

Kuchicheb Festival: The Challenges of Cultural Genocide in Nigeria's Takum Chiefdom

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Abstract²

Cultural policy in Nigeria allows each ethno-religious group to practice its culture. But genocide tendencies have constituted a challenge to the Kuchicheb cultural festival celebrated by Kuteb people in Takum Chiefdom, Southern Taraba State Nigeria. This initial challenge to one ethnic group later resulted to challenges to other ethnic groups whenever they also wish to celebrate their cultural festivals. The questions which this paper seeks to determine their answers are: How is Kuchicheb cultural festival celebrated? Why has it turned to be an avenue to fight and kill? Are there remote and immediate causes which the Government has resolved or failed to resolve? This paper found that in Takum Chiefdom the Government is not positive in implementing Nigeria's Cultural Policy which says Government should promote the culture of all groups in Nigeria. This paper recommends that the Taraba State Government should not be seen to encourage cultural genocide in Taraba State. As such the remote cause of the conflict should be solved and the suspension of celebration of cultural festivals in Takum be lifted.

Keyword: Culture, Cultural Policy, Genocide, Kuchicheb

1. Introduction

Takum Chiefdom

Location

Takum Chiefdom is one of the eighteen (18) Chiefdoms in Taraba State Nigeria. It is located in Southern Senatorial Zone of the State. It comprises the present day Takum Local Government Area (LGA), Ussa LGA and Yangtu Special Development Area. A chiefdom is an area headed by a government graded traditional ruler. That means the graded traditional ruler is paramount over other traditional rulers within the Chiefdom. The paramount traditional ruler of Takum Chiefdom goes by the title Ukwe Takum. The originates from Kuteb tribe's native law and custom. The chiefs in Nigeria serve as the custodians of culture.

Migrations and the Inhabitants of Takum Chiefdom

By chronology of migrations to Takum Chiefdom and Takum town in particular, the Kuteb are the aborigines of Takum. And some members of other ethnic communities who later joined the aborigines in the Chiefdom are:- Ichen, Kpanzun (Jukun), Chamba, Hausa and Tiv. Each of these groups has culture that distinguishes one from another and each group highly values its culture and festival. But the attempts to extinct the culture of one group by another in Takum constituted the foundation for inter group conflict.

Scope of This Paper

In view of attempts to extinct cultures, this paper on culture would find out whether there is a cultural policy in Nigeria which encourages this. This paper would also determine whether the State Government

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created the enabling environment for all ethnic groups to celebrate their culture. This study would also examine the implication of intergroup attacks as it relates to the concept of **genocide**. Finally, the paper would find out whether it is true that Kuchicheb is merely organized to inflict violence on persons who are not Kuteb; or it is a deliberate effort by persons who are not Kuteb to give the festival a bad name to destroy it.

2. Methodology

Data for this study is sourced from library materials such as letters from the disputing parties, newspaper reports at the time of the conflicts and Government investigation panel reports. In respect to analysis, the method of *content analysis* would be used determining the authorship, authenticity, or meaning of communications (Berelson 1952, Holsti 1969, Tyrus 1964, Barbie 1996, Wikipedia). In interpreting the data for this study, ‘*Group theory*’ is adopted as the theoretical framework. ((Bentley 1948, Truman 1951, Shut 2005, Mbah 2006, *Ikiligbe* 2008) Group theory, asserts that the force which shapes policies is the role of individuals in Group form. The groups in our case study are the ethnic groups in Takum, particularly the Kuteb, Jukun and Chamba and their respective allies within and outside Takum Chiefdom.

3. Literature Review

The meaning of Culture

Some people simply see culture as limited to music, dancing and wearing of uniforms to show their distinct dance steps from that of other groups. It therefore not surprising that when government chief executives go to a community on official duty or when cultural festivals are organized professional dancers and or community dance volunteers appear on stage in their chosen uniforms to dance. But a comprehensive definition of culture and cultural activities are wider in scope than the act of wearing uniforms and dancing.

Etymologically, culture is a word which originates from Latin language and it means cultivation, development, and improvement (Pavel 1989). But this same word is given different meaning in different fields of study. Culture when discussed in two broad areas of social anthropology and biotechnology can be seen as not being the same. Specialist say there are more than two hundred definitions of culture and some definitions contradict each other (Pavel 1989).

Socially culture means distinctive outcomes of social interaction related to many aspects of life which leads to the production and collection of arts that is music, literature, and related intellectual activities, considered collectively as necessary for the health of the society and to make a people joyous and popular. Thus culture includes shared beliefs, values of group and their practices or attitudes that bind them together. It also extends to art of development of skills or expertise through spreading and acquiring of knowledge and sophistication about these beliefs, values and practices through education and exposure to the arts of doing things. This further leads the people to identify with a particular place, class or time to which they belong to.

Biotechnologically, culture refers to a biological material-growth in special conditions e.g. plants, microorganisms, or animal tissue grown in specially controlled conditions for scientific, medical or commercial purposes. It includes tillage that is cultivation of land or soil in preparation for the growing of crops or plants.

Bodley (2006) defines Culture, in anthropology, as

the patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes humans from other animals. A people’s culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems.

Culture thus is the total way of life of a people. It is all the elements that is, things they do every day and periodically. The elements for example, range from religious and administrative /political institutions that

produce and release the native laws and custom of a people. The rules and norms state the do and don't do. The norms define the characters that are described as *good and bad behavior* as well as the *sanctions* that follow misconduct. It further includes the dress a people wear, the food they eat, their language, the tools they use at home and at work place. It even goes as far as how they react to external negative influences that tend to destroy a cherished element of their culture. From the foregoing understanding, religion is the heart of culture of each ethnic community. Therefore a change in religious practice brings about positive or negative readjustment in lifestyle. At times some people abandon their language, dressing and usual life style to adopt that of their new found friends and ethnic Community's religion. This has happened between pagans and Christians and Islamic faith adherents. From the religious perspective other laws of the land emerge to shape our behaviors; from religion our myths are determined, that is, accepted beliefs of a people e.g. on why deaths occur, rivers flow or dry up, the occurrence of drought and flood; from religion we make value description that is expression of what is good and beneficial e.g. the issue of no same sex marriage, polygamy is bad, intermarriage is good, having many children is good, abortion is bad, care for children and the old is good, peace is good and war is bad etc And sometimes what is good in one cultural area is bad in another. Good at one time is bad at another time; from religion we exhibit physical behaviors through symbols of the people e.g. clothing, hairstyles, musical equipments, names e.t.c. These ways of life" are passed-on from one generation to the next. The human awareness that each society is guided by a distinctive set of beliefs, feelings and strategies for living gives the members of the society a sense of common identity as "a people" (Richly 2002). Culture therefore is an important part of human lives, as it helps in building unity in the society.

Cultural Festivals

The word cultural on the other hand is derived from the word Culture. Cultural is an adjective which describes something relating to a culture or civilization. Cultural festivals of a polity are as numerous as the number of ethnic groups that live in it. Furthermore, when one looks at the social perspective, there are also varieties of cultural festivals. The festivals are mostly performed to mark harvest, initiation into manhood or womanhood, installation of rulers, marriage, burial ceremonies and occasions of general entertainment. Prominent among the major cultural festivals in Taraba State are the *Nwunyo* fishing festival in *Ibi*, *Ibi* local government area; *Purma* of *Chamba* in *Donga*, *Donga* local government area; *Puje* of *Jukuns* in *Wukari* local government area; *Sharo* of the *Fulani* in *Jalingo*, *Ardo-Kola*, *Lau* and *Bali* local government areas; *Kuchicheb* festival of the *Kutebs* in *Takum* and *Ussa* local government areas; *Kati* of *Mambilla* in *Sardauna* local government area; *Mantau* and *NseNse* festivals of the *Mumuye* people in *Yorro* and *Zing* local government areas (Taraba State Government Diary 2012). Cultural activities thus are manifested in the people's general behavior as regards social, economic and political values, fashion, arts, dances, songs and musical instruments e.t.c.

Sensitive Components / Aspects of Culture and Change in human Activity

From the above definition of culture, the present writer is of the view that in modern time, practically the aspects of culture that easily creates conflict and introduces changes that affect group cultural activity are language, Native Law and Custom and Traditional Institutions of Authority.

Language

In human life, the primary symbolic aspect of culture is Language. Language is the most symbolic because it is the number one that easy tells which part of the community one hails from before we begin to inquire or confirm whether the language clue is correct as a basis of identifying members of one group from another. With the importance of language, you cannot talk of a people without language. In other words, you cannot talk of French culture without French language and ascent. Hence, in Canada the most important outcome of identifying French way of life is the language and ascent before you speak about other aspect of French culture that distinguish French from other groups. Similarly, between Britons and Americans, though both are whites and speak English, but American English and ascent is different from that of the British. This similarities and differences can also be found among black language groups. Apart from comedians who imitate how others speak, a typical Hausa man can easily be distinguished from a Yoruba man when both

speak English. In addition to language as indicator of culture distinction, language serves as the instrument that transmits other aspects of culture within a group and between groups. And as groups interact other artificial or common languages develop to ease communication and give them a new identity e.g. the use of Pidgin English in Africa. And Pidgin English differs from one cultural area to the other. In the process where the number of groups mixing is very, very high and such groups migrate into other cultures, there is the tendency that some languages have to naturally go into extinction. The process of language change e.g. the need to use a common language/lingua franca as a result of urbanization does not lie within the powers of man to direct alone but it also occurs naturally and spontaneously in most cases. The natural extinction of language and other aspects of culture e.g. dressing and dancing style, differs from the one induced by genocide tendencies.

Native Law and Custom

The norms, rules and laws of a given community guide individual and group interaction and the interpretation of a behavior: whether it was rightly or wrongly conducted. The norms could also be categorized as to whether they are for land, traditional authority, marriage, social, economic, religious e.t.c. activities. These norms speak a lot about a people's values and culture and they differ from group to group. Misunderstanding between individuals and groups may arise because of clash of laws and ways of life. The group that wants to conquer through legal or illegal means often tries to impose its norms and culture. But the presence of rules / norms as part of culture requires members of a community to obey and when they are seen to obey it, the people can be described as a people with a culture of obedience. So people with unlawful behavior are assumed not to be cultured and are not to be part of the community. And so when deviant behavior and insecurity is on the increase it becomes a source of worry because it is not a behavior the people want. Hence the saying that, "*it is not in our character or culture to be violent, steal, cheat, lie*; or a people are described as *it is in their culture to be violent, steal, cheat, lie, be promiscuous, etc.* The story of creation explains this natural phenomenon a lot. Following the divine directive in Genesis 2.15 that "*the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it*" (NIV Bible). To "work it" here means to cultivate it while to take care of it means to guard it. "Man" thus is not a passive object only influenced by external circumstances that he cannot control, but he is a dynamic creature, given the powers to also create, cultivate, develop and improve on what he knows and does. Consequently, man started life as a naked being. But spontaneously a woman did not only emerge and was given to him to enable procreation activities among other roles by the woman. It is also worthy to note that some "do this" and "don't do that" as rules were also given. At this early period of their relationship, they were both naked, but they were not embarrassed for being so until the law of *don't eat the fruit of the forbidden tree* was breached. From then other chains of actions and reactions made man (Adam and his wife) to begin to use animal skin for clothing. But today the heritage of going naked and use of animal skin is phased out in most communities. This arose because of industrial revolution which introduced technological culture and products.

Traditional Institutions of Authority

A people who realize they have a distinct language and ancestor make for themselves laws and chieftaincy institutions that strengthen their corporate existence through law making, interpretation and policy enforcement. Even where a people have lost communicating in their language, chieftaincy institution is not only used as the symbol of authority but also that of uniting a people. It is still through the chief that the laws are made, enforced and interpreted. The chief is thus regarded as the custodian or preserver of the people's culture.

Nigeria's Cultural Policy

In any given community culture is important. It is

- i. a medium for guiding an individual to conform with required group behavior
- ii. a basis for citizenship training in leadership and political skills, laws, taboos and regulations to increase dedication and curtailing or controlling deviants

- iii. a basis to differentiate one group, community, society or nation from another, thus it creates a social personality .
- iv. basis of showing the ideas and institutions a group values or wants and does not want
- v. a foundation of effective socialization and symbol that a people are in peace, and united for development .
- vi. Receiving, reserving and legitimizing cultural accretion and development from time to time.
- viii. Preserving the social heritage and values of the people.

To achieve the above importance of culture, Nigeria Cultural policy was formally harmonized in 1976. The policy is aimed at promoting the cultural heritage of its peoples. It was approved and officially launched by the government in 1988. Some of the Government objectives of the policy are:

- To mobilize and motivate the people by disseminating and propagating ideas which promote national pride, solidarity and consciousness.
- To evolve from our plurality, a national culture, the stamp of which will be reflected in African and world affairs.
- Promote an educational system that motivates and stimulates creativity and draws largely on our tradition and values, namely: respect for humanity and human dignity, for legitimate authority and the dignity of labor, and respect for positive Nigerian moral and religious values.
- Promote creativity in the fields of arts, science and technology; ensure the continuity of traditional skills and sports and their progressive updating to serve modern development needs as our contribution to world growth of culture and ideas.
- Establish a code of behavior compatible with our tradition of humanism and a disciplined moral society
- Sustain environmental and social conditions which enhance the quality of life, produce responsible citizenship and an ordered society.
- Seek to enhance the efficient management of national resources and skills.
- Enhance national self-reliance and self-sufficiency to achieve our national aspiration for industrialization.

In addition to the policy document in Nigeria there is also a Constitutional expression /provision which recognizes cultures and vests a responsibility for its development on the State. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 in section 21 provides that

The state shall Protect, preserve and promote the Nigerian cultures which enhance dignity and are consistent with the fundamental objectives as provided in this chapter; and Encourage development of technological and scientific studies which enhance cultural values

From the forgoing, it entails that a community's culture goes beyond the mere organization of festivals. It includes our daily positive behavior or activities that intends to develop our political, economic, social, educational, foreign affairs, environmental, mass media, national ethics and duties of citizens. It includes how we relate to each other in these areas to bring about peace for sustainable development in the policy areas; or negative behavior which bring about war to destroy some or all we were able to cultivate and develop over the years. From this totality of behaviours Nigeria national policy requires the people to promote only that which would *Protect, preserve and promote the Nigerian cultures which enhance dignity and cultural values*. That is to *Promote an educational system that motivates and stimulates creativity and draws largely on our tradition and values, namely: respect for humanity and human dignity, for legitimate authority and the dignity of labor, and respect for positive Nigerian moral and religious values* The culture of domestic war is thus to be eliminated.

Nigeria's Cultural Policy and Implementation Strategy

To promote preserve and present cultural values, Government established cultural policy implementation machineries. We have Federal Ministry of Information and Culture with her agencies for culture both at the federal and the State levels. The revitalization of our endangered culture is the major task of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The Ministry and its Agencies have tried to mobilize Nigerians at all levels and to instill in the people and their institutions the spirit of pride in their cultures. There are also private sector practitioners in the culture industry. And they have established organizations to regulate their activities.

To ensure that the people participate in cultural development, the government mobilized communities to present their music, dancing steps and the use of uniforms among others at cultural festivals such as Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) held in 1978, and national cultural carnival held annually at the Federal Capital Territory Abuja tagged "*Abuja Carnival*". At the Abuja festival every State presented array of cultural troupes. These cultural troupes demonstrate the numerical richness of the people's total experiences as they historically moved from one stage of doing things in the past to the way some things are being done at present e.g. horse riding, boat regatta, masquerades, singing of songs that verbalize the people's experiences, feelings and aspirations e.t.c. Thus culture is bound to be as many as there are many language groups in this country. And there are many areas of similarity as the people are prepared and agree to adopt, live and celebrate their new ideas and outlook. This new look can be seen in new religion and mode of worship; drumming tones, dancing steps and styles, new style of housing; new ways of dressing, new equipments of farming, hunting and fishing, new desires and methods of socialization, business, security. e.t.c.

The question is, should Nigerians look forward to the celebration of Kuchicheb festival or should it be banned as called for by some non-Kuteb people. In Takum Chiefdom, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments in 2009 collaborated with Kuteb Yatso of Nigeria (the umbrella social and cultural organization of the Kuteb people) to make a documentation and promotion of the Kuchicheb festival. The Commission also collected Kuteb artifacts for preservation at the National Museum. While the Commission has constructed museums in some communities, efforts are on to construct a Museum in Takum.

Negative Attitudinal Culture as Challenges to Cultural Development

In spite of both public and private sector agencies the desired outcomes are far from being achieved because negative culture is dominating the Nigerian society. In the words of Ernest-Samuel, (2009)

The peoples' traditional values which include respect for humanity and human dignity, respect for legitimate authority, dignity of labour and respect for positive morals and religious values are paid lip service. Many State polices have been formulated without regards for the citizens or their well being. Some administrative structures have been established, but those in power by omission or commission chose to deploy their siblings and relations to such establishments irrespective of whether they are qualified or not, instead of employing qualified personnel who are not related to them. Structures for promotion of culture have been high- jacked by those at the helm of affairs and such establishments have been converted to serve the selfish interests of those at the top. Seminars and workshops are organised basically to create avenues to spend government allocation on promotion of culture and not to achieve the real objectives of the exercise. The resultant effect is that it is generation of funds instead of the promotion of culture, promote the image of those organising and managing the programme. Many government officials have publicised their interests in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage in the media, but have secretly sold the people's prized artifacts to expatriates for the lure of foreign currencies. Fat budgets for cultural carnivals/revivals have been drawn for the nation, but greater percentage of the expenses go to unrealistic and false ends designed to hoodwink the polity to ensure that no one raises eyebrows, hence every year, it is common to hear about cultural events like Abuja carnival, NAFEST, Ahiajoku Lectures and their likes, without any concrete foundation for the sustenance of such events for the purpose of preserving and promoting Nigerian culture.

Another dimension of the problem in Nigeria's Community of Takum Chiefdom is the use of the negative culture, where some communities are showing the world that they are fighters, conquerors and heroes in the past and they are stooped to fight and conquer even in this era of anti war and conquest instincts). This has led to attempt to use unconstitutional means to resolve conflicts of interest instead of the use of constitutional means of conflict resolution. Hence, the intolerance by one group of another's constitutional heritage. This further resulted in inter-ethnic group wars, which aim is to conquer and extinct the culture of other ethnic groups. This paper sees this approach by some ethnic groups and indeed the State Government's discreet support to war mongers as a tendency to genocide and is against the United Nations policy on genocide.

Genocide

Genocide as an internationally recognised crime, is defined by Lemkin (1944) as

A coordinated plan, different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundation of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the group themselves. The objective of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institution of culture, language, national feelings religion and the economic existence of national groups and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against individuals not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group. (T *(In Thorneberry (1991).*

From the above, the present writer opines that the objective of genocide negates the culture of "Live and let Live." Genocide cannot be achieved without **first** disobeying the laws of the land valued by the masses. This is because genocide is aimed at massacre of national, ethnic, racial or religious groups. The tendency to genocide encourages the argument in Nigeria nowadays that "all communities are settlers". The purpose is to justify the acts of genocide on the indigenous people. Historically, genocide has been traced to wars in ancient and classical era for the extermination or enslavement of the first settlers of an area. From the religious perspective the Holy Books are replete with stories of conflicts and wars of this nature. And up to the twenty-first century we have equally witnessed total wars leading to the destruction of lives and properties. These wars were carried out, using simple, as well as modern and sophisticated weapons, both at international and domestic levels.

Types of Genocide

Genocide, which is simply described as inter-ethnic conflicts nowadays, takes place daily and in many dimensions. Lemkin (1944) have described the various types of genocide. We have *political genocide* which aims at the destruction of the original government of the nation, race, community and imposition of that of the oppressor at every level; *Social genocide* aims at weakening national spiritual resources, especially by attacking the intelligentsia; *Cultural genocide* is the prohibition of the use of one native or local language, compulsory education in the spirit or favor of another nationality, and goes as far as burning artifacts and books. It also includes bastardisation or vandalisation of cultural values, transfer of children to another group, forced and systematic removal of elements representing the culture of another e.g. artistic impressions, native laws governing the title, selection and appointment of traditional rulers to the ones preferred by the oppressor; *Economic genocide* includes the destruction of the peoples source of economic activities e.g. land, industry and farm produce; *biological genocide* are measures directed at reducing birth rate in the opponents group and to have a higher rate in the oppressors group e.g. weaken the survival capacity of children; *physical genocide* involves mass killings of a certain groups, racial discrimination by providing for the oppressor group only and starve the others; *Religious genocide* is the elimination of one religion with non-religious philosophy or substitute with another religious philosophy; *Moral genocide* are the attempts to debase particular groups, so that they would not be liked and more deserving for elimination so that the oppressor can have a place.

The United Nation Conventions against Genocide

It is concluded that genocide's oppressive tendencies are uncivilized, barbaric and vandalistic. Consequently, United Nations Convention on Genocide which went into effect in 1951 after it had been

ratified by 20 nations further defined genocide in Article II as *any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national ethnical, racial or religious groups (a) killing of members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) forcefully transferring children of the group to another group*. Consequently, the Convention sees genocide, as starting from conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide and complicity in genocide as punishable acts. Again, the United Nation General Assembly defined genocide as a denial of the right of existence of an entire or part of human groups; as homicide it is the denial of the right of individual human beings to live (Goodspeed 1966). In positive terms genocide was also made punishable whether committed by private individuals, public officials or statesmen. And complaints on it can be lodged with the United Nations and International Court of Justice in particular for investigation and subsequent request for the most appropriate action to stop genocide by the State can be made where such a crime against a people has been committed (Goodspeed 1966; Meron 1992).

Harff and Gurr (1988) examined episodes of State sponsored mass murders since World War II. Their goal was to create a data set that allows researchers to compare and better understand these types of mass murders. They came up with two major types of state sponsored mass murder: **genocides and politicides**. That whereas on one hand **genocides** (Hegemonial and Xenophobic): victims are identified based on their ethnic, racial, national or religious identities but the victims may not necessarily think of themselves in these terms. However, as a matter of identifying targets for murder, the State identifies victims on the bases of their ethnic, racial, national or religious distinctions. On the other hand **Politicides** (Retributive, Repressive Revolutionary, Repressive/Hegemonial): victims are identified primarily in terms of their political opposition to the regime and dominant groups or in terms of their position within the society (for example, peasants, intellectuals, etc). The common denominator is that the State seeks to destroy a substantial portion of the identified victim group(s). In the process, *politicides* can transform into genocide. For instance a state may carry out mass murders as a way to repress opponents to the regime e.g. intellectuals but it may turn out that members of a particular ethnic group are disproportionately members of the opposition intellectual group as was the case of Indonesian campaign against the East Timorese and Ugandan politicides/genocides carried out in the 1970s and 1980s. Harff and Gurr's (1988) definition of genocide is slightly different from the definition contained in the UN Genocide Convention.

- Whereas Harff and Gurr regard genocide as the murderous actions carried out by a state or regime, the Genocide Convention makes no mention of States.
- Whereas the Genocide Convention only addresses exterminatory campaigns against racial, ethnic, national and religious groups the Genocide Convention did not mention the extermination of political groups as presented by Harff and Gurr

Harff and Gurr include “killing members of a group” and “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or part” as criteria for identifying cases of genocide. The Genocide Convention also includes “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group” as part of the definition of genocide. But Harff and Gurr did not include this criterion of mental harm in their definition.

Be that as it may going by the above definitions by Lemkin, the United Nation as well as Harff and Gurr it can be asserted that there is a manifestation of the various elements/types of genocide in the history of intergroup relations in Takum Chiefdom. The tendency to these types of genocide perpetrated by non State groups, are tacitly supported by the State. The degree of its manifestation is however not as much as other re-known cases of genocide. But within the context of our case study it a worrisome condition.

4. Findings

The Meaning of Kuchicheb

According to the Kuteb Yatso of Nigeria (KYN) Cultural Committee (2009), Kuteb the ancestor of the Kuteb people from time immemorial expressed his relationship with his creator “*Rimam*” (Kuteb name for God), and his forebears by way and manner of thanksgiving and self-appraisal feast called KUCHICHEB. From this origin Kuchicheb is a thanksgiving and self-appraisal feast where Kuteb acknowledged the companionship and benevolence of some natural forces in his existence, personality, success, failure and security. He not only trusted them but cast his hopes on them for spiritual guidance, prolonged life and blessings. Kuchicheb is also a representation of the people. It’s an embodiment of the totality of their way of life, that is, who they are, where they live, what they do, what they eat and how they dress. Above all, it demonstrates the people’s attitudinal behavior towards one another and their ancestors. It is a common belief among the Kuteb people that Kuchicheb festival is an avenue where offences committed either against each other or against the ancestral spirits are purified and pardoned. It is also a period of redeeming vows in which the people bring their sacrifices to the gods that they might be blessed and thereby making new vows to the ancestors. It is their conviction that *Kuchicheb* festival comes with more strength, vigor and encouragement to face the challenges ahead as the rain is being expected. Kuchicheb festival is a point, moment and location in a circle of planting, harvesting and storage. It is an exciting routine as one event leads to the other in an uninterrupted succession. The festival is symbolic in two features. It marks the end of a season of planting and harvesting and preludes yet another season which is in character logical of the former. One obvious and outstanding thing about Kuchicheb which is common to all Kuteb sons and daughters is the exhibition of one feeling. This feeling rules them all, whether present or absent during the celebration. The spirit of a common ancestor which binds them as a one people called after this one man: Kuteb. The fact remains that on the day of this feast, its observance is seen accomplished by all Kuteb people wherever they may be found on the universe. Just like the Christians prepare for 25th December, Muslims look out for the lunar moon, the Igbos look towards the day of the new yam festival etc, so do the Kuteb people look forward to having 25th March of each year to celebrate their festival of oneness.-the Kuchicheb

Occasion of the Festival

Philosophical Foundation

By nature, man is created with special ability that no other creatures created of God has. In any environment he finds himself, he tries to work, guide and take control of the things around him and put each of them in order, to suit his logical senses if not his selfish interest. Intuitively, man discovered that he did not find himself in existence by accident but rather by some cosmic orders. He becomes conscious of the need to be in communion with those cosmic orders for his good. The cosmic orders therefore, serve as weapons and defense for the people in times of trouble and the need for companion in times of peace. Kuteb man is not different here. After all, the soil, seedlings, rain and other natural factors that occasion his good harvest are not just accidental discharge but rather they are designs to better his lots. Based on this the Kuteb people belief there is that need to honor whoever is responsible for this favor. This way, he believes there is need to broker peace to ensure guidance and protection. It is this conscious attempt at self-realization to align him with the celestial bodies that Kuchicheb festival is birthed. Therefore, its yearly performance from generation to generation over a period of time posits its very calendaring to March every year. Evolution comes with time, whereas, perfection is as a result of constant practice and innovation Kuchicheb therefore is the story of a cultural festival that is as old as the man himself. This choice is deliberate. The period is vocational as all farm produce have not only been brought home but have been stored. In fact, he uses this period to visit friends and relations, to hunt and to carry out other social activities and wait of the rainy season. This annual thanksgiving festival takes place in March of each year and lasts for seven (7) days.

The Forms and Contents of the Festival

The Sacred Ussa Hill

Our foray into the forms and contents begins with the myth surrounding the sacred Hill of Ussa or

Mount Ussa- the holy place of the supreme God called *Rimam*. It is here in Ussa Hill that the Kuteb people were said to attain the consciousness of their nationhood. This hill lies to the south of the present Takum and east of Ussa Local Government areas of Taraba State.

The attainment of this nationhood resulted in the allotment of land/adjourning hills by Kuteb, the progenitor, made to his sons where they live till date (Ahmed-Gamgum 2005). These clans have a common central administration under a paramount head known as *Ukwe* who rule these units through vassal heads called *Kwe* (*plural Akwe*). Thus it is clear, the Kuteb people live in a federation of clans.

It is pertinent to state that it is in Ussa Hill that the rite of the desolate sacrilege of the people is atoned. It is worthy to note that the *Ukwe* visits this place once during his kingship, when he is enthroned, to commune with the ancestors to be purified of his past guilt. The administration of the rite of purification is the exclusive reserve of the *Akwen Rikwen*, spiritual leaders who serve as the custodians of this Ussa Sacred Hill.

The Institution of Kukwen (Plural Akwen)

The institution of the *Akwen Rikwen* is the hub of the festival. Each of this clan assigns a priest to Ussa hill seven days prior to the festival to participate in this important sacred duty. It is gain saying that the lifestyle of *Kukwen Rikwen* is an embodiment of mysteries. It is believed that he (*Kukwen*) cannot be beaten by rain. Therefore, rain must wait for him to return home wherever he finds himself before it pours down. At the advent of draught however, he brings out his attire and suns it to cause rainfall. He shall not put up overnight outside his domain no matter the distance away from home no matter the circumstances. Also he shall not eat in the public for that is an abomination. He shall only eat from a woman who has attained her menopause and he does not make use of modern utensils but native utensils like *ekik* (calabash dish) and *iseap* (native ceramic dish) for eating and *nwung* (calabash cup) and *tou* (calabash) for drinking. He shall not be provoked since such action spells doom on the land.

These characteristics are the attributes of the men who hold the power to intercede for the people before the ancestral spirits. They sojourn in Ussa Hill for seven days to atone for the offences of the people and appease the ancestors to continue to ensure good health, fertility, good harvest and more blessings from *Rimam*-the (supreme God). They only descend from Ussa Hill on the completion of all rites of purification and the receipt of the sacred *fire-Urua*. This occurs on the seventh day of their sojourn and incidentally the D-day of the festival.

Preparation and Announcement for the Festival

Before the festival is celebrated each year it starts with *Iki* (masquerade) festival at the clan level before and the grand finale is held at Takum town at the *Ukwe* Palace and during *Kuchicheb* festival. In preparing for the grand finale it is preceded by meetings of the Cultural Committee in consultation with the *Ukwe* Takum the *Akwe* (Clan traditional rulers) and as well as meetings of all the *Akwen* (traditional religious Priests) of the twelve Kuteb clans presided by *Kwe Kukwen* (chief priest) to discuss and announce the period for the holy week. Decision on the holding of *Kuchicheb* is relayed to the elders of each clan who will in turn pass the same to heads of families well ahead of time to allow women prepare corn for brewing *cwab* (native beer) and other food. In recent times when the festival was not to hold decisions of the elders were announced through the KYN using all available news media.

A Week before the Celebration

During this period it is required that there be, self and community purification activities, viz:-

- All house-hold surroundings in *Kuteb* land will be kept clean.
- There will be no fighting among the people. As such the people are enjoined to purify their hearts by settling their differences so as not to harbour any grudges against each other.
- They are to show hospitality to visitors and relatives who came from far and near, with little or no provocation.

- Children must not be harassed or maltreated.
- Sexual activities are forbidden during the sacred week.
- matured *Kuteb* elders and priest go and stay at Ussa hill for one week in order to seek permission from *Kutebs* legendary father for the celebration
- Masquerades as incarnates of ancestral spirits, operate on a different plane of morality and are governed by ultra-mundane code of conduct. Any stooping on their part is, therefore beyond the propitiatory scope of carnal priest (Ahmadu 1991).
- Any person who violated the holy week taboo, either by sheer oversight or default, could be forgiven through ritual purification by the priest.

The ability to maintain purity shows a people who have respect for law and order as commanded by their ancestors and passed on by elders, *Kukwen* and the *Ukwe*. It thus denotes a period of sober reflection

The Ancestral Urua (Fire)

The thematic pre-occupation of **fire** forms the nucleus of this content. The ancestral *Urua* is pivotal to all other events. Therefore, it is worthy to note that before embarking on the pilgrimage to the sacred holy land of Ussa Hill (the point of purification) fire is expected to be put off in the land as required by tradition. However, civilization has made nonsense of this decree as there are so many sources of fire today. But its sacred and dramatic relevance is still observed. Domestic activities will only resume in the land when the ancestral *Urua* is brought to the people after hours of stay without fire. As the *Kukwen Rikwen* lights the ancestral *Urua*, he in turn allows the representatives of the twelve clans to light from him the fire with the aid of straw tied together to form a bundle. This ancestral *Urua* is then rushed in different directions to the settlements of the twelve clans. On arrival at the village square every family unit comes forward to take the light so as to restart domestic life once more in their various homes. This depicts only the symbolical nature of *Urua* in this festival and in the life of the people,

However, one spectacular event that takes place here after the ancestral *Urua* is gotten is the unconscious jubilation that erupts in songs and dances of joy by whoever is present in the sacred holy land regardless of status or age. Sometimes this happiness makes them forget that they are being waited for and expected at Yangtu cultural ground at the hill opposite Government secondary School (GSS) Takum, *along Takum- Lissam Road*. Such a moment heightens the anxiety of the people at Yangtu cultural ground as to whether or not the purification rite has been successful.

The Significance of Urua

Urua is accorded a central or most significant part in the festival of Kuchicheb to such an extent that one wonders why such recognition is placed on it as opposed to other things like water, air, seeds or even plants and animals as is the case with other cultural activities elsewhere. The reason is based purely on the experiences of *Kuteb* in relation to *Urua* i.e. the discovery of *Urua*, the use of it and its efficacy from time immemorial. *Kuteb* the founder and father of the tribe discovered or came into contact with *Urua* in mysterious circumstances, which are too cumbersome to narrate here. But suffice it to state here that his experiences convinced him that *Urua* must have been sent to him by *Rimam*. In the first contact he was severely burnt which made him to run away but *Rimam* instructed him to collect *Urua* and take it home with instruction on how to use it. This he did. When he did he discovered that *Urua* in fact is the greatest gift that *Rimam* ever gave him. He discovered that it is with *Urua* that he prepared his farm tools; clears his farm; dries his food and meat for storage; lights his environment; fight his enemy; cook his food; treat himself; defend himself against enemies and wild animals; communicate with other persons; etc. An instance of effective communication by fire is the story of the re-migration of *Ichen* people from Takum / *Mbarikam* hill to their present locations. In fact the *Ichen* people who are the kit and kins of the *Kuteb* are said to have come from *Kwararafa* and joined the *Kuteb* people in Takum in about 1770s. They lived together with the *Kuteb* people at Takum / *Mbarikam* hill before their re-migration to their present location (in Donga and Kurmi Local Government Areas). As population grew and there was insufficient space for farming and hunting activities

and to avoid conflicts the Ichen therefore decided to move east wards in search of land. But before leaving they agreed with their Kuteb brothers that whenever they found a suitable place they would make big fire so that when the Kuteb brothers saw it they would know that a suitable place had been found as well as know the location and direction. This they did when the Ichen finally got to Nyivu (Nugui) mountains across river Donga along Takum-Mararaba Road in Donga LGA. The Kuteb people at Mbarikam saw the fire and the two later exchanged visits. This shows effective communication by use of fire. Thus the Kuteb man knew ever since that light which is produced from fire travels faster and further than sound.

From the totality of the foregoing, Kuteb came to the irresistible conclusion that Urua which was given to him by *Rimam* is central in all his activities. When Urua is put off in preparation for the one to be re-distributed, it reminds Kuteb of the time when there was no fire and also reminds him of the gift from Rimam – a thing worth celebrating indeed.

Hunting Expedition

Groups of hunters also go out to hunt three days to the festival. Their role includes sourcing for meat to be used during the festival besides providing surveillance. During this period the hunters are to exhibit prowess, brevity and bravado as they are expected to finally appear on the day of the festival with meat and live animals.

The first day of the Kuchicheb festival

The next stage is at *Yangtu*: a transit point for the festival situated about 3 kilometers south of Takum town along Takum–Lissam–Bisaulla Federal highway. On the first day of the festival, the twelve *Kukwens* representing the twelve clans move in a precession and leads the *Ukwe*, the paramount ruler of the *Kuteb* to Yangtu Kuchicheb ground along Lissam road. From the Palace the *Akwen Rikwen* finally arrive at the Yangtu cultural ground with the *Ukwe* where the *Akwe* (subordinate traditional rulers), *Ndufu* (elders), dignitaries, diplomats, invited guests and a cross section of the public in expectation of the arrival of the Elders that went to Ussa hill to take the *uruu*. The arrival of the *uruu* bearers is signaled by seven gun salute, fired into the air to signify their joy of accomplishing a task of this magnitude. After the *Akwen Rikwen* have received this salute, they moved forward to felicitate with the *Ukwe*, and hand over the whole procession to him. Then the hunters come next to pay homage to the *Ukwe*. Thereafter, they join the *Ukwe*, his chiefs and elders in a session to appraise the success of the year past and project into the coming year. This is a soul-searching session as the *Ukwe* expects nothing short of genuine advice, suggestions, criticisms etc which yields meaningful resolutions at the end of it. Whatever has been carefully deliberated and agreed upon during this session, forms the working plan for the year ahead. This also forms the basis of the key note address to be delivered by the *Ukwe* not too long from there

Types of Dressing

Various communities have their respective uniform attire which their members wear as symbol of identity. Similarly the Kutebs since the events during Kuchicheb festival period take the form of a fiesta, the celebration that not only showcase the current attire but includes the exhibition of traditional wears since prehistoric to modern times, emphasizing the changes that occur in the community which has caught the attention of Kuteb people and they as a people formally adopted. The Kuteb people that actively participate in the festival dress in a variety of costumes. Some clad in traditional costumes made of leaves and animal skin to depict the pre-textiles era brought by industrial revolution. The leaves and skin are used in covering only the private parts while all other parts of the body are bare. Some wear beaded girdles and locally dyed clothes to show case new form of human dressing.

Industry

It is a show of farming and hunting tools and a mark of Kuteb industry *through* exhibition of local craft, economic resources, social and community developments projects etc. At the individual level for instance, a Fikyu man who lived at the bank of river Gamana depicted his fishing culture by presenting fishing trap at the venue and he claims that a fish will come out of the trap and go about a-life as if it were in the river; some youths stylishly rode bicycles or motorcycles and sing along to demonstrate modern skills they have

acquired in the use of machines; other trek long distances and singing to Takum whether young or old to demonstrate life before the advent of modern travelling machines. The people also display locally made weapons developed and or used for hunting and domestically in the house by Kuteb over the years. These are spears, machetes, knives and guns. As part of the celebration (like in many other occasions for example marriages ceremonies) guns are shot into the air and fumes from guns rent the air making the atmosphere more exciting and recharged. But these weapons are not to be used on any living thing be it ants or animals throughout the period of the festival.

Making Kuchicheb an national and International festival

The festival attracts observers from other parts of the country and from other countries. in particular Kuteb who are national of other countries also participate.

Artifact

As stated above there are numerous artifacts that are used during this festival which range from costumes musical instruments to household properties and industrial activities equipment. Because of their attraction, in 2009, samples of the artifacts were transported to the National Museum where they would be better appreciated. There are also natural formations like rocks which because of their integral part in the accomplishment of this cultural performance constitute artistic and /or cultural relevance to the people. During the Kuchicheb festival some people also take time off to visit historical sites of interest in the chiefdom

Songs and Dances

The fiesta also includes some participants who go into songs and dances. The women swing their hips from left to right amidst laughter and joy. Children also paraded the street to display their costumes and sing songs which express their joy and whatever subject song makers present. The songs are in praise of gallant achievements of great men of Kuteb land. The clans are all called each to present their dance steps and as they do so, the *Ukwe* may decide to dance at least one of their dance steps. Singing in all cultures is an instrument for correction. So those who have done wrong no doubt when they hear a song relating to their acts must feel guilty. It is expected that the offender who feels remorseful would take corrective actions. While others who offend but don't feel remorseful seek every defensive measure (mostly wrong) to cover his guilt and would want to do more or goes into exile.

Masquerades

Masquerades from each Kuteb clan also form part of entertainment during *Kuchicheb* festival. The masquerades are believed to be spirits and so must also obey the rules of purity. This believe of masquerades being spirit but not human being must be maintained by all. A breach of this taboos can result to instant death through severe nasal bleeding and a mysterious shrinking of the mask if it is the fault of the masquerade. As such the masquerade procession is preceded by a peculiar beat of the *Ika* (drum) and special tempo of sings as a sign to warn off women and children from their paths. It is also believed that the masquerades represent gods of various purposes; such as good health for hard work at the farm. Before the dance performance of masquerades each day, the head of the household that maintain each masquerade would come out with a clay pot of water. He then dips palm leaves in the water and sprinkles the field three times. While doing so he also states repeated that "It's all peaceful, peaceful, peaceful" 3x And during the dance the sprinkling and statement is repeated.

Speeches

After the dances, the *Ukwe* then delivers his keynote address to his subjects, thus marking the end of this stage. His message takes the form of congratulations for a year ended and encouragement to the people to be more hard-working, to live in peace and harmony, to love one another as brothers and sisters and a stern warning of disobedience towards the ancestors and constituted authorities.

Education

In spite of the recent hostile environment which the Kuteb man has found himself, even little kids and youth were not afraid to demonstrate their love for their way of life even under threats and real attack as from the 1990s. when the festival was to be held. The strong presence of children and youths was also a demonstration of the love for education through strong participation. And the speeches at the occasion imparted words of wisdom.

Hospitality

There is a show of Kuteb hospitality through lavish provision of assorted food and drinks accompanied by lots of meat from domestic and games. One feature of the dish is that is cooked with plenty palm oil locally produced. The assorted locally brewed drinks are served in much quantity to satisfy its consumers and each day comes with fresh brew till the festival is over.

The Procession to the Ukwe Palace

The procession gradually takes the festival to its height with pomp and fun. The presence of the *Ukwe* adds glamour to it all. Majestically, powerfully, authoritatively and with an aura of the manifestation of the glory of a royalty, the *Ukwe* is escorted to the Ukwe Palace. The *Akwen Rikwen* lead the procession in well dressed priesthood attire. As they move in calculated steps, they sprinkle water regarded as holy from the keg which each of them carries, on the *Ukwe* from time to time by the priest near the *Ukwe* and the others where they are. As they do so they also make pronouncement of peace unto the land. The hunters with their game come next all fiercely looking, (all for the fun of it), depicting a role model. Not all the hunters can be found here as the remaining half is positioned at the tail end of the procession. The next to follow the priest is the king of Takum, the *Ukwe*, in a splendid royal robe on a horse back as those seen during durbar. Majestically the horse moves till the *Ukwe* arrive his palace. Closely behind the royal father, are the National Executive Council /Committee (officials) of the Kuteb people's pan socio-cultural organization known as *Kuteb Yatso of Nigeria (KYN)*. They are followed by other sons and daughters of the soil, dignitaries and other invited guests. In this order, the procession moves on and on, at snail pace, till it terminates at the palace of his royal highness -the *Ukwe*. Indeed the procession from Yangtu into Takum is tumultuous and sapping as a journey of less than 3 kilometers may take up to five hours. The procession symbolizes expression of loyalty and honour to his Royal Highness the *Ukwe* Takum. This is more so that the festival is to continue at the palace of *Ukwe* Takum in Takum town, the epicenter of aboriginal heritage. On arrival at the palace, the *Akwen-Rikwen* after praying and stumping their staff of authority on ground, the *Ukwe* would dismount from his horse to the cheers of the people. He salutes their resilience before the event of the day closes. Takum also doubles as the symbol of unity between Kuteb the aborigines and members of other ethnic groups whose presence has help to further urbanize Takum also deserve to be entertained by the dances.

Other Six days of the Festival

Variety of Entertainment Events

It is crucial to note at this point that the festival lasts for seven days with the *Ukwe* coming out for the next three days only to watch his subjects celebrate in songs and dances, all praising the benevolence of *Rimam* and royalty of the throne. The remaining days, the *Ukwe* does not come out again; however, festivities go on throughout the land. The people must do so in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. There is also an invitation which allows other ethnic groups to come and share in the merriment of the festival. Sometimes they also bring their dances. The festival is rounded up with other programmes such as the selection of *Kuchicheb Queen* for the next coming year and a cocktail party for elites.

Whatever were exhibited and as many as other eyes could describe what was seen during the occasion, combines to demonstrate the frankness, boldness, and the industry in the character of the Kuteb man. That he does that which is good and necessary at that time it is needed for the peace and progress of self and community. And so the larger community can learn and use the Kuteb for development of the Society.

Counting of Blessings

At the end the *Kuchicheb* festival, members of the extended families from other towns join their relations in their main family house to review their performance within the previous year. They recounted their blessings and their loss. They settle outstanding differences within the family and take some resolutions and pray for a prosperous new year. Following this, they disperse to their various farmsteads to resume the new farming season (Ahmadu 1991). Also it is not surprising that after a successful celebration, it is followed by heavy rain even there was threat of drought. Such rain serves as a form of reassurance that there is nothing to be afraid of, as the year would come with multiple blessings especially for the women.

The Challenges of Cultural Genocide in Takum Chiefdom

Kuchicheb festival has some challenges that threaten her survival and development. The challenges come from the efforts of other ethnic groups that wish to project their identity by reconstruction, oppositions and violent attacks on Kuchicheb celebrants. And in each successive attack new reasons are presented by other tribes to stop the hosting of the festival in Takum. Over the years this has established a culture of tit for tat and introduction of destructive strategies, and operational tactics to disrupt or counter disrupt from the other disputing party. Below is the analysis of the major festival directed disruptions in Takum

Conflict No. I:- 1976: The beginning of Opposition to Cultural Festivals in Takum

Up to 1975 the Kuchicheb festival was as usual characterized by masquerade dances. It starts in other Kuteb towns before the grand finale is held at Takum town at the Ukwe Palace. The Kuteb solely sponsored and organized the festival. And other ethnic groups were free to come and watch and dance. This was a display of culture of tolerance, receptivity and accommodation in Takum. There were also occasions for dancing competitions among all ethnic groups in Wukari Division. Usually preparations began at Wukari, Donga and Takum District levels. The winners at Takum, Donga and Wukari Districts converged at Wukari the then Divisional capital for finals before proceeding for the State level competition.

Thus, before 1976 there had never been a case of any ethnic group opposing another ethnic group from organizing their festival. But in 1976 the Kuteb cultural festival began to receive opposition from the Jukun and Chamba in the then Southern Gongola State. The following reasons were advanced:-

(1) That Kuchicheb festival is organized on tribal basis therefore it will emphasize differences between various groups in the division. That the Local Administration should only support activities organized by communities and not by tribal groups.

(2) That because the festival is absolutely organized by a single ethnic group it negates both Federal and State Governments policy on cultural activities

(3) That any assistance to the Kuchicheb festival will be interpreted as supporting tribal activities.

(4) That Wukari Local Administration should only support activities organized by communities and not by tribal groups

To the Kutebs the attack on Kuchicheb on the bases of the above reasons were not valid to warrant withholding of the Local Administration's financial and moral support. Consequently, the then Kuchicheb Working Committee wrote complaints against the stance of Wukari Division as contained in their Letter Ref: No. KTB/KGB/2/16 dated 14th May 1976 as follows:-

That though the festival is organized by a single ethnic group it is not against the Federal and State Governments policy as the government (Benue Plateau State government 1970) encouraged people to develop and organize their culture festival. That more so the list of traditional, cultural and national monuments in the respective areas were submitted, series of meetings were held, the first was on 29th September, 1971, and Committee members (For Traditional, cultural music) were appointed in the three

districts: Wukari, Takum and Donga as such the Kutebs feel that they were not neglecting government's policy

On the stoppage of assistance to Kuchicheb festival because it will be interpreted as supporting tribal activities, the Kutebs stated that the Wukari Local Administration has been supporting tribal activities. The Puje and Nwunyo fishing Festivals were referred to as Jukun Culture In the Nigeria Standard issue of April, 15th, 1976 page 8 and the Local Administration's financial support to Puje festival range from N1,000 to N6,000 annually and such aid went along way to entertain invitees and help to encourage sporting activities which form part and parcel of such festival. As such the Kutebs saw the call for stoppage of support to the Kuchicheb as discriminatory therefore responsible officers of government should not support that call.

On the issue that the festival is organized on tribal basis argued that it is not true just as it is difficult to talk about a culture of multi-tribal communities. Hence they have never discouraged other tribal groups from participating in the festival and have also invited non Kutebs to participate in the festival by giving wide publicity to all and sundry to attend and appreciate the culture of the Kuteb.

On the issue that the Local Administration should only support activities organized by communities and not by tribal groups. The Kutebs posed the following question:-

Are we to understand, Sir, that a tribal group cannot form a community but there is talk of Yoruba Community in the Oyo State, Ibo Community in Imo or Anambra State, Jukun Community in Wukari. Should there not be a Kuteb Community in Takum Sir? The argument may be termed preposterous but it throws light into the customary tactics of confusing the common man with vague technicalities. We feel that support from public fund should be given to other cultural groups in Donga (Puma/Takaciyawa Cultural festival) and Takum Kuchicheb Festival) irrespective of whether such are communities or tribal groups. It is only the prejudiced minds that will not allow, acknowledge the existence, cultural development and survival of the Kuteb people.

The question at this moment is, based on State policy, does it require that when one festival is about to be as popular as others it should not be supported or be banned? Or that there are some other reasons responsible for opposition?

Conflict No. II:- The 1981 Disruption of Puje Festival In Takum: A matter of tit for tat

The Jukun festival is called Puje. It has a unique timing for its organization. According to Emberton (1935)

The Puje Festival in the days of long was held at frequent interval, took place early this year after a lapse of some six years and brought a number of Jukuns to Wukari to participate in their ancient religious and social ceremonies. Such an occasion is one when beer, provided by the Aku and other leading Jukun nobilities, flows freely and usually results in an "overdraft" against the financial resources of the donors. It is believed that this year, monetary strain on the Aku has been severe. The coronation celebration, which were held in May at Wukari, also brought a large number of visitors and although Native Treasury funds were used to provide for their entertainment further demands were probably made upon the Aku's

The unique features of Puje festival according Emberton (1935:25) is that it is a traditional ceremony that is accompanied by "*ceremonial visit to Puje*" hence the name of the festival. Secondly, the fact that it was held at frequent interval, took place early this year after a lapse of some six years falls in line with the believe that Akus in most cases did not leave longer than six years. As such the festival often coincides with the burial of a late Aku and traditional coronation of another Aku. This festival has never been opposed to by any ethnic group. Another unique event is that the 2012 Puje was organized while an Aku is a-life. The Puje festival held before 2012 was in 1976 when the then Aku died and the present was to be installed.

The Kpanzun Community before 1981 never organized an elaborate festival in Takum but displayed their dance steps e.g. during weddings, Christmas periods or visits by top Government officials. But for the purpose of *Identity reconstruction*, by 1981 they started hosting their festival called "Ekpan-Funre" and

within a short time they renamed it as **Puje**. As a result of this development and recalling the opposition from Jukun against hosting of Kuchicheb in Takum, the Kuteb people also came out to oppose Puje in Takum. The Kuteb made a case with the government, tension rose and Mobile Police force were drafted to Takum town to stop Puje in Takum. (The Nigerian Standard 31, December 1981; The Nigerian Standard January 18, 1982). As a result of the stoppage, the Jukun then

1. Accused the police for double standard

2. Accused the Ukwe Takum Alhaji Ali Ibrahim who is not a Jukun of sectionalism, tribalism, discrimination and of playing partisan politics.

They alleged that the DPO, the Chief of Takum with some top men of the ruling political party in the State (Great Nigerian Peoples Party-GNPP) held a secret meeting at the Chief's house and that it was after that meeting that the DPO stopped the festival which eminent personalities had come to witness. To the Jukun and Chamba it was unfortunate for the DPO to take orders from the Chief and at the same time claim that he was doing so in the interest of peace. As far as the Jukun and Chamba were concerned they were law abiding citizens and Mr. Ayetobi had no respect for common law of which he was supposed to be an officer.

Confronting the Kuteb they in an Advertorial announcement (The Nigerian Standard February 18 1982:11) said,

whether Puje, a Jukun Festival, is staged in Wukari only or not; and whether it is staged at particular occasions only or not; what is the concern of the Kutebs in Jukun traditional and cultural festivals? If it is Wukari Jukuns who protested against their brothers of Takum Local Government Area for planning to stage Puje in Takum, this will make sense. The Jukuns and related Jukun tribes have their cultural and traditional dancers and festivals, call it by any name you like, it is Jukun, so what is the concern of Kuteb.

Findings reveal that the choice to call the festival **Puje** in Takum compounded the predicament of the Kpanzun in Takum in celebrating their festival in Takum (The Nigeria Standard March 3, 1982:4). Further findings also show that it is because of the protracted chieftaincy dispute in Takum that Puje is given an intelligence definition by the Kuteb. The Kuteb perception is that the aim of calling the festival Puje is to assert that Takum is owned by the Jukun and so the Jukuns in Takum should receive every support to fight the Kuteb out of Takum for the Chamba to ascend the Ukwe Takum throne. Seen in this light it provoked Kuteb to protest that '*we have never had Puje in Takum*' because the festival in Takum has no features of Puje as celebrated in Wukari. The suspicion, fear and concern of the Kuteb over what the Kutebs regard as the scheming of the Jukun and Chamba was confirmed through the arguments presented by the Jukun and Chamba in the print media where they stated

1. that to them the Jukuns led the Kuteb to Takum area and Kuteb are Jukuns so Takum Land is Jukun land;

2. that Chamba ruled Takum with nine chief as such to them Chamba with the advent of the 1975

Order they have the right to vie for ascension of the Ukwe Takum stool

3. they also regard

- (a) Kutebs who are not Likam, Akente, and

- (b) these non Likam and Akente whose father had no personal house in Takum are not **indigenes of Takum** as such should not speak over Takum chieftaincy. But that

- (4) Mr Sunday Dankaro: A Jukun indigene, the "Suma" of the Jukun of Takum came not as a visitor

but to participate in his people's festival. Mr Dakaro's father is an indigene of Takum and so his grandfather and great grandfather" (The Nigerian Standard February 18 1982:11)

From the arguments there is no doubt that the remote cause of the opposition to Kuchicheb from 1976 as stated earlier is the desire by Chamba to ascend the Ukwe Takum Chieftaincy stool. The opposition against Kuchicheb festival or against Puje is not because one was fast out-shadowing the other festivals. Rather first,

the opposition started following the passage of the 1975 Order/gazette which gave the Tikari and Dinyi (Chamba) the right to join the Kuteb to vie for ascension to the Ukwe Takum stool. From then it became a policy of the Jukun and Chamba to use Government machinery to ensure that the Government disassociates itself from Kuchicheb festival (Wukari Divisional Secretary Letter Ref No. ND/GP/52/177 of 24th March 1976).

Second, the argument against the Kuteb who are regarded as non indigenes of Takum town was therefore a strategy to weaken opposition from Kuteb that are regarded as indigenes of Takum by discouraging support from Kuteb who are not members of Likam, Akente and Rucwumam Kuteb clans known to have no other traditional town apart from Takum. The fact that the Chamba and Jukuns came much later to join the Kuteb clans that founded Takum, is responsible for the Kuteb assertion that it is an irony for the Jukun and Chamba to regard members of other Kuteb clans who naturally have cultural linkage with the three Kuteb clans in Takum as non indigenes of Takum. The new dimension of the conflict which went beyond the issue of Kuchicheb festival to that of which Kuteb clan should be legally seen as indigenes and non indigenes Takum became an issue for the Jukun and Chamba to find a way to make it a legal reality since 1980s. How this goal actualized in the late 1990s through local government creation is a subject of another paper.

Conflict No. III:- The 1982 Stoppage of Puje Festival in Takum

In December 1982 the preparation for Puje festival was in progress but the Jukun and Chamba could not celebrate it because according to Nafinji (The Sunday Standard Dec 1982:9) other tribes in the area obstructed arrangements for the celebration As to why it was obstructed he said it was because of fears of Jukun domination hence the statement that Puje has never been celebrated in Takum but Wukari town, the main base of the Jukun.

A comparison of **Puje in Wukari** and **Puje in Takum** shows that both festivals have some similarities: (i) In both occasions Adire cloth as uniform is worn. (ii) Both have the element of installation and burial of a chief. However in terms of differences, (i) Whereas the Puje in Wukari is organized by Jukuns in Wukari, that of Takum is organized by Kpanzun Jukuns in Takum (ii) Whereas that of Wukari is a long standing tradition, that of Takum is of recent origin to lay claim to ownership of Takum (iii) Whereas in Wukari as earlier stated by Emberton (1935) involves a “ceremonial visit to Puje” a site east of Wukari town in Wukari Chiefdom, as for the Puje in Takum there is no visit to Puje at Wukari but to Tenkpan or Pejiji in Ussa Local Government Area. This is substantiated by Nafinji as follows

A striking aspect of the Jukun culture is the method of appointing a new Tsoho Uhwe called Kuru Kpanten. This is done by the title holder shidi. The Shidi and his juju would select the king in his shrine while the subjects wait outside the shrine all dressed in ‘adire’ As the king is brought out to his subjects, they all hail him and pay homage according to Jukuns culture. When he dies he is taken to a place called Tenkpan or Pejiji now known as Kuna Tata Hill for burial. All the past ones were said to have been buried there except the present Tsoho’s predecessor who was a moslem

(iv) The Puje in Takum is not celebrated at the same time when the Wukari Puje is taking place at Wukari but it is planned for December of each year.

From what takes place in reality, we can therefore say that there is name misnomer between Puje in Wukari and Puje in Takum. The use of Puje in Takum contradicts the name of the place of burial of Kpanzun chiefs. And so some opinions suggested it would have been more objective if the Kpanzun had tagged their festival **Tenkpan** or **Pejiji festival** because the burial and installation of Kuru Kpanten in Takum used to include a visit to Pejiji in Ussa LGA just like that of the Wapan includes a visit to Puje, hence the name Puje. The historical fact is that fact first generation of Kpanzun in the course of their migration from Donga area which is east of Takum, resided in Lissam and Rufu territory in a location later called Pejiji near Lissam and Rufu (Kutebs).It was from Lissam and Rufu (Kuteb) clan land that the Jukun re-migrated to Takum town to live with the Likam, Akente and Rucwumam (Kuteb clans).The second generation of Kpanzun came in the

20th century from Wukari as a result of Christian Missionary activities, while the third came or lived in Takum as a result of business and /or educational activities.

Conflict No. IV:- THE DISRUPTION OF THE 1992 KUCHICHEB FESTIVAL

(a) Causes

The Culture of Fear of Insecurity

The 1992 Kuchicheb was marred by violent attacks. The question that came to the mind of Kuchicheb enthusiasts was, who was responsible for the stoppage and why? Before the 1992 Kuchicheb festival day violence, the Government gave approval and later withdrew the approval that Kuchicheb should not be held. To ensure that the Kuchicheb was stopped by government the Jukun and Chamba had to convince the government that there would be insecurity if Kuchicheb was held. According to Jukun/Chamba Community Takum (1992:2)

4. For the object of clarity, we wish to first give you a synopsis on the history and culture of Takum. The town is indigenously inhabited by the Jukun, Chamba, Kuteb and Ichen. The Chamba have, been embarking on the Taka ciyawa festival, the Jukun have their Puje and the Kutebs on the recent past, the Kuchicheb. Your Excellency is here implored to pencil the phrase _ This festival came in the wake of what informed observers see as the eruption of Kuteb nationalism, conceived, and being nurtured by one Dr. A.A. Shaki a deposed Chairman of the Takum Local Government being backed by Alhaji Ali Ibrahim the present Ukwé Takum (Underline mine for emphasis)

The Culture of Presenting False Information

From the above quote the Jukun and Chamba wanted their view against Kuchicheb to be upheld because to them Kuchicheb is a recent festival and its origin dates to the time Dr Shaki a Kutebman was Takum Local Government Chairman in 1991. This theory of recency of Kuchicheb when weighed against the earlier established fact that Kuchicheb is not a recent cultural festival and there was an opposition to it as far back as 1976, it can be said the making of false statements is also culture of some people which creates conflict in Takum. As such the claim of being informed observers as stated in the above quotation is really not or the act of falsification to misinform is a deliberate strategy towards achieving the goal of frustrating the implementation of the Kuchicheb programme.

The Feeling of Frustration

The continues effort by the Jukun and Chamba to stop Kuchicheb as well as the Kuteb effort to hold the Kuchicheb festival created a feeling of frustration and lack of peace on both groups. The Jukun/Chamba Community in Takum (1992) state that:-

6. *Since the introduction of the Kuchicheb festival in the social annals of Takum, the inhabitants have never known peace. It is unfortunate we cannot lay our hands on any security report but the records, we are confident are there to attest to this assertion” (underline mine for emphasis)*

Indeed, from the facts at our disposal it is not as a result of the *introduction of Kuchicheb* but because of the innovations and of course the development and rising popularity of Kuchicheb festival in Takum (a town which the Jukun and Chamba wish the world to regard as founded by the Jukun Chamba in order to ascend the throne of the chief of Takum) that makes Kuchicheb a source of fear and a source of lack of peace to the Jukun and Chamba. Second, because of their goal it became inevitable for the same Jukun and Chamba to create the condition of insecurity in Takum as from 1970s in order to get the assistance of the State to wipe Kuteb culture out of Takum. And third, the same Jukun and Chamba at the same time have to complain about lack of security in order to be regarded blameless.

Therefore, if by 1976 the Kuteb like other tribes were looking for financial support to make Kuchicheb grand, then by 1992 the festival couldn't have been “*conceived, and being nurtured by one Dr. A.A. Shaki a deposed Chairman of the Takum Local Government*”. The fact is that the festival is as old as the existence of

Kuteb in Takum which predates the coming of the Jukun and Chamba to Takum town. Rather the making of the festival grand, and the insistent to hold it in Takum as oppose to Jukun Chamba interests is responsible for the conflict.

The Jukun and Chamba would have been comfortable where the festival participants would not step into Takum town.

The impact of the phobia, or eeriness of the festival and the strategic struggles which include writing petitions to the Government, was that, the Government immediately agreed with the claims of the Jukuns and Chamba. Consequently about three days to the festival day (23rd March 1992) a counter order came. That the permission granted by the State Government for the festival to hold is withdrawn. As result of the withdrawal, some security agents came from Jalingo to Takum to enforce the Order. On arrival, a meeting was held with the local government officials, some community elders, traditional Council members and Kuchicheb Organizing Committee to comprehend the causes of the cancellation Order. At the end of discussions the meeting was convinced that there was no tangible and concrete evidence that would cause security breach. The meeting then resolved that a delegation of all the parties (Kuteb, Jukun and Chamba) be sent to Jalingo to assure the Governor of Taraba State Rev Jolly T. Nyame that the festival should not be cancelled and it shall be held in an atmosphere of peace. The delegation comprised the following:- Tanko Ubangari Kaura (representing Chamba), Nwunuji shidi (representing the Jukun), Habu Nathan Mifinyawa (Representing Ukwe Takum), while Madaki Alabura, Kwe Daniel Kikong and Saidi Mgbe (represented the festival Committee). Following the accomplishment of this mission by the delegation, the Governor accordingly re-granted approval on the 24th day of March 1992 for the festival to hold.

Whereas the news of the approval by Government for the festival to hold came as a thing of joy to the Kuteb that there is no longer opposition and they looked forward to a hitch free festival. But this was not so with some Jukun and Chamba particularly members of the Action Committee led by Engr. Polycarp Istifanus. They saw the approval as a “*tonic for violence for the Kuteb*” to kill the Jukun and destroy properties.(Jukun/Chamba Community Takum 1992:3). Consequently, the feeling of insecurity gave rise to different interpretations and actions by the Jukun and Chamba youths. On one hand the Jukun and Chamba did not only alleged that the Kuteb mounted road blocks in all routes to Takum town, they also claimed that the Kuteb blew *Kutumbu* (Kuteb trumpet) on the eve of the festival, which to Jukun and Chamba meant a call to all Kuteb to rise up in arms. They also claimed that the Kuteb celebrants sang abusive songs, on the eve of the festival; and that the Kuteb started attacks on the festival day between 8.00 and 10 00 am at the CRCN secretariat along Bali road at the outskirt of Takum town; as well as blamed their elders /chiefs to have supported and attended the Kuchicheb programme

Consequently, in spite of the confidence, trust and peace building meetings organized by the Ukwe Takum and Elders and later with the Governor, the youths insisted to prove themselves right and to prove the authorities of the land wrong by showing that that there would be insecurity. And so to the greatest surprise of the Kuteb people on the 25th March 1992 (the 1st day of the festival) the Jukun and the Chamba who had hitherto signed an agreement before the Government of Taraba to keep peace, could not be obeyed by their Youths. They were seen as eating their words and the Youths began to attack a peaceful procession of the Kutebs. Indeed the Jukun and Chamba Youths said they did not expect their elders to attend the meeting traversing tribal boundaries, talk less of agreeing with the Ukwe no matter how *sweet-talked* the Ukwe was, and how reasonable the joint meeting also was. The Jukun and Chamba youths thus wanted to be seen as positive predictors of insecurity if the Kuchicheb was held (Jukun/Chamba Community Takum 1992)

The Kuteb said they were shock; more so that the first missile thrown at the peaceful crowd came from the house of the Jukun Ward Head (Sonji Adi – a signatory to the peace accord). These developments, raised a number of observations. For instance, that if the Jukuns were preparing to attack the Kutebs on the festival day and at the same time were raising dust about sense of insecurity clearly underlines their hypocrisy. And the fact that they eventually agreed and signed an accord that the festival would be held in peace was tantamount not only to deceive the Kuteb but also fooling the Taraba State Government” (Usman Bello et al (1992:7). The eventual disruption thus was to (i) prove to the community elders, leaders and Government

that it was wrong to believe that Kuchicheb would be peaceful and (ii) that it was Kuteb who attacked the Jukun and Chamba

Following the disruption of the festival, the Kuteb in their counter petition clarified the misconceptions. First, they argued that while it is agreed that Kutumbu is a medium for communication, but the Kuteb did not prepare for war talk more of passing a message for war in a period Kuteb were to be most pure. Secondly, the allegation that the Kuteb started the attacks between 8.00a m and 10.00 am, is false. The Kutebs assert that there was a smooth conduct of the festival at Yangtu cultural ground near GSS Takum and the fact that the Kuteb have the desire to run the programme for seven days the Kuteb would not have it terminated their Kuchicheb themselves Third, that it is not true as claimed by the Jukun and Chamba that Dr Ando Shaki as the leader of Kuteb youths marched to the compound of the Jukun Ward Head and the Chamba Maiangwa Usman Tamti in attempt to kill them. Rather the Kuteb said Engr. Polycarp Istifanus who formed the Jukun and Chamba "ACTION COMMITTEE" in 1991 was responsible for organizing and leading the attack of 1992. Further findings from a letter by the Action Committee which Polycarp was a member stated their objective as follows:- "This committee had been carefully picked out to serve as Social indicator for monitoring Jukun /Chamba Youths on the following (i) To handle crisis effectively (ii) To communicate to you our success and failures (iii) to promote and encourage our cultural heritage"

Provocation

As to what eventually triggered actual violent attacks of 1992 whereas on one hand the Jukun and Chamba assert that provocation and violence started on the eve of 25th March, the Kuteb on the other hand said they did not provoke any person(s) rather it was Kutebs that were provoked through physical attacks before they countered in self-defense. That the provocation started far into noon of 25th March 1992, the roadblocks and spate of violence and counter violence started after the procession rolled into the town. And as the dislike and frustration over the known stoppage of the festival increased, the need to also frustrate the procession became also necessary. And mayhem started when one Tanko rode a motor cycle into the procession. Whereas the Jukun and Chamba regard the youth who rode a motorcycle into the procession as an "innocent passer-by" who " escaped lynching when he stumbled on them. He was stabbed at but escaped miraculously with only minor injuries" But the Kuteb regard the youth as a sent person to deliberately provoke Kuteb celebrants by roughly forcing his way through the crowd so that in the mist of any resistance he would receive support. Indeed when the Kuteb were provoked and asked why he had to force his way, rain of stones and gun bullets started pouring into the procession and the gate of stampede and violence became wide open. And the youth escaped. Be that as it may, the Kuteb concluded that the allegations that the Kuteb started the attack among others are "*lies*" and "*terrible lies*" because Jukun and Chamba Youths have long prepared to attack the Kuteb people.

Findings by the Committee reaffirm the fundamental motivation for the oppositions to Kuchicheb. The Taraba State Government Committee Report (1993) stated that:-

from all available evidence, the Committee is of the view that there was no particular event or incident which could be considered to be the direct or immediate cause(s) of the recent April –May 1993 Kuteb/Jukun–Chamba conflict in Takum other than the manifestation of the remote causes...Inter-ethnic group struggling for supremacy over one another, which crystallized into violent confrontational relationship between the conflicting tribes. This reached its climax during the 1992 Kuchicheb "(Kuteb annual cultural festival) when the Kuteb on one hand and the Jukun-Chamba on the other hand clashed. It is instructive to note that the same situation would have repeated itself during the 1993 Kuchicheb cultural festival, were it not for the extra tight security arrangement.

The Committee Further Elaborated That

2.39 However the Kuteb transformed the above into an aggressive cultural measure to safeguard what they consider their traditional institution and Kuteb land, when it became apparent that the Jukun–Chamba

were determined to also ascend the Chieftaincy stool of Takum. 2.40 In the same vein , the Kuteb took advantage of the existing local Government and Traditional Council institutions which are controlled by them and attempted to erect at strategic locations within Takum , Kuteb cultural artifacts. (Sculptures) to be unveiled during the 1992 Kuchicheb festivals. The committee notes further that, were it not for the tight security provided by the state Government, similar violent clash would have repeated itself during the 1993 Kuchicheb festival (Taraba State Government Garvey Committee Report (1993)

Thus it could be said that the continuous staging of the festival would boost the fact that Kuteb are founders, dominant and provide the paramount traditional ruler-ship of Takum. As a result when the Chamba secured the 1975 order which gave the Tikari and Chamba the right to vie for the stool, they had to do anything that could be done to disrupt the festival, create bad image of the Kuteb people and the then Ukwe Takum. The Kuteb on their part did everything possible to counter any type of obstruction from the Tikari and Chamba. According to Garvey Yawe Committee

While the Kuteb have the Kuchicheb festival, the Jukun have the Puje and Chamba Purma (Takachiyawa) festivals respectively. In promotion of their cultural heritage and with the souring of relationship between the three (3) major ethnic groups, each group try to use these festivals to antagonize the other and exert it's claim over the ownership of Takum.

(ii) The Remote Cause: The Crave for Political Power

In the petitions and memos by the Jukun and Chamba as well as the Kuteb to Government investigation panels before 1992 and another to the Governor of the State in the 1992 crises it is not in doubt that the remote cause of the 1992 attacks on Kuchicheb is the crave by Chamba and Jukun to ascend the Takum Chieftaincy Stool and to also win elections to government political positions in Takum LGA. The facts and analysis of the issues involved in the Chieftaincy dispute is beyond the scope of the present paper.

(b) Solutions

(1) The Jukun-Chamba recommended Solution for the 1992 Conflict

The way out of the psychological trauma as a result of Kuchicheb festival among other issues according to the Jukun and Chamba in their petition to the Government (Jukun/Chamba Community Takum 1992) are:-

(a) That another Local Government be carved out of Takum keeping the Kutebs away to themselves as was the case when the last civilian Administration carved Ussa Local Government This kept the Kuteb to themselves and peace was given a chance

(b) That Alhaji Ali Ibrahim the Ukwe of Takum is partisan and so must be brought to book by the law

(c) That another Chieftaincy be created for the Kuteb. This was the case before the British Colonial administration merged it to Takum in 1914.

(d) That since Dr. Shaki is a Nigerian citizen bound by the law of the land he should be brought to book, for no one has the monopoly for irrational inclinations

(e) That security agents in this area should be more alert: for we would not want to believe that they at times ignore their duties.

(f) That the Kuchicheb and any other festivals be permanently cancelled.

From the above recommendations, the Chamba and Jukun wish to cleanse, or destroy Kuteb presence in Takum Local Government. What about the Kuteb perspective and Recommendations?

(2) *Kuteb 1992 Recommended Solution*

The Kuteb on the other hand in their presentation to the Taraba State House of Assembly regard Takum, as a centre of camaraderie, that had spirit of peace, love, natural fona, but that had been crudely disrupted in the recent. And it can never be the same again unless the following prayers are granted and instantly (Markus and Christopher 1992)

1. The House of Assembly should resolve to permit the executive to make a special grant of one million naira (N1,000,000.00) to Takum Local Government to

(a) augment her present concerted efforts to provide drugs and medical materials needed for the treatment of the numerous victims

(b) Those who lost relations have to be consoled and those who were rendered absolutely homeless would have to be assisted in getting temporary accommodation

(d) A portion of the money will go to supplement what the Local Government spends on security personnel daily (Markus and Christopher 1992)

Unlike the Jukun and Chamba recommendations which sought the eviction of Kuteb from Takum LGA the Kuteb did not make suggestion for the eviction of Jukun and Chamba from Takum LGA. But obviously the Kuteb Youths retaliated the physical attacks that came from the Jukun and Chamba Youths. On the part of the Government, the government of Jolly Nyame apart from reinforcing security presence in Takum and setting up an investigation Committee under Garvey Yawe, nothing was done in respect of other recommendations

From the above it can be seen that while in 1976 the Kuteb was accused of being tribal and in 1992 the Kuteb promotion of its custom and tradition was described as *Kuteb nationalism*, the Jukun and Chamba have found themselves doing what the Kuteb have been accused of. That is the Jukun and Chamba were not able to demonstrate a detribalized culture. In the course of time they went further to oppose not only Kuchicheb festival but everything Kuteb in Takum. The reasons for the Jukun and Chamba tribalism which led to the disruption of the 1992 Kuchicheb are grounded on both immediate and remote cause: under immediate it is the fear of insecurity and presentation of false information while remote is the desire for political power.

It is also interesting to note that Takum Local Government, then under the Chairman of Hon Danfulani Kwetaka also set up a Committee of inquiry into the crises. The Committee was headed by Mallam Haruna Ali-Yara an officer with the State Civil Service. The findings and recommendations of the Aliyara Committee was similar to the Garvey Yawe State Government Committee

Conflict No. V:-Disruption of 2008 Kuchicheb Festival

When the 2008 Kuchicheb festival was on top gear, rumor spread that the Chairman Takum LGA Hon Ahidjo Musa, a Yukuben man vowed that it will be over his dead body to allow this festival to take place and that he has petitioned the State Governor Danbaba D. Suntai to stop the festival. While the Kuteb people wondered why the Local Government Chairman took this stance, the town crier popularly called Garba *Maishella* went round town and announced that the State Governor has ordered that the festival should not be staged. The fact that the Kuchicheb Organizing Committee was not invited for any meeting and was not in receipt of any government written communication, the Kuteb continued to wonder what was happening and continued to prepare for the occasion. But the Jukun and Chamba Youth probably aware of what was to happen from Government side went on to spit fire and brimstone against the festival. The questions that raged were would Jukun and Chamba Youths become a judge in their own case as well as become law enforcement agencies by attacking the Kuteb celebrants themselves?

Further inquiries showed that those against the celebration of Kuchicheb in Takum did so because of:-

(1) the feeling of insecurity. That in the past the Kuteb use the occasion to fight Jukun and Chamba and they believe this would happen again;

(2) That Ussa LGA and Yangtu Special Development area has been created so Kuchicheb should not be held in Takum;

(3) That the State Governor of Taraba State has approved that it should not be held though no written orders were shown

(4) That Kuteb sing provocative songs so it should not be celebrated.

Those for Kuchicheb 2008

Those for Kuchicheb 2008 argued responded thus

(1) on the view that the Kutebs use the occasion to fight Jukun and Chamba, the Kutebs contend that it is not the culture of Kuteb to ensure that conflict and violence is carried out during Kuchicheb period hence practically:-

(i) There is participation by kids, old men and women in the celebration in Takum which means that Kutebs had no intention to attack any one and did not expect the Kids, old men and women to be attacked by Jukun and Chamba.

(ii) The fact that the Kuteb did not react violently immediately on the Statement accredited to the Chairman that it would be over his dead body for Kuchicheb to hold, portrayed that the Kuteb did not plan for violence. Rather it was the Chairman and his Kith and kin who planned and kick start violence to disrupt Kuchicheb.

(2) *On the argument that Ussa LGA and Yangtu Special Development Area* has been created so Kuchicheb should not be held in Takum, Kutebs argue that this is baseless because Takum is not only the symbol of unity of Kutebs before other ethnic groups joined the Kutebs but is also the symbol of Unity between Kutebs and other ethnic groups that live in Takum. Hence the Kutebs have learnt to tolerate the good ways of life and festival of other ethnic groups that live in Takum, so also other ethnic groups should respect the presence of Kutebs culture in Takum town, more so that Kutebs also live in Takum; especially Kutebs clans of the Likam, Akente and Rucwumam who have no other town or village exclusive to each of them except Takum town. And Likam and Akente being the most senior of Kuteb children, it is normal that other Kuteb clans would come to Takum than Likam and Akente going out to other clan's town. Again, the fact that the Likam and Akente are the traditional royal families to the throne of Ukwe Takum, and the Ukwe Takum Lives in Takum, courtesy demands that after the programme at Kuchicheb cultural ground near GSS Takum, the Ukwe Takum need to return to his Palace in a royal procession where the festivity is to continue.³

(3) *On the reason that HE the Governor of Taraba State has approved that it should not be held* the Kutebs could not believe the same Governor who during the 2007 Christmas at Suntai as well as at a festival at Karim Lamido LGA promised to promote cultural festival in the State; The felt the Governor would not want to stop Kuchicheb festival simply because some other groups don't want it to be held. As such it was unbelievable that if a written Order from the Governor against staging of festivals exist it is surprising that it was not made available to Kuteb elders before the festival started.

(4) *On the view that Kuteb sing provocative songs* the Kuteb assert that provocative songs were not sang. Rather it was only imagined that provocative songs would be presented as is customary in every community. The fact that this view was presented before the first day of the festival entailed a pre- conceived idea but not an action that took place during this festival.

A synthesis of developments during the 2008 festival as most informants stated are that, chronologically, the 2008 celebration of the festival started peacefully and continued up to 2 pm of Tuesday of the 25th day of March in Takum. There were no attacks from either side (Kutebs and the Chamba and Kpanzon). But when the Ussa hill and programme at GSS Takum was completed and a grand procession with the aim to continue the celebration at the Ukwe palace reached Donga road precisely at the same area

where the 1992 procession was disrupted so also the 2008 procession was disrupted at the same area. The procession was attacked with stones and people were beaten up in other streets; and the celebrants began to run for protection. The army on patrol chased the stone throwers to no avail as the stone rain continued from Jukun and Chamba homes along the streets. The next event was the destruction of Kuteb houses and attack of those who were in these houses. For example an old man and relation to the late Madaki / Wakili Takum was murdered in cold blood at his residence in Takum. As for houses, the first house that was burnt down is located opposite Takum Post Office. It belonged to late Garniya Galadima of the Immigration Service. These developments provoked and triggered what Kuteb regard as self-defense from attacks along the streets during the celebration. It was reported that during this stampede, about five kids were kidnapped and their whereabouts were not known again. The rest can be imagined. The collective attack which could have led to full scale war as prayed for by some youths in Takum in order to give them opportunity to loot houses and shops did not take place because of intervention of security agents.

In an interview granted by Hon Ahidjo Musa, the Chairman Takum Local government during the crises to *The Pointer* newspaper, he said the cause of the 25th March 2008 crises in Takum is because “the government observed that Kuchicheb is only celebrated when they have a chief that is Ukwe Takum is available, because there are some traditional rites that have to be performed by the Ukwe himself. And that a further look there was security information of likely crises that would erupt if the Kuchicheb festival was allowed. Hence, there was a halt on the Kuchicheb. But because of disobedience, the Kutebs went ahead and observed the cultural day. And the fear of the authority or fear of the Governor came to pass.

Like in the previous years the culture of fear and the need to prove the Kuteb wrong that the festival would be peaceful has now been given official embrace by the local Government and the State Government. Instead of advising and persuading the both celebrants and non celebrants to embrace peaceful approaches, the State was now spearheading one group against the other.

Conflict No. VI:- Disruption of Puje Festival in 2008

Nevertheless, nine (9) months after the disruption of Kuchicheb in March 2008 without a government circular to back the claims that the State government has banned Kuchicheb or any other festival, it was the turn of the Jukun and Chamba to organize their festivals in December 2008. Before the celebration of Puje and Taka-ciyawa in December 2008 it was alleged that these festivals would be disrupted by the Kuteb. When preparations for the festivals started, the Kuteb, Jukun (Kpanzon) and Chamba elders in Takum at a security meeting found it necessary to stop the hosting of Jukun and Chamba festivals in Takum to avoid any conflicts. Like in the past the culture of disobedience to elders/authority of the land reared its head. The Jukun and Chamba youths vowed to go ahead with their festival whether the elders of the town and government approved of it or not. The Chairman of Takum LGA also held series of meetings to brief the people on the need to stop the Puje festival. He also employed the town crier Mallam Garba Meshela to announce that the Government has suspended the organizing of any cultural festival in Takum. The town crier was accompanied by one Ali Nubiji to show how strong this policy was and should be complied with. In spite of the announcement, the Ekpan festival went on as planned by some youths and violence was triggered when a Kpanzun lady went into Kuteb ward to show off and she was attacked by those provoked by her behavior. This led to counter violent attacks from the Jukun youths leading to the disruption of the festival. This conflict and the role of Government are well captured by an international Human Right report as follows:

On March 25, violence erupted between the Jukun and Kuteb communities of Taraba State, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of seven persons, destruction of property, and displacement of the Kuteb community. The government deployed mobile policemen to the area to prevent further violence. On December 28, the violence reignited when the Kuteb protested the Jukun trying to hold a cultural festival known as Puje. The Kuteb were previously prohibited by the government from holding their own cultural festival, Kuchicheb, earlier in the year. The clash reportedly resulted in millions of naira worth of damage,

thousands of residents fleeing for safety, and seven deaths (US Department of State-2008 Human Right Report: Nigeria)

The Impact of Chamba Jukun and Kuteb Tribalism/Nationalism

Culture of tribalism. /Ethnic Nationalism

A tribal community's culture goes beyond the mere organization of festivals. It includes their daily positive behavior or activities that intends to develop a national/ inter-tribal political, economic, social, educational culture as well as, improve environmental, mass media, national ethics and duties of citizens. These duties includes how they relate to each other in these areas to bring about peace for sustainable development in the policy areas. Another arm of culture includes negative behavior which bring about war that destroys some or positive achievements of the people. From this totality of behaviours (positive and negative) Nigeria national policy requires the people promote only behaviors that would "*Protect, preserve and promote the Nigerian cultures which enhance dignity*"... "*and cultural values.*" That is, to "*Promote an educational system that motivates and stimulates creativity and draws largely on our tradition and values, namely: respect for humanity and human dignity, for legitimate authority and the dignity of labor, and respect for positive Nigerian moral and religious values*" In essence this policy as well as moral and religious values condemns the culture of lack of love, lies, stealing, extortion, domestic terrorism, war, unwarranted or excessive bias associated with tribalism and nationalism, e.t.c.

Wikipedia defines tribalism as "*the state of being organized in, or advocating for, a tribe or tribes. In terms of conformity, tribalism may also refer in popular cultural terms to a way of thinking or behaving in which people are more loyal to their tribe than to their friends, their country, or any other social group*" The Free Dictionary defines **tribalism** as "*The organization, culture, or beliefs of a tribe. 2. A strong feeling of identity with and loyalty to one's tribe or group*" and Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines tribalism as "*loyalty to a tribe or other social group especially when combined with strong negative feelings for people outside the group*" From these definitions membership of a group/tribe as well as pursuing the interest of the group a person belong to is inevitable but the problem or negative aspect is when it is excessive and neglects the interest of the larger group.

Similarly, Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines nationalism as

"a feeling that people have of being loyal to and proud of their country often with the belief that it is better and more important than other countries" **or:** *"a desire by a large group of people (such as people who share the same culture, history, language, etc.) to form a separate and independent nation of their own"* **or** *"loyalty and devotion to a nation; especially : a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups"*

From the definitions what tribalism does negatively at local level, nationalism also does the same at the international level at the international level excessive or unwarranted nationalism have brought hatred against members of other nations and have brought war between nations. But the existence of tribes, nations, political parties or whatever names human groups have adopted, it is how the pursue their goals by breaking the laws of the land is the area that needs to be corrected for the interest of the larger community to thrive.

It is worthy to further note that when the behavior of the disputing tribes in Takum is evaluated using the above definition the fact is that the underlying positive platform to organize festivals both at local and national level (Abuja carnival) are positive acts of tribalism and tribal nationalism because each member of Takum community or participants at Abuja carnival has a feeling of identifying with a tribe, remaining loyal to the tribe and supporting the ideals of the tribe. But the underlying current for opposing cultural festivals by the Kuteb, Jukun and Chamba in Takum are the negative acts of tribalism. Both the positive and negative are acts of

support meant to justify claims of each tribe to the throne of Ukwe Takum Secondly, when the definitions are evaluated in relation to Nigeria's cultural policy, tribalism and nationalism is a good culture. But the policy as well as moral and religious values condemns the culture of lack of love, lies, looting, stealing, extortion, domestic terrorism, war, unwarranted or excessive bias, e.t.c. which the people of Takum easily support its engagement by some of their respective members. Negative tribalism and nationalism is increasing day by day such that with little provocation guns are brought out for violent attacks aimed at totally eliminating the opponent. And when political power is gotten it is aimed at *abuse of office* by pursuing tribal goals of the group in power or highly connected to power holders against the natural interest of the other group.

To this end, when people talk about tribalism and nationalism as a negative, excessive or unwarranted behavior, it refers to the negative side of pursuing tribal or national interest. Over the years the Jukun and Chamba have described only Kuteb behaviors which the hate as *tribalism* or *Kuteb nationalism*. But in view of the facts that God and Nigeria's cultural policy permits belonging to a tribe and the promotion of positive tribal culture such as wearing a distinct ethnic group uniform attire, which serves a symbol of identity of that group, and condemnation of negative tribal behaviors such as intimidating members of other groups to feel inferior, abandon their symbols of identity to adopt that of others, extorting and killing members of other groups, then from the facts on cases of conflicts deposed in this paper there is no doubt that the Kuteb, Jukun and Chamba were wrong in their approaches to each other. And it is not just only one or two of the tribes that exhibited negative tribalism and nationalism. However, when we weigh the actions of the tribe in relation to the concept of cultural genocide it is very clear that it is the Jukun and Chamba that higher degree of tribalism as a result of their effort to destroy the culture of one tribe paramount traditional chieftaincy (Kuteb culture) in Takum. Furthermore, the fact that there is as stronger support now than before by some Kuteb sons and daughters for a Chamba and Jukun governorship candidate in Taraba State as from 2011 it entails the Kuteb have started to reduce the negative aspects of Kuteb tribalism or Kuteb nationalism. The same reduction has started to seen in some Jukun and Chamba by supporting Kuteb candidates as from 2015 general election. The long term objective of the Chamba and Jukun support for Kuteb candidates is being doubted in some quarters because it is seen as a strategy to commit **cultural/political genocide** against the traditional interest of the Kuteb people; hence the existence of opposition to some Jukun and Chamba candidates by Kuteb. **Some** Jukun and Chamba also oppose Kuteb political interest because of their desire to completely dislodge Kuteb from Takum. And so when a Jukun candidate was declared as winner of Taraba State 2015 Governorship election under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) the Kuteb were mocked by Jukun Youths. The youths dressed a pig in Kuteb traditional Kuchicheb attire and paraded it in Takum and were saying the time has come to send Kutebs (dirty pigs) out of Takum. This was shortly followed by Tiv assailants who killed five Kuteb Christians (members of Reformed Church of Christ for Nations RCCN) in cold blood along Takum to Kastina-Ala road. And other attacks, counter attacks and deaths occurred in subsequent days. In recent politics the Tiv in Taraba have become strong alias of the Jukun and Chamba. It is alleged that the Tiv were promised to be allowed to occupy Kuteb land when the Kutebs in Takum LGA have been killed or sent to UssaLGA These developments started to send caution to Kutebs both within and outside the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that won the Governorship election. This is culture of tribalism in action in Takum. At this point the detail analysis of the struggle for political power and the fear of tribal agenda is reserved for another paper.

Violence Damage to Life and Property

The continuous opposition by the Tikari and allies escalated to a point of violent conflict, for the first time in 1993 and subsequent years. It led to war in Takum town and extended to other villages leading lost of lives and properties on both sides. For instance the extent of damage according to the findings of the Garvey A. Yawe Committee "as a result of the recent Kuteb /Jukun –Chamba conflict of April –May 1993 about forty-five (45) human lives were confirmed lost and twelve (12) injured."(Taraba State Government, Garvey Committee Report 1993) The Committee also identified that "Properties worth about sixty-one million, four hundred and sixty-two thousand, one hundred and fifteen naira (N61,462,115.00) only burnt or looted." (Taraba State Government, Garvey Committee Report 1993). Similarly in the post 1993 attacks the following

negative impact was felt by both parties. There were injuries, deaths, missing persons, abandonment of houses to become refugees at the same police and army barracks, starvation, both parties accused the government of giving preferential treatment to the other party. Though the government had information on those preparing for violence or had acted in a violent way the government after arresting some accused, had them released and no prosecution was made. That this had effects of encouraging further deviant behaviour. In 2008 when the Chamba/Jukun group opened fire with automatic rifles on the Kuteb annual Kuchicheb cultural festival, about six people were killed (Mustapha 2009). Indeed Takum, a centre of camaraderie, was crudely disrupted. Each party took the law into their hands in the name of self defence irrespective of which side started the violent attack and whether it was Ahmadu Tanko, Shaiki, Polycarp or not. There were injuries, deaths and loss of properties on both sides. The Jukun were happy that the festival did not continue peacefully as celebrants ran for safety.

Disruption of Economic Activities

Economic activities were paralyzed each time festivals were disrupted; and Takum turned from her former image of growing population to a ghost town, as people fled for their lives.

Revenge via Disruption of the Chamba and Jukun festivals

The Kuteb in turn sort revenge by also disrupting the festivals of the Chamba and Jukun in Takum.

Strained Social Relations

The conflict made members of the disputing communities not to trust each other. This in-turn made the disputing parties not to be enthusiastic to hold joint activities.

Government reaction

Whereas the Jolly Nyame regime of 1992-1993 did not implement the recommendations presented directly by the Kuteb and Chamba or indirectly presented to the Government through the Garvey Yawe Committee, but by 1996 the following issues were given attention by government:-

Local Government Creation and the Denying three Kuteb Clans right of Self determination

Under the regime of Gen Sani Abacha the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, had Ussa LGA carved out of Takum LGA in 1996 for a significant Kuteb population based on the Jukun and Chamba criteria (Ahmed-Gangum (2000). Like the issue of the Chieftaincy, the creation of Ussa Local Government came with new dimension of problems e.g. the emergence of “Orphan” Kuteb Communities, which sparked off the Takum violent warfare of 1997 to 1999. The detail facts and analysis of the intrigues involved in the creation of Ussa LGA and its effects is also beyond the scope of the present paper.

Pursuing Chamba Interest on Ukwe Takum stool

By early 2008 it was clear that there is reluctance by Danbaba regime not to implement all previous Government Panel reports which recommended a continuous ascension of the Ukwe Takum stool by Kuteb ruling families alone. (Steve 2008) And under the same regime there was suggestions and effort towards creating a chiefdom for the Kuteb out of Takum Chiefdom by the upgradation of either the Kwe Lissam or Kwe Bika as later interest tend to express; while the Chamba is to be allowed to hold sway in Takum town through a proposed amendment of the 1975 gazette to give room for Government to appoint the chairman and secretary of the Kingmakers. Compass (2009).The likely effect of this is that the candidate to be recommended for approval would always be a Chamba person.

A Suspension of all Festivals in Takum

Recalling that in 1992 the Chamba recommended that the festivals in Takum be banned. The Government started to implement this as from March 2008 when a verbal order for the stoppage of Kuchicheb was issued through Government officials. Consequently, the Government issued Order of “**Suspension of Cultural festivals in Takum Local Government Area**”, through the Executive Chairman Takum Local Government, And the letter reads thus:-

His Excellency the Executive Governor of Taraba State, Pharm. Danbaba Danfulani Suntai has granted approval for the suspension of all cultural festivals in Takum Local Government Area with effect from the date of this letter until further notice.

2. Further more, His Excellency directed that he will be meeting with the Traditional Chiefs and elders of the area early next year (2009) on the issue of sustaining peace and security in Takum Local Government Area

3. You are therefore to ensure that the content of this letter is widely circulated to all concerned for strict compliance” (Taraba State Government letter Ref No. GHJ/LG&CA/457/II/519 dated 15/12/2008)

The above order is a tendency to actualizing the 1992 recommendation by Jukun and Chamba that “(6) That the Kuchichep and any other festivals be permanently cancelled.”. The suspension order is as well as a tendency to fulfill a dream for cultural genocide of Kuteb festival. Reacting to this the Kuteb argued that if Ekpan Funre alias Puje with all its rituals is only held in Wukari during the installation of an Aku Uka; and if a mini Puje imported from Wukari is held in Takum, then Kuchicheb festival should be allowed to be held in its rightful venue: Takum. To celebrate Kuchicheb outside Takum makes Kuchicheb an incomplete event.

5. Conclusion

Communications: A synthesis of the communications made by the disputing parties (Kuteb, Jukun and Chamba shows that the two parties presented their story in such a way that:-

- (a) their respective goal would be achieved easily
- (b) each party would not be accused of being responsible for the violence but only their opponent who attacked them
- (c) they portrayed that only one side lost lives and property
- (d) they stressed that members of the opponent side should be punished
- (e) they stressed that the interest of the reporting side should be protected
- (f) There is a manifestation of adult delinquency in Takum. The elders and elites who are suppose to lead by example failed to lead by good example of tolerance and mutual development hence the youths could not be controlled to stop deviant behaviors. If there was control there would have been peaceful celebration of Kuchicheb and other festivals in Takum Chiefdom.

Culture of opposition: This study has further shown that the first opposition to Kuchicheb gave rise to the culture of opposition by Kuteb against Jukun and Chamba cultural festivals in Takum. Similarly conflict period the Juken and Chamba advance new reasons to ensure that there is violence to justify their call for the cancelation of all festivals so long as Kuchicheb is included.

Failure of dialogue: Over the years Government tries to use dialogue to persuade the Jukun and Chamba who are opposed to the staging of Kuchicheb in Takum to accept the staging of the festival. Apparently, the dialogue often ended with agreement that the festival be staged. But the same Jukun and Chamba turn around to disrupt the festival in spite of security arrangements.

Use of security agencies: The conflicts made the Government to go further to draft in Police and soldiers to keep peace by ensuring that the use of private arms to commit inhuman acts was stopped. Each of the disputing parties at one time or the other blamed the security for taking sides with one of the disputing to carry out inhuman activities

Investigation Committee: The Government also set up investigation Committee to find out the remote and immediate causes of the opposition and conflicts. Unfortunately, the Government often failed to implement fundamental recommendations to resolve the remote causes of the Conflict in Takum. But by

2008 the Government went on to implement recommendations presented by Jukun and Chamba that the Government should suspend the organization of festivals in Takum.

Genocide: With the 2008 suspension of festivals in Takum the Government and the Jukun and Chamba have succeeded to carry out cultural genocide in Takum. The major motivation for the Taraba State Governor to fall into this temptation of marginalizing Kuteb's Kuchicheb festival is because the Governor is a member of one of the opposing ethnic groups (Chamba). And indeed he disguised his anti Kuchicheb desire by suspending the organization of **all** group's festivals in Takum. The implication is that while the Kutebs are not happy the other tribes that called for the ban of all festivals are happy. This paradox of the Jukun and Chamba recommending a policy that is also harmful to the Jukun and Chamba is to portray that they are not tribalistic but in reality though they would not celebrate in Takum they have Donga and Wukari as primary venue for their festivals to continue to flourish. In other words, while Kuchicheb has no other primary venue apart from Takum, other festivals have vent for celebration in other towns. In view of this sustained opposition to Kuchicheb, the Kuteb were provoked to also disrupt the introduction of Takaciyawa and Ekpan-Funre (alias Puje) festival in Takum. From the perspective of the causes of the conflict in Takum, though we have said the causes are remote and immediate, a detailed analysis goes to show that the causes are also multi-dimensional and intertwined, The opposition to Kuchicheb festival therefore is as good as opposition to Kuteb presence in Takum because Kuchicheb and Ukwe Takum cannot operate independent of each other and would not give the natural satisfaction and peace if held outside Takum the traditional headquarter of the Kuteb people. Whereas the Kuteb have no other place to perform their festival in its natural setting/traditional headquarter and seat of their paramount traditional ruler; the Jukun and the Chamba have their natural setting / traditional headquarter and seat of their paramount traditional ruler at Wukari for Jukun and Donga for Chamba, to freely and openly stage their festivals. They have this freedom because the suspension does not extend to Wukari and Donga. The freedom for the celebration of Puje and Purma in Wukari and Donga respectively is further consolidated by the fact that the Kuteb have and value peace. The culture of peace makes Kuteb both at home (Kuteb land) and abroad more interested in promoting the culture of peaceful coexistence and giving to God what belongs to God and to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Hence Kuteb living in Wukari and Donga do not value disrupting the staging of Puje in Wukari and Purma in Donga.

6. Recommendations

Since the Government also wants peace and has the function of promoting cultural development, the Government would be failing on its role as catalyst to peace and development when it continues to over sustain the suspension of celebrating cultural festival as well as refuse to appoint a new Ukwe Takum. The suspension and non appointment of Ukwe Takum makes the architect of the ban policy do more harm in the direction of genocide and create more underdevelopment and unhappiness in Takum Chiefdom. Therefore,

(i) The people of Takum should resolved to practice of genuine vulture of tolerance in Takum by giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. Then in the spirit of live and lets live give all groups a sense of belonging in Takum.

(ii) To build trust, confidence and establish a sound foundation of justice, Government should avoid abuse of office, and no group should profit from the proceeds of wrong acts. As such due process should be complied with for a transparent resolution of the remote cause of the dispute and appointment of the Ukwe Takum

(iii) Government should lift the suspension of organizing cultural festivals in Takum.

(iv) In addition to the various existing cultural festivals, all ethnic groups in Takum should work towards the celebration of peace and unity day in Takum to be called "**Saki** Day or Week". Saki is traditional cap which has come to be worn by the Kuteb Jukun and Chamba people in Taraba State. Saki is also a word in Kuteb language meaning friend. Saki day therefore should be a period for all the ethnic groups to celebrate

friendship and symbolized by all wearing **bur Saki** (cap) and displaying their cultural festival in one day or week". This is preferable on the 22nd day of October of each year or after every three- three years to mark the anniversary of the longest 20th century intra-Takum-community war in Takum Chiefdom as well as celebrate the beginning of the journey to genuine tolerance of the status of each ethnic group, peaceful co-existence and coactivity.

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