THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT OF VICTIMS OF THE 1998 VIOLENT INTER ETHNIC CONFLICT IN TOTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA

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DECLARATION

I here by declare that this thesis entitled "**The Social and Economic Adjustment of Victims of the 1998 Violent Inter Ethnic Conflict in Toto Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria"**, has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research work, it has not been presented in any previous application of higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.

_____ _____

DAVID USMAN JACOB DATE

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "**The Social and Economic Adjustment of Victims of the 1998 Violent Inter Ethnic Conflict in Toto Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria**", meets the regulations for the award of the Degree of Master of Science (Sociology) Postgraduate School, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and his hereby approved for its scholarly contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, children and late parents.

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ABSTRACT

The Bassa-Egbura violent inter-ethnic conflict rendered many people homeless, reduced them to internally displaced persons and inflicted other forms of physical and psychological injuries to others. It also resulted in the loss of lives and properties. This study investigated the social and economic adjustment and strategies adopted by victims of this conflict. The conflict perspective was reviewed and adopted as frame of analysis for the better understanding of the social and economic adjustment of victims. A field work was conducted in the three districts of Toto Local Government Area to gain insight into the genesis and extents of the violence conflict. The researcher administered three hundred (300) structured questionnaires to the internally displaced persons who had returned after the conflict. Focus group discussions were held with members of the ethnic groups such as the Bassa, Egbura, Yoruba, Hausa, Gbaygi and Ibo residing in the area. The leaders of these ethnic groups also indepthly interviewed about the hardship their people faced and who they considered were worse hit. It was found that the Bassa were the worst affected group. Their people were killed, their properties destroyed. They constituted the majority of the internally displaced persons. They

went on exile to neighboring towns and states for a period of two years facing hardships such as lack of money, friends, relations to associate with and unemployment among others. The crises caused major disruptions to various aspects of life such as economic activities, children's education, infrastructures and population displacement. On return, the adjustment of the displaced victims included resettling in places other than their former homes and starting life afresh to avoid been attacked by those who had earlier attacked them. Those who returned to their former area of settlement also had to start from the scratch because all their houses and other resources had been destroyed. The study recommends that dialogue should be facilitated among the warring groups. There should be fair political participation at local and state level, for the Bassa and the Egbura ethnic groups. Boundary adjustment and land dispute issues among the Bassa and Egbura should be resolved by the Nasarawa state government to forestall the reoccurring violent conflict, lost of lives and properties in the area.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Violent inter – ethnic conflicts constitute one of the major problems of social, economic and political life in Nigeria. Hardly has any region been spared from any form of conflict, even though they differ in prevalence and intensity. Alubo (2006) noted that in the far north, violent religious disturbances have broken out in Kano, Katsina, Zaria and Kaduna among other places since 1980. In the south-west, there have been violent communal conflicts at Sagamu, Lagos, and Ife-Modakeke. In the south-east, the Umuleri-Aguleri conflicts were most noticeable. The Toto violent inter-ethnic conflict, the subject of this study occurred in the north-central geo-political zone of Nigeria.

It is evident that violent conflict between ethnic groups is a threat to national integration and development. Nation building is threatened by inter-ethnic conflicts which undermine the security and political stability, economic developments, protection of human lives and property. The phenomenon of inter-ethnic violent conflict deserves a study in Nigeria because it leads to destruction of lives and property. This study examines the violent inter-ethnic conflict

between the Bassa and Egbura in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State that took place in 1998 with sporadic recurrence up to 2003.

Ethnic group, as a concept ordinarily refers to people who share a common ancestry, common language and common culture Typically, there are common identities, common natural habitat, territoriality and common ancestry. In Nigeria all ethnic groups have geophysical spaces which are regarded as their respective home lands. Members lay claims to being "indigenes" "natives" or "sons/daughters of the soil". These popular concepts refer to whether or not one is within or outside the ethnic home land (Alubo 2006:5)

Barth (1986:7), defined ethnic group as a;

> Largely biological self-perpetuating group of people that share fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms.

Suberu (1996:4) defined ethnic group as;

> A social collectivity whose members share such objective characteristics as language, core territory, ancestral myths, culture, religion, political organization and a perception of common ancestry.

The two definitions, consider ethnic group as a social construct marked by language affiliation, customs, value systems

and a common origin. The definitions also extend to natural habitat, territoriality and common ancestry. In a nutshell, ethnic groups exist within the framework of a shared citizenship, historical experiences and a membership of a territory acquired and occupied by ancestors and their descendants. An ethnic group therefore means a collectivity of individuals living in a defined territory among which there is a sense of people-hood, governance, common language and other shared values.

Conflict on the other hand, according to Coser (1965:8)

> is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rivals.

Jubrin (1996: 4) defined violent inter-ethnic conflict as a violent contact between groups who differ from each other in terms of culture, religion, physical feature, ideas or political affinity. What is common to Cosers' and Jubrin's definitions is that violent conflicts are conscious acts involving persons or group struggles. Whenever two or more people of different ethnic groups meet, everyone tries to protect the interest of his own ethnic group. It is therefore clear that conflict could arise when two or more ethnic groups have interest in the same property. This is the context in which most Nigerian ethnic groups hold land and rulership of

specific territories (Osaghea 1994:10).

Varshney (1994:28) noted that;

> In Africa, inter-ethnic violent conflicts have made some communities ungovernable. This could be seen in the civil war that broke out in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Burundi in the 1980's.

In Nigeria inter-ethnic conflicts are widespread, occur frequently, and destructive of lives and properties. The situation has indeed resulted in set backs to achievements in the development of various socio-economic pursuits. Ethnic conflict have hindered growth and development of the country in the past and even in the present times (Osaghae, 1994:10).

1.1 The Reseach Problem

The violent inter-ethnic conflict in Toto Local Government Area, had implications for the development of the area, specifically, noted here are; security, economic, political and social implications on development. During the course of the violent conflict, many people were killed; many were reduced to internally displaced persons, hundreds of houses and business premises were destroyed.

A conservative estimated cost of all the damages amounts into hundreds of millions of Naira. In the light of these, this research

investigates the social and economic adjustment of the victims during the exile and after they had returned home in 2003.

The key research questions for this study are:

1. What are the economic and social losses inflicted by the violent conflict on the victims of violent conflict in Toto Local Government Area?
2. What are the social and economic adjustments of the victims during exile?
3. What were the social and economic adjustments adopted by the victims after exile?
4. What are the possible measures to be taken to prevent further inter-ethnic violent conflict between Bassa and Egbura communities in Toto Local Government Area?

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the forms of adjustment they made during and after exile.

The specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the human and material loses inflicted by the violent conflict on the victims in of Toto Local Government Area.
2. To identify the social and economic consequences of the inter-

ethnic violent conflict on the development of Toto Local Government Area.

3. To examine the social and economic adjustment of the surviving victims during and after exile.
4. To suggest possible measures to prevent further inter-ethnic violent conflict between Bassa and Egbura communities in Toto Local Government Area.

1.3 Significance of the Study

With a diverse ethnic composition, Nasarawa State, is one of the producers of food items for the Federal Capital Territory (The Nations Capital) which houses many Nigerians (Suleiman, 2001:19). Ethnic conflict have negative implications for food security since the area was turned from food producer enclave to war enclave. This led to food scarcity which resulted into inflation of prices of food items in the Local Government Area, state and the Federal Capital Territory.

During the period of the conflict, elections into political offices were placed on hold. This had implication for state's nascent democracy since the Toto people were not represented in political structure of the state (quoted in Peters 2001:1, 2). This situation contradicts the tenets of civil society and devalues opportunities for

peace, stability, coexistence and social justice.

The internally displaced person's problems that accompany this conflict also have implication in social development such as education and good health attainment.

This study will create awareness about the destructive nature of the violent inter-ethnic conflict and how it affected the development and quality of life of citizens of Toto Local Government Area Nasarawa state and its neigbouring states and the Federal Capital Territory. It is expected that findings will educate the communities involved on how to prevent future occurrences in order to forestall peace.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is restricted to the violent inter ethnic conflict between Bassa and Egbura ethnic groups in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State between July 1998 and May 2003. Under this, the exile and post exile adjustment of the surviving victims were studied.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Historical Overview of Violent Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Toto Local Government Area

Toto is one of the thirteen (13) Local Government Areas that constitute Nasarawa State. The headquarter is at Toto. The major ethnic groups in Toto Local Government Area are Bassa, Egbura, Gbagyi and Gade. Toto's economy is largely agrarian being mostly a rural setting. It has mineral deposits such as sand stones, ceramic clay, iron ore and other precious stones. There are three small urban areas (Gadabuke, Toto and Umaisha) in Toto Local Government Area

The communities in Toto Local Government Area had lived relatively peacefully before 1983 when the peace enjoyed in the area was shattered by the violence that accompanied the appointment of a paramount ruler, Mallam Ohemi Regedu (an Egbura) of Umaisha chiefdom as *Ohimege Opanda* kingdom which expands from Toto district down to Umaisha districts (Jibrin, 2000:21).

In 1986, a civil disturbance broke out as a fall out of several years of unheeded complaints by the Bassa to successive Local Government Chairmen and State Governors for their

marginalization from policy making positions and participation in the governance. Amidst this tension, arrangements were made for the official installation of the Ohimege Opanda who had been appointed in 1983. The tension culminated in an early morning gun shots aimed at the Bassa by a group of Egburas riding in a pick-up van on 11/2/86 (Galadima, 2002).

It was later explained that the clash was as a result of the Government's decision to appoint a Bassa man as the village head of Ugya which was opposed by the Egbura (Alex Ogomudia, 1986). In 1998, following the years of tension, another violent conflict erupted. Very sophisticated weapons were used and many people, predominantly the Bassa were killed. Although there were conflicting reports on the number of lives that were lost during the crisis, more than one hundred and thirty persons lost their lives including six police men. Similarly, 100, 000 people (mostly Bassa) were displaced and forced to live as internally displaced persons (IDPs) scattered in at least six (6) states of the Federation (Gaya, 2004).

> The efforts by Nasarawa State Government, supported by the Federal Government, to return the Bassa refugees to their homes from July 2000, thought initially quite successful, was aborted by another armed attack on Bassa refugee camps in 2001,

> dispersing the people into exile afresh to other neighboring towns (Gaya 2004:11).

However, the Bassa remained displaced again from 2001 to 2003. The Government of Nasarawa State on July 3rd, 2003 brought back the internally displaced persons and kept them in different camps. Some of the internally displaced persons rejected the camps because the Government had not made adequate provisions for their safety and feeding. Those who decided to stay were settled at Toto, Ugya, Kanyefu and Gadebuke transit camps. During this period, one of the leaders of the displaced groups was quoted in July, 2003, as saying:

> We are happy to be home! To all sons and daughters of Bassa, I say, welcome home. We are beginning life from the scratch. As you can see, we will be spending the first few months in refugee camps. We need help, thousands of Bassa have no shelter they can call their own (Newswatch, 2004).

Both the Bassa and Egbura claimed that they were the first to arrive and settle in the area. Two kingdoms had existed in the area, Opanda for the Egbura and Ikereku for the Bassa, but the boundaries between the two ancient kingdoms are not longer known (Ogomudia Report, 1986). Current descendants of each of the two ethnic groups still lay claims to ownership and control of Toto Local Government Area. The Gbagyi and Gade maintain that

they came on the scene later, after the Bassa and the Egbura had settled in the area. According to Gaya (2004:29) this accounts for their low numerical strength.

It was claimed that the Egbura cooperated with the Fulani during the Danfodio Jihad and embraced Islam. As a result, they enjoyed a special relationship with the Muslim Fulani rulers of the Nasarawa Emirate. Most Bassas on the other hand had resisted Islam and later embraced Christianity. This provided the basis for the characterization of the conflicts as ethno – religious (Gaya 2004:13). Again, there was an economic dimension to the grievances of the Bassa. It was pointed out that only the Egbura were appointed revenue collectors in all major markets in the three districts of Toto Local Government Area. The most prominent is Ugya market. This led to a situation whereby only Bassa market women paid tolls (Ogomudia report 1986).

Egbura constitute the political majority in Toto Local Government Area even though the Bassa constitute the numerical majority (Gaya 2004). For instance, out of the 14 villages in Umaisha District, only five had Bassa village heads (Samci Report, 1986:5). In 1981 Umaisha chiefdom was created for the Egbura. In October 1983, another chiefdom, this time, the Toto chiefdom was

created for (the Egbura) with the institution of the Ohinoyi Ogye. But the Bassa with its numerical strength were not given any chiefdom while the Egbura had two (Gaya 2004:8).

2.2 Violent Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Other Parts of Africa

In Rwanda, according to Lemarchard (1990), the ethnic consciousness which was characterized by claims of political supremacy between Hutu and Tutsi claimed over 800, 000 lives in 1972. This led to mass movement of displaced persons to Tanzania. In the host communities, this resulted in environmental degradation, diminishing food security, depreciation of the infrastructure and pressure on the social and health sectors of the host country. This also involved social and economic adjustment on the part of the refugees (Adisa 1996). Adisa further maintained that, the adjustment took the form of acceptance of food provided and not food wanted and restriction of movement.

According to Nnoli (1998) ethnic consciousness promotes inter-group competitions for resources; this further promotes ethnic politics in which ethnic groups look for access to state power. Ethnic consciousness promotes strong ties among various ethnic groups; this in turn promotes hostility against those who are considered outsiders to one's group. This may promote socio-

economic competitions among ethnic groups. The consequences include mass killing, looting, raping and the displacement of people. The surviving victims are forced to start a new life and make adjustments in new settlements. (Adisa1996 :14).

In the study of inter-ethnic conflicts among the Tiv and Jukun in Taraba State, Egwu (1998) noted that ethnic consciousness was very glaring among the two ethnic groups. To him this resulted in hostility between the two ethnic groups. When individuals are too conscious of their ethnic groups, they claim supremacy of their own group over the others. This is further passed to successive generations through the process of socialization. This encourages the growth of inter-ethnic animosity, which is extended to various areas of human endeavors such as economic and political interests. The prejudices that develops are transmitted to the upcoming generations of members that will perpetuate hostility.

Zuberu (1999) asserted that too strong loyalty to an ethnic group promotes keen competition for land ownership, political domination and economic supremacy. He attributed the outbreak of the crisis between the Tivs and Jukuns to claims for land ownership in Taraba State. He further maintained that ethnic

consciousness is usually manipulated by individuals and groups to achieve goals.

2.3 The Relocation of Victims Persons

The United Nations declaration of Basic Principle of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1980:4) defined a victim as:

> A person who individually or collectively suffers harm including mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairments of fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within the nation state.

A victim is a person who must have suffered personal injury, loss of dear ones or property as a result of crime or other disasters. Once victimized, individuals are forced to adjust in order to meet the new challenges such as the need for foods, clothes, shelter and other necessities of life. Therefore the first problem of displaced victims is relocation. Once displaced, the person is faced with the problem of where to go and resettle since he is not safe in his own land.

Some victims may engage in anti-social behaviors in order to meet desired needs in their new abodes. In the study of the social adjustment of victims of inter-ethnic conflict in Southern Senatorial

Zone (Awe, Keana and Obi) of Nasarawa State, Gaya (2004) noted that victims of an inter-ethnic clash between the Tiv and Alago fled to Lafia and started life afresh. The adjustment by individuals took different forms. Some victims engaged in activities like petty trading, small scale farming, hawking of fire wood and being employed as night watchmen. Other victims engaged in anti-social activities, like stealing, house breaking, shoplifting and prostitution to earn a living.

Kibreab (1987: 28), in the study of Eritrean refugees in Sudan, observed that;

> Peoples' decision to become refugees is based on the desire to positively improve their social and economic conditions of existence. This is further motivated by feeling of being helpless and powerless to protect themselves against persecution and physical assault.

What compels people to leave their place' of birth in order to become refugees in another place is invariably either the quest for relief protection from danger or threat. Ellie (1988) maintained that a refuge is a victim of an oppressive, inhuman society and, therefore, deserves respect and compassion. Brooks (1970, 17) sees a refugee as a:

> Human being who relocates in a place where he has no friend, his family is changed, his

> material needs are restricted and his entire rights are determined by the forces within the enclave in which he is kept.

Adisa (1998) in the study of Rwanda refugees in Burundi found that host the communities perceived the refugees as strangers who competed with them for scarce resources. The hosts usually preferred that refugees, been given a separate place (camp). According to Anifowose (2004), the interpersonal and inter group relation between the refugees and hosts depended on several factors such as adaptation to new environment, acceptance of community culture and availability of food and shelter. If the resources are adequate, the refugees could be accepted to interact with the host community but if the resources are in short supply, acceptance of refugees would be more difficult. Therefore, for refugees to be integrated into the host community, there must be adequate resources such as food, shelter, medical facilities and other public utilities for both the hosts and the refugees.

In assessing the social integration of the displaced persons during the Ife-Modakeke communal conflict, Adeyemo (2001) noted that "refugees" preferred to live in the society and culture that they are accustomed to. In such a place, their potentials could be utilized by members of the host community. Therefore a new form

of interpersonal and inter-group relationship would be developed for the victims to survive as individuals and groups. Victims must evolve some form of friendship patterns and alliance. They normally would have those who to and not to trust. They devise ways of meeting and having love affairs. All these need adjustment for life to be meaningful. Therefore a new form of social integration and inter-group relationship will be contrived by the internally displaced persons.

In the study of Rwanda refugees in Uganda, Napoleon (1994) noted that a new form of social adjustment was evolved for proper integration of the displaced persons. He noted that Rwandan refugees provided labor which was needed in the local Ugandan textile industries. This also promoted inter marriage between the Rwandans and the Banyarwanda of Uganda. In this case, the Rwandans needed new adjustment in terms of friendship with the hosts, accepting the culture of the hosts and some form of restrictions within themselves.

2.4 Economic Adjustment of Internal Displaced Persons and Refugees

People who have fled their country in search of safety from war and repression, are often subjected to abject poverty. In the study of refugees that fled to Hargeisa camp at Fugnido in Ethiopia,

Dahir (1989) found that one of the greatest challenges of the displaced persons was access to balanced diet, good water, shelter and security. Adisa (2001) in the study of Sudanese refugees in Uganda found that balanced diet was a major problem of the refugees. He further argued that families who were unable to borrow or get assistance from humanitarian organizations experienced starvation. Consequently many refugees suffered from malnutrition. He further noted that:

> Refugees, whether in camps or scattered, engaged in variety of economic activities to ensure their families survival. In this, they demonstrated both resourcefulness and courage. Some engaged in collecting left over foods from people and hotels, some dug up termite mounds to gather the grains stored within, others begged in desperate attempts to feed their families. Yet others learnt new skills like knitting, weaving and black smithing and many performed task they would never have imagined performing before (Adisa, 2001:14).

For the internal displaced persons, the most important thing was to do what would provide food. This is the situation the victims of violent - inter-ethnic conflict between Bassa and Egbura ethnic group faced. In responding to the food needs, Zuberu (2001) noted that the displaced Bassa in Ugya in some cases stole what they were not given. In the case of Bassa in refugee camps, they

entered the farms of the host community and collected food items. The internally displaced persons revealed that this was in reaction to their economic needs since the government was not sensitive to their plight. These items include cassava, maize, groundnuts, banana, yams and millet from people's farms and sold them in the market. This would enable the refugees have money to buy other food items required for the house hold. Some of the food items that were provided by relief agency such as maize and cooking oil were sold by refugees. The money gotten from the sold items were used for other needs, like clothes, and other food items. The situation was similar to Rwanda refugees in 1994 as captured by Adisa in (1996:19).

> The difficulty we had, commented a United Nations High Commission on Refugees programme Officer in Uganda was that apart from Rwandan refugees stealing from the farms of the Ugandans, most of the relief materials brought to the refugees were sold out and found almost everywhere in the market.

However, this attitude of the internally displaced persons made the members of host communities to become more hostile to the refugees.

The economic adjustment of the internally displaced persons was to steal food items in order to solve the problem of hunger and

enable the victims have money for other basic requirement like clothing, shelter for themselves and dependants.

Nodjal (1994: 6) in the study of Rwanda refugees noted that survival depended on being adaptive. Dietary practices may be more easily changed than might other wise be expected. Some of the refugees were forced to take food they were not used to due to hunger in the camp.

Passang (1992), in his assessment of the adaptation to food supply to Chadian refugees in Cameroon, found that, it was hard at first to get used to Cameroon food which were prepared from cassava and sorghum. Therefore the process of adaptation took place with certain difficulties e.g. how to get used to the scarce food if available since there is no option of choice within the shortest period to avoid hunger.

In the analysis of food available to the Sudanese that fled to Darfur, Kibreab (2004) ascertained that most of the Sudanese had insufficient supply of food provided by the hosts and donor organizations. In some cases, the food supply did not meet the nutritional needs which led to dietary deficiency diseases like kwashiorkor, scurvy, dental problems, stunted growth and other related diseases.

Unemployment is another stress that displaced persons are faced with. Wilkinson (1998) in the study of economic adjustment of victims of inter-ethnic conflict in Angola found that the displaced people were left at the mercy of unemployment. This to him made many of the displaced people to take to the streets as thieves, petty repair men, prostitutes and hawkers. Kibreab (1987), in the study of Eritrean refugees in Sudan, noted that the integration of displaced persons was a problem. This was seen from the degree to which refugees succeeded in becoming productive members of the host communities. In the study of Ethiopian exiles in Sudan, Bulcha (1983) noted that social integration in the host communities began with the acquisition of jobs. The survival of displaced persons depended on availability of jobs in order to earn means of livelihood. A job in itself is a social security for the individual.

In the study of refugees, south of the Sahara, Brooks (1970: 14) noted that,

> Every one is born in a certain place be it town or village with the smell of the soil and the feel of the wind. There his soul is free, there he will live and die except forced to move. If forced to move, his movement will appear to be governed by the prospects of economic improvement rather than need for space. The economic improvement is

therefore tied to job available for survival.

Passang (1992) in the study of Sudanese refugees in Cameroon asserted that, some of the refugees found alternative employment by being water-carriers, going from one house hold to another to look for buyers. In some cases, the male went round the streets with their axes hung on their shoulders as firewood hackers in order to earn a living. Some became house cleaners. He also noted in the same way that, some Chadian refugees in Borno state in Nigeria, settled spontaneously in the midst of local populations, with whom they often shared ethnic and kinship ties in addition to the common bond of Islam instead of staying at the camp provided for them. Such was the case in localities like Bama, Gamboru and Ngala. The refugees worked as water carriers, wood sellers, farm laborers, mobile tea sellers and hawkers of various farm produce.

In the analysis of Togo refugees in Ghana, Dosseh (1993) observed that the education of Togolese children was neglected because the parents could not afford the school fees. The priorities of the parents were food and shelter for their children.

One of the basic needs of human beings is shelter. They refugees need to be protected from the elements of the weather. They need comfort and rest after stressful activities and above all

they need security and privacy for all members of the family. In the study of Rwanda refugees, Guichaova (1992) noted that the Rwanda were exposed to all harmful elements of the weather because of inadequate tents. Some of them slept in an open field which swarmed with mosquitoes and other insects especially at the beginning of the raining season. Many basic needs like food preparation and storage, child care, sex and the socialization of children are best met in private family homes. Much of the satisfaction of psycho-social needs is centered on the privacy provided by the home. Congestion and overcrowding thwart the satisfaction of these needs.

Bulcha (1987: 17) in the study of displaced persons in Ethiopia maintained that

> All the dwellings in the camp were single room units with many families sharing premises. This would result in health problem, such as the spread of diseases and lack of privacy.

All the literatures reviewed in this chapter show that the internally displaced persons are subjected to a lot of hardship and frustration. These show that once displaced, individuals would adjust to the new environment so that ones existence can be meaningful to oneself and the entire members of the society.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

There is no single theoretical perspective that can explain all the aspects of any social phenomenon. All perspectives look at situations based on perceptions of social realities. For better understanding of the dynamics of social and economic adjustment of victims of inter-ethnic violent conflict in Toto Local Government Area, the structural functionalist and Marxian perspectives/ theories are examined.

The functionalist perspective draws substantially from the ideas of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emilie Durkheim who made several contributions to the role of social structures as sources of conflicts. They look at conflict emanating from group relations to the analysis and the adjustment of victims of violent inter-ethnic conflicts. In the analysis of society, this perspective assumes that society is made up of parts, for example, the family and other social institutions. It sees what holds society together and the consequences of the malfunctioning of a unit of the social system. It maintains that each part has a function in the maintenance of the society. (Bottomore, 1981; Turner, 1990).

Durkheim believes that each of these parts or structures performs a role in the maintenance of the society in an equilibrium.

The states of disequilibrium arise when one or more parts (structures) are not playing their parts properly. It is a state where social problem such as violent inter-ethnic violent conflicts occurs. Such a state however, does not last long as society has inbuilt mechanisms that generate forces that will tackle such disequilibrium and restore balance (Pope, 1976:14).

For social adjustment to prevail, it implies that anarchy has been created. The victims find themselves in a hostile environment. All these are states of disequilibrium which call for the restoration of equilibrium. To Durkheim, when people have common social values, there is social cohesion, which in turn brings peace, harmony and unity. If the social values are weak, the solidarity would not be there, this would result in disunity, which may promote conflict. Once there is disequilibrium, the state of equilibrium must be sought in form of adjustment so that individual in the society can continue to live. The adjustment could be in forms of friendship with others in a new place, or a new form of interpersonal or group relationship which must be developed (Gans, 1972).

One of the main concerns of the functionalist theory is to explain the functioning of the social system. The theory assumes

that a certain degree of social order and stability is important for the survival of a social system. Functionalist are therefore concerned with explaining the origin and maintenance of order and stability. This also forms a basis for social solidarity. Common value to functionalist, produce common goals and the common goal produce solidarity and stability (Ollman, 1976).

The Marxian perspective on the other hand, seeks to explain the bases of conflict in the society. Karl Marx observed that conflict is the major means for achieving one's goal of survival in the society especially by those who do not own the means of production. The Marxian perspective is called dialectic materialism, the notion that development depends on the clash of interests between two classes – those who own the means of production and those who do not own the means of production (Foltz, 1991:369-70). Conflict to Marx is class-based. In his analysis of the capitalist society, he maintained that for the working class to own means of production, they have to struggle with the capitalist class to bring about change in the society (Egwu, 1993). Inter-ethnic conflict from the Marxian perspective emanates from unequal relationships within the economic structure of the society. Conflict between ethnic groups to Marx is based on competition for material resources.

The work of Marx influenced other conflict theorists who include George Simmel (1908) and Collins (1975). These groups share Marx's analysis of the society from the dialectical materialism point of view. They extended the notion of conflict from class struggle to group interest which can manifest in struggles between ethnic group, between generations and even among student groups on university campuses. Conflict theory agrees that the main source of conflict in human societies is scarcity of resources that people require. To them, wealth, prestige and power are always in limited supply. Therefore groups struggle for supremacy over each other in order to control the resources.

Coser (1956) argued that under some circumstances, conflict is functional for society. It prevents social systems from becoming rigid and fixed by exerting pressure for change and innovation. Simmel (1955) is of the view that without conflict there is no adjustment because, social change needs adjustment for society to continue.

Ethnic conflicts tend to emerge at the moment when a group perceive that its members are being excluded from access to what they consider to be their rights be it economic, political and religion. As Roger Blench has shown, this contestation is common

between several groups especially herders, fishers, farmers and hunters (Blench 2004).

Alubo also argues that the struggles for identity take on material expression such as the control over resources and access to decision making and political control (Alubo 2003:6). These claims were the result of the violent conflict between the Bassa and Egbura groups in which the two groups struggle for supremacy over each other to indigeneship, rulership control resources.

In the case of violent inter-ethnic conflict in Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, the violence occurred as a result of conflicting interests on land resources. Land have acquired a new economic value as a result of population increase, discovery of mineral resources. These also increased the political dimension of the conflict, based on competition and struggle for control over the institutions and resources of government. Once a ethnic group establishes ownership of the land on which other ethnic group live and work to earn their living, the immigrant groups, not only become marginalized but become subservient to the landlords who may be very oppressive in their claims.

From the two perspectives examined, the Marxian (conflict) theory will be adopted for the research work. The perspective lays emphasis on history and social change. It takes into account the material conditions of the people and the process of change.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Location of the Study

The location of the study is Toto Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria . Bassa and Egbura ethnic groups are the main inhabitants of this Local Government Area. Toto Local Government is made up of three Districts, Toto, Gadabuke and Umaisha. The study location area are Toto and Umaisha Districts because the inter-ethnic conflict was concentrated in those areas.

Table 1.1: Ethnic Distribution in Nasarawa State

S/N	Local Government Area	Major Ethnics Group
1	Akwanga	Mada/Eggon
2	Awe	Arago/Tiv/Awe
3	Doma	Arago/Eggon
4	Karu	Ggaygi
5	Keana	Arago
6	Keffi	Hausa/Fulani/Gwandara
7	Kokona	Gwandara/Afon
8	Lafia	Kambari/Eggon/Mada/Alago
9	Nasarawa	Afo/Agatu/Hausa/Fulani
10	N/Eggon	Eggon
11	Obi	Arago/Tiv
12	Toto	Bassa/Egbura/Gade/Gbaygi
13	Wamba	Rindren

Table 1.1 shows the 13 Local Government Area and their respective major ethnic groups in Nasarawa state. The study location of the violent inter-ethnic conflict is Toto Local Government Area which is the home town of the Bassa and Egbura ethnic groups.

3.2 Research Population

The crisis was essentially confined to Toto and Umaisha Districts. Most destruction of property and losses of lives occurred in these two districts but with incidental occurrences in Gadabuke.

Out of the 25 villages in Toto Local Government Area, Toto District has eleven (11) villages; namely Shafan Kwatto, Shafan Abakpa, Ukya, Kolo, Gate, Yelwa, Adadu, Zono, Toto, Mateni and Ugya, while Umaisha District has fourteen (14) villages, these are, Foforu, Kango, Kanyehu, Shege, Uttu, Zore, Umaisha, Zainaku, Angura, Iggi, Dausu, Igwa Pati, Katakpa and Sogene. All the villages in both districts were affected by the conflict.

All the 25 villages were studied. From the observation made during the formative research, it was established that there were between 36 and 65 households in each of the villages. A house-hold for the purpose of this study consists of all the persons who

live together in one house. This could be referred to as a compound, where people live as members of nuclear or extended families.

3.3 Research Design

The research design employed in the study is survey method. This design studies groups or population by collecting data through several instrument which include observation, questionnaire and interview among others.

3.4 Techniques of Data Collection

During the visit to all villages in Toto Local Government Area, in 2001 to ascertain the extent of damage to properties, most of the people met were either Gbaygi or Egbura, who confirmed that the Bassa had fled to neighboring towns and states for safety. This assertion made it possible to find out where they fled to. It was gathered that the Bassa were scattered over neighboring states and towns.

During the exile, places such as; Lokoja, Abaji, Koton Karfe, Nasarawa, Keffi, Laminga and Robochi were visited. Focus group discussions FGD were held with two groups from each of the towns mentioned in areas where the IDPs were kept to ascertain the conditions of the internally displaced persons. Also some key

informants (KII) were asked questions on the conditions and adjustment of the internally displaced persons. When the internally displaced persons returned to the refugee camps in Toto, Gadabuke, Ugya and kanyehu, focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with them to elicit information about their conditions in the camps. However, the questionnaire were administered when the internally displaced persons had returned to their ancestral homes (see appendix A).

i. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Four Focus Group discussion were held with between 6 and 12 persons (from Bassa, Egbura, Gbaygi) guided by facilitator. Each ethnic group was constituted for FGD, hence four group for each ethnic group, except the Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa who had a group each. These were done when the victims had returned homes. (See appendix D – The Discussion Guide).

ii. **Key Informant Interviews (KII)**

These interviews were conducted in order to elicit information from individual and eye witness of the crisis who had knowledge of the study. The key informants include former chairmen of Toto Local Government Area, councilors and various village group chairmen. The leaders of the host communities such as Abaji,

Gadabuke, Kuru, Tudu Huku and Koton Karfe were also interviewed: (See appendix C or interview schedule).

The secondary sources of data were obtained from published sources such as paid advertisements and other publications where various parties to the conflict provided information. Similarly, judicial commission reports, official documentation of the crisis from service commission were studied.

The researcher made use of research assistants (interviewers) made up of Federal Polytechnic students who had been trained on techniques of data collection, as well as probing, listening and note taking skills. The interviewers were carefully selected to reflect the parties to the conflict. Thus, the Bassa interviewers interacted mostly with Bassa communities and Egbura interviewers did the same. Other ethnic group (Hausa, Igbo and Yorubas) were interviewed in Hausa pigin English. All responses were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size

To avoid the problem of studying the whole population, coupled with inadequate human and material resources, a sample of 300 was decided upon for the whole Local Government Area. The sample size of 300 was drawn from the two affected districts

(Umaisha and Toto) which reflected the entire population of location of study. This adequately served as a representative sample, representing all the villages that were involved in the conflict. This was spread across all 25 villages that constitute the two districts that were affected by the violent conflicts.

During the formative visits to all villages in the two districts, it was observed that the household ranges from 17 to 45 in each village. All the households in each village were stratified according to degree of losses suffered such as; (a) those who lost properties only (b) those who lost human beings only and (c) those who lost both human beings and property. In each of the villages, a total of twelve households were picked by random selection of four households from each of the three categories of losses incured. A total of 12 household were selected from each village, this resulted in a total sample size of 300 respondents from the 25 villages, 132 from Toto District and 168 from Umaisha District. In each household selected, an adult delegated by the head answered the questioniare items in Appendix A.

3.6 Data Analysis

The responses in the questionnaires and interviews were analysed using percentages to show the frequencies of disribution

of various responses/situations. The key variables for analysis are; inter-group relations; occupation/job available, attitude of host community, loss of lives, properties destroyed, and other forms of hardship experienced by victims.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS ON EXILE AND POST EXILE SITUATIONS OF THE VICTIMS OF THE EGBURA-BASSA VIOLENT CONFLICT IN TOTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Returnees

The demographic factors are important in survey research in order to understand the composition of the research population sampled. The demographic variables considered important for this study include villages of the returnees, age, religion, marital status, occupation and education.

4.1.1 Villages of Returnees

Out of the 25 villages visited, 9 villages (Ukya, Shafa Kwato, Shafa Abakwa, Kolo, Iggi, Angura, Zore, Uttu and Kanyehu) had 11 respondents each making 4.2%. The total percentage of the entire village within this category was 38% (99 of the respondents). Gate, Sogore, Katakpa, Dausu and Ugya villages had 12 (4.6%) respondents each, with the total percentage of 23% (60 respondents) of villages within this category. Foforu, Igwa Pate, Umaisha and Shegge had 10 (3.9%) respondents each with total of 19.5% (50 respondents) of the villages within this category. Mateni, Toto and Zanaku villages had 8 (3.1%) respondents in each bringing the total percentage to 9.3% for the three villages. Zono,

Adadu, Yelwa and Kangu had 9 (3.5%) respondents each, making the total number of 13.8% villages in this category.

4.1.2 Age of Returnees

The ages of the returnees shows that majority of the Bassa 175 (69%) were elderly persons aged 55 years or older. The number of youth years 20-45 for the survey is 80 (31%). Most of people that were seen during the administration of questionnaire were the elderly who constituted 69% (179) of the entire sample who responded to questionnaire items. The eligible age for inclusion in the sample was 20 years of age or older.

When two of the leaders of Bassa were asked of ages of the persons killed, they asserted that most of victims were between ages of 25 and 45 years. “Sir go round all the settlements of the Bassas, you can count the number of youths, we are finished”, he lamented. In most of the villages visited during the field work, majority of the people seen were elderly persons of 55 years or older.

4.1.3 Religion of Returnees

The majority 197 (76%) said that they are Christians while 49 (19%) admitted that they are Muslim, 13 (5%) respondents did not indicate their religions.

4.1.4 Marital Status of the Returnees

Out of the entire sample of respondents, 193 (74.5%) were married while 66 (25.5%) were single. However, the population of married female was 58 (22.4%) while 89 (34.4%) male were married. Furthermore, 27 (40.9%) returnee were unmarried male, while 39 (59.1%) returnees unmarried female.

Table 4.1 Occupations of Returnees

Occupations	**f**	**%**
Farming	130	50.2
Civil service	83	32.2
Trading/Business	34	13.1
Others	12	4.6
Total	**259**	**100.0**

The occupations of the returnees include farming, trading and civil service as shown in Table 4.1.

Farming which was the most frequently reported occupation of the returnees had 130 (50.2%) respondents. The responses also showed that 83 (32%) were civil servants. Others (4.6%) include artisans and apprentices.

The educational attainment of the respondents showed that,

64 (24.7%) never went to school, 115 (44%) had primary school education, 55 (21.2%) responded that they have secondary school education and 25 (9.7) had above secondary school education as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Educational Qualifications of the Returnees

Type of Education	**F**	**%**
No formal education	64	24.7
Primary School	115	44.4
Secondary School	55	21.2
Technical/polytechnic	25	9.7
Total	**259**	**100.0**

4.2 Pre-Exile Situation: The Events that Preceded the Violent Inter-Ethnic Conflict in 1998

Two major events and an age long acrimony led to the violent inter-ethnic conflict between the Bassa and Egbura ethnic groups in Toto Local Government Area. These are:

i. **The Creation of Opanda and Ikereku Chiefdom (Historical Factor)**:

There has been an age long contention on who the owners of Toto Local Government Area are. Both the Egbura and Bassa had different versions of the history of the area, especially on who came

first and who later to the territory, which ancient kingdoms existed in the area, the boundaries, who was superior and who was subordinate. The Egbura perceived themselves as the first group to settle in the area in contention. They argued that they built the ancient empire of Opanda, stretching from Toto to Umaisha Districts. The Bassa disagreed. They argued that Opanda Empire never existed. They claimed that the real kingdom was "Ikereku" which was the Bassa Kingdom stretching from Umaisha to Gadaguke through Toto, and that the Egbura were immigrants to the Ikereku Kingdom. However, all the available records in archives did not show which ethnic group (Bassa or Egbura) came first apart from the claims of the two ethnic groups.

ii. **The 1983-1986 Civil disturbance in Toto:**

In Toto local government area the politically dominant ethnic group were Egbura, even though the Bassa were far more in population. Out of 13 villages in Umaisha district, only five (5) had Bassa village heads (Samci Report, 1985:5). None of the kingdoms created in 1981 and 1983 had a Bassa leader. This made the Bassa subervients to the Egbura. In 1986, the civil disturbance was the fall out of several years of complaints by the Bassas against Egbura. Amidst this tension, arrangements were made for

the official installation of Ohimege Opanda (an Egbura kingdom).

On 11th February 1995 there was a violent clash between the Bassa and the Egbura at Ugya as a result of government decision to appoint a Bassa as the village head of Ugya. In 1997, following years of tension, a bloody conflict erupted between Bassa and Egbura.

All the investigative commissions set up by successive governments of Nasarawa state were unable to find any evidence, as to which of the groups first settled in the area. The Haruna Abdullahi Committee of 1985, Alex Ogomudia Panel of 1986, J.M. Samci Committee of 1986 and Thomas Niagwan High-powered Committee of 1995, all arrived at the same conclusion, that there are no records that showed which of the ethnic groups came first apart from the claims of the two ethnic groups.

iii. **Socio-cultural Factors:**

The Bassa and Egbura ethnic groups in Toto Local Government Area had always been at variance with each other inspite of being neighbors. Jibrin (2003:16) noted that:

> The Egbura consider the Bassa, particularly their women as inferior. On the other hand, Bassa women, too, do not want to marry Egbura men because they consider Egbura blood impure and evil. They believe that to marry an Egbura is to bring evil blood into

the family.

The absence of affine linkages and other areas of common interest exacerbate the intensity of the conflict between the Egbura and Bassa whenever it broke out. In order to break this acrimony, Jibrin further noted that "a former Military Governor of Nasarawa State promised to give N50, 000 gift to any Bassa and Egbura couple (Jibrin 2003:23). From the data gathered and observation made, this was yet to happen by the time of this study in 2003. With this scenario it has been difficult to build a cohesive group of citizens in Toto Local Government Area.

In this study, both the warring parties (Bassa and Egbura) identified land dispute as the ultimate cause of the 1998 violent conflict. The long standing hostility broke into violent conflict as result of claims over land and control of resources such as (tin ore, lead, columbite and precious stones) which the Local Government Area is endowed with. One of the Egbura leaders' claim is that the Bassa seized their land in Ugya and build market on it. This claim was refuted by one of the Bassa leaders, who opined that, because of the hospitable nature of the Bassa, the Egbura were given the land in question as strangers. He traced the origin of the Egbura to the contemporary Kogi State. From the assertions of the two ethnic

groups, conflict over land and political control and domination of Toto Local Government Area were the major problems.

When the researcher asked the former Chairman of Toto Local Government Hon. Samson Daudu (a Bassa) 1998, about the cause(s) of the violent conflict, he responded furiously:

> There are historical accounts about the issue of land which is a constant sore point, in the relationship between Bassa and Egbura. This account also embraced in recent times political representation and domination which is a prerequisite for resource control. In a more serious note, and in a nutshell, go to archives and read the history of the Bassa ethnic groups. There were no accounts of conflicts between the Bassa and Egbura before. Both lived in symbiotic relationship (smile on his face). The Egbura were strangers in the land who were given land to farm and accorded rights and benefits under the control of Bassa. Please go back to history in archives. The recent crisis was instigated by ownership of land and market among Bassa and Egbura ethnic groups in Ugya (Sic).

The Bassa perspective is summed up by Danjuma Baba (2000) in a paper presented to Nasarawa State Government in which he averted that the Bassa never denied the presence of Egbura in Toto area for a long time, but that the Bassa were the rightful indigenes and the owners of Toto Local Government Area long before the Egbura came. He insisted that today the Bassa

constitute the numerical majority in Toto Local Government Area. He lamented that the numerical superiority of the Bassa had never reflected in political power sharing. Such a disadvantage he maintained exists in both traditional institutions and the modern political institutions notably the staffing of Toto Local Government Council and in a wider sense in Nasarawa State Government.

The Bassa claimed that "Egbura are aggressive tribe made up of ethnic chauvinists who employed their strategic positions in business, bureaucracy, security services and judiciary to perpetuate the exploitation and deprivation of the disadvantaged owners of the land, the Bassa". To the Bassa, "the first kingdom that emerged was Ikereku Kingdom which is the kingdom of Bassa. The Ohimege Opanda was only lord over Bassa for there was never any such kingdom in the history of Toto Local Government Area before Bassa Kingdom (Bala, 2004:27).

The Egbura's perspective of the cause(s) of the conflict is summarized by one of the Egbura leaders, Usman (2000:28) in paper presented to the Nasarawa State Government in July 2000.

> It is premised on the conviction that the Egbura were the first ethnic group to settle in the area currently referred to as Toto Local Government Area. Therefore, the entire space of Toto Local Government Area was historically Egbura land. Historically the

> Egbura had been rulers of the territory from the Federal Capital Territory to Abaji, Koton Karfe and Okene, before the Bassa arrived in the area. Traditional rulership, is synonymous with ownership of the land and having the right to exert all forms of political and traditional control over such lands. Being better educated, coupled with hard work, the Egbura are being envied by "small minds" and that for no cause the Bassa seek to exterminate the Egbura.

Another important point noted by one of the elders, a Gbaygi leaders in Gbadabuke is that the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria adopted the policy of indirect rule which made Bassa and Egbura to come under the overlordship of the Emirate of Nasarawa. The Egbura who embraced Islam became allies of the Nasarawa Emirate and the colonial administration while the Bassa stuck to their traditional religion and later converted to Christianity. The alliance between the Nasarawa emirs and the Egbura District Heads in the course of traditional administration further marginalize the Bassa to political insignificance. It implies that village Heads appointed to facilitate the efficiency of colonial administration were mainly Egbura. Worst still, the Bassa did not have access to, or were reluctant to embrace Western Education unlike Egbura. All these further marginalized the Bassa, politically and economical despite their numerical strength. These are the

issues that relegated the Bassa to the background. This could also count for the non participation of the Bassa in selection of the Emirship of Toto.

In a paper presented by one of the Egbura youth (Peter, 2005:21) to Nasarawa State Government, he maintained that;

> The Egbura did not deny the long presence of the Bassa, in Toto Local Government Area. The Bassa had been subjects of help under the Egbura. Thus, since the land did not belong to the Bassa, they should not claim both land and territory to actualize their political aspirations. By implication, the Bassa should not unduly aspire to traditional positions such as Staffed Chiefs, Village or District Heads, and least of all being LGA Chairmen because doing so would tantamount to a trespass on Egbura traditional rights. The land belongs to the Egbura, the Bassa are settlers, and should accept that they are. The Egbura feel that they can make concessions to the Bassa as a group only if the Egbura are consulted.

Thus, the crux of the matter from the Egbura point of view is the sovereignty of the Egbura over the territory and the Bassa ethnic group who they consider "immigrants". These claims are based on the Egbura claims of being of Kwararafa descent, hence, the area Toto Local Government Council belongs to the Egbura.

However, it is very difficult to conclude about who are the rightful owners of the territory currently referred to as Toto Local

Government Area. All the white papers presented to Government committees such as Haruna Abdullahi Committee 1985, Alex Ogomudia Panel of 1986; J.M. Samci Committee of 1988 and Thomas Nagwan High-Powered Committee of 1995 never indicated anything of such apart from the claims of the two groups (Bassa and Egbura).

However, from all the archival sources, all the investigative commissions set up by successive government and available literature came to conclude that there is no evidence as to which of the groups arrived Toto Local Government Area first.

4.3 Nature of the Crises

Of the 259 respondents sampled returnee household heads, 183 (70.7%) were at their respective homes when the violence broke out. They witnessed the hostilities and were affected in one way or the other. Seventy-three 73 (28%) said they were in nearby villages when the violence broke out. They could not come home before fleeing into exile. However, the effects on all the victims that were around and those that fled are likely to be the same because the attack on them was sudden and simultaneously executed in all the villages. All fled without taking anything along with them.

Some of the village heads of the Bassa said that they were

around in their various villages when the attacks were launched and saw how some of their people were massacred. During the field work, it was observed that most of the Bassa villages were razed, their properties were destroyed and public buildings were burnt down. The Bassa leaders maintained that the attackers went from house to house almost at the same time and the same day burning, killing and looting. This event led to mass exodus of Bassa people from their ancestral homes into neighboring Local Government Areas in Nasarawa, Kogi and Benue States and the Federal Capital Territory.

The leader of the Bassa in Ugya village, (where the conflict started), said that, it was in the night of 2nd May 1998 between 10:30pm and 11:00pm that the violence started when they heard the shots of sophisticated guns. The leader lamented that before he could come out, the Egbura had surrounded the Bassa sections of Ugya. He confirmed that shortly after that a vehicle headed towards his house with sporadic shooting of guns. He ran back into the house and later into the bush for safety. Before 4:30am, the whole district headquarters turned to a smoky arena. When he came back, houses had been burnt; corpses littered everywhere, property, including foodstuffs, other farm produce and domestic

animals had been looted or vandalized.

One of the elders of Bassa, Mallam Isuwa Ibrahim in Ugya confirmed that the conflict started in the night when majority of the people were sleeping.

> We were sleeping. What woke us up was the sporadic shooting of guns and chanting of war songs by the Egbura militant youth. "All Bassa must go. All Bassa must die. It is our turn to kill all Bassa who killed Egbura before. All Bassa must die!"

The erstwhile Chairman (Samson Audu, a Bassa) of Toto Local Government Area between 1993 and 1997 ascertained that the conflict was indeed violent because many lives were lost. People were displaced and took refuge in neighboring towns and states. He further affirmed that many structures such as houses, business premises, schools, health facilities, places of worship, orchards and economic trees, mostly belonging to Bassa were burnt during the conflict.

All the 259 (100%) returnees said that their properties were destroyed during the violent conflict (Table 4.3). The properties destroyed according to some of the village heads of Bassa, include crops on farm lands, stored seeds; yams, cassava and yam seedlings on the farms. Other destroyed items includes stored grains, livestock, farm implement; houses; vehicles, motor-cycles

and bicycles.

However, each category of properties destroyed represents the entire population studied. Therefore on the properties destroyed 186 (71.8%) confirmed that their crops were destroyed on the farm. 214 (82.6%) confirmed that stored food items (including seeds and seedlings) were destroyed; 172 (66.4%) ascertained that livestock were either killed or stolen; furthermore, 62 (23.9%) persons maintained that they lost mobility gadget such as motorcycle, bicycle and vehicles see table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Property Destroyed

Property destroyed	**F**	**%**
Crops on farm land	186	71.8
Stored food	214	82.6
Livestock	172	66.4
Bicycles	101	39.0
Motor cycles	98	37.9
Vehicles	62	23.9
Houses	124	47.9

When respondent were asked to state their most important items that were destroyed, 125 (48.3%) indicated crops on farmlands, 124 (47.9%) indicated houses while 10 (3.9%) mentioned gadgets such as bicycles, vehicle and motorcycles.

On the importance of the destroyed items, 210 (81.1%) said that the items were sources of income and means of livelihood, 113 (43.6%) said that the destroyed property sheltered them; 31 (11.9%) said that the items destroyed were means of transportation; 42 (16.2%) mentioned other items like fish ponds, poultry houses and piggeries which were sources of income for them.

4.4 The Plight of the Victims in Exile

The survey of the victims revealed that 148 (57.1%) went on exile to nearby towns while 111 (42.9%) had fled to nearby states. The forceful movement of people from their places of abode had adverse effects on them. They had to contend with where to live, adjustments to unfamiliar food items, who to associate with, and how to integrate into the hosts' cultures. Hosting the "exiles" also had adverse effects on the host communities that the displaced people put up with. The internally displaced persons had been initially perceived as people in transit who could stay for a few days and leave. They were initially welcomed and cared for by the host communities. Most of them were initially admitted to their hosts' households. But when they had outstayed their welcome (in most cases, victims stayed more than two years on exile before their return to camps), the hosts perceived them as people who

endangered their private land, and hastened environmental degradation in the forms of pollutions and deforestation. The available social infrastructures, such as health, education and water supplies among others could not meet the demands of the hosts and the internally displaced people. This was the case in most of the towns like Koton Karfe, Abaji, Lokoja, Suleja and Nasarawa and villages such as Kuru, Tudu-Uku, Loko gomo, Nakuse and Guto visited during the field work. The sympathy for the plight of the internally "displaced strangers" began to give way to suspicion and hostility because the internally displaced persons adversely affected the various aspects of the host communities' life. This resulted in discrimination against them by members of the host communities.

From the observation made and the indepth interview conducted the displaced person's main problems were food, shelter and schools for their children. In order to make ends meet, some of them slept in open fields, some begged to feed members of their families, others provided cheap labor. Some girls had to offer sex to men for money and other material needs. Spaces, food, security, health care and other necessities of life were competed for. The host communities became very hostile and no longer saw anything

good in the internally displaced person they were hosting.

The former chairman, of Toto Local Government Area (Paul Wabare (Bassa) disclosed that:

> There was serious hardship the people went through. There was no shelter for some people who were on exile. In some towns, where the surviving victims of the crisis had no relations, they slept in an open field, some in uncompleted building. In fact some of the public building such as churches, mosques, schools, and hospital premises were used as places of resting and sleeping at night. During the day, the victims would wander about in order to pass time before returning back to the public places to sleep. Apart from not having sleeping places, most of the victims had no jobs to sustain them. Hence most of them took to major streets in the towns as beggars. In one of the places I visited, I was told that some of the victims were in police custody because of anti-social behaviors such as petty theft, assault and duping of other victims and members of host communities.

In some cases as observed, parents either encouraged or turned blind eyes to their daughters' transactional sexual activities because of the material rewards they got. Generally speaking, all victims ascertained difficulties in getting food, money, shelter and employment. Table 4.5 presents the various hardships the displaced persons went through.

Table 4.5: Hardship during exile

Hardship during exile	F	%
Insufficient food	193	74.5
No shelter	175	67.6
No source of income for sustenance	163	62.9
No relation and friends	178	68.7
Discrimination	147	56.8
No governmental attention	125	48.3

When respondents were asked the various hardship they went through, 193 (74.5%) of 259 respondents confirmed that they lacked food to meet demand, 175 (67.6%) had no shelter, while 163 (62.9%) respondents maintained that they had no source of income; 147 (56.8%) ascertained that they were treated as second class citizens (discrimination). Furthermore, 178 (68.7%) respondents confirmed that they had no relation and friends to associate with.

During the Focus Group discussions with the Bassa at Abaji, Koton Karfe, Korodu, Tudu Uku, Nasarawa and Laminga where they had taken refuge, it was revealed that there was serious discrimination against them. The host communities in these towns felt that the displaced persons competed with them for the locally

produced foods such as cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, beans and bananas. The host communities complained that the food items, provided by State Government to the displaced persons were inadequate. This made the displaced persons look up to them for food and other necessities. In some of the towns (Abaji, Nasarawa, Gwagwalada and Karu) the internally displaced persons were not allowed to have access to governmental health facilities – such as local health centre and clinics. The host communities felt that the drugs and medical facilities on such health units were not enough to serve both the permanent residents and "outsiders".

Incase of Gwaygi and other ethnic group that fled, they are unnoticed by the government because they stayed with tribal men in places the fled to. Some of them returned to their ancestral homes immediately when the armed police men were brought to the areas, unlike the Bassas who were more in number and had no any ancestral home than to wait at the camp provided by host communities.

The displaced persons lived restricted lives in some places like Abaji and Koton Karfe. These included persecutions and restrictions of movement. The situation was captured by a former councilor, a Bassa.

> My people, (the Bassa) especially those in Koton Karfe and Abaji, were reduced to ordinary animals in the bush, no association, no friends, no food, no work, no money, and no government attention from anywhere. They were not allowed access to hospitals and even the police station. Most of the children died of hunger, malnutrition and cholera (Sic).

4.5 Jobs and Incomes Earned

One hundred and seventy (65.7%) of the members of Bassa ethnic group (surviving victims) said that they engaged in farming activities when they were on exile. They worked on the host communities' members' individual farms as laborers. About 28% of the respondents were engaged in one form of petty trade or the other. The Focus group discussion revealed that most of those who traded were selling grains for the local farmers or acted as middle men and women. The remaining respondents, 17.6% were artisans in local smiting industries.

The activities performed did not earn enough income to cater for most of their needs, such as shelter, food and children's' school fees. During the focus group discussions with the displaced Bassas, they complained that they worked for very low payments on host community members' farms as laborers for which they were not paid enough to meet the basic needs of their respective families. To them, sometimes payments were based on heaps of

yams dug up, farm size and land covered. Apart from these, the flat rate was three hundred naira per day from about 7.00am to 4.00pm. During the in-depth interview, the Bassa leaders stressed that, their people were seen as hawkers of water, gatherers of grains from the ground, wood harers, and beggars of money and food from the host community members. To him it was a terribly humiliating experience the Bassa people went through.

4.6 Children's Education

It was found that 151 (58.5%) of the displaced persons could not send their children to school because of lack of money. However, 78 (30.1%) of the displaced persons said they could afford money to pay their children's school fees, but the children were not admitted to schools because of discrimination.

Before the displaced people were settled at the camps in Gadabuke, Toto, Kanyefu and Ugya, they had already spent more than two years away from their respective homes. Most of their children could not go to school while in exile because too little money was available to live on. Thus, children's education was jettisoned. The plight of the displaced school children was captured by a former secondary school teacher (a Bassa) in the following words;

> Schools were shut down as everyone, including the teachers and pupils/ students fled for safety. We the Bassa stayed for more than two years away from our homes. The major priority was survival in terms of food, shelter and security. Schooling was not a priority.

After the conflict, it was ascertained that some of the school buildings had been used either as camps by militants or were targets of attack and demolition (cases in Zogene and Yelwa). In many of such demolished schools, the militant gangs inscribed graffiti about their motives such as: "Abasanni, agbani etayitu" kpo'ono rekuwuku aguunos" meaning "Bassa should leave our land or we will not stop war"; "Bassa must go away; Toto is for Egbura"; "All the land na Egbura; Bassa na stranger". Schools left standing were vandalized and the roofing sheets used to erect mobile war camps for the militia.

However, in a violent conflict of this nature, no matter how strong the aggressor were, they must incurred some loses.

During the IDI with Egbura District leaders in Toto, Umaisha and Shafa Abakwa confirmed that three of their kinsmen were killed and two houses belonging to Egbura were burnt in Tudu Adadu and Zegge. They also confirmed that the few Egbura that were displaced left their areas a strayed with their kinsmen or

relations within the local government area. For only two months and few day after which they left back to their villages. The district head of Zegge confirmed that "those who left their area were staying with their relations within the districts and later came back".

4.7 The Burdens of the Internally Displaced Persons on their Host Communities

Most of the internally displaced persons arrived at their respective places of refuge with nothing except the clothes they wore. Many of them did whatever was possible to obtain meals and clothes. This led to stealing of food items on the farms of the host communities. Community members complained about bands of youth from camps raiding farms at night. The host communities also complained of high prices of food items such as maize, guinea corn, yams, rice and cassava which they attributed to the influx of the displaced persons. On one of the visits the researcher made to Gwadbuke town, on a market day, the Sarki Gbagyi complained of the hardship the Internally Displaced Persons had brought to the town:

> Go to the market and see and confirm the prices of food items. A tuber of yam that we used to buy at N50.00 costs twice that price i.e N100.00. Look at the "mudu" of Gari (cassava flake) that we used to buy N40.00 is now N100.00.

The massive influx of homeless strangers on the host communities (Lokoja, Abaji, Koton Karfe, Lamiga, Keffi and Nasarawa) was devastating. It was observed by the researcher during the visits to host communities that the internally displaced persons spilled over into every available space, cutting down trees for kilometers to build huts or make charcoal for cooking. They crammed themselves into schools, churches, mosques and anywhere they could find shelter. The internally displaced persons placed severe stress on public properties such as schools and hospitals which were overstressed and damaged. This scenario was captured by Dalo (Gwagyi) in Koton Karfe; "they have destroyed everything, all the forests and food crop. They brought diseases and people died".

The inhabitants of the host communities (Koton-karfe, Gadabuke, Nakuse, Tudu Uku, Loko Goma, Afa and Agbo) regretted the negative consequences of their kindness in initially accepting the displaced persons. In Gadabuke for instance, the trees in the forest were felled and used as firewood. Jibrin (2004: 6) noted that:

> The deforestation by the internally displaced people's increases soil erosion, accelerating the process of declining land fertility and poor crop yields. Deforestation also imposed

> an extra burden on the women and children in the local communities, as they had to travel much longer distances to collect wood and water for household use.

The decline in food production meant that food supplies in the area were not sufficient to meet needs of the hosts and the strangers. The damage to banana and mango trees, cashew and other economic trees as the refugees moved through villages and towns worsened the situation of scarcity of these commodities. While the local inhabitants often fed or provided food for internally displaced persons as they moved through their villages, at times, the internally displaced persons stole what they were not given. In some towns especially Tudu Uku and Nakuse, there was a serious complain about theft of locally produced food such as cassava, bananas, sweet potatoes, beans. The mood was captured by the owner of a big mechanized farm:

> We cater for internally displaced person's needs and as a consequence we suffer. We render difficult service to Internally Displaced Persons. We buy food at costly prices. Our schools have been destroyed, our forests exposed to erosion. They rustle, steal and commit robberies. What have we gained by being nice to others except penury? Enough is enough. They should go away (Sic).

The impact of the massive influx of homeless strangers on the host communities was devastating. The displaced persons spilled over every available space, cutting down trees for miles around to build huts or to make charcoal for cooking. They crammed themselves into schools, offices and churches and anywhere they could find shelter. The vast majority squatted in open spaces in Gadabuke, Nakuse, Abaji and Koton Karfe: A local resident of Abaji noted;

> No one can imagine what it is like. Hundreds of dirty, scabby, sick people arrived in our town. They macheted down all our trees, they light fires and cook on our paths. They defecated and vomited on our` doorsteps and threw their dead children into our gardens.

4.8 Post Exile Situation of the Returnees

On 3rd July 2000, the Nasarawa State Government formally embarked on moves to return and resettle the Bassa in Toto Local Government Area. This took place after due consultations were made with the Egbura and Bassa groups. The Egbura were said to have given assurances that the returning Bassa would not be molested (Gaya 2004:21). The then Vice President of Nigeria, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was invited as Guest. The Federal Government announced a donation of N100 million to resettle the Bassa people in their homes. Because their houses had been destroyed during

the fights, four transit camps were made for them in Ugya, Toto, Kanyehu and Gadabuke by the Nasarawa State Government. The State Government also promised to assist Toto Local Government Area with development infrastructurally. The Government never had any plan for other ethnic groups that fled. There was no any mention of other ethnic group in the resettlement programmes. The reason could be that of the numerical strength of the Bassas victims involved.

The Egbura were unhappy with the details of the resettlement effort. They interpreted the government's moves as being more favorable to Bassas than the Egbura. They accused the government of resettling and assisting only the Bassa, and argued that some Egbura had also been displaced. The Egbura did not like the fact that the returnees were kept in camps before they were moved to their homes, although the Bassa actually had no homes left to return to. The Bassa on the other hand were also displeased because they expected the government to have assisted them rebuild their destroyed houses.

After the internally displaced persons had returned, over 55, 000 persons was enumerated by the Halilu Bala Usman Committee (Usman 2000). The efforts of resettlement were thwarted after a

fresh attack was launched on the Bassa camps leading to their second exile which was triggered off by the killing of an Egbura Village Head, Baba Alhassa at Tudun Adabu. The Egbura accused the Bassa as being the "killers".

On the 3rd May 2003 another peace accord was brokered between the Bassa and Egbura. Soldiers were deployed to ensure that no further violence was perpetrated. These arrangements were still in placed up to the time of data collection in October, 2006.

On 15th November 2003 the returnees from exile were settled at the four refugee camps in Ugya, Toto, Kanyehu and Gadabuke before going back to their ancestral homes. The nature of the refugee camps further subjected the returnees to hardships. One of the internally displaced persons remarked that they were exposed to hardships at the camp:

> We were dumped like refuse in the camp with little or no attention from anybody. Not even the government. There were no places to sleep, no water to drink, no privacy. People were just like animals without respect for human dignity. Everywhere smelled. People littered everywhere with urine and faeces (Sic).

The host communities of Toto (Egbura) Ugya (Egbura), Gadabuke (Gbagyi) and Kanyehu (Egbura) transit camps also had their own complaints against the government. The village head of

Ugya opined that the state government was insensitive to the plight of the host communities (Egbura) because the IDPs were kept without adequate arrangements for their needs. He said;

> You can see all the firewood (which is the only source of fuel in the camp), were gotten from our forest. Close to the camp, a firewood market developed to supplement supplies from donor agencies. Even trees meant to beautify streets were cut or uprooted. All these lead to the deforestation of our village.

In many cases, the nature of refugee camps was such that there were no adequate provisions to resettle the returnees before their final exit to their homes. In all the refugee transit camps visited, structures such as primary and secondary schools were put in place except in Toto where the Youth Centre was used as camp. There was no adequate arrangement for the returnees were to settle. That was why the schools were used as transit camps. Whatever the form, the amenities were often grossly inadequate. The persistent problems were toilet facilities, food and water supply. The pit toilets and boreholes, constructed only in Toto Transit Camp, could not meet the needs of the large population. The camps had no provisions for schools and teaching. Thus education for the children was disrupted. The same is true of health facilities. There were periodic visits by medical personnel to

provide emergency services such as the treatment of outbreaks of diarrhea, cholera and other related diseases. Malnutrition was noticeable in the children. The government could not do much in terms of provision of relief materials and amenities needed for the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

When the Bassas returned, despite the peace accord, animosity was still strongly harbored among the two ethnic groups. They perceived each other as "enemies". The Bassa were unwilling to rebuild their destroyed homes to return to. Therefore when Bassa respondents were asked why they could not stay in their former place, 147 (56.8) indicated that it was due to the fear of attacks by Egbura. Out of the sample interviewed, 106 (40.9%) said they were rejected by the Egbura.

From the FGD in Toto, Umaisha, Zegge and Kangehu, the Egbura asserted that they will not live together with the Bassa as long as the Bassa fail to accept the fact that they are foreigners in Egbura land. They asserted that:

> The Bassas are historically subjects of, and help hands for the Egbura. Egbura land does not belong to the Bassas. They should not claim land and territory to actualize political aspirations.

When an Egbura leader was asked whether or not the Bassa

should be included in the existing political structure of Toto Local Government Area, his response was:

The Egbura tradition which can be traced back to their Kwararafa ancestry should not be bastardized. Chiefdoms are not created just like that, nor are people incorporated into existing traditional institutions except by inheritance.

During the focus group discussion with the Egbura, when the issue of why the Bassa were not living with them was posed for discussion, they all maintained that the Bassa are "foreigners" who do not like peace. The Egbura still maintained, even where the Bassa lived, (that is the land) belong to Egbura and the Bassa must one day leave.

During the focus group discussion with the Bassa in Ugya, Zogene and Toto towns, they perceived the Egbura as an aggressive group who never liked peace. When each of them was asked about living together with the Egbura, they all maintained that they cannot stay in the same kingdom with the Egbura. They all agreed on having their own kingdom and Local Government Council. When the groups were asked about inter-marriage, they all considered it as taboo and pointed out that even before the conflicts, it was very uncommon for Bassa to marry Egbura. During

the visit to Ugya, Zogene and Toto, it was found that the Bassa had re-settled far away from the Egbura areas. It was therefore easy to distinguish the Bassa areas from the Eguras'.

Most of the returning members of the Bassa ethnic group settled in places where a large numbers of Bassas were because most Bassa houses had been destroyed to the foundation level. Therefore it was difficult for them to return to their former places of abode. In addition, some of the Bassa houses left standing had been occupied by the Egbura while they were on exile.

When the Bassa were asked which ethnic group they would like to live in the same place with? Majority said they preferred to live with the Gagyi and other displaced people who are staying in Toto Local Government Area. Specifically 106 respondents (41%) said they had been rejected by the Egbura when they attempted to resettle within or close to Egbura.

All civil servants irrespective of ethnic groups maintained their jobs on return. Some of those whose lands were seized were given back to them. Government confiscated lands and provided alternative sites to the contending individuals if claims to same pieces of land were contested.

4.9 The General Impact of the Crises

Both Bassa and Egbura communities in Toto local government area engage in agriculture as the main economic activity. Agriculture being labor intensive means that the mass departure of the Bassa from their homes during the conflict impeded agricultural activities. The conflict erupted during the raining season after crops had been planted. When the farmers were forced to flee, there were no people left to continue with the farming. During one of the interviews with a Bassa leader, he narrated that by the time they came back; all the farm produce at home had been looted and the farmlands seized by Egbura. To him, even the biennial crops (such as cassava and sugarcane) were harvested by Egbura who took advantage of their absence. In some cases, Bassa claimed that, even the economic trees were felled and used for timber. When some members of Bassa groups were asked whether they acquired farmland on return, all of them said that they had but all in new places. None had had access to their former farmlands.

4.9.1 Effects of the Bassa-Egbura Violent Conflicts on Other Ethnics Groups in Toto Local Government Area

Other ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) who are settlers confirmed that although the target of the violence was

Bassa ethnic group, they were also affected. Some of them fled from Ugya to neigbouring towns when the Egbura started looting and vandalizing their property.

Some of the militants extended the aggression to other ethnic groups most especially the Igbos and the Yoruba who had shops and small scale businesses. The attackers looted shops, molested the owners and destroyed business premises. These made these ethnic groups (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa), flee to neigbouring towns or where they had relations. This scenario was capture by a Hausa returnee.

> We were all asleep, when suddenly we heard gun shoots. The gun shoots continued with tribal songs. We heard screams and shouts. We remained in fears until the day break. What we saw were charred death bodies, burnt houses, destroyed properties and confusion everywhere. We were told to evacuate our houses or else…. We left our abode without preparation. Now we are back, to start life afresh. We need money, we need shelter, we need assistance to enable us start afresh.

They revealed during the focus group discussions that they too lost properties worth millions of Naira. They observed that although they were not parties to the conflict, during the break down of law and order, their business premises were destroyed.

The Igbo group confirmed that they lost one person (a baker) during the conflict. Most Igbos and Yorubas complained that their shops were raided and looted. Some said after looting, their shops were set ablaze. This assertion was confirmed by councilors of the wards (Ugya, Sogeni, Umaisha and Zegge wards) who said the Igbos and Yorubas whose shops were looted and burnt had mostly settled in Toto Local Government Area for commercial activities. One of Ebgura leader maintained that;

> Most of the immigrant traders (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) could not return. This further brought down the population of the area, and resulted in scarcity of essential goods such as spare parts for motors, vehicles, motor cycles and bicycles. Most of the food that are not produced in this area became scarce.

For the members of Gbagyi ethnic group in addition to the murder of their most prominent daughter (Mrs. Maimuna Joyce Katai), the erstwhile Commissioner of Women Affairs in Nasarawa State, complained that their properties worth millions of Naira were also destroyed. Under age Gbagyi girls, unmarried and married women alike were reported to have been indiscriminately raped by the Egbura youth.

When the three youth leaders of Gwaygi were asked why the Gwaygi were targeted; their versions were that, on 3 May, 2003,

Egbura youths who were National Democratic Party (NDP) could not stad a good chance of winning election, set out to disrupt the elections by violent means. As early as 8.45am before voting started they were already armed in about three trucks and went as far as Gadabuke. These youths began by ringing the church bell at an unusual hour. Mrs. Maimuna Joyce Katai (Gwaygi), a commissioner for women affairs, was invited to calm the situation, she requested that the ballot box in her polling unit be taken to the police station for safe keeping. The militia followed her to the station, overwhelmed the station, broke into the armory and brought her out. She was beaten to death and short twice. The attacker went to her house and burnt it down; killing Gwaygi and destroying two of their villages, Zokotu and Yewuye. This also resulted to looting, raping and emasculation of Gwaygi people. However, there are several versions of what happened and why it happened. Some Egbura youths who were asked about the incident maintained that the commissioner was attacked and killed because she stole a ballot box.

However, the Egbura sources maintained they lost two sons in Gadabuke during friction of 3rd May 2003 at the Commissioner's polling unit which also led to the death of the commissioner. One

of the Egbura youth, Mallam Yunusa confirmed that although they lost three persons including a village head, Baba Alhassa at Tudu Adadu and four houses were burnt in Gadabuke by unknown persons. Those whose houses were burnt stayed with their kinsmen in Gadabuke.

The leader of Gwaygi claimed that they (Gwaygi) were been accused of brain behind the killing of Egbura sons on their farm in Gadabuke. They were also accused of burning Egbura houses. These further extended the aggression of Egbura on their people (Gwaygi).

4.9.2 Impact on Economic Life

Besides the negative impact of the crises on income and food security, there was general feeling that prices of food stuff escalated because of disruption in production. In many communities such as Ugya, Sogene Zege, even in Toto, there were complains of absence of the Bassa people, because they had been known for the production of cassava, yam and maize. It was for instance observed that new yams would have been available in the markets by August 2003 if the Bassa had been around. The disruption was not limited to agriculture alone, commercial motor vehicles driver whose occupation include the transportation of people and goods were too

scared to ply the roads. This made the evacuation of farm produce impossible. In some neibouring Local Government Areas, such as Nasarawa, Keffi and even Abuja the FCT, transporters complained of low passenger flow to and from Toto Local Government Area. In many village markets, the flow of people declined as many visitors avoided the war torn areas because of fear of attack. Services such as milling, sale of grains and cooked food (major sources of income for women) disappeared. The usual thrift and savings schemes also collapsed. These could not continue because most markets could not function.

4.10 The Impact on Hausa, Igbo, Gbagyi and Yoruba Returnees

Most of the Hausas that fled and returned said their land were returned to them. Some Yoruba and Igbo who were also affected by the conflict had returned. These groups of business men and artisans whose properties were vandalized maintained that they started all over from the scratch by sourcing for capital (money) to start afresh. Some of them said that because of the closeness of their houses and shops to the Basas' their houses also got burnt in the process of burning the Bassas' houses. Most of the Gwaygi that fled Zokotu and Yewuye stayed for two weeks and returned to their village with the intervention of armed military men. These victims were assisted by their men for resettlement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

From the data gathered the Bassas were worst affected during the conflict. The study found that all the four transit camps (Gadabuke, Ugya, Toto and Kanyehu) were inhabited by members of Bassa ethnic groups only. During the visit to some of the neighboring towns (Gadabuke, Abaji, Koton Karfe, Nasarawa, Laminga and Shamage), Local Government Areas (Keffi, Nasarawa and Karu) and States (Kogi, Nasarawa and Benue), most of the refugees were Bassa. Even in most of villages and towns visited in Toto local government area most houses and property destroyed belonged to the Bassas.

The violence went on for weeks without police intervention. The event led to mass exodus of Bassa people from Toto Local Government to nearby towns in Kogi and Benue States and the FCT. They also fled to towns like Keffi, Nasarawa and Karu for safety. There were more than 55, 500 internally displaced Bassas who relocated to neighboring states and towns (Gaya, 2004).

The crises in Toto Local Government Area had spillover effects to towns like Abaji, Nasarawa, Gwadabuke and Keffi. It

affected virtually all aspects of life. The crises brought economic hardships to the Bassa. Agriculture which is the mainstay of Toto Local Government Area's economy declined because the youth were either the aggressors or targets of the violence. None could pay attention to farms during the crisis. Agricultural production declined because of insecurity of the area. Markets and other economic activities were disrupted because sellers, buyers and traders were scared. During and after the conflict, farm produce were either looted, destroyed or left un-harvested as Bassa farmers were too scared to go to farms. A Conservative estimation of lost agricultural produce was over 40 million Naira (Gaya 2004). The entire Toto Local Government Area relies on agriculture as the main economic activity. Agriculture being labor intensive, mass departures from it would bring scarcity of food. The conflict erupted after the crops had been planted but as farmers were forced to flee, there were no people to tend to the farms. Consequently, food became scarce and expensive. In many communities such as Ugya, Gwadabuke and Kanyefu, there were complaints of high cost of foodstuff.

In terms of access to resources and opportunities in day-to-day life the contestation between the Bassa and Egbura was the

ownership of the Local Government Area. This contestation resulted in struggle for identity, access to power and control of resources. The Dialectic materialism of Marxist pointed to the fact that the struggle for identity take on material expression such as the control over resources and access to decision and political control (Alubo 2003:66). Roger Blench has shown that this contestation is between several groups – herders, fishers, farmers and hunters (Blench, 2004). These claims were the result of the violent conflict between the Bassa and Egbura groups in which the two groups struggle for supremacy over resource control.

The crises resulted in hardship in various ramifications. The most severely affected ethnic group were the Bassas. They were the most displaced group. They took refuge in other towns where they had no relations. The education of their children was stopped for more than two years. During the crises some of the schools in the area were vandalized and the roofing sheets were used for mobile war camps for the militia. Unlike the other ethnic groups, the Bassa even when they returned to the camps had more difficulties because there were no schools in refugee camps. Children could not go to school. Most of the Bassas who were on exile could not send their children to school mostly because of lack of money.

Some of those who had money could not send the children to school because their children were discriminated against and not offered admission.

5.2 Conclusion

The hardship impose by the conflict was felt by both the immediate victims who fled and those who remained in their homes. Aspect of production such as labor, food processing and even the transportation of crops from farms were impossible to perform. Invariably, farming the main source of income became impracticable to pursue. Adjustments therefore took the forms of relocating and starting life afresh.

The conflict further worsened the inter-ethnic relations between the Bassa and Egbura. Bassa/Egbura who initially shared several things in common especially, places of worship, markets, town halls and the attendance of each others cultural festival have fallen apart as a result of the violent inter-ethnic conflict.

5.3 Recommendations

However, conflicts sometimes lead to better understanding between the contending parties which may later result in peaceful co-existence. It is one of the objectives of this work to recommend

how the conflict can be resolved in the area in question. Therefore, the following are recommended:

1. The government of Nasarawa State and the leadership of the two ethnic groups should enlighten the youth on the importance of dialogue between the two ethnic groups. Government should introduce joint development activities that will involve youth association of the two ethnic groups along ethnic communal lines like Toto youth association (including Bassa, Egbura and other ethnic groups). Inter-ethnic marriages, just like the pledge of N50, 000 for any inter-marriage between the Bassa and the Egbura should be preferred. Toto Local Government cultural festivals and arts involving the two (Egbura and Bassa) should be introduced and encouraged. Joint projects, such as feeder roads construction work boreholes digging and maintenance should involved the two communities in form of participatory development with routine governmental monitoring so that such interaction will not result to further violence.
2. All the displaced persons should be made to return to their former places of residence. The returnees should be allowed access to their former homes and farmlands, so that they can

be more properly integrated into the community.

3. All the ethnic groups should be allowed fair political participation in the affairs of the Toto Local Government. The State and Local Governments should make it a duty to invite the Bassa and Egbura to discuss and resolve their differences. The meeting should inculcate a sense of security and recognition in the people.
4. Political offices and positions should be based on capacity of the candidate.
5. The reconciliation programme should address the issues of land disputes and political participation with fair representation of the two ethnic groups. All the conflicting group clamoured for boundary adjustment and provision of each chiefdoms and local government areas. This if done will bring peace and unity to each contending group.
6. It is pertinent for government to engage in peace building and campaigns to enable the wounds of feud to heal.
7. A commission of enquiry should be constituted to investigate known boundaries at given points in time and to device a way of allocating the territories to each group to avoid the reoccurring losses of lives and properties. Since there is no

actual records on who first settled, government can seat on round table with conflicting ethnic groups on how best boundaries can be demarcated to suit the parties involved.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

1. Village ……

2. Ethnic group a. Egbira ( ) b. Bassa ( )

   c. Others (specify) ……

3. Age……

4. Sex: a. Male ( ) b. Female ( )

5. Marital status: a. Single ( ) b. Married ( ) c. Divorced ( )

   d. Widow ( ) e. Widower ( )

6. No of wives ……

7. No of children ……

8. Religion: a Christianity ( ) b Islam ( )

   c Others (specify) ……

9. Occupation: a. Farming ( ) b. Civil servant ( )

   c. Trading/Business ( ) d. Others (specify) ……

10. If the former job before the conflicts is not being maintained,

    state why ……

11. Highest formal educational attainment ……

    a. None ( ) b. primary school ( ) c. Secondary ( )

    d. Technical/Polytechnic ( ) e. others (specify) ……

SECTION B

SITUATION OF RESPONDENTS DURING THE CONFLICT AND IN EXILE

12. Where were you during the conflict? a. At home ( )

    b. Neighbouring town ( ) c. Neighbouring state ( )

    d. other specify …… ……

13. Did you flee your home? Yes ( ) No ( )

    (if no skip question 14 – 24)

14. Where did you take refuge? a. Neighbouring town ( )

    b. Neighbouring state ( ) c. Neighbouring countries ( )

    d. others (specify) ……

15. How long did you stay in exile? ……

16. During the exile, did you make friends? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

17. Briefly describe your life in exile? ……

    …… ……

    ……

18. What was the attitude of the host community?

    a. Very friendly ( ) b. Friend ( ) c. Not friendly

19. In exile, how did you get shelter? a. Through Government ( )

    b. Through Friends and relations ( ) c. Self efforts ( )

    d. No shelter ( ) e. other (specify) ……

20. If any, what kind of job did you do to sustain yourself in exile?

a. Farming ( ) b. Trading ( ) c. Government job ( )

d. Artisanship ( ) e. None ( ) f. Others (specify)……

21. How adequate was the income generated by you per month?

a. Adequate ( ) b. Very Adequate ( ) c. Inadequate ( )

22. Were your children going to school before the violent conflict?

a. Yes ( ) b. No

23. Did your children go to school when you were in exile?

a. Yes ( ) b. No

24. If no, why?……

……

ADJUSTMENT ON RETURN

25. Now that you are at home, are your children going to school?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

26. If Yes, how many children have you in the following types of school? a. Primary ( ) b. Secondary ( )

c. Above secondary ( ) d. None of the above ( )

27. Are you presently staying where you were before the conflict?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

28. If No, why? ……

……

29. Who among these ethnic groups would you like to come close with? a. Egbira ( ) b. Gyagi ( )

c. Other (specify) ……

LOSSES DURING CONFLICT

30. Was any of your relations killed during the violent conflict?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

31. If Yes, how were those killed related to you? (Tick as many as applicable) a. Father ( ) b. Mother ( ) c. Husband ( )

d. Wife ( ) e. Son(s) ( ) f. Daughter ( ) g. Nephews ( )

h. Uncles ( ) i. Aunts ( ) j. Nieces ( )

k. Others (specify) ……

32. During the violent conflict, did you sustain any serious injury? a. Yes ( ) b. No (If No, skip question 31)

33. If Yes, specify the injury sustained ……

34. Was any of your property destroyed? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

(If No, skip question 33 – 36)

35. If Yes, which of these properties listed in the table below were destroyed? ……

……

	Property	Destroyed	Quantity
A	Farmland		
B	Seeds		
C	Seedlings		
D	Stored food items		
E	Livestock		
F	Farm implements		
G	House(s)		
H	Bicycles		
I	Motor cycles		
J	Four wheel vehicle(s)		
K	Others (specify)		

36. State the three most important items to you in Question 35?
37. Comment on how important the destroyed properties are to your substance? .....
.....

38 Which of these properties have you been able to replace?

	Property	Replaced	Quantity
A	Farmland		
B	Seeds		
C	Seedlings		
D	Stored food items		
E	Livestock		
F	Farm implements		
G	House(s)		
H	Bicycles		
I	Motor cycles		
J	Four wheel vehicle(s)		
K	Others (specify)		

39. If farmland were destroyed were there crops on it during the violent conflict? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

40. In your new place do you still continue with farming activities? a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

41a. When do you have more dependents?

a. Before the conflict ( )

41b.Why?.....

.....

42. Discuss briefly the problems facing you after the exile.

.....

APPENDIX B

(1) Where were you during the violent conflict?

(2) What was the nature of the conflict in terms of destruction to lives and properties?

(3) Were you people on exile?

(4) Did you visit your people when they were on exile?

(5) Briefly comment on your experience during the visit.

(6) What are the consequences of the violent-conflict on the development on the Local Government Area?

(7) What was the nature of adjustment adopted by your people?

APPENDIX C

(1) Where there internally displaced person in your domain?

(2) From where did they come from?

(3) How long have they stayed?

(4) Do you want them to continue to stay with you?

APPENDIX D

1. Where they were during and after the violent encounters;
2. The nature of destruction to properties and lives;
3. Hardship faced in exile;
4. The adjustment made during and after exile.