, Kamo, Awak and the Pero-Chonge ethnic groups. However, since the demands for local government were many, the Dasuki Commission worked out a plan to deal with the many requests by considering the number of Federal Constituencies in the areas. Tangale-Waja as at that time had two Federal Constituencies – Tangale-Waja South-East

Constituency and Tangale-Waja North-West Constituency. The South-East constituency comprised of the districts of Kaltungo and Dadiya while the North-West Constituency was made up of Waja, Billiri and Cham Districts. However, when the local government councils were to be created in this region, the districts were shuffled; Waja, Cham and Dadiya were reconstituted to form Balanga Local Government, while the districts of Billiri and Kaltungo were merged to form Billiri-Kaltungo Local Government with headquarters at Billiri. Although this arrangement as would be expected, did not suit the people of Kaltungo, the argument given by the Dasuki Commission for this arrangement was that the two communities speak the same language and share similar socio-political institutions (Abba Ezekiel, 2021).

Although the argument is valid, the commission failed to take into consideration the dynamics and complexities inherent in both polities. The government also failed to take into cognizance the argument put forward by the colonial administrators that the Tangale tribe is divided into the districts of East and West and they are two distinct entities. Although both acknowledged a common origin, there has been for many

years both before and since British occupation, enmity between the two people of East and West. Any attempt to combine them in an administrative unit will meet with much opposition and could only be accomplished by force. It can be recalled that the colonialist tried to unite the people but on knowing the historic conflict, they decided to administer them under their respective chiefs. This event was followed by the banning of all political associations that sprung after the unbanning of political activities in an effort towards transferring power to civilian government by the Babangida led military government. In their place, the Federal Government came up with two-party system – Social Democratic Party (SDP), and National Republican Convention (NRC). These two political parties provided opposing ideologies in which the intense rivalry between Billiri and Kaltungo continued to grow. Billiri sided with the Social Democratic Party while the National Republican Convention had most of its supporters from Kaltungo. The two communities through the two political parties competed for control of political power. The result was the inter-party rivalry and fighting that characterized the two communities on the eve of the December 8th, 1990 local

government elections. The most immediate cause of the 1990 clash was the harvesting season of that year (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992).

All these factors combined, led to the 1990 bloody clash between the two broad Tangale communities. As would be expected, there are conflicting accounts on which community actually stoked first. Account from Tangale West maintained that it was the Kaltungo peasant farmers who launched a surprised attack on Billiri peasant farmers. According to one Mallam Aaron, the Billiri peasant farmers were harvesting their crops when the Kaltungo mob invaded their farmlands and drove them away, setting ablaze a nearby settlement. The Kaltungo account on the other hand contended that the trouble started when Musa, Lalokshi, Adamu Aliyu, Pobe Twaling and Ngali were harvesting their farm produce on the fateful day of November 23rd, 1990, when a mob from Billiri attacked the Kaltungo peasant farmers, seized part of their goods and setting the farmlands and farm settlements ablaze. The battle was marked by offensive and counter-offensives between the two communities which lasted between November 23rd and 27th, 1990. Anti-riot policemen were deployed on 26th November of the same year to calm the situation. Among

the weapons used were sticks, stones, machetes, spears, bows and arrows, Dane guns and few automatic rifles. Black magic was also utilized. It was accounted that a mysterious lady, believed to possess magical powers led a group from Billiri in one of the counter-offensive against Kaltungo. When Colonel Abu Ali, the then military governor of Bauchi State visited the scene to sympathize with the victims, he was shown the samples of ammunition fired from automatic rifles. On the whole, many lives and properties were destroyed. It was estimated that about 200 lives were lost and property, mostly foodstuff and farmlands, worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Why the Conflict Continued

Despite all the efforts made toward achieving peace, one will be tempted to ask or think why the conflict continued up to 2017. The answer can be found in the following analysis. Firstly, the communal conflict in Tangale land is a long-age conflict inherited from the pre-colonial period which its actual cause or causes cannot be ascertained as different reasons were given by different accounts as discussed previously. It is a conflict that has eaten deep into Tangale land and has succeeded in planting the seed of discord between the two broad Tangale

communities especially, when one measures the period the conflict has been on ground. From the pre-colonial period to post-colonial period, it can be said that the hatred, aggressiveness, jealousy and feeling of anger has continued to pile-up, which one of its consequences was the 1990 bloody clash. The elements of these bitter feelings within the two Tangale communities continued to prevail up to the present-day.

Secondly, the conflict is a communal one in which the causes or sources of the conflicts are cultural heritage that the two communities have in common and share together. For instance the conflict on the ownership of the term “Tangale”; it is a concept that represent both the language spoken and the people and therefore for one section to claim sole ownership of the concept may definitely result into endless conflict. This is because the concept serves as their identity known all over the world. Another example is the issue that has to do with land. Land in Tangale land and indeed among other ethnic groups is vital. It is considered as the property of the fore-fathers rather than the living and any mishandling of such may attract the anger of the fore-fathers. It is therefore guarded by all means and any encroachment on such lands may degenerate

into conflict which until the said land is claimed, the conflict may continue to persist. This is clearly seen in the conflict in Tangale land and it has, as a matter of fact, formed the basis for the annual clashes that were experienced between the two Tangale communities especially, over farmlands.

Thirdly, the efforts made at resolving the conflict are in most cases one-sided. In other words, a good number of the peace movements especially the one within Tangale land, emanates from a section of the two communities. It was not designed from the start involving both divisions of the Tangale. Some of them carried out their activities only within a section and not covering the two settlements. That is to say that some of the peace advocacies are myopic in nature. For instance the Tangale Community Development Association (TCDA) is basically an association made up of Tangale from Billiri Local Government Area (Tangale West) and not incorporating the other section (Tangale East) in its leadership structure. This has contributed to why some of the peace initiatives failed to yield the desired results. Thus some of the peace movement organizations can be likened to the Nigerian political parties in the First Republic. For example, the Northern Youth

Movement, which from its name shows that the political parties are regional rather than national in their outlooks (Dangombe Mark Hassan, 2019).

Fourthly, in most cases, the approach adopted in resolving the communal conflict in Tangale land right from the start is the dysfunctional rather than the functional approach. The management and resolution of conflict has been summed up under these two approaches. The dysfunctional approach is a negative interaction conflict accompanied by violence while the functional approach on the other hand is a type of conflict management that is positively approached and diplomatically solved. Under the functional approach, questions are being asked, injustice being challenged and corrected, contradiction being resolved as well as deprivation being addressed thus, bringing about positive changes (Oyeshola DOP, 2005). The cases of open violence in Tangale communal conflict is an indication that the two communities chose to adopt the dysfunction approach which ends with casualties as a result of the destruction of lives and properties and not with a solution to prevent recurrence of another clash. This has also contributed in elongating the conflict to the present-day. This is in addition to lack of tolerance,

patience and respect among the Tangale people as a whole.

Social Impact

The fact is that Tangale land should have been more developed more than it is now if not because of the consequences of the different communal conflicts and their recurrences in the area. Some social developments from government and private sector have eluded Tangale land due to the conflict between the two broad Tangale communities. As noted earlier, as a result of the disagreement between the two settlements, Armeiy Roadstone Construction Company was not able to establish a quarry for its construction activities because of the dispute over the land that was allocated to the company. The then chairman of Tangale-Waja Local Government Council, Daniel Alkali had to write to the quarry manager regretting that the land been allocated was not conducive for successful operation due to long standing boundary disputes between Tangale East and West (Yarima P. Samuel, 1992). The implication of this is that the entire Tangale was denied of the development that the region would have benefited from the activities of the company especially in the area of employment among the youths. It is also expected that such

companies would have rendered one or two community development project to compensate the people nearby. Another instance is that surrounding the establishment of NTA Kaltungo. The disputes between the two Tangale communities did not allow this project to be actualized as conflict over land ensued immediately the project was sited (Abba Ezekial, 2021).

One immorality committed by the Tangale as a result of the communal conflict within the group is the distortion of history and historical facts. The games of claims and counter claims by the two communities had led them to twisting and fabricating stories to suit their claims thereby assassinating each other's character. This act has contributed to the many conflicting accounts on the origin, migration and settlement of the Tangale. Instead of putting in all efforts to reconstruct a reliable, factual and authentic account of their origin, the accounts of the tradition of origin of the Tangale are shrouded by contradictions emanating from the two broad Tangale settlements. For instance, while it is agreed that the Tangale were one of the earliest known occupants of the Gombe area, it should not be as far back as the 13th century as claimed by one of the accounts from Tangale West. The account did not only

claim that the Tangale were in the Gombe area by the 13th century, but affirmed that the Tangale West were already settled, established, structured and organized politically as a kingdom by that century. For if the events that led to the mass migration of the ethnic groups (including the Tangale) that later came to dominate the Gongola Basin was brought about by firstly, the crisis of Kanuri Empire in Kanem-Bornu entered between the 13th and 14th centuries as a result of the Bulala menace which led to the establishment of new capital at Ngazargamo by Mai Ali Ghaji. Secondly the resurgence of Kanuri imperialism in the new Borno Empire (Ade Ajayi J. F. and Crowder Michael. 1976), it would not be rational therefore, for any of the Tangale division to claim being established in their present location by the 13th century. This is a distortion of history.

Another implication of the communal conflict in Tangale land is that it has led to almost permanent feelings of suspicion between the two communities. There is always that feeling of blame, even if it is minimal especially when there is any disagreement involving the two settlements. The games of blame is still not over to the extent that any slight mistake or offence committed by one person to another

(especially between two Tangale people from the different settlements), it is easier to attribute such to the games of blame existing in Tangale land. This ill-feeling has also contributed to dividing the Tangale as one ethnic group even if they found themselves in another state rather than Gombe State. They cannot hold tribal meetings together as a people that come from the same ethnic group and where such meetings are held, the house is usually divided into two, each individual aligning with his immediate kin brothers.

Closely related to the above is feeling of fear, anger and hatred between the two communities. One aspect of the implication of this is that a Tangale from the eastern section is mostly apprehensive when he finds himself in the western section. Whenever there is a communal clash between the two settlements, even married couple that are united from the two sections were said to be separated pending when the tension subsided. In essence the communal conflict still affects the family units (Elisha I Sobok, 2021). In addition to that, the conflict also destroys courtship that may lead to marriage. Although there are semblances of inter-marriages between the two Tangale communities, many have suffered and were denied marriage simply because the

intending couples emanates from the Tangale East and West. These cases are rampant even in contemporary times and it is caused mostly as a result of the long-aged conflict between the two settlements. The danger here is that the victims of such circumstances usually develop hatred and anger toward the opposing section. Similar situation is obtainable whenever there is a violent clash leading to loss of lives. The families of the deceased are left with unquenched anger towards the other section. The conflict in Tangale land has also added to the number of recorded communal clashes in Gombe state area and the nation at large and by extension to the growing insecurity bedeviling Nigeria.

The negative impacts of the conflict in Tangale land is not only limited to the two communities or Gombe South, it also affected innocent citizens and travelers. Tangale community is located along the Federal highway, connecting Bauchi – Gombe – Adamawa states. On several occasions, the conflict had halted the movement of travelers using this route. It is important to note that in some instances, these travelers spent hours or even the entire day waiting for safe passage to their destinations. Apart from costing travelers their time, appointments and other business

engagements are also affected as a result of the conflict in Tangale land which often leads to blockade of the road. Psychologically thus, the conflict instill fear not only in the minds of the Tangale speaking people but even passersby navigating through the Tangale territory.

Economic Impact

Economically the disaster caused by the intra-ethnic conflict in Tangale nation lies primarily in the destruction of agricultural goods when farms are destroyed and farmers killed. The lives of farmers wasted affected source of labor or production and cultivation power. It is important to note that during the pre-colonial period, communal conflict leading to open violence was prohibited during the rainy season. However, this had changed, in which records had shown that the recurrence of the conflict mostly took place in the rainy season, affecting the agricultural activities in the area. This invariably contributes to food insecurity. For example, the immediate cause of the 1990 bloody clash was sparked up as a result of dispute over farmland during the farming season of that year by peasant farmers. It has been estimated that goods worth millions of naira mostly foodstuff and farmlands were burnt in addition to over 200 lives that were lost

(Yarima P. Samuel, 1992). It also affects markets especially in terms of goods availability. This is to say that the communal conflict has its effect in causing low production above subsistence level. For instance, when a farm is destroyed (especially when such farm is primarily for commercial and not subsistence purpose), it automatically brings about shortage in the quantity of goods to be displayed in the market. The recurrence of the conflict in the farming season has made people to be in constant fear in carrying their agricultural activities; this is common with villages located close to the borders between the two communities such as Lashilkodok and Kufai. Some farmlands are even left uncultivated due to the fear of the dispute that may arise which also limits food production in the area.

Political Impact

One of the glaring political implications of the intra-ethnic conflict in Tangale land is that, it has led to the establishment of separate local government areas for the two broad Tangale communities. In 1989 Billiri-Kaltungo Local Government Area was created by the Dasuki Commission. This did not go well with the two conflicting groups. In fact, it was among the factors that contributed to the brutal clash and in 1991,

Kaltungo Local Government Area was created. It is important to note that right from the colonial period, it was discovered that the two communities were not compatible under a single administration and the colonialists had to administer the two settlements using their respective chiefs. Even in contemporary times, the only administrative or political post uniting the two Tangale settlements is the senatorial position, governorship and presidency. This is because the whole of the Tangale-Waja falls under a single senatorial district. For the lower chamber in the National House of Assembly (House of Representatives), the two conflicting Tangale divisions are separated, with Billiri and Balanga Local Government Areas under a single representative at the lower chamber; and Kaltungo and Shongom Local Government Areas having their own representative. This ill-fated event between two brothers led to the creation of Kaltungo Local Government in September, 1991 thus, separating the two communities administratively (Baba Tuta Paul, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intra-ethnic conflict among the Tangale nation in Gombe state area is a protracted one spanning over the colonial to post-colonial eras, which continued to fan the

ember of disunity among the Tangale up till date. The conflict arose as a result of different social, political and economic factors which continued to defy various approaches in finding lasting and permanent solution. Border disputes and battle of supremacy over the term “Tangale” among the Tangale East and Tangale West are some of the issues still bedeviling the unity and progress of the Tangale nation which culminated into series of clashes that claimed loss of lives and properties in Tangale land and beyond.

Oral Interviews

NA ME	A G E	OCCUP ATION	PLAC E	DATE
Mr. Tuta Paul	60- 63	Rtd Civil Servant	Mala m Inna, Gomb e	3/10/2 021
Mr. Abba Ezek iel	65	Public Servant	Banga nje, Kaltun go	15/6/2 021
Mr. Esli Ezek iel Abba	36	Civil Servant	Kaltun go	18/12/ 2021
Mr. Jonat	63	Rtd Civil Servant	Pokwa ngli,	14/4/2 015

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