

Review

Ethnicity and citizenship crisis in Nigeria: Interrogating inter ethnic relations in Sardauna Local Government Area, Taraba State

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The recurrence of ethnicity and citizenship question generate the debate whether citizenship in Nigeria is inclusive. This problem is very topical in Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State. Sardauna Local Government Area which is located in south-east of Taraba, north-east Nigeria was part of the former British Northern Cameroon that voted to join Nigeria after the 1961 plebiscite. The people in Sardauna Local Government Area, apart from the Fulani who speak a Senegambia language, fulfude, every other ethnic group in the area speak Bantu and semi Bantu classic. They share largely similar history, culture, tradition and intermixed religion. Despite these similarities, inter-ethnic relationship has been played down by elite's manipulation of ethnicity and citizenship. This paper argues that elites does this by exploiting proximate causes of conflict such as poverty, unemployment, land tenure issue, group identity while struggling for power in the primitive accumulation process. The paper concludes that unless ethnic groups in the area appreciate their history, redefine their socio-economic and political relations, and develop a sense of nationality to resolve conflict through non-violent means; the problem will continue to undermine peaceful coexistence and development in the area.

Key words: Ethnicity, citizenship, Sardauna Local Government Area, Mambilla Plateau, British Northern Cameroons, Nigeria, colonialism, plebiscite.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the soft underbelly of colonial boundaries, ethnicity and citizenship question remain contested phenomenon in Africa. The confrontational nature of these identity questions relates to the origin of modern statehood which agglomerated various ethnic nationalities and necessitated their permanent socio-economic and political intercourse at the turn of the 20th century (Rodney, 1972; Odofin, 2003).

African countries, beyond the impasse of colonial rule, have increasingly become internally fragmented more than when they were inherited from departing colonial and social changes brought under colonialism. They encouraged and accentuated the virulence of ethnicity

and citizenship question as means of enhancing their powers. Political elites that assumed power at independence fed on the far reaching political, economic competitive status in the primitive accumulation process and patronage. This accounts for numerous conflicts and self-determination issues sub-Saharan Africa has experienced in the last decade. Somalia, Liberia, Congo Democratic Republic, Burundi, Nigeria, Eritrea, Cameroon, and Sudan (Darfur region), but just to mention a few are famous examples (Nnoli, 1994; Toyin, 1994; Agbo, 2006).

Ethnicity and citizenship question are more than anything else, recurrent in Nigeria. The constancy has given rise to the emergence of ethnic identity formations to assert for socio-economic and political justice, the outcome of which has been conflicting ethnic engagement. The driving force behind ethnic conflagration is power struggle among ethnic gladiators (Jega, 1996).

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In their contest for power and resource control, they whip up ethnic and citizenship question to ignite political inferno. Sardauna Local Government Area presents hodgepodge of such experience that is not only dynamic but also definitive. The problem is colonially driven and that has been the condition which situates the locale in Nigeria. The paper discusses ethnicity and citizenship in Nigeria with the attempt of explaining inter-ethnic relations in Sardauna Local Government Area.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES: ETHNICITY AND CITIZENSHIP IN PERSPECTIVE

The concept of ethnicity

Ethnicity generates its origin from the Latin word *ethnos*, meaning “people of the same ancestry.” The concept ‘ethnic’ is associated with race, culture and tradition, and ancestral connection of people with common descent, meant to enhance one’s image and group membership in the society (Giddens, 1971). This relates to Kendall’s conception of ethnic group, when she defines it as “...a collection of people distinguished by others or by themselves, primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics” (Kendall, 2007).

Ethnic groups denotes “human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration...it does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2010). Kornblum (2005) corroborated that “ethnic groups are populations that have a sense of group identity based on a distinctive cultural pattern and usually, shared ancestry, whether actual or assumed.” On the other hand, Odeh (2009) defines ethnicity as:

...the nature, content and focus of inter-ethnic relationship existing between different ethnic groups in multi-ethnic society. It exposes the nature of interaction among the competing ethnic groups as informed by the prejudices and identity.

The nature, content and focus of inter ethnic relationship is therefore, at the core of the cultural outlooks which set a particular group of people apart from others (Giddens, 1971). These outlooks may obviously include cultural traits such as language, clothing or religious practices, ethnocentrism and the tendency of occupying a distinct geographical area by choice, or for the sake of identification (Rex and Masson, 1986), or otherwise; to enhance ones’ ethnic competitive efficiency in the political marketplace (Nnoli, 1978). Ethnicity therefore, enforces mutual connection amongst people of the same ancestry. It encourages internal cohesion and solidarity and enforces the need to provide natural security for

each other, and also promote a sense of identity (Nnoli 1994). On the other hand; it generates inter ethnic struggles over power and resources allocation (Nnoli 1995).

Ethnicity for most African countries remain the most contested outcome of intense political struggle, in which socio-economic and political characteristics of statehood has been transformed to respond to dynamic of powerful and often, disruptive forces of social and political changes. For example, Nigeria represents multi-ethnic state where ethnocentric values are used by elite to display ethnic group pride, and to also indulge in the glorification of their own culture to the scorn of others’ way of life. This character exacerbates ethnic sentiments and fuel mutual distrust, suspicion, hatred, strife and rancour among ethnic nationalities (Odeh, 2009). These sentiments underpin issues associated with citizenship question motivated by “struggles over values, claims to status, power and scarce resources around the world” (Coser, 1956).

The concept of citizenship

Citizenship has been defined variedly among scholars. According to Nnoli, “Citizenship is a phenomenon associated with the state... It involves a strong identification” (Nnoli, 2003). Jibrin Ibrahim cited in Kazah-Toure (2004) conceived citizenship as “a status that is applied to a person endowed with full political and civil rights in the state.”

The aforementioned definition point out categorically to the state as the only institution with the capacity to endow individuals with citizenship. Conferring citizenship status must meet certain criteria, which may include birth, registration or naturalization. This is defined in the constitution which locates their political rights, civil rights and civil liberties. Citizenship as individual constitutional right comes with duties and obligations. The constitutional obligations test individual loyalty and patriotism to the state. It also reinforces empathy, sustains solidarity and promotes ‘we-feeling’ (Nnoli, 2003).

Dynamic nature of citizenship: Some political realities

Citizenship is a force that makes citizens to participate in the democratic process. The absence of it limits social cohesion and generates the condition for mobilizing group membership to perpetuate sense of vulnerability and to challenge the status of the state (Nnoli, 2003). Klusmeyer (1996) argues in this context, when he conceived citizenship as rooted in:

...The fundamental institution that connects the individual bearer of rights to the protective agencies of the state. The civic realm of the state provides the main channels

through which individuals can participate politically and share in governance.

Citizenship principles as it applies to most states, do not accord everybody equal rights in the state. This is because it also tends to exclude those who have not been endowed with full citizens' rights. The people that come under this category are often referred to as 'foreigners'; at another level, they are called 'settlers' or 'non-indigenes'. The categorization of citizenship on this paradigm is enhanced by status of birth (the law of blood), law of place, and naturalization (Kazah-Toure 2004). Such categorization makes it difficult for the conception of nationhood, when ethnic minorities are treated as anomalous and problematic, even when they have inhabited the territory for centuries, or even when they have been granted full citizenship rights (Rae 2002; Kazah-Toure, 2004). The context in which this is demonstrated explains exclusive criteria used to determine the grounds of one's citizenship which further question, 'when does a settler become native?' (Mamdani 1998).

The unequal treatment of ethnic groups on certain basis of identity is central to citizenship question. Citizenship question is central in countries with widespread diversities in terms of religion, race and ethnicity. Citizenship question in Nigeria is a contested outcome of individual struggles for rights to participation and socio-economic welfare in a multi ethnic state.

Generally, citizenship question is invoked when there is an entrenchment of ethnicity and other primordial factors identified by Kazah-Toure (2004) thus:

"...the manipulation of ethnicity and religion by ruling elite and the monopoly of political power by a dominant ruling elite from particular ethnic or religious group - while others are kept away from sharing power." The nature and character of the state responsiveness to the necessities of citizens generally prop up citizenship question directed at the state. This is as a result of the inability of the state to make adequate provision for 'social necessities of livelihood' which Ekeh (2004) refers to as "individuals' basic security needs."

This inability emboldens sentiments among ethnic groups directed against one another and the state, thereby depriving it of the needed loyalty (Jega, 2000). The political economy explanation for this is beaoned on the closing of socio-economic garb and political opportunities among ethnic groups, particularly ethnic gladiators competing for state power, the use of state power and the consolidation of it. The incompatibilities of interests generated by these circumstances are usually given ethnic coloration. The adverse effect is the destruction of internal cohesion and solidarity needed for consolidating democratic governance in Nigeria's multi ethnic setting. Ameliorating such adversity is to create more and more space for developing and accommodating 'inclusive

citizenship' (Kazah-Toure, 2003) that will allow for citizens' participation in the democratic process.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SARDAUNA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Sardauna Local Government Area is one of the sixteen local government areas in Taraba State. The local government area located on the south-east of the state is bounded by Republic of Cameroon on the southern, eastern and almost half of its western part and Gashaka and Kurmi Local Government Areas on the north and south-west respectively (Ahmadu et al., 2009).

Sardauna Local Government Area has total landmass of about 3, 765.2 km and lies on the latitude 5 31 and 7° 18' north and on the longitude 10 18 and 11° 37' east with an altitude of about 1,850 m above the sea level. This part of the country owing to its altitude is relatively cool; most days in the dry season, the temperature will reach 20 to 23°C and drop to 16 to 18°C at night, whilst in the wet season these averages fall a couple of degrees to about 14 to 13°C. Sardauna Local Government Area is highly saturated by green-lush vegetation. It is Tsetse flies free and harbours over one million herds of cattle. The route to the Plateau and the terrain is widely fascinating given its scenic beauty, vegetation and landscape which charm various ethnic groups and tourist to the area (Ciroma, 2009; Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2011). Tabara State map showing Sardauna Local government Area bordered by Republic of Cameroon on the South-East of the state (Figure 1).

Ethnic composition in Sraduana Local Government Area is very complex and intermixed. This is because of the overlapping nature of cultural and traditional practices that have existed among ethnic inhabitants in the area. Inter-ethnic relations in the area has largely been driven by and sustained through customary norms of the people. This process began to be undermined with the development of colonial domination that informed rise of group consciousness in the post colonial era. Islam and Christianity are dominant but these ethnic groups, despite they intermix their traditions with either Islam or Christianity; they have equally not forgotten their practice of commemorating and remembering their ancestors through sculpture and prayer (Roy, 2011). However, internal solidarity and cohesion existing among them has always been strained by elite manipulation of ethnicity and citizenship for vantage positions in the primitive accumulation process (Toyo, 2001).

Ethnographies of settlements in Sardauna Local Government Area

Sardauna Local Government Area has never existed anywhere in history. The area was famously known as Mambilla Plateau. Sardauna Local Government Area as it

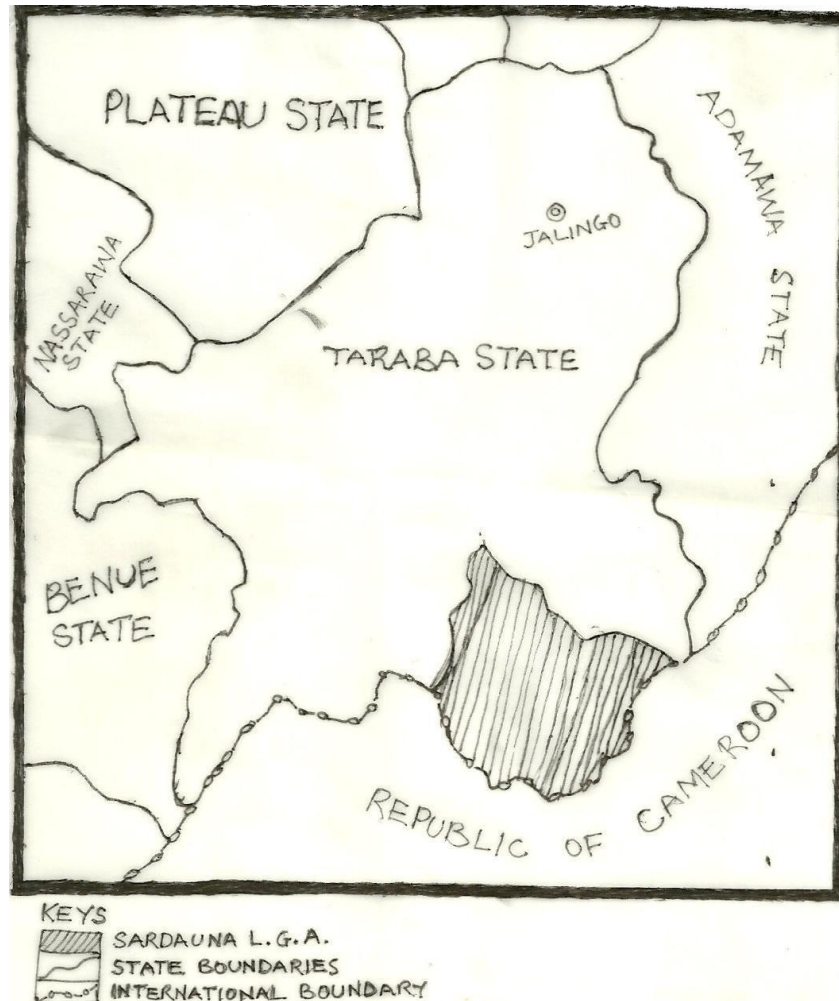


Figure 1. Taraba State map showing Sardauna Local Government Area. Source: Author, 2011 curled from administrative map of Taraba State, Ministry of Land and Survey, Jalingo, Taraba State, 2005.

is known today was part of the Sardauna Province, named in honour of Sir Ahmadu Bello (Premier of Northern Nigeria), due to his personal influence in the British Northern Cameroons, ahead of the plebiscites to ensure that the area was not ceded to Republic of Cameroon.

Ethnologically, the ethnic groups settled on the Mambilla Plateau consist of Mambilla, Kaka, Fulani, Panso and Kambu and other ethnic minorities from other parts of the country. Apart from the Fulani, who speak a Senegambia language, Fulfulde, other ethnic groups speak Bantu and semi Bantu classic. They migrated from Southern and Central Africa into their current region of settlement before the Jihad crusade in thereabout 1804. However, their migration into Sardauna Local Government Area has been traced to French and British Cameroon, caused obviously by the Jihad raids in the century. Although, there are no historical specification as to which ethnic groups moved into the Plateau, there is a

consensus that Mbum speaking people now located at Kilayang and Hore Taram were appeared to have been early settlers in the area. Notwithstanding, Mambilla, Kaka, Mbum, and Fulbe are said to have migrated from the French Cameroon, while Kambu and Panso were from the British Cameroon. Some of them however, most have migrated into their present area of abode well earlier before the independence of Nigeria and Cameroon was decided (Ahmadu et al., 2009).

Fulani (*Mbororo*) migration into Sardauna Local Government Area can be traced to 19th century. They speak a Cameroonian dialect of the Seneigambian language, fulfude, and are inherently pastoralist or nomadic by orientation. The 'pendular' nature of the Fulani made their spread across the Mambilla Plateau possible. This was motivated by the requirement of greener pasture and above all, an environment that was Tsetse flies free for effective management of livestock. On arrival, the Fulani settled in round dump-like huts with their families

(Virtanen, 2003).

However, there is no consensus among Fulani people in Saradauna Local Government Area as to which Fulani family settled early on the Mambilla Plateau. Blench (2005), while citing Percival (1938) from Rehfish (1994) posits that the Fulani origin on the Mambilla Plateau dates back to 1875. According to him, "the first group of fulbe people to reach the grassland from the Cameroon was the Rahaaji clan, who arrived only a few years before the Germans entered into the area. Although, their arrival may well have occurred well earlier than this period, their establishment of permanent hegemony probably only dates from the immediate pre-colonial period and may have reflected the need for pasture, after the rapid degradation of the highlands in the north central Cameroon."

The Fulani were principally the precursors of the 1804 Jihad led by Sheik Usman Danfodio. The effect of the Jihad has remained historically implicative for the non-Muslim natives of the vast territories of northern Nigeria and the northern Cameroon in particular. Within this period, Modibo Adama, an Islamic faithful and an ardent adherent to Usman Danfodio's philosophy in 1806, has secured the mandate to lead the Islamic expansionist crusade into the vast area covering Adamawa into the entire northern Cameroon, including Mambilla Plateau. The Fulani people in the Banyo plain also join their kinsmen in the crusade and were out to bring many hitherto independent communities under control.

Ethnic groups on the Mambilla Plateau resisted the Fulani Jihad vehemently to prevent conquest; notwithstanding, the impact of the Jihad was obvious hence, it was partly equally the reason for the migration of various ethnic groups on the Mambilla Plateau from their original enclaves. Rehfish (1974) demonstrated that the militaristic Fulbe Siire groups from Banyo despite resistance were committed toward expanding their boundaries into the area until they were halted by the Germans in 1901. However, even though many of them most have migrated out of their original enclaves much earlier before Jihad, it is still plausible to state that the fear of being conquered and decimated for slavery was primate for majority migration. The implication of the raid is very obvious and evident today. All ethnic groups on the Mambilla Plateau speak Fulani language, Fulfulde, as their lingua-franca, but have remained "fiercely individualistic and mutually distrustful" when it comes to politics (Chem-Langëë, 2004).

The Mambilla speaking people migrated from the French Cameroon. They occupy the major part of the plateau, west of Banyo stretching into the Bamenda Region to such places as Kimi, Somié, Shongkolong, Atta, Kila and Lip-down in the present day Republic of Cameroon (Ahmadu et al., 2009). They appeared to have settled at Mayo-Mbilla (River Mbilla) area located around the Banyo Plain. It is also obvious that the name 'Mambilla' must have been generated from 'Mayo-Mbilla'

where they spread from across the present day Saradauna Local Government Area in the later part of the century. The obvious reason for their migration was said to have been motivated by the Banyo Jihad in the 19th century. On their arrival, the Mambilla people settled in group of villages such as Bang, Mbamga, Kabri, Warwar, Ndunda, Chana, Kakara, Leme, Ndarup, Ngya, Mbar, Gembu and other places throughout Saradauna Local Government Area (Zeitlyn and Connell, 2003).

Yetunde (2008) described the Mambilla as "people of Nigeria and Cameroon (who) live on the Mambilla Plateau and on the Tikar Plain in Cameroon as well as in several small villages further north towards the town of Banyo. These people regard themselves as a group with a common identity. At an altitude of some 700 m, these villagers live in a different ecological zone where oil palms grow and gallery forest is found. The Mambilla language is a congeries of dialects and related language. Roy (2011) corroborated this assertion that:

"Linguistic evidence indicates that Mambila ancestors were members of the original Bantu linguistic split that occurred approximately 2,000 years ago. It is also probable, given the close similarities between languages spoken in the immediate area of northern Cameroon and adjacent Nigeria, which the split occurred in this very region. Descendants of the Bantu have expanded across Africa to the eastern coast and south to the Cape in the years since that split occurred. The Mambila themselves moved slightly southwards as a result of Fulani pressure from the North in the 17 and 18th centuries".

The Kaka (*Ka'aka*) ethnic groups who also speak Bantu classic, spanned from the Yamba areas into the Fumte areas in the Bamenda region, from where they spread into the Saradauna Local Government Area. In the Republic of Cameroon, they are settled in Mbem, Nwa, Ntong, and Nfe, Lus and so on, while in Nigeria, they are settled in Antere, Inkiri, Kusuku, Ndumnyaji, Sakaka, Warkaka, Wah, Nguroje, Ma-sumsum, Yerimaru, Furmi, Tarmnya, Dorofi, Gembu, and Maisamari areas. This ethnic group speak congeries of dialects, some similar and some others not quite similar, but largely share similar culture and traditional practices. They have very rich traditional religious system that unites them together in a common bond. They migrated dispersedly into the local government area during the Jihad raiding of 1804 through to the 1900s. Other factors said to have necessitated their movement were climatic condition, relief and the need for trade and other relevant habitable reasons (Ahmadu et al., 2009).

The Kambu and Panso ethnic groups migrated from the British Cameroon almost at the same time with other migrants into Saradauna Local Government Area. The Kambu people are settled in places such as Ndu, Nkambe and Nwa areas while the Panso people are located in places such as Nkar, Mbaima, and Kikai area.

They are highly industrious and maintained network of inter-group relationship with other ethnic groups long before the spread of the Jihad. This was informed through trade into the verse areas that runs into the now Republic of Nigeria.

Historically, The Kambu and Panso speaking people traded in Kola nuts as far as Kano and the eastern parts of Nigeria in the 19th century. The plenty of Kola nut and Pear trees in the Plateau are attributed to them. This could be their obvious reasons for their movement into Sardauna Local Government Area in the century. They are spread across all parts of the Plateau and appear to be settled dominantly in Dorofi, Tamnya, Ngoruje, Maisamari, Mayo-Ndaga, Kusuku and Gembu. They have a rich cultural practice that informed their uniting force; and have succeeded in maintaining largely their trading orientation, inter-mingling it with farming as their stable profession (Ahmadu et al., 2009).

One common feature all ethnic groups on the Mambilla Plateau which include Kaka, Mambilla, Kambu, Panso and Fulani have maintained is the permeability of culture, tradition and religious practices with one another transformed into socio-economic and political engagements which are to some extent similar. They have also maintained constant contacts with their Kin and Keith (ancestral homes) located in the now Republic of Cameroon, whether directly or indirectly most especially when there is any festivity and rituality.

Historical foundation of ethnicity and citizenship question in Sardauna Local Government Area

The historical foundation of ethnicity and citizenship question in the Sardauna Local Government Area is dynamic. Historically, the area was configured into Nigeria by colonial quest for territorial expansion. The origin of the area generates from then Sardauna Province (Kwaghe, 1973). Originally, it was part of German Kamerun, which spanned from the Bakassi Peninsula, now ceded to Republic of Cameroon (Omoigui, 2011) to Dikwa in Borno State, north-east Nigeria. The fall of these territories to the Germans was ensued through numerous treaties they entered into with natives in the 1800s.

By 1914, the Germans had already created a large chunk of territory and put it on Africa and world map. With out-break of the First World War between 1914 and 1918, the British, French and Belgian forces defeated the Germans and brought the colony under control. The British and French established a joint administration (condominium) for few months and later, redrew the map in their own favour. Under the League of Nations, the colony's territorial boundaries were reduced to less than its 1910 boundaries. The territory was divided between the French and Britain based on the Treaty of Versailles after the defeat of the Germans and confirmed by the League Nations in 1922 (Mbuh, 2010; Omoigui, 2011).

However, during the Second World War (1939 to 1945), the Germans were defeated while making effort to recover their lost colonies. The British received a mandate over two areas bordering the Nigerian colony while France was given 80% of the German Kemerun territory. The area administered by Britain was disjointed by the Benue Valley thereby creating a division between British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons. The area was characterized by mountain range forming the natural frontier between British areas of jurisdiction and the large eastern French areas. Omoigui (2011) corroborated that "On August 2nd, 1946, Britain divided the Cameroons into two, called "Northern Cameroons" and "Southern Cameroons". The 1946 'Order in Council' contained detailed provisions describing the border separating these two regions, now conveniently administered from colonial Nigeria - but not part of it. Figure 2 shows the map of the British Cameroons.

The League of Nations was transformed into United Nations, which also means the transformation of Mandate territories to Trust territories. One of the obvious reasons for this was to enable the trust territories to be developed for eventual self determination (Kwaghe, 1973). Colonial administration of the trust territories continued until the Plebiscite of 1959. The plebiscite was a general election that was held in the trust territories to allow the people choose between integrating with Nigeria or choice of a future date for self-determination, or secession from Nigeria and Union with French Cameroon (Talla, 2011). It was decisive for the people of the trust territories because it was the only option provided for them by the UN Trusteeship Council to determine their socio-economic and political future. The process which necessitated the conduct of the plebiscite was made possible through several constitutional conferences held under British colonial rule contesting the political future of British Northern Cameroons.

In March 13, 1959, the United Nation General Assembly adopted Resolution 1350 (XIII) recommending the conduct of Plebiscite for British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons. It was obvious that Nigeria and Cameroon were certainly going to gain national independence in 1960. It was therefore necessary to determine the political fate of trust territories before they gain national independence. For the purpose of effective plebiscite, trust territories were separated from Nigeria under adopted Resolution 1352 (XIV) of the United Nations (Nfor, 2010).

Dr. Djalal Abdoh of Iran was made plebiscite Commissioner. The plebiscite was conducted on November 7, 1959 in all the 334 plebiscite stations. The male gender was the only once featured to participate in the referendum. The questions administered were thus:

1) Do you wish the Northern Cameroon to be part of Northern Region of Nigeria when the Federal Republic of

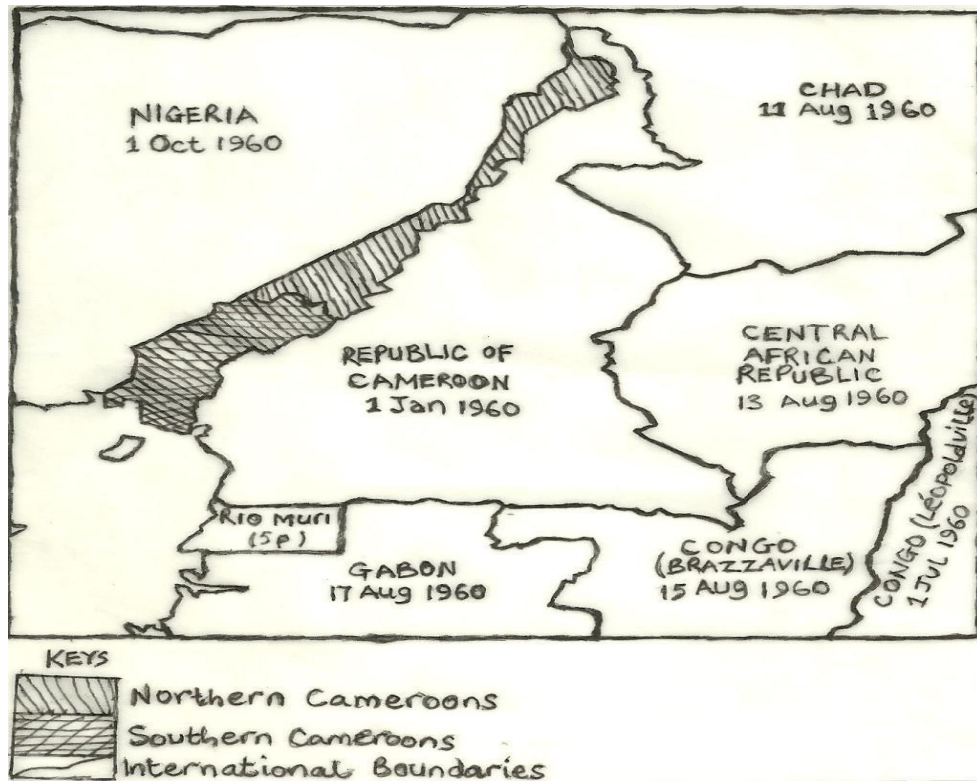


Figure 2. Map showing Northern and Southern Cameroons bordering Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Cameroon. Source: curled from <http://www.cameroonechoes.org/will-you-vote-french-cameroon-or-Nigeria-in-another-plebiscite/> retrieved July 10, 2011.

Table 1. Result of voting by each district in the British Northern Cameroons in 1959.

Plebiscite area	Vote for Nigeria	Vote against Nigeria	Total vote
Dikwa North	7,575	7,197	14,772
Dikwa Central	8,891	11,988	20,879
Gwoza	3,336	6,773	10,109
Madagali/Chubunawa	4,247	9,818	14,065
Mubi	6,120	13,578	19,698
Chamba	4,539	11,651	16,190
Toungo/Gashaka	2,252	2,099	4,351
Mambilla	2,745	7,353	10,098
United Hills	3,063	89	3,152
Total	42,788	70,546	113,334

Source: Trusteeship committee report on the plebiscite of 1959, United Nation Document T/1491 of November, 1959.

Nigeria becomes independent?

2) Are you in favor of deciding the future of Northern Cameroon at a future date?

In the hot-house plebiscite, majority votes of 70,401 conceded for a future date to decide their political future while votes of 42, 497 conceded to join Northern Nigeria. Table 1 show the plebiscite for the 1959 results.

Before the 1959 plebiscite, precisely in the autumn of 1958, a United Nations visiting mission visited the French Cameroon, British Northern Cameroons and Southern British Cameroons, and came out with a conclusion, given that the Northern Cameroons was dominantly Muslims and with other manifest opinions, the population have it that they should permanently become a part of the Northern Region when Nigeria gain independence

Table 2. Result of voting by each district in the British Northern Cameroons in 1961.

Plebiscite area	Vote for Nigeria	Vote against Nigeria	Total vote
Dikwa North	22,765	10,562	33,327
Dikwa Central	28,697	24,203	52,00
Gwoza	18,115	2,554	29,672
Madagali/ Chubunawa	16,904	13,299	30,203
Mubi	23,798	11,132	34,930
Chamba	9,704	25,177	34,881
Toungo/ Gashaka	4,999	3,108	8,107
Mambilla	13,523	7,467	20,900
United Hills	7,791	157	7,948
Total	146,296	97,659	243,958

Source: Trusteeship committee report on the plebiscite of 1961, United Nation Document T/1556 of April, 1961.

(Vaughan, 2008). Unfortunately for them, the 1959 plebiscite result turned out otherwise. Their conclusion was a total departure depicting the questionnaire was grossly inadequate and inadvertently reflected the political interest of the British Northern Cameroons. Their choice pattern in the referendum for a future date informed their dissatisfaction.

After French Cameroon and Nigeria had gained national independence on January 1 and October 1 of 1960 respectively, post-colonial politics over plebiscite became virulent on Mambilla Plateau and other areas under trusteeship. Dr. E. M. L Endelly was campaigning for unification of the trust territory with Nigeria, while J. N. Foncha was campaigning for unification with Cameroon. As this unholy campaign was going on, a new date was fixed for the conduct of the plebiscite. This created allowance for the people to determine their future for the second time. Both genders were allowed to participate in the referendum. The Male gender went to polls on February 11, while the Female gender also went to t polls on February 12, 1961 respectively. The questions featured were thus:

- 1) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon?
- 2) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Nigeria?

Here again, there was inadequacy in the questionnaire, because there was no provision for a third alternative which would have read: Do you wish to achieve independence by 'not' joining either of the two republics? The question would have enabled the people to properly and adequately determine their political future. The questionnaire was so designed to reflect Nigeria and Cameroon erstwhile colonial masters. The people were not given primacy in the making of the plebiscite questionnaire. While in Southern Nigeria, where the Southern Cameroons were allowed freehand to determine their fate, the case was different in the North,

Sir Ahmadu Bello ensured that British Northern Cameroons was not ceded to the Republic of Cameroon.

Spurred by Sir Ahmadu Bello's visit and encouragement, the people of northern Cameroon (Mambilla Plateau inclusive), voted affirmatively in the 1961 plebiscite to be in Nigeria, despite the fact that Republic of Cameroon was just a breathe away from them and quite a distance from Nigeria (Zainab, 2010). Out of a total of 243, 958 registered persons for the plebiscite, 146, 296 (60%) voted for reunification with Nigeria, while 97, 659 (40%) voted for union with Cameroon (Nohlen et al., 1999; Omoigui, 2011).

Ndangam (2010) further buttressed that "after the plebiscite, the UN adopted resolution 1608 (XV) to endorse the plebiscite results and name the dates for terminating Trusteeship in Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons and anyone who reads it perceptively cannot deny the fact that this resolution also divided the British Cameroons officially and irrevocably into two parts. The northern Cameroons including Mambilla Plateau (now Sardauna Local Government Area), officially became part of Nigeria on June 1, 1961, marking collective arrogation of citizenship status to all people of former trust territories. Table 2 shows the results for the 1961 plebiscite results.

Meanwhile, it is worthy of note that the two alternatives from which the British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons voted to decide their political future to either join the neighbouring *La Republic du Cameroun* (Republic of Cameroun) or Republic of Nigeria, was ensure by the United Kingdom representative to United Nation Trusteeship Council, Andrew Cohen's ardent opposition not to accept the inclusion of a third alternative in the making of the plebiscite questionnaire (Nohlen et al., 1999).

The choice of the people of Sardauna Local Government Area to vote in favour of Nigeria was motivated by the overwhelming promise and hope given to them by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Federal Republic of Nigeria in his January 22,

1961 speech. According to Ahmadu et al. (2009) cited Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as pointing out to the seriousness of the plebiscite to both Nigeria and the future of the British Northern Cameroons citizens, promising that:

On the one hand, you choose certainty and security, an honourable status as an integral part of a big nation in Africa with your future assured. With Nigeria you can look forward to sharing in the tremendous economic development of our country, to sharing in the massive schemes for expanding education. Above all, you can be assured of security of the rule of law, the protection of your lives and houses and farms and to the guarantee of your human rights.

The paradox with the self determination negotiated by the United Nation for the trust territories indicates that after five decade, they have not benefited much from the vast socio-economic and political privileges available to other citizens which are central to 'individuals' basic security needs'. This explains the volatility of these territories to ethnic and citizenship crises currently limiting the efficacy of democratization and contesting the sovereignty of Nigeria.

One fact that is eminent is that the plebiscite separated the people who have shared historical, cultural and traditional heritage into two different countries – Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Cameroon. The plebiscite liquidated the internal harmony, cohesion and solidarity enjoyed by the people in Sardauna Local Government Area and beyond in the pre-colonial times. Some of the inter-group relationship were necessary for developing independent nation-state, if not were for colonial interruption. According to Rodney (1972) colonialism marked for them "the stimulation of internal tribal jealousies to keep them from dealing with their principal contradiction with the European overlords.

On a general premise, creation of modern state in Africa created a psychological given that turned ethnic groups which have co-existed for decades into warrens of hatred, thereby generating ethnicity and citizenship question crisis that has become 'Pandora box' in Nigeria. They also created the feelings that fostered unhealthy growth of ethnic identity by categorizing some ethnic grouped as majorities with other ethnic groups sub-group under them as minorities (Lenshie, 2010). The colonialist also established and popularized dominant ethnic groups as land lords of territories they inhabited collectively with the minorities.

Nigeria presents a mosaic example of this circumstance. The north was christened to be owned by Hausa-Fulani, the east by Igbo and the west by Yoruba. This was also applicable to areas where ethnic defector majority exist. A typical example here is Sardauna Local Government Area, named after Mambilla ethnic group. This has created the deception for other people that

Mambilla ethnic group are citizens while other ethnic groups are foreigners. Unfortunately, the lingua-franca on the Mambilla Plateau is fulfulde; this again raises the confusion whether Mambilla constitute a majority or the inhabitants were conquered by the Fulani people. This is one colonial dungeon left behind for the people to battle with at the mercies of their socio-economic and political future.

POST COLONIAL ETHNICITY AND CITIZENSHIP QUESTION IN SARDAUNA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Colonialism in Africa was an arm-banditry and a betrayal of trust for most citizens of the former trust territories under British colonial administration. Colonialism created for most of them, problems and challenges that still to haunt after five decade of plebiscite. William (2002) noted that:

...the rule of the British was rather draconian. The people were sucked more and more into the vortex of colonial rule. An obvious consequence of this is the consciousness created in the people that the talk of human rights and freedom was at best mute. Their hatred of oppression was a catalyst in their quest for freedom. At independence the situations grow worse. While British colonialism sponsored an image of an external master-servant relationship, independence in 1960 celebrated and engineered an image of an internal master-servant relationship.

This is evident by the character displayed by post colonial elites at various levels of societal strata which encourages the perception that Nigeria is a colonial contrivance and it is reflected by the way various political classes perceive one another, especially when it comes to struggle for power and state patronage.

Citizenship question in post colonial Nigeria is ethnically driven and geographical defined. Kazah-Toure (2004) stresses that "citizenship in Nigeria is based on ethnic identities and tracing of origin". The content of this assertion is constructed on the bases of in-group and out-group status definition, which characterize multi-ethnic state of Nigeria. It is on this premise that Rae (2002) stated thus:

The ethnically based interpretation of national identity that is still prevalent in these states, despite civic principles to be found in their constitutions, poses problems for how minorities are treated within the nation-state and there are significant tension between the conception of nationhood and nation-building liberal democratic institutions. The predominantly ethnic understanding of nationhood is very hard to reconcile with liberal-democratic politics because it implicitly

recognizes full citizenship rights only for the majority ethnic group. Ethnic minorities tend to be treated as anomalous and problematic, even when they have inhabited the territory for centuries. This is the case even when minorities are formally guaranteed full citizenship rights.

Ethnic minorities in any state has most of the time been treated as aliens. This ill-treatment they receive is at the core of the constant manifestation of ethnic volatile engagements. In Nigeria, this is fostered by the inability of the post-colonial elite to construct effectively, the philosophy of inclusive citizenship that will be capable of developing national identity with a cosmopolitan outlook (Kazah-Toure, 2003). Other conflict generating factors can be located in the scarcity of cherished values and the differential opportunities that exist among competing groups intensified by ethnicity (Odeh, 1999). This explained why the Mambilla/Kambu-Panso upheaval of 1982 and Mambilla/Fulani crisis of 2000 and other spates of conflicts in Nigeria are central (Jibrin, 1999). Most reasons explicated for such occurrences are centered on the demand for recognition and inclusion in political bargain of states' resources allocation (Dzurgba, 2010). This scenario calls for the understanding of constitutional bases of citizenship in Nigeria.

Constitutional bases of citizenship in Nigeria: Defining citizenship status of ethnic groups in Sardauna Local Government Area

In a modern state formation, the constitution is the life-wire because it states the rights, duties and obligations of citizens and non-citizens, as well as their operational limitation. At this point, the state becomes a nobelium entity which requires the constitution to traffic its navigation. This assertion is in tandem with the democratic philosophy of state formation. The absence of a constitution and constitutionalism, the state goes into the 'state of anarchy' which truncates the operative standing of statehood.

Constitutional process world-wide include: the precedence of International Convention, International Court of Justice, and indigenous traditions among others, which do not contravene the universal comprehension of the concept of natural justice. In Nigeria, the constitution which arrogated the status of citizenship to the people of the trust territories (Sardauna Local Government Area inclusive) did not do so in retrospect, it took effect from the post-independence 1963 constitution. It made the following provisions in Chapter II, Section 7, Sub-section (1) and (2):

7 – (1) *Every person who, having been born in the former colony or protectorate of Nigeria, was on the thirtieth day of September, 1960, a citizen of the United Kingdom and*

colonies or a British protected person shall become a citizen of Nigeria on the first day of October, 1960: Provided that a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this sub-section if neither of his parents nor any of his grand parents was born in the former colony or protectorate of Nigeria.

(2) *Every person who, having been born outside the former colony and protectorate of Nigeria, was on the thirtieth day of September, 1960, a citizen of the United Kingdom and colonies or British protected person shall, if his father was born in the former colony or protectorate and was a citizen of the United Kingdom and colonies or a protected person on the thirtieth day of September, 1960, (or, if he died before that date, was such a citizen or person at the date of his death or would have become such a citizen or person but for his death) become a citizen of Nigeria on the first day of October, 1960 (FRN, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1963).*

This is also reflected in several other constitutions that have since been reviewed in the later years. In the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the provision is indicated in Chapter III, Section 25, Sub-section (1) and (2) (FRN, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

From the foregoing, what is then the moral justification of citizenship? This is captured by the fact that citizenship should not be measured by virtue of birth, ancestry or other historical coincidence, but by how much an individual contributes to the development of his own country and fellow countrymen and women. On the contrary, citizenship in Nigeria is historically defined based on ancestral connection and ethnic cleave. The definition of ethnic groups in this context, either as Hausa, Yoruba, Ibibio, Kaka, Fulani, Mambilla, Igbo, Kilba, Higi, Jenjo, Marghi, Jukun, Kuteb and so on, is informed by such identity creation of citizenship. It is on this account that the Nigerian identity has suffered, depicting Nigeria as a mere colonial causation. The people within it geography are neither created nor invented by the colonialist yet, because of ethnic identity manipulation under colonial rule make primordial identities to supersede over national identity (Odojin, 2003). This informs the reason why Akpan saw Nigeria federalism as an "accidental foundation by Lugard" (Akpan, 1978).

It is also interesting to note that modern states throughout Africa were created in such a way that they never reflected the conterminous nature of various ethnic groups that inhabits them. For example, the Yoruba nation was divided into a number of collectivities spread across Nigeria, Benin Republic, Ghana and Togo. The Hausa/ Fulani were also divided across Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Niger, Chad, Mali, Ivory Coast, and Republic of Cameroon. On the other hand, Kanuri, Higi, Chamba, Kaka, Mambilla, Ndola, Tigun, Fulani and Verre on the Nigeria-Cameroon borders were divided between Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad. This is central to virulent conflicting

nature of these areas in Nigeria. The Bakassi peninsula is an example where such controversy has been exploited in the International Court of Justice.

Conflicting nature of ethnicity and citizenship question in Sardauna Local Government Area

Conflict is a universal phenomenon; their occurrence differs in gravity as the factors motivating them also differ in complexity. Conflict does not occur in a vacuum, there must be some forms of mistrust and misunderstanding before conflict can occur; sometimes it becomes transformed into violence. As an enduring feature of multi ethnic state, conflict becomes exacerbated when it goes under the carpets of ethnicity and citizenship question. Most conflicts in Nigeria are typically communal and are construed by adverse socio-economic and political relations among ethnic groups (Nnoli, 2003b).

Although, conflict in Sardauna Local Government Area is associated with socio-economic and political variables, their occurrence dates to the era of colonial rule. Odeh (2009) asserts that:

Ethnicity in Nigeria is traceable to the colonial era with British conquest of hitherto independent ethnic groups ... that altered drastically the nature of inter-group relations between these ethnic groups. Before the arrival of British, these ethnic groups traded amongst themselves in sustenance of their agricultural mode of production. The conquest meant that the ethnic groups, at least brought under one political umbrella with the capitalist mode of production as its foundation.

Conflict in Sardauna Local Government Area between ethnic nationalities particularly farmers and herders dates back to 1923 (Blench, 2004, 2005). The primate causes of the conflict became pronounced at the close of independence as every ethnic group was struggling to gain political relevance ahead of the plebiscites. Several factors that have remain central to political conflagration in Sardauna Local Government Area after the 1961 are poverty, unemployment, land tenure system, discovery of natural resources and party politics (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2006). These primate causes of conflict become functional when ethnicity and citizenship question are exploited, but more often explosive when electoral politics takes the centre stage.

Dzurgba (2010) argues that elections are deliberately organized to be highly competitive and expensive such that other politicians who do not have enough resources are eliminated in the race. He also contended that the political character creates room for political convulsion and violence at both local and international levels. This circumstance is undermining the peace, unity and progress in Sardauna Local Government Area and Nigeria at large.

The political character demonstrated by Dzurgba (2010) thesis came alive in Sardauna Local Government Area, following the multi party politics in 1979. According to Blench (2005), the emergence of Mambilla to political relevance during the transition to civil rule in 1979 changed the pattern of inter ethnic relations on the Mambilla Plateau. Between 1979 and 1982, ethnicity and citizenship question took the centre stage of socio-economic and political affairs in the area. Katsala (1982) disclosed that ethnic nationalities in the area were often threatened to be deported or denied participation in the political process and sharing of other privileges. This denial was inadvertently the cause of the 1982 political violence between Mambilla and Panso/Kambo ethnic groups.

Ahmadu et al. (2009) linked the political violence to party politics. They contended that the multi party politics which, within the context of democratic spirit supposed to have provided the parlance for the people to choose between political parties became central in the exploitation of ethnicity and citizenship question to deny other citizens opportunities to socio-economic and political privileges available to them. Blench (2004) recorded that the breakdown of law and order on the Mambilla Plateau that year led to massive exodus of Mambilla and other ethnic nationalities such as the Nso (Panso) into the Republic of Cameroon.

On the other hand, Nnoli (2006) linked the political toga to land tenure problem. He argues that the problem became pronounced when foreign companies acquired very large fertile lands through negotiations with the government to the exclusion of the indigenous population. This massive acquisition made the availability of land scarce and competitive. The people began to clamour and make claims to territorial ownership, which further led to continues struggle and mutual suspicion among ethnic inhabitants.

Ciroma (2009) suggested that "apart from the pressure of the 'big names' taken up large plots of land on the Mambilla Plateau, the herds on the plateau have been on the increase, especially during dry season when the low lands have no grass and vegetation." This could be central to the clashes witnessed between farmers and herders in the area (Blench 1984, 2003, 2010). Nnoli has also pointed out that the pressure on land created land tenure question. The Mambilla, according to him, suffered majorly from forced dispossession, growing land hunger and social misery. The Mambilla farmers were denied justice in most land disputes that involved them. A judicial commission of inquiry revealed that Fulani cattle owners and other well to do individuals used their economic might to obtain official support in disputes with them (Nnoli, 2003b).

The circumstances motivating conflict in Sardauna Local Government Area continued well beyond 1980s; to be precise in 2002 another conflict broke out between Mambilla and Fulani ethnic groups. The cause of it was

also the manipulation of ethnic and citizenship identity. More to this was caused by the death of Alhaji Muhammadu Mansur, the Chief of Mambilla, created vacuum in the Sardauna Traditional Council. After his death, Mambilla speaking people began asserting for leadership and ownership of the traditional stool.

Ciroma (2009) stated that historically, the area was administered from Yola by Lamido Adamawa, who sent district heads to administer on his behalf. The first two heads of the Mambilla Plateau that were sent from Yola were Mallam Danlawan and Mallam Muqaddas. After them, an indigene of the place, Mallam Audu Baju was appointed district head. Another Fulani, Mohammed Mansur assumed the position of the district head and when he died in 2000, the Mambilla people vowed that no 'foreigner' would be their chief again. Mutual distrust among asserting ethnic groups further strained when they could not reach consensus. The lack of consensus became the grand motivator of the conflict.

Beyond this impasse the character of politics displayed by elites in the political process prior to the 2003 democratic transition has also central to the cause of the violence. The desire for power at all cost, despite losing popularity for non-payment of local government civil servants for about one year among other contending issues became a stake in the conflict. Significantly, identity formation found expression, labeling of others as foreigners was further transformed into political conflict with ethnic gladiators taking lead to sustain their hold onto power position. The implication of this is that collective consciousness, harmony and internal cohesion is lost on the altar of ethnic chauvinism and citizenship question. The need to forestall rapid development in the area as a tourist heaven in Nigeria is also suffering. It becomes eminent to address the problems squarely so that citizens and the government can benefit.

Addressing the challenges of ethnicity and citizenship in Sardauna Local Government Area

Ethnicity and citizenship question constitute major contested issues of national questions. Their centrality in the socio-economic and political terrain challenges the muscles of nationhood in Nigeria. It is in this context that Alubo (2003) postulated that "there is a gaping hiatus between rhetoric and reality of self-determination, a sense of belonging to Nigeria geo-political space, especially in the state and local councils." The accentuation of ethnicity makes the effort of stabilizing the political process and the construction of inclusive citizenship futile adventure.

Several political strategies have been adopted as remedial solution to the problem of ethnicity and citizenship in Nigeria. These remedial solutions have assumed some national recognition in the power sharing process and recruitment into civil and public services. As

a means of resolving conflict, some states and local areas government have adopted the zoning formula or the rotational system in their politics, to resolve problems associated with power and resources allocation. In Taraba for example, Kurmi Local Government Area reflect these principles in their politics. It has indeed help in resolving problems associated with power configuration. This is one area that Sardauna Local Government Area has failed to locate the means of resolving within this context, problems surrounding political equations.

The conception of the political architecture is constructed on the fact that it has the capacity for building bridges of unity, cohesion and loyalty among Nigerians. The effort has been rendered precarious due to misinter-pretation, distortion and political manipulation by dominant ethnic or sectional elite to serve their gregarious interests as against developing a civic identity for Nigeria (Ekeh, 1967; Uroh, 1998). Meanwhile, other issues needed to be addressed are the questions surrounding land tenure system, unemployment and equitability in the distribution of resources and privileges among ethnic inhabitants in Sardauna Local Government Area.

Land tenure system, according to Olatunbosun (1975) is one of the greatest problems in Nigeria which prevents a more rational concept of land ownership and agricultural activities. This is because the definition of land ownership is community based. In Sardauna Local Government Area, land question has remained one of the most palpable reasons for conflicting engagements. Instances where individuals own over 10 to 15 ha of lands is very prevalent, most of which are used for grazing of animals and rarely allowed for farmers used are central to mutual distrustful, generating ethnicity and citizenship question. The government must engineer an inclusive mechanism that would resolve this problem if inter-ethnic relations in the area must be mutual and cordial.

Government in conjunction with the citizens must also reached consensus to resolve the problem of traditional leadership. This is important because it is primarily a major process of bridging peaceful inter ethnic relations in Sardauna Local Government Area. Important to note is that traditional leadership for most of these areas were colonial creation; because most of these ethnic nationalities have existed as republican nations. Vaughan (2008) cited example with how Germans imposed "Haman Yaji, a Fulani, as districts head of Madagali over Marghi and other pagans whom he regarded as fitting objects of numerous slave raids."

Unemployment which today is very much alarming in Nigeria is accounted for the several insurgencies the country has suffered. The issue of unemployment has been overstretched in the national politics with little or nothing done about it. In Sardauna Local Government Area, the situation is not different. There are overwhelming populations of graduates in the area that

go about doing nothing reasonable. The inability to provide them with job opportunities also creates room for elites to manipulate them easily for personal interests. The government must intervene in this aspect as it is necessary for reducing the circumstances leading to conflict in the area. The government must also ensure that it create a playing level ground for all ethnic inhabitants in Sardauna Local Government Area. This must cover areas such as political recruitments and appointments in public and civil service; failure to carry other ethnic groups along in the statecraft, ethnicity and citizenship crisis would continue to be prevalent in the area.

Ethnic nationalities in the area should also be encouraged to know their history; this is important because it is the only way unity, peace and progress can be enhanced. Bob Marley (1983) posits lyrically that "If you know your history, then you will know where you are coming from." Angelique Kidjou affirmed this assertion thus: "Africa's battle for survival and emancipation is to educate the youth about themselves, their history and culture and generally, equip them with such knowledge that can make them able to resist all manner of manipulation by opportunist politicians whose agenda is to keep the majority deprived" (Sule, 2010). If the citizens in the area are well informed about themselves about their background and history, the better would be inter-ethnic relations in the area.

CONCLUSION

The dynamic of politics that motivates ethnicity and citizenship question has a colonial origin which is tied to the 'politricks' of the plebiscites conducted in the former German Kemerun. After about five decades of their merger with Nigeria following provincial declaration in June 1, 1961, it appears that there has not been much effort by the government to appreciate the socio-economic and political condition of the people. The inability to redefine this context, their means of livelihood through provision of widespread opportunities is at the core of the numerous ethno-political crises that has traumatized peaceful coexistence in the area. The inaptitude of the federal government towards the construction of the promised hydro power plant since 2002 among others explains this misfit.

Addressing these problems, the political elites must develop mechanism for resolving political questions and must collectively appreciate consensus building as necessary for achieving unity. The people in the area must also appreciate their historical origin, the circumstances that brought them into permanent intercourse with one another and the Nigerian state and be willing to give up differences which are largely political than cultural, to tolerate one another for mutual benefits and development of the area. To achieve these noble objectives, there must be a total overhaul of the system.

Awareness must be created among Nigeria Immigration Services and citizens on the historical trajectory of Sardauna Local Government Area in Nigeria. They must also be reoriented toward improving their political psyche to accommodate one another as a necessity for developing inclusive citizenship.

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