

**TRADITIONAL MODELS OF GUARANTEEING AN ACCEPTABLE AND
REASONABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE NIGERIAN COMMON WEALTH: THE
TIV EXPERIENCE**

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Abstract

Tiv as an indigenous group located in the middle-belt region is the fourth largest traditional cluster in Nigeria. In Benue State however, it is the largest homogenous tribe. Its complexity in various religious and cultural practices in form of beliefs, norms, values and hopes like any other group influence the people's behaviour. This work explicates generally the Nigerian but particularly the Tiv repugnance of dishonest practices derived from their fear of retribution from the supernatural forces as the means through which efficient and effective management of the nation's common wealth can be actualized. The violators of the various norms and values are appropriately punished as stipulated by traditional regulations. These rules are veiled in mystery and actions of the supernatural beings and are based on obedience on the part of humanity for prosperity and disobedience for misfortunes. The writer is of the opinion that the negative effects accruing to the nation at the present political dispensation has encouraged corruption and turned down the struggle for development. It is therefore, pertinent for the people to hold onto their original religio-cultural systems that are built around the fear of the unknown and instant retribution by the supernatural forces against the devastating disorderliness and crooked use of the nation's richness derived from the negative heritage of the colonial masters and the influence of corrupt leaders within and outside of the continent of Africa. Some rich Tiv religio-cultural practices are brought to the fore to express how they can effectively help in efficient control and use of the nation's corporate riches without hitches.

Introduction

Human behaviour wherever it is carried out and in whatever form it takes is a picture of what one has learnt from the environment as a result of experience. It is a truism that in this world, one almost has a clean slate at birth upon which much is written as he grows to maturity. The things he comes into contact with to a large extent determine how he behaves which is chiefly

derived from what he believes and practices that forms his way of life. These beliefs and practices are learnt and taught to enhance effective transmission to other generations. They could be written or orally passed on by the progenitors of the group. In Nigeria, there are the indigenous (tribal and cultural) and foreign (colonial masters') heritages received at various points in her history as a nation state. The question is how beneficial the heritages are to human development through positive change in attitude and manners? It is obvious that more negative effects are received than positive ones, thus serving as a barricade for speedy development. This explains why Jimoh concludes that extermination of fraud on the part of individuals and present established organizations have not produced any meaningful results (202).

In the religious heritage to be specific, traditional religions are known to be extremely rich in institutions that offer honest leadership, good governance and accountability for efficient management of a people's common wealth. This is why Gbenda in his opinion suggests a natural searchlight on Nigerian traditional institutions as the only way to the nation's redemption of her lost image as a fraudulent free state (202). Gbenda is right because traditional institutions remain the most outstanding permanent structures upon which human conduct is built. The complex nature of the Nigerian nation has diverse behaviour from different groups but it is certain that owing to the fear of the unknown most tribes in their traditional practices detest deceitfulness and award punishment to violators of such wicked acts regardless of their status in the society.

This study brings to limelight the Tiv traditional religious ideas and practices as they embrace the Nigerian common prosperity positively. It explains how the traditionalists attempted to manage and achieve adequately the sharing and putting to use of their nation's communal treasure through organizations that were in existence before the advent of the Whiteman to Nigeria. Also explicated is how the same institutions could be used today and by extension how the Tiv consciousness and balance of the material and spiritual needs or pursuits could facilitate the actualization of a well-managed Nigerian common wealth. The Tiv as an ethnic group are associated to the Bantu race of Central Africa in their origin (East 14, Gbor in Torkula 8-9).

The tiv as a people

As found in Tiv oral tradition, Tiv origin is traced from a single ancestor, Tiv. The word Tiv refers to the ethnic group, the land on which they live, and to the language they speak. The origin of the Tiv is associated to the Bantu of Central Africa. To East Tiv language is semi Bantu because of both ethnological and linguistic affinities (14). In the same vein, Abraham and Gbor feel that the worship arts and physical appearance of the Tiv is in close resemblance

of the Bantu Nyanza people (qtd in Torkula, Cultural Institutions 8-9). This argument is based on Abraham's 67 word-lists which shows similarities between Tiv language and the Bantu Nyanza who now live in the present Malawi (East 14-15). This is supported by Baka as he presents the South African myth of the first Tiv man that is centred on Tiv as an ancestral founder thus: "... Tiv Awange, and his wife, Aliwe, from whom the people derived their name... Takuruku Anyam Azinga, whom elders and historians agree on his provenance that he was a South African, fathers Tiv himself" (qtd in Ushe 6). The Tiv as a people therefore, trace their ancestry to Tiv which is also tied up to the socio-political experience of the people that makes the name Tiv still relevant. As Ushe rightly puts it, Tiv may generally be said to be the descendants of an industrious man called Bantu in South Africa (*Kpor of Tiv* 6). Alu's summation that the language affinity with the Bantu in addition to the reference of the linguists that Bantu was a name given to a band of ethnic groups that lived together in Central Africa makes the Tiv descent from Bantu very convincing (2,3).

Population explosion is believed to be the reason for the displacement of the Bantu from their Sheba abode to many directions in Africa. The Tiv people as descendants of the Bantu group are found mainly in Benue State of the Middle Belt region in Central Nigeria. They made up of 14 out of 23 Local Government Areas that make up Benue State. "The Northern Nigeria Statistical Year book of 1965 put the Tiv population at 2.7 million" as the fourth largest homogenous ethnic group in Nigeria (qtd in Wegh 30). Torkula stresses that the Tiv cover an area of over 30 000 square kilometers that lie roughly within 3 and 6 north of the equator and longitude 8 and 10 east of the Greenwich Meridian which is mostly grassland with most part of it lying 2440 meters above sea level (Cultural Institutions 10). Thus, they experience both wet (April to early October) and dry (late October to March) seasons of the tropics each year.

The Tiv are bordered in the north by the Alago, Koro and Angwe of Nassarawa State. To the south, they share borders with Udum of Cross River State. From the west the Idoma and Igede people of the same Benue and Igala of Kogi States share boundary with the Tiv. The east of the Tiv is occupied by the Jukum and Chamba of Taraba State. Describing the location of the Tiv and their distribution at the Benue valley and its environs, Ihuah has this to say:

The Tiv of the lower Benue valley occupy over thirty Local Government Areas in Nigeria and the southern part of Cameroun as follows: Buruku, Gboko, Gwer, Gwer West, Katsina- Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Tarka, Ukum, Vandeikya and Ushongo in Benue State; Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Mutm-Biu, Takum and Wukari in Taraba State; Awe, Doma, Lafia and Obi in Nassarawa. The Tiv are also found in large numbers in Quan-Pan and Shendam Local Government Areas of Plateau

State. They are also found in Obudu, Ogoja and Yalla Local Government Areas of Cross-River State. Similarly, a significant number are indigenous to Suleja Local Government of Niger State and the Federal Capital Territory. A sizeable population of Tiv people is also found in the Southern Cameroun. (P. 160-161).

This distribution of the Tiv is similar to that of the majority tribes in Nigeria (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa) and may well have accounted for the placement of the Tiv as the 4th largest ethnic group in Nigeria with a population of about 6 million people (<http://www.tiv.4t.com>).

The land enjoys a steady downpour with the aid of Benue and Katsina-Ala Rivers. Though sometimes floods are experienced in some areas where they overflow their banks during the September and early October heavy rains; there is enough sunshine and favorable temperature of between 80 F and 90 F that makes the land fertile with rich alluvial deposits at the river banks for growing a variety of crops that do well in the tropics. Cereals like maize, millet, guinea corn, rice and others like cassava, yam, cocoa yam and water yam are easily grown in the Benue valley. The Tiv politically are egalitarian in nature. Their leadership at various levels of the society is dominated by` elders who are believed to have possessed *tsav* (witchcraft). The Tiv unlike other ethnic groups around them had a democratic and non-centralized system of government (Torkula, Cultural Institution 3). They had no king or ruler but operate a stateless organization manned by elders until 1947 when the Tiv people had their first paramount ruler called the *Tor Tiv*, the chief of the Tiv people. He now presides over their affairs as a leader of Tiv ethnic group.

Tiv Religiosity

Aondo (God)

The Tiv as an ethnic group have divine objects upon which their religiosity revolves. They include the following; *Aondo* (God), *Akombo* (Rituals), *Azov* (Fairies), *Tsav* (Witchcraft). These objects are not only fundamental to Tiv traditional religion but defines Tiv worldview and consequently dictate the Tiv way of life as to how they think, talk and act in their daily life activities. Their traditional belief and practice have links with the supernatural powers that are in control of the people's future upon whom humanity rely for help. A concise description of each one of them will avail us a glimpse of what the Tiv believe and practice.

The Tiv believe in God's omniscience (all knowing), omnipresence (present everywhere) and omnipotent (all powerful) natures as the supreme supernatural being who is the creator and sustainer of His creation. The names of their children reflect these attributes like *Aondohemba* (God has won or is a winner, therefore, there is none to compete with him and win). This refers to his all-powerfulness. *Aondofa* (God knows – which is a reference to

his awareness of everything that happens to everybody anywhere at any time (his all-knowing quality).

Aondonguhanma ijiir (God exists or is present everywhere - at the same time). These were enough proofs of God's awareness of all manners of behaviour and his power to award punishment to any deserving person or group whenever societal norms were breached. Sometimes a whole generation may suffer misfortunes because of the sins of their forefathers. In the same way, a life well lived by the forbears would earn their adherents progress, prosperity and good leadership quality. This according to Iorshagher is necessitated by the unending interaction between the physical and the spiritual realities that are believed to be responsible for every fortune and misfortune that befalls humanity (21). Fear and reverence of the Supreme Being encourages judiciousness in dealing with humanity and material resources.

Akombo (Rituals)

The Tiv awareness of *Aondo* and His all-powerfulness heighten the Tiv persons surrender to the claim for obedience to the will of *Aondo* which takes place in rituals and the right observance of certain laws. The Tiv believe in an invisible order that is established by *Aondo* which *Aondo* uses as a standard of measuring human obedience. Total adherence to the laws taboos and prohibitions means complete obedience to *Aondo* which produces the desired establishment of a harmonious relationship with the divine. In essence, this echoes good health, fertility of land and women, bumper harvest, long life and prosperity for mankind. A violation of the code showcases an impending danger to humanity in form of disasters, untimely deaths, epidemics and infertility to mention a few. This explains why Special Forces called *akombo* are made by *Aondo* and given to mankind to control the human activities in order that the desired harmony would be achieved for a more meaningful life to be lived.

The various *akombo* are the embodiment of the codes with their various penalties attached to them. Through the use of *akombo*, theft and other immoral acts are reviled. Properties of individuals and groups are protected by hanging or placement of *akombo* emblems on them. Anybody especially non initiate of the *kombo* who touches the emblem or the property has transgressed. The prescribed punishment of such *kombo* is then melted on the individual or group as the case may be. Unless the right propitiations are made, it eventually leads to death of the culprit. The Tiv abhorrence of ill-gotten wealth through dubious means and other dissolute acts is informed particularly because the consequences in most cases affected not only the individual offenders but the entire community. This is in conformity with the Tiv spirit of communality as a group, Torkula confirms this when he says that those who died by *kombo*

of *swende* (ritual that is responsible for death by accident) were buried in the ‘fadama’ for fear that more deaths would occur in the community because it is considered a cursed death (Cosmology 119). Iorshagher adds that some violations or gross misconduct carry curses that could be transferred to the unborn children if not removed through propitiation (76). As a result, management of public resources or utilities were the concern of everybody in Tiv community for the consequences were not only to befall just on the living transgressors but also to the unborn generations.

Swem Ritual (Sacred Pot)

Swemis symbolized in a pot filled with soil, ashes, *ayande* leaves, *gbaaye* (iron wood) and cam wood which is smeared at several places. In addition, notches of palm leaves are tied round the pot as another good example of Tiv traditional institution that is very instrumental for encouraging the exhibition of effective leadership qualities in managing the country’s corporate prosperity. Though with metaphoric interpretation, it is used here as a ritual of justice, honesty order, truthfulness and fair play in Tiv society as it represents the conscience of the race. An evil act is dictated by swearing the *swem* before *Aondo*, natural spirits and ancestors to declare his innocence but when guilty of the said offence *swem* is capable of swelling one’s limbs, stomach and causing severe headache that can lead to death. As such it is used for taking oath of office in Tiv community service for their own greater good. This entails that failure to guide against the societal norms for which one has sworn, makes such a person never to escape the wrath of the supernatural beings wherever he or she runs to (Waapela 40).

Since oath taking is a common feature on assumption of public office in Nigeria, the spirits propelled during *swem* ritual will check the indifferent attitude adopted by politicians who swear and still go about their immoral activities scot-free. Instant punishment of such people by *swem* will serve as a deterrent to others by not only dispensing Justice, sustaining social control by reconciling individuals and groups but by also fostering honest leadership as the main tool for development. The right attitude to power, greatness and wealth which are barebones of a successful nation remain the most frantic challenge of Nigerians. This could be easily derived from the rich traditional attributes of Nigerians in general and the Tiv in particular. For the priority of every good administration is to leave legacies that would ginger the spirit of immortalization in the minds of their subjects after their tenure.

Shishima in his separate remark views *swem* as being capable of availing peace between individuals and communities in avoidance of disorder. It is held to be feasible when carried out by the elders who are said to be the custodians of morality: (4-5). *Swem* reconciles individuals and communities in cases of differences in the presence of the elders when the appropriate rites

are carried out. Hugging and fellowship meals are signs of true reconciliation. With these, traditional leadership tries to live up to expectations with the hope of taking the community to greater heights. Gbenda asserts that people in authority shun evil, they live upright lives worthy of emulation and in accordance with the exemplary leadership attitudes of ancestors who had held such positions (204). This, he/she does having been aware of the consequences of dissipated behaviour which would attract retribution. While *swem* checks the excesses of wicked leaders and exposes administrative exploitations, offer appropriate deserving penalties as enshrined in the community's law code; reward for excellence in form of prolonged existence and immortalization of deserving individuals in different forms after death is made feasible. They are said to be ancestors therefore, naming of institutions or important traditional sites after them is highly accentuated.

Similarly, the virginity of girls was protected by tying of a snail shell to the waist or neck to prevent her from having sex or being raped. The emblem once tied was not to be removed and tied back except by the *kombo uikyoor* (literary, ritual of snail) priestess. The young lady was not supposed to have sex with any person until when the shell was removed prior to her marriage ceremony. Those involved in fornication act with the *ikyoor* on them before marriage for example, are considered unclean and are punished by the *kombo uikyoor* by becoming sterile or barren. They could no longer bear children in their life time until the right propitiations are carried out by the right persons. The fear instilled in individuals who are involved or witnesses of these acts keep them away from conscious commission of offences and redirect their thoughts to do the right things in order to receive praises and other forms of reward. The discipline and orderliness that this fear generates among the Tiv ensures that wherever call for ethnic, national and international sharing and management of resources is required prudence and equity is carried out for fear of *akombo*'s attack.

Azov (Fairies, Spirits)

Azov which can be said to be spirits or fairies hovers around actively though not with identifiable bodies. *Azov* (plural) or *ijov* (singular) can appear to anybody in any form at any time and place. They are not deities nor angels nor spirits of the dead, but spirits of nature. Their habitat is in the rock, water, woods, hills and mountains. *Azov* are supernatural beings or spirits but some of their activities among men are contrary to the nature of spirits because they are seen and felt. In the examination of *azov*'s physical involvement in human activities, Torkula stresses that when offended, *azov* punish by beating their mastership with noticed visible whirls that are physically felt, and by hauling stones at the family or sometimes by

visiting them with sickness (Cosmology 17). They are invisible with the naked eyes but sometimes appear to some selected people of their choice in human form. It could be on the farm, at home, at the stream and in the bush to demand for a favour in form of clothes, food, money or any other help. *Azov* give good things to people in form of supplying animals for hunting, riches, excelling in given areas and bountiful harvests among others.

The favours mentioned above are particularly directed to people who obey their laws, who are hospitable, generous and obedient to societal norms. Those who do not follow their laws and are not well disposed to other individuals are subjected to the wrath of the *azov* in form of poor harvests, bareness and blindness just to mention a few. *Azov* are believed to be haters of evil and malevolent behaviour while they cherish benevolent acts and kind gestures. Women and children are taught at youthful age not to throw water out of the doorway anyhow at night since *azov* move around houses, lest they pour the water on them and provoke their anger. Pregnant women are also not allowed to move about at night lest they come into contact with the *azov* to destroy the good formation and fortunes of the unborn baby. These morals are taught to women and children to instill discipline and protect them against evil. The punishment meted on offenders by the *Azov* brings sanity and creates fear which make people to be obedient to their elders and to respect the societal precepts.

***Tsav* (Witchcraft)**

Tsav as a Tiv religious idea is a complex factor that is originally a cosmic potency that is internalized in man to be part of his or her personality. According to Downes, *tsav* is a mysterious power force with life and energy necessary for the good generation of the ordinary function of nature which does not function by itself but exist in an active form in some individuals who use it for their personal benefits and can be maliciously used for reasons of vengeance (Tiv Religion 32). If used unconstitutionally or viciously against the benefit of the society, it is said to be negatively used and is called bad *tsav*. This usage attracts sanctions as retribution to the performer as a means of suppressing the negative use of *tsav* to the barest minimum. But when used constitutionally or benevolently for the benefit of the society it is said to be positively used and could be termed good *tsav* (Rubingh 73). In this sense, *tsav* is used in preserving the land and adding vitality to the people. In the past, people who aspire to leadership positions in the society in various aspects of life were expected to have *tsav* as a prerequisite for the attainment of such positions.

To actualize the revitalization of people and the preservation of land, *tsav* is joined with *akombo*, a major system of Tiv religious practice. The *mbatsav* with their personal power combines with the impersonal to be better functionaries of *akombo* practice in order to set right

the *tar*, “land” (Downes Tiv Religion 27). People are assured through these rites that the susceptibility to which their life is endangered has been removed. Therefore, the land and women will be fertile and the land will be free from calamities (Yakubu 77). *Akombo* and *tsav* work together in Tiv religious thought. While *akombo* upon violation of the taboos makes one vulnerable to calamities and give the appropriate retribution, the *mbatsav* in addition offer their punishment too for the committed offence (Downes 74). The power that *akombo* represent may be controlled by an initiate into such *kombo*; and the authorities (*mbatsav*/elders) of the *tar* by becoming initiates can release the good and hold back the destructive forces for the good of the society (261-262). This implies that it is only the *mbatsav* who stand a better chance to interfere with the forces of nature in addition to punishment melted by *akombo*. Through these institutions, probity that checks the excesses of power and misuse of common resources is ensured.

***Mbayiase* (Ancestors)**

The belief that human being consists of the physical, body, destructive material that ceases to exist at death is African in general and Nigerian in particular. The spiritual, soul, is nevertheless, an imperishable substance that exists after death. The position of one in the hereafter is determined by the way he/she lived an acceptable or unacceptable life on earth. He or She is considered a wandering spirit if the life lived is unfulfilled one but an ancestor in fulfilled life. Fulfilled here refers to possession of special qualities that ushers extra ordinary behaviour accepted by the community, a life devoid of diseases like leprosy, small pox and the like that leads to one’s death and of shameful death like accident (*ku swendegh*) and death before old age. Giving one a befitting burial ceremony is also a prerequisite for becoming an ancestor.

The ancestors, also called the living dead are considered to be part and parcel of their families after death who are believed not only to have interest in the affairs of the clan but to be the custodians of family morality thereby influencing activities of their people to the right direction if their well-being is acknowledged. This brings to consciousness that one’s actions are guided or monitored not only by the Supreme Being but also by the ancestors believed to be nearer to us. This brought cohesion and carefulness in carrying out assignments in line with societal norms and values. Kennedy’s assertion that “the man who sees his existence in the light of eternity will certainly think differently than the man who assumes that death is the ultimate conclusion” becomes appropriate (28).

This guidance makes the Tiv people accountable to the invisible world for every good or bad, honest or dishonest, corrupt or incorruptible service rendered to the people whether in public or private life. They understood fully well that they can never escape the wrath of the spiritual beings if wrong adjudication of judicial powers or abuse of office procedures by way of any irresponsible act is committed. Religion in this sense permeates all areas of human endeavour without exception where fear of the unknown controlled individuals to carefully take decisions and use judiciously any privilege availed them for service to the community.

Tiv and Politics

Power among the Tiv was traditionally controlled by people of the right age, experience and accomplishments. Good stewardship, moderate and honest use of power was the main objective pursued by leaders who were themselves conscious and were also always reminded of the wrath of the divine authorities by the traditional functionaries. These beliefs and practices stabilized the community and gave a sense of direction and commonness in set goals for their effective actualization. This steadied characteristics of traditional religion were however, seen as a threat and agents of anti-colonial administration. Thus the decree to phase out traditional structures seen as barricades meant to inhibit the smooth running of colonial government was promulgated to the detriment of a clear Tiv world-view with features that determine his human self-consciousness.

The existence of secret societies and cults which brought the Nigerian people together at various fronts in settling internal disputes and for suppressing external aggressions most usually became known to colonial government officials as anti-colonial organizations meant at hindering the smooth running of government activities. Tamuno and Horton attributes the dissolution of such organizations to the secret societies' imposition of death penalty, either in trials by ordeal (e.g. the *Isoko Eni* cult) or by more direct means (e.g. the Ibo *Ibinokpabi* and the Tiv *Nyambuan*) exposed their cruelty (10). But instead of undergoing a research and phasing out only the negative part of the feature, the whole structure was exterminated. Having been unfettered for more than half a century (the so called independence) of failed attempts in the management of our communal resources, it beholds on Nigerians to revert to some descent indigenous practices integrating foreign ideas that held and can still hold us together in unity of purpose as a people with fair and equitable distribution and management of the common inherited wealth for a greater nation state.

Tiv and Social Life

Traditional religion and culture concretized the relationship between the descendants of the various existing groups. In Nigeria, through sincere practice of traditional precepts before the influx of foreign traditions in the name of westernization, groups of people participated in rituals and cultured relationships with supernatural beings. The requirements of the traditional religion to the adherents became a uniting factor for all the groups. Respect for age was taught at the family level as one of the outstanding quality of the belief system. Ekoko and Amadi unmistakably stated that respect to the various age grades and elders, hard work, sense of fulfillment, good neighborliness, humaneness, honesty, and truthfulness were stressed as virtues at various levels in the different ethnicities. (112). All the large groups were involved in the practice in ideally harmonious connections. Traditional attributes like age grades, secret and open societies were effective means of subduing pressures and clash of interests. Annual and biannual celebrations which brought people together tended to foster peaceful co-existence and enhancement of the right pursuit of community goals and aspirations. The unity of purpose was a strong reservoir of power for executing all intended programs without stress. Fear of being judged and punished instantly by the directives of the oracles without the possibility of any appeal at the time also helped in revolving societies according to set goals(114). Mixed formation of groups and inter-ethnic festivities could be carried out to unite the different ethnic groups for effective governance to thrive in order to accelerate development. Therefore, an explanation on how the Nigerian abundant resources could be efficiently managed for the attainment of a meaningful development informs the relevance of the value system which determines the worth of the Nigerian citizen. This entails the way the Nigerian people think and behave. The value system of the Tiv, an indigenous ethnic nationality of Nigeria in this instance is taken for consideration. These values if carefully observed would serve as bridges for efficient management of Nigerian common resources. Below is an example of a few Tiv values that would ensure acceptable and impartial use of the country's riches for an enhanced development.

TRADITIONAL MODELS FOR A JUDICIOUS MANAGEMENT OF THE NATION'S COMMON RESOURCES: THE TIV EXPERIENCE

Truthfulness and decency

Honesty and decorum as viewed in the light of purity of human life, openness, respect for institutional and societal management and power are virtues in Tiv. As the source from which the foundation of good life among the Tiv is established, it is demonstrable that justice, integrity and honest struggles for livelihood are offshoots of truth. This truth ensures that

hardworking individuals that carry out their obligations in trust and honesty for a rich and steadily grown Tiv nation are rewarded. People who excel in their careers are considered brave and accordingly rewarded. For instance some give their daughters hand in marriage to great singers, famous kings, excellent masqueraders and even good footballers are treated with decorum. For example, the under seventeen world cup taken by Nigerian golden eaglets in --- -- attracted each player a street named after him as a reward for t\he honour than the nation. Kind gestures and brevity are rewarded because they are believed to be of value not only in this physical world but also in the afterlife. For those who lived extra ordinary life while alive, after death are considered ancestors (the living dead) and are highly respected by their family members and communities. If excellence is sought as a result of been aware and assured that one would be rewarded in this life and the hereafter faithfulness and objectivity would characterize individual and collective disposition toward the sustenance of Nigerian common wealth.

Consequently, falsehood and dishonesty, the antonyms of truthfulness that eat away the fabric of society resulting to cruel and decaying culture are deemphasized. Deceit which has no fear of God does not promote the good cause of the society and has no respect for the rights of others. It gives birth to injustice and greed that are controlled by selfish interests, a thing detested by the Tiv. The Tiv therefore, despise lies and indecent behaviour. Refusal to give traditional titles to irresponsible (dishonest, doubtful and vicious) people is another giant stride taken by the Tiv. The present Tor Tiv V, His Majesty, Professor James Iorzua Ayatse is an advocate of rewarding excellence to worthy Tiv sons who deserve commendation and punishment for those who are a nuisance to Tiv society (Radio Benue Broadcast on Tiv Day, 20th November, 2018). Though truthfulness and decency is attacked and suffers defacement at different times in the history of the Tiv, it still stands tall as a wonderful motivator for good leadership which is worth emulating by the larger society.

Endurance

Endurance being the capacity to stand tall against certain difficult conditions as a true mark of perseverance and patriotism which encourages one's self control in the midst of harsh conditions is cheered. It is a must have trait which the Tiv very much cherish having been aware of the world's ups and downs. An individual difference in capacity and temperament does not break the link between this worth, forbearance and the degree of a person's self-reliance. The awareness of the difference in knowledge, training and understanding controls the reaction of a considerate and thoughtful person against another person with little knowledge, training and understanding. A patient person accepts defeat or takes any fortune or

misfortune as God's decree. He or She is courageous in all undertakings, is a keeper of secrets and has self-control which produces reliability. This trait has made the Tiv to be an organized people that are well established in their domain as a formidable and an ordered nation state even in the midst of external bellicosity. This would help if nationally used by enduring the hard conditions of attacks by enemies of progress and remaining focused in the sharing of the nation's resources for a speedy development.

Self-Restraint

Self-discipline or control is an inner sense that prevents one from acting in an indecent manner. Its breeding of conscience makes the Tiv very uncomfortable when engaged in an anti-social or illegal act. The conscience distinguishes the Tiv from animals by motivating the Tiv to carry out good actions thus avoiding evil acts. This therefore, projects harmonious relationship with the Supreme Being for a good reward and with our fellow humanity by waxing stronger in keeping the law of the land and observance of the rules of traditional human relations of co-existence. The Tiv people use their freedom by weighing their likes and dislikes using their standards of good and evil as they are expected to do to others what they would want others do to them. Lack of courtesy breeds lawlessness, Godlessness, arrogance and shamelessness which is abhorred by Tiv tradition. The indiscipline which characterizes our present behavioural trend that is constantly posing challenges in the society today is believed can only be controlled by the will power and ethics that have a religious base.

Self-justification

The Tiv concept of self-justification (*chia I tan*) is a practical means of ascertaining self-control whenever assuming a position in public or private service. Before one undertakes a noble course in Tiv society or take up leadership position, he is first of all expected to *ta chia* (justify himself) from some unwholesome acts inimical to the course or post he/she assumes. This is meant to clear himself/herself of all allegations that would have beclouded his/her political will power in carrying out the assignment. A false declaration makes one to incur the punishment which the person publically proclaims. This keeps him or her abreast to be focused and fair in all things pertaining his or her assignment. The choice of people with clear consciences would avail impartiality, thoroughness and evenhandedness in the sharing of the Nigerian common resources thus bringing development closer to the people's door steps.

Fairness

The Tiv strong sense of equality is rooted from their egalitarian nature which concretes way for their communal lifestyle devoid of autocratic or tyrannical leadership. Their respect

for the rights and freedom of others is responsible for their belief in leaders that are straightforward, just and unbiased. Those in authority are viewed as servants who are bound to respect and implement the collective will of the people than advance their personal interests against the entire populace regardless of their affluence or influence in the society. The leader acts according to the dictates of the governed to which he is also accountable to. This sense is believed would bring home impartiality and answerability to bear on the sharing and the religious use of the nation's collective riches.

Conclusion

A community that frowns at unethical acts but promotes honesty and dedication in her service stands a better chance of growing in the little provisions that are made available, no matter how diminutive. The crooked actions portrayed by Nigerians today traceable to the advent of the Whiteman has made the writer to suggest a return to some salient Nigerian religious and cultural practices that have stood the test of time. This is demonstrated in the Tiv belief that the physical (visible) world is supervised and controlled by the spiritual (invisible) one. Therefore, the belief that the vulnerability of disobeying the invisible forces is the reward of misfortunes and consequent death instilled fear in all, hence the pursuance of excellence as a virtue wherever one finds himself/herself. The resultant effect of this ideology if sincerely put to practice today will still be glaring hence it seems to be the only true way through which the nation's common resources could effectively be harnessed and properly managed. This would also be a positive response to Gbenda's earlier call that a natural searchlight be focused on Nigerian traditional institutions as the only solution for rescuing the nation's image from corrupt susceptibilities (202).

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