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# Tiv Pre-Colonial Settlement Patterns

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**Abstract**

The paper examines pre-colonial Tiv settlement patterns in the Benue Valley Area. It argues that Tiv settled on the hilly enclaves during their early period ofarrival in the Benue Valley, while larger compounds known as the 'ikyar-ya' settlements emerged in the latter period. The paper made use of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, while its' approach is historic, narrative, and analytic. The study reveals that Tiv hilly settlementswere mainly for security challenges from external invaders. The collapse of the Kwararafa Empireand the defeat of the Chamba in wars led to abandoned hill settlements for 'ikyar-ya' settlements. The 'ikyar-ya' settlements were hugely populated because of their largeness and were headed by the 'orya' whose administration anchors on tiv traditionalvalues, norms, and belief system.

**Keywords:** Settlement, Pre-Colonial, *Swem, Ikyar-Ya*, Migration

## Introduction

The history of development of man from primitive stage to Homo sapiens (wise man) was remarkable with innovations and technological advancements. These exploit (both scientifically and technologically), weredriven by sedentary life through the discovery of agriculture production or what has been termed Neolithic revolution. The coming of agriculture brought increase food production and population expansion, the discovery of

fire, iron technology, knowledge of medicine, shelter, and later on urbanisation. In a similar manner, the Tiv who are said to have migrated out of their '*Swem*' hilly enclave were farmers and lived a sedentary life even at this early stage ofdevelopment. Due to their population expansion, curiosity in search for fertile land and security, led totheir migration in the Lower Benue Valley. Archaeological evidences clearly demonstrated that during the early phases of Tiv migrants in the Benue Valley, the choice of hilly enclave was most preferable for self defence from external invaders. The collapse of Kwararafa Empire, the defeat of the Chamba (Ugenyi) in battles gave Tiv much confidence to effectively occupy the Benue Valley area by pushing other ethnic stocks southwards, westwards, northwards and eastwards. This feat led to transformation of Tiv settlements as observed by H.T. Ahom

> The people lived in nucleated settlements and these were located on mountain tops, a typical example is Swem the original homeland of the Tiv which was said to be a mountainous settlement. However the people's settlement pattern changed from the nucleated to the scattered nature of settlements when they dispersed into the middle Benue valley sometime in the 16 or 17 century.[213]

Although, Tiv left nucleated settlement pattern to dispersed pattern during this period as a result of shifting cultivation and available land butsettled in larger compounds known as the 'ikyar-ya' settlements.

Therefore, this paper examines the various kinds of pre-colonial Tiv settlement Patterns in the Benue Valley. The paper opens with a conceptual examination of settlement pattern, and this follows immediately with historical perspectives on Tiv origin, migration and settlement. Proceeding next in this

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213.Ahom, H.T. Agricultural Practices and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv of Central Nigeria, 1900-1975', *The Journal of the Faculty of Arts and I* 46 *slamic Studies Vol. 10,2014,* *P.47.*

sequence is the Tiv hill settlement, Tiv '*kyar-ya*' settlement, the inner logic that sustained the 'i*kyar-ya*' settlements, and conclusion has been made based on the papers' investigations and discoveries.

**Conceptual Study of Settlement Pattern**

Settlement pattern is a term that is applied to the spatial arrangement or distribution of settlements within a given area. The term also denote the manner in which a population distribute itself within a geographical space it's occupied, and has been viewed in diverse ways by different disciplines like: archaeology, ethnology, anthropology, geography, economics, architect, history and the rest of others. To an archaeologist, the term settlement pattern refers to:

> The study of ancient human occupation and activity patterns within a specified area ... the distribution of features of sites, buildings, and other constructions in relation to the topography of a given area. Archaeological studies of settlement patterns deal with such matters as urbanisation, the relationship between town, village and countryside and the operation of administrative centres. Findings reflect the relationship of the inhabitants with their environment, and the relationship of groups with each other within that environment.[214]

An archaeologist sees settlement pattern strictly as evidence within a given region of the physical remnants of communities and networks. That evidence is use to interpret the way independent local groups of people interact in the past. People have lived and interacted together for a very long time, and settlement pattern has been indentified dating back as long as humans have been on the planet earth. Arising from the

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214. See definition of settlement according to archaeology on http://www.archaeologywordsmith.com

foregoing argument, K. Chang sheds more light on the concept of settlement pattern from the archaeological standpoint. His position is that:

> Archaeological settlement means the local context wherein the community is presumed to have resided and to have gone about its daily business... in this context, he described the settlement as the physical locale or cluster of locales where members of a community lived, ensured their subsistence, and pursued their social functions in a delineable time period (emphasis added).[215]

To a cultural anthropologist, settlement pattern comprises the means by which humans place themselves and their dwellings in relation to the land and the pattern of migration, aggregation, and dispersal which gives rise to their distribution on the land.[216]

While geographers on the other hand have given a comprehensive study of settlement pattern. They analyse the varying forms of human settlement in terms of their size, composition, location, arrangement, organization, function, and history.B. Adeleke and G. Leong defines settlement pattern as: '... a unit or organized group of men, women, and children making a living out of their surrounding environment'.[217] Their argument anchors on the manner in which population distribute itself within the geographical space that they occupy. When conceptualizing this term with specific reference to the rural people, it is said to have being how the people locate themselves in relations to their farms. A settlement pattern in this course refers to the way that buildings and houses are distributed in a rural settlement.

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215.Chang, K. 'A Typology of Settlement and Community Patterns in Some Circumpolar Societies', *Settlement Archaeology*, Palo Alto CA: National Press Books, 1962, Pp. 28-41.

216.See http://what-when-how.com/social-and-cultural .

217.Adeleke, B. and Leong, G.*Certification Physical and Human Geography*, Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1978.

Settlement pattern can be classified variously. For exampleE. Mundi & S. Ogunnride, F. Hudson,and R. Horton among others have broadly grouped settlements into cluster or nuclear or compact village settlements, and disperse or scatter settlement.[218] While according to E. Ekong&Ganahave included linear or line settlement which has emerged as a result of road network and river line areas.[219] E. Mundi & S.Ogunnride further justify reasons why a settlement can take either disperse or nuclear pattern. They contend that:

> Social conditions such as the need for defence against external aggressors, type of family organisation, arrangement of economy-particularly in the case of landlords, feudalistic etc. These conditions tend to determine whether people live in clusters or in scattered settlements; The nature of physical conditions such as land, farms or topography, soil type, water availability, type of vegetable among others. These conditions determine how much land will be available to the population both for habitation and the practice of its economic pursuits; The nature and organisation of the prevailing agricultural economy. That is, whether permanent or semi-permanent, nomadic type of farming is practiced. The decision of a group of people to occupy a particular land area is generally determined by the physical, natural or geographical conditions of the area whereas the pattern of settlement might be affected by a combination of the foregoing factors.[220]

Indeed, socio-economic as well as physical conditions are good parameters that influences settlement pattern of a particular

218.Mundi, E. & Ogunride, S.*Introduction to Rural Sociology,* Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria, 2008, P. 23.Hudson, F.*A Geography of Settlement,* 2nd edition, London: Macdonald and Evans Ltd, 1970, P. 6.Horton, R. 'Stateless Societies in the History of West Africa'. Ajayi, J. and Crowther, M. (eds.), *History of West Africa* 1. London: Longman, 1971, Pp. 72-91.

219.Ekong, E. An *Introduction to Rural Sociology*, Uyo, Nigeria: Dove Educational Publisher, 2003.

220.Mundi, E. & Ogunride, S.*Introduction to Rural...*Pp.22-23.

group. Although, E. Mundi & S.Ogunnride have fail to appreciate that culture influences settlement arrangement of any given society.  It is from this wise that S. Fish asserts that: '...settlement reflects not only a society's natural environment and level of technological sophistication, but also the influence of various institutions of social interaction and control on which the culture is maintain'.[221]

Another pattern of settlement earlier on isolated in this study is disperse or scatterred settlement. Disperse settlement is a term use for relative placement or composition of a collective of human beings. For example, it may look at how closely members of such a collective reside spatially in relation to other familial or social units. One way to look at the subject is to consider the concept of population density or how many individuals may be located in a given zone such as a square mile or square kilometre.[222] Disperse settlement are found in some societies in Nigeria including the Tiv.

The last pattern of settlement isolated in this study is elongated or linear settlement. A linear settlement is usually located along either side of tracks, roads, river bank, or levee, along the edge of a valley above flood level or along the coast. This means such settlements occur where buildings are strung out along a line of communication. This kind of settlement has its own merits and demerits. For example, linear settlements avails settlers' easy transportation hence they are located along communication lines. Such settlement also serves as a good platform where entrepreneurship skills are display. Furthermore, settlers enjoy social facilities like electricity and communication; they also interact with different people who often frequent their locality on different assignments. From the forgoing conceptualisation, the summation of this studyon settlement pattern can be x-rayed from the lenses of the spatial arrangement of households in Tiv society and the factors that

221.Fish, S. 'The Settlement Patterns Concept from an Americanist Perspective'. Bilman, B. et al, (eds.), *Settlement Pattern Studies in the Americas: Fifty Years since Viru*, Washinton D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1999, P.66 .

222.See www.ehow.com>ehow>culture.

inform them. Furthermore, the concept of settlement pattern can also be analysed against the scenery of the dynamics that has transform Tiv society over several decades and how this has fashion development or underdevelopment in Tiv society during the period under review.

## Historical Perspectives

### Tiv Origin

Tiv origin and migration is shrouded with a lot of controversies and myths among scholars to the extent that S.O. Ogundeleremarks: 'conceptualising Tiv traditions is a combination of 'sense and nonsense' with the sense standing for the usable historical truths about the Tiv while the nonsense has to do with the exaggerations, omissions, misapplications, misjudgements, and misinterpretations'.[223] Although, the objective use of oral, linguistic, anthropological, archival, and archaeological sources could clear such complicated confusions. It is the consensual failure of these sources that plethora of versions about Tiv origin and migration persisted till today.

Oral sources which try to justify Tiv origin and migration are entrenched in 'creation, Bantu and family theories'.[224] The creation theory, which is so common among the Tiv is popularised in works of E. Rubin, T. Makar, and T. Gboramong others who unanimously submit that God (*Aondo*) was the creator of the universe (Tar).[225]A. A.Torkula captures this mythology as postulated among the Tiv that: '... *Aondo* had created the world and settled closer to it until he was hit with a pestle by a woman who was pounding food. In response, he

223.Ogundele, S.O. 'Settlement Traditions: A Case Study of the Tiv of Benue State, Nigeria'. *Journal of Environment and Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004, Pp.21-29.

224.Torkula, A.A. 'A Survey of the Marriage and Burial Institutions amongst the Tiv of Central Nigeria'. PhD Thesis, St Clements University, 2004, P.16.

225.Rubingh, E. *The Sons of Tiv*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969. Makar, T.*The History of Political Change Among the Tiv in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Press, 1994. Gbor, T.*Mdugh U Tiv Man Mnyer Ve Hen Benue*, Zaria: Gaskiya Publishers, 1978.

moved into the skies (*Kwav Aondo*) which is his present abode'.[226] This hypothesis seems to be mythical although with a lot of meanings. Firstly, it portrays the extent to which the Tiv believe in God as the creator of the universe. Secondly, it portrays God and Tiv relationship in antiquity, their belief in his existence and supremacy.A. Idyoroughcrowns this argument with his elaborate analysis of Tiv cosmology that:

> The Tiv world view of how the cosmos is constituted is that there is a supreme deity that is responsible for the creation of all nature (*Aondo u i gbetar*), '*Aondo Shon*' or '*Aondo U-Abaverjuwa*'. But the Tiv do not have a specific way of adoring or worshiping this God other than casually praising him by telling others of the good things he has been doing for them.[227]

Idyorough further contends that: 'in between this supreme deity (*Aondo*) and the human beings (*U-umache*) are to be found the spirits (*Ajov*), witches (*Mbatsav*), and ghost (*Mbakuv*)'.[228] To him, they interceded between man and God. The spirits (*Ajov*) were held with high esteem among the Tiv because of their important role in Tiv belief system. The Tiv believe that spirits could preserve an individual against witches/wizards and ghost such that some people made images to worship as '*Ijov Aondo*' (Spirit God), although believing that it represented the supreme God on earth.

The account of *Aondo* as the creator of Tiv nation has been postulated differently among Tiv scholars. J. Orkar for example, points out four versions surrounding the *Tiv* progenitor. His first version attaches *Takuruku* as wife to *Aondo* who gives birth to *Tiv* and *Uke*.In his second version, *Takuruku* is rather sees as

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226.Torkula, A.A. 'A Survey of the Marriage and Burial ...P.16.
227.Idyorough, A. 'Ethnic Minority Agitations and Nigerian Politics: Reflections on Tiv Revolts, 1906-1964'. Orngu, C. Wauan, T. & Ikpanor, E.T. *Ethnic Minority Agitations and Political Development in Nigeria,* Vol. 1.Abuja: Danafrique Publishers, 2015, p.2.
228.Idyorough, A. 'Ethnic Minority Agitations and Nigerian...' P. 2.

a male figure (man) with his wife *Olenolen* or to other scholars *Aliwe*. His third version sees *Takuruku* as the original deity who created *Aondo* who in turn created man. His fourth version says *Takuruku* was a brother to *Aondo* and the first progenitor of Tiv.[229] The confusion which surrounds the actual father of Tiv is made worse with some other oral traditions pointing neither to: '*Shon*', '*Anyamazenga*', '*Karagbe*', '*Gbe*', '*Akem*' nor '*Awanger*' rather than '*Takuruku*'.[230] The *Shon* version attributes Tiv to '*Orii*' (black man) whose father instead of blessing him mistakenly blessed his brother '*Oryian*' (white man).[231] Furthermore, all these traditions are not certain with even the descendants of the Tiv. There are accounts that say Tiv gave birth to: '*Ipusu, Ichongo*, and *Gbe*'. *Gbe* is alleges to have separated from his other brothers to find his own settlement. While other accounts mention Tiv sons to have included: '*Poor, Ipusu*, and *Ichongo*'.[232] From the forgoing, there is confusion and ambiguity in Tiv story of origin which places a rigorous task on contemporary Tiv scholars to keep searching for more historical facts. Therefore, this debate will continue to persist for more decades if not centuries to come, unless a consensus point would be reached on this subject matter.

### *Tiv Migration*

Another contentious aspect of Tiv history lies with migration story. Oral sources and extant literature are replete withthe story of '*Swem*' homeland as where the Tiv have migrated to their present abode. The most stressing aspect of the *Swem* story is the inability of scholars to reconcile Tiv oral tradition with archaeological and linguistic evidence at their disposal. For example, the location of '*Swem*' has not been reconciled up till today. S. Akiga sees *Swem* as a hill in the Iyon area of Ikyurav-

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229.Orkar, J. 'A Pre-Colonial History of the Tiv of Central Nigeria C.1500-1850', A PhD Thesis, Department of History, Dalhousie University, 1979, P.105.

230.Chia, T. (2014). 'Archaeological Survey of Gbanger and Mto Hills in the Hiitom Area of Ushongo Local Government, Benue State, Nigeria'.  M.A. Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2013, P.24.

231.Apenda, A. 'Inter-Marriage and Its Implication for Tiv Culture'. Akinwunmi, O.  et al, (eds.) *Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria During the 19th and 20th Centuries,* Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2006, P.189.

Ya in the South-Eastern Tivland.[233] For T. Makar, *Swem* is in the Nyiev-Ya in the present Kwande LGA of Benue State.[234] T. Gborand J. Orkar point an area around Nigeria-Cameroon Border, South-East of the present Tivland.[235]A. Dzurgbatraces *Swem* to the source of Katsina-Ala River in the South-Western Cameroon. He specifically points at the Akwaya LGA in Cameroon where there are ranges of mountains with one of them standing higher.To him, that highest mountain is *Swem*.[236]

Recent research work carried out by T. Chiacorroborates A. Dzurgba's position, thus:

> The Tiv and Iyon are one family who once lived together around a hill called Swem (by the Tiv and Iyon) which is located about 10km North-East of Anyimayeke hamlet in South-Western Cameroon. Other groups within the vicinity of the Swem hill call it by different names such as *Kibetene* by the Assaka people, but it is not known whether any of these groups visits the hill to perform any ritual rites... the Swem hill was not inhabited in terms of setting up settlements on it, but was regarded as sacred and used for the performance of some ritual rites. The Swem hill remains a sacred place where the Tiv and Iyon people go to connect with their ancestors for blessings.[237]

Additional information put forward by A. Chia to justifies his claim of the Tiv brotherhood with the Iyon-Ipurugh people is

232.Apenda, A. 'Inter-Marriage and Its Implication for...' P.189.

233.Akiga, S. *The Decent of Tiv From Ibinda Hills*, Africa: Vol. Xxiv, 1954, P. 33.

234.Makar, T.*The History of Political Change.*.P.67.

235.Gbor, T. (1978). *Mdugh U Tiv.*..P. 46. Orkar, J. 'A Pre-Colonial History of the Tiv of Central Nigeria C.1500-1850', A PhD Thesis, Department of History, Dalhousie University, 1979, P.118.

236.Dzurgba, A. *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural Perspective*, Ibadan: John Archers Publishers, 2007, P.26.

237.Chia, T. 'Archaeological Survey of Gbanger and Mto Hills in the Hiitom Area of Ushongo Local Government, Benue State, Nigeria'. M.A. Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2013, Pp.23.

the existence of the Iyon-Azembe people in Nigeria who does not only speak Tiv language but never the less shares cultural trait with the Tiv. Although, the Iyon-Azembe have a dialect which is not comprehended by the Tiv known as the 'Ugare'. The Iyon-Azembe people today seemingly do not know how they came to acquire the Ugare dialect but claims they might have acquired it from their interactions with other groups in the Cameroon.[238]

Furthermore, Tivland in Nigeria is geographically separated from the Iyon-i-purugh land in Cameroon because of the River Muan. T. Chia argues that in his interaction with the Iyon-Ipurugh people, they indicated interest being part of Tiv people in Nigeria:

> Iyon-i-purugh people ... as a matter of fact ... expressed their desire to become part of the traditional Tiv day celebration held annually in Gboko, Benue State of Nigeria. They claim to have descended from Ikyr, the ancestral father of other Tiv groups such as Ishangev, Ukan, and Gaav.[239]

T. Chia's position is similar to A. Dzurgbawho claims that: 'the Ugbe, Iyon, and Utange are Tiv'.[240] Their position therefore contradicts T. Makar who potently submits that: 'the Tiv left *Swem* because of constant wars with other tribes'.[241] The submission of this work regarding the direction of *Swem* homeland as postulates by some Tiv scholars should be taken as an attempt to reconcile the protracted argument surrounding the actual location of *Swem*.

The association with Tiv-Bantu language has made scholars to have taken the argument surrounding Tiv origin to Congo Area of East Africa. On this premise,J. Iyohas considers *Swem*

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238.Chia, T. 'Archaeological Survey of Gbanger...' P. 27.
239.Chia, T. 'Archaeological Survey of Gbanger...' P. 28.
240.Dzurgba, A. *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...*P.26.
241.Makar, T.*The History of Political Change..*P.67.

hilly enclave as the last settlement of the Bantu migration.[242] The brain behind Tiv-Bantu origin has been championed by M. Talbot, and F.H. Johnston in 1926and this might have influenced the work of R.C. Abraham in 1933 (a Colonial Officer) who drew up a 67 word list to demonstrate the relationship between the Tiv and the Bantu Nyanza.[243] R.C.Abraham's 'classification is not just based on vocabulary alone, but also on examination of grammatical structure. This makes his classification more attractive than the others'.

The Tiv-Congo origin's thesis gains support from scholars likeT. Gbor who attributes the tradition which says: 'a green snake (*Ikyalem*) helped them to cross River Congo'.[244] An average Tiv man even today believesthat his ancestors were saved by 'Ikyalem' as such killing it is a taboo. Z.A. Gundu citing 'Joseph Iornumbe Ikoche maintains that: 'in the Equatorial Guinea where he worked as a plantation labourer between 1951 and 1953, the Mpama people acknowledged the ancestral status of Tiv'.[245] P.O.Atuu cited in P.T. Ahire postulates that: 'the Tiv soldiers who served under the United Nations peace keeping operations in the town of Kivu-Kindu province in Congo in 1960 observed that the Congolese have some knowledge of the Tiv in their folklores'.[246] However, all these postulations have not been investigated for a reliable proof for one to confidently associate the ancestral home of the Tiv with the Congo.In a nutshell, lack of comprehensive research by scholars perhaps; the failure of the Department of Antiquities between 1930s and 1950s rescue operations, and the Bantu homeland project

242.Iyo, J. 'Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C. 1475-1900 AD'. Ochefu, Y. Iyo, J. & Varvar, T. *A History of the Peoples of Benue State,* Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2007, P.40.

243.Igirgi, D.A.*A History of the Tiv Textile Industry C1850-2000 AD*, Makurdi, Aboki Publishers, 2007, 27. Abraham, R.C. *The Tiv Tribe,* Kaduna: Government Printer, 1933.

244.Gbor, T. (1978). *Mdugh U Tiv...*P. 46.

245.Gundu, Z.A. 'Historical Archaeology of Ancient Settlements in South-Eastern Tivland, Benue State, Nigeria', PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1999.

246.Atuu, P.O. (1993). 'The Tiv in Military Services'. Cited in Ahile, P.T. (ed.) *The Tiv in Contemporary Nigeria,* Zaria: Writers Organisation, Daraka Estate, 1993, P. 92.

initiated by the Archaeological Department, University of Ibadan in 1975-2008 makes this debate to prolong. When archaeologists and the Tiv linguists would attempt the genetic classifications, dialectology, and glottochronology, the issue of Tiv origin and migration would be resolved, although just historical time is a factor.

**Tiv in the Era of Hill Settlements**
Arguably, Tiv in pre-colonial period once lived on hilltops. Oral and archaeological sources confirmed that there was in existence of such hilltop settlements in the Benue Valley by the time they migrated out of their '*Swem*' home enclave. They may be other reasons for the establishment of hill settlements among the Tiv during this period. However, evidences gleaned from available sources have established how the Kingdom of Kwararafa was so powerful and could have been a menace to this Bantu stock that was just coming out of their hilly 'Swem' enclave. The existence of Kwararafa was around C. 1349 with its head quarters at Santolo in the Sudanic Region.[247] When it was seriously attacked by the Hausa pagans, its headquarters was shifted to Tagara and again to Beipi or what O. Erim establishesas Apa 1 in the Middle Belt Region.[248] R. Sergentargues that the establishment of Beipi as the headquarters of Kwararafa was around C. 1463-1493 and to him:

> The people who migrated southward after the defeat of Tagara in C.1463-1493 included a large contingent of Afakwariga and Pabir, with smaller number of Koro and Gwari population also migrated to the West and eventually crossed the Jos Plateau and settled in the Southern Zaria.[249]

247. Sargent, R.*Economic, Politics and Social Change in the Benue Basin, C. 1300-1700 A Regional Approach to Pre-Colonial West African History*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1999, P.216.

248. Erim, O.*Idoma Nationality 1600-1900: Problems of Studying the Development of Ethnicity*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1981,P.4.

249. Sargent, R.*Economic, Politics and Social...*P.216.

The defeat of Kwararafa Empire at Tagara led to the establishment of Beipi as its new headquarters. Here, a new population of the Jukun and Idoma-Nokwu (Idoma, Alago, Etulo, part of the Igala and Igbirra, and Akwa) were incorporated into this large and powerful confederacy that poses a serious threat to the Tiv who from C. 1475-1900 were gradually emigrating from their *Swem* home land into the Benue Valley.[250] This movement was in at least in four phases. The first phase was C. 1475-1535, the second phase was C. 1535-1595, the third phase was C. 1595-1775 and the last phase was C.1775-1900.[251] The early phases of these Tiv emigrants might likely be the ones that settled on the hills of Akoo, Ibinda, Ushongo, Dikpo, Ikyuen, Ikwe, Indyer-Mbakuv, Gbanger, Mkar, and Gboko hills of Katsina-Ala Basin for security reasons. This fact has been corroborated by C.A. Folorunso, and S.O.Ogundele who have shown that the abandoned hill top settlements of the Katsina Ala Basin represented an unstable phase in the settlement history of the Tiv when they were forced uphill as a response to incessant slave raids.[252] Chronometric dates for the archaeological settlements of the valley falls within the slave trade era and are used to reinforce the interpretation, thus:

> From the dates of the 15th century obtained for the sites (within the Katsina-Ala Basin), it is obvious that the Tiv were forced into the hills by the Jukun whose empire got to its zenith during the 16th and 17th centuries and were involved in raiding for slaves in the Benue valley. The altitude of these hills and the elaborate walling systems surrounding the settlements on them also point to the fact that security could have been of the essence

250.Sargent, R.*Economic, Politics and Social...*P.222.

251.Iyo, J. 'Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement...' Pp. 42-47.

252.Folorunso, C.A.'Interrogating the Evidence: The Nigerian Cultural Landscape'. Inaugural Lecture, Universityof Ibadan, Thursday, 25th October, 2007, P.16.Ogundele, S. O.'Settlement Traditions: A Case Study of the Tiv of Benue State in Nigeria'. *Journal of Environment and Culture,* 2004, Pp. 1-29.

here. The hills could therefore have been refuge zones
for their settlers (emphasis is mine).[253]

One of the earliest references to slavery on the Tiv in the Benue
Valley is from Koelle's Polyglotta Africana where two freed
slaves of Tiv extraction (Disele and Yapenda) were
interviewed.[254] Besides, giving distinct Tiv vocabulary, these also
give account of where they were captured.

We cannot disassociate hilltop settlements in the Benue
Valley from the Tiv even though other ethnic groups lived in
this part of the country, for example: the Idoma, the Igala, the
Ugenyi, and so forth. This explanation stems from the fact that
archaeological and ethno archaeological works conducted by
scholars such as B.W. Andah, C.A. Folorunso,S.O. Ogundele,
Z.A. Gundu, Ndera,and T. Chia, have associated hilltop
settlements in Tivland today with the Tiv.[255] Common
archaeological materials on all these hilltop sites include
remains of circular stone structures representing foundations
of former huts and granaries, grindstones, clay pots and
potsherds, remains of collapse dry stone walling system often
enclosing the settlements, pieces or parts of broken clay, smoking
pipes, and rock shelters and caves with potsherd.

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253.Folorunso, C.A.'Interrogating the Evidence...' P. 15.

254.Koelle, S.W. *Polyglotta Africana*, Akademische Druck-U.Verlagsanstalt, Austria, 1963.

255.Andah, B.W. 'Bantu Phenomenon: Some Unanswered Questions of Ethno-Linguistics
    and Ethno-Archaeology'. *West African Journal of Archaeology,* Vol.13,1983, Pp.1-
    23. Andah, B.W. 'The Bantu 'Homeland' Project: Ethno-Archaeological Investigations
    in Parts of the Benue Valley Region'. *West African Journal ofArchaeology,* Vol.
    13.Folorunso, C.A. 'Interrogating the Evidence...'Pp. 235-266.Ogundele, S.O.
    'Agriculture and Settlement among the Tiv of Nigeria: Some Ethno-archaeological
    Observations'. Shaw, T. et al (eds.), *The Archaeology of Africa*, London: Rutledge,
    1983, Pp. 274-288. Ogundele, S.O. 'Archaeological Reconnaissance and Excavation
    in Parts of Tivland'. *West African Journalof Archaeology,* Volume 23, 1983. Gundu,
    Z.A. 'Historical Archaeology of Ancient Settlements in South-Eastern Tivland, Benue
    State, Nigeria'*,* PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1999. Chia, T. 'Archaeological
    Survey of Gbanger and Mto Hills in the Hiitom Area of Ushongo Local Government,
    Benue State, Nigeria'.  M.A. Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2014.

C.A. Folorunso's ethno-archaeological work on extant settlements around Ibinda hills (compounds of Wombo, Tse Gbashanam, Lukposu, Adzege, and Alumuku) tries to make a comparative analysis of extinct hill settlements with Tiv extant settlements as he potently argues:

> Extant Tiv settlements comprise five distinct domestic structures. These are sleeping huts, kitchen huts, reception huts, store huts, and chicken huts. The arrangements of these structures is circular with the reception hut in the centre and the store huts and chicken huts smaller in size and normally outside the main circle of the compound. A comparative partial analysis of the hill top settlements and extant Tiv settlements in the plains indicates that the abandoned hilltop settlements were not only smaller in size but were also more compact in arrangement. The diameter of the huts on the archaeological sites range from 1.80 to 5.80 metres with an average of 3.82 metres and the nearest neighbour distance (NND) between huts ranges from 20 cm to 8.40 metres, while the huts in the present day compounds present diameters ranging from 1.80 to 6.80 metres with an average of 4.35 metres and the NND range from 60 cm to 8.40 metres.[256]

From the above argument, it is can be seen that the pattern of the Tiv hilltop settlements was similar to that of the plain settlements although the rocky nature of hills might have prevented the construction of larger structures and compounds.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing analysis, we have to make some summation here that; the Tiv once lived on hill tops perhaps for security purposes. And by the time they have a firm grip over their enemies (the defeat of the chamba also known as the ugenyi among the Tiv, and the collapse of Kwararafa Empire), there was no single reason for them to stay on hilltops but rather to vigorously push the feeble groups that left Kwararafa and who were at the verge of forming Apa1.

256.Folorunso, C.A. 'Interrogating the Evidence...'P.12.

A.A. Torkula therefore gives the spread of the Tiv on the Benue plains in this wise:

> The Kunav and Gaav sections moves towards the South-West (displacing the Udam) while Jemgbar, Ugondo and Ikyurav moved North-West (pushing the Etulo and Idoma) and Shitire, Ukum, Iherev, Masev, and Nongov moved North-East against the Jukun, Arago, Koro and Migili who were displaced to make room for the Tiv habitation of their present area.[257]

Therefore, the Idoma, Keana, Igede, Dom, Udam and many more groups lost their territories to the Tiv, while the Etulo were engulfed. This explains why the Etulo forms a coterie of non-Tiv people in Katsina-Ala which is the heart of modern Tivland. It is on the plains of the Benue Valley that Tiv ethnic stock began to build larger compounds called the 'ikyar-ya' settlements. The Tiv 'ikyar-ya' system of settlement forms the proceeding section of this work.

**Tiv in the Era of *Ikyar-Ya* Settlements**
Tiv in the pre-colonial societylived in '*ikyar-mbayar*' or larger compounds (*ikyar-ya*-singular, *uikyar-mbayar*-plural). The '*ikyar-ya*' settlement was principally made up of family group. A family especially in the African context simply refers to people of common blood or what S.F. Wegh terms among the Tiv as '*tsombur*' (umbilical cord), which implies 'members joined together in a sort of organic unity'. S.F. Wegh expatiates that:

> The smallest genealogical unit, may just be a small one; husband and wife, with their children or it may be a large family in which one man has several wives with whom he procreates several children. It should be stressed that the fact that a family includes grand-children both married and unmarried does not mean

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257.Torkula, A.A. 'A Survey of the Marriage and Burial...' P.18.

that it is seen in terms of extension. It is just one big family.[258]

S.F. Wegh's analysis of family group among the Tiv underscores what constitute the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement. The '*ikyar-ya*' settlement was organised on the basis of '*ihinda*' (maternal household) traceable to one paternal-lineal head (*ter u vesen*).This is because: 'lineal system is the basis of the family as well as the pattern of settlement and political system' among the Tiv.[259] Other members of the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement were the kinsmen or relativesand were considered as members of one big family.Few of such settlements are still in existence especially in remotest areas of Ichongo-Tiev, Kwande and Sankera in contemporary times.

The Tiv '*ikyar-ya*' settlement was a consummation of young and old people, artisans,  medicine men, story tellers *et cetera* who variously contributed to the socio-economic development of every 'ikyar-ya' settlement.[260] The Tiv '*ikyar-ya*' settlements had tight security and were populous, maintain orderliness, strict adherence to Tiv tradition, norms and values, while land and its usage was collectively owned. This in the final analysis preserved Tiv culture and tradition as well as potent philosophies like '*ya na wanigbian*' (eat and give your brother), *ayatutu ka uno ka se* (the Tiv are one).

Tiv settlements were scattered in fashion. This point could be more appreciated looking at the socio-political organisation of Tiv society generally. The socio-political organisation of Tiv society as postulates by T.A. Varvar comprises of five hierarchies: '... the compound (*ya*), the family group (*anterev*), the kindred (*ityo*), the principal lineage (*tar*), and the Tiv country

258.Wegh, S.F. *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity*, Makurdi: SNAAP Press Limited, 1998, P. 125.

259.Torkula, A.A.*Death and Burial Customs of the Tiv People of Central Nigeria*, Jos: Midland Press Ltd, 2004, P.18.

260.Oral Interview with Apesande Nyiutyar, Age 90+, Interviewed in his Family Compound at Tse Nyiutyar Wananambe, Mbadim-Mbatyav, Gboko LGA, 18-12-2019.

(*tar tiv*)'.[261] The compound (*ikyar-ya*) forms the first level of Tiv settlement pattern. The '*ikyar-ya*' was headed by the '*orya*' who manages the affairs of the '*ya*' system. He was believed to protect his family members physically and spiritually. Physically, the '*orya*' ensures that all members of his family work on his farm so that there was enough food for consumption. He also settles their differences and stand for them in situation where the need arises. The '*orya*' settles disputes among his family members while punishment was melted on the offenders. Spiritually, the 'orya' protectes his family through his '*tsav*' and '*akombo*'. In situation where he fails to deliver his family or investigate the cause of any calamity, he loses the confidence of his entire family and this sometimes leads to the dissolution of the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement.

The second level of Tiv settlement was the family group (*anterev*), or the '*ipaven i ken iyou*'/'*i ye ingyor*' loosely translated to mean; 'in-house group who shares their daughters in exchange for wives' (*iyamshe*), before it was abolished by the British imperial powers.[262] The third level of Tiv settlement was the kindred (*ityo*). The*Ityo* is the composition of lineages traceable to an agnatic progenitor refers to as 'Mba' (meaning sons of). 'Mba' is a prefix and it is often added to the name of a progenitor. For example, Kina, wua, gur, gbera *et cetera* when referring to a group of Tiv whose lineages are traceable to them with a prefix 'mba' becomes: 'mbakina, mbawua, mbagur, mbagbera and so forth. Therefore, Tiv settles according to their kindred's or '*ityo*' in scattered fashion. The fourth level of Tiv settlement was the principal lineage or the'*tar*'. E. Rubbingopines that: 'lineage segment occupies a homogeneous territorial area called tar'. He defines tar as: 'any area containing a group of people bounded together by a kinship

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261.Varvar, T.A. 'Pre-Colonial Social and Political Structure in Tivland'.  Ochefu, Y.(eds.) et, al, *A History Of The Peoples Of Benue State,* Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2007, P. 140.

262.Ahokegh, A.'Communal Conflicts in Nigeria, 1960-2004: A Study of Tiv Experience', PhD, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2009, P.79.

relationship'.[263] The 'tar' encompasses all other segments discussed earlier on and its gives a broader or wider scope on how the Tiv settles among them. The Tiv organises their settlements according to principal lineages. This explains the Tiv philosophy of '*orvany*a' (stranger) in any given '*tar*' or principal lineage. The '*orvanya*' has no blood ties to a particular '*tar*' but a settler and as such has less political influence among the people he settles with.

The fifth and final stage of Tiv settlement is the Tiv country (*tar tiv*), which is inhabited by the grand-children of the ancestral father, Tiv. The '*tar Tiv*' is thus sub-divided into genealogies known in line with the first two sons of the Tiv. That is, 'Ipusu' and 'Ichongo'. The Ichongo sons of Masev, Iharev, and Nongov settled closely in a geographical area, while the Ipusu sons of Shitile, Ukum, Kparev, and Ikor did the same. Although, there is a mixture of Ichongo sons settling among the Ipusu sons in Kwande (Ikurav-Ya, Ishangev-Ya, and Turan), Jechira (Ikurav-Tiev and Ishangev-Tiev), and Shankera (Ugondo, Turan, and Ikurav). J. Iyojustifies this mix-up in Tiv society as seeing today from migratory waves which: '... were not orderly but 'dislocational' and did not follow contiguity in settlement patterns according to clan relations'.[264] J. Iyo (2007:42) submits that: '.... this is also the reason why we have the incidence of duality or even more in lineages scattered all over Tivland today'.[265] Although, '*Tar*' is known to be a territorial space which man occupies, and the Tiv attaches deeper meaning to it. To them, it includes the invisible background which contains many forces that regulated individual and social life. These forces bring the spiritual and physical world into close interaction which is either harmful or beneficial to man, depending on how he reacts to social norms.[266] The Tiv settled according to the above hierarchies even in the post-colonial period.

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263.Rubingh, E. (1969). *The Sons of Tiv*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969,P.65.

264.Iyo, J. 'Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement...' P.41.

265.Iyo, J. 'Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement...'P. 42.

266.Hembe,G.N. *J.S. Tarka: The Dilemma of Ethnic Minority Politics in Nigeria*, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2003.

**Dynamic Measures that Sustains the Tiv *Ikyar-Ya* Settlements**

Most scholars have come to conclusion that Tiv society in pre-colonial period was egalitarian and gerontocratic in nature. Gerontocracy is '... government by elders. The governing group come to power by virtue of their age. They control the affairs of the people because of the belief and assumption that they know and understand the customs and traditions of the people better than anybody else'.[267] Age was therefore very important and it was a potent factor for political and socio-economic organisation among the Tiv, although it was not the only ingredient for leadership. As observes byD. Avav 'the elder must have the attitudes of fair play, and vast in customs of his people'.[268] Apart from these attributes, such elders must be honest, polite, and diplomatic in handling issues of the family. It is against this backdrop of understanding that K.S. Carlston, and E. Rubingh in their separate studies conclude that personality of an individual determines his ability to acquire a leadership position among the Tiv.[269]

*Abinitio*, the administration of the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement was on elders of the compound headed by the eldest man called the '*Orya*'. This means, the '*Orya*' in most instances was not the father-head of the compound but assumed such responsibilities by virtue of his age and abilities. The '*ikyar-ya*' administration therefore entrusted a lot of challenging responsibilities on the '*Orya*' stemming from religio-judicial, legislative, and executive functions. The '*Orya's*' responsibilities include:

> Led and directed all the activities related to agricultural production, he chose new sites for erection of buildings; he settles family disputes; he granted permission and

267. Nwankwo, B.C.*Authority in Government*, Makurdi: Almond Publishers, 1990, P. 39.
268.Avav, D. 'Principles of Selecting a Traditional Ruler in Tiv', Paper Presented at the Workshop on the Tiv Ethnic Character, held in Gboko on 20th -22nd May, 1993.
269.Carlston, K.S.*Social Theory and African Tribal Organisation: The Development of Socio-Legal Theory,* Urbana: University Of Illinois Press, 1986.Rubingh, E.*The Sons...*P.66.

negotiated for marriages involving sons and daughters of the compounds; and he played a leading role in the religious activities that were considered necessary for the well-being of the compound... the Orya represented the compound in all dealings with external political units. It was his duty to defend the compound against external threats, both materially and spiritually. He also represented the compound in marriage negotiations with other compounds.[270]

Other roles of the '*Orya*' were:

Keeping daily peace (of the compound) and settling such other disputes that arise between members of the compound. In doing this he is vested with the authority to punish and ensure compliance depending on the nature of the offense. In addition to these responsibilities, the *Orya* is also vested with the power to determine sites for new buildings, admit, entertain, and expel visitors, distribute farm land, and identify burial positions.[271]

In this way, it is indisputable that the 'Orya' was very fundamental in the '*ikyar-ya*' administration and management. The *Orya's* ability to discharge his responsibilities could build or split the compound. In a nutshell, the '*Orya's*' functions were pivot point which holds together the 'ikyar-ya' settlement in Tiv society. The '*Orya*' in every '*ikyar-ya*' settlement tries to maintain peace and ensures that members of his compound adhere strictly to the lay down rules and regulations, while erring members were punished according to the gravity of the offence. Inasmuch as the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement had rules and regulations does not mean that it was not devoid of its own problems. For example, issues like quarrels, fights, jealousies, witchcraft, and so forth were common and if the '*Orya*' was a

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270. Wegh, S.F. (1998). *Between Continuity and Change...*'P.67.
271. Tseayo, J.I. *Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria: The Integration of the Tiv*, Zaria: Gaskiya Ltd, 1975.

weak person he scatter the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement as D.C. Dorwardclearly observes: '... the head of a large family group who appears too weak in providing civil and religious leadership to his group may also be ignored. In an extreme case, such action might lead to the break-up of the '*ya*', the offending elder being left to sit alone'.[272]

Another crucial factor that sustains the Tiv '*ikyar-ya*' settlements was subsistence agriculture which was controlled by the head of the family using his influence to direct which plot of land to be cultivated. Against this knowledge, the Bohannans note that: 'among the Tiv the activities which lead to production are part of the duties that form that complex network of rights and obligations of kinship, family and sometimes the religious and political structure'.[273] This means the '*Orya*': '... had the right to take yams and other food crops when needed for specific purpose deemed to be for the good of the compound'hence he controls the production of subsistence farming.[274] Subsistence agriculture was based on simple soil management techniques like shifting cultivation, and rotational bush fallow.Shifting cultivation requires periodic movement of settlements to new land when the old land was exhausted. The practice of these farming systems was directed by the '*Orya*' and this defines how he manage land resources which in the final analysis accommodate '*ikyar-ya*' settlements.

The fear of'*tsav*' was another reason that sustains Tiv '*kyar-ya*' settlements.Tiv society during the period under review was immersed in fear of '*tsav*' presume to have been possessed by all elders.[275] Although this assertion is disputed in this current research work arising from the fact that most of our informants

272.Dorward, D.C.*The Development of British Colonial Administration Among the Tiv, 1900-1949*, London: African Affairs, 1969, P. 318.

273.Bohannan, P. & Bohannan, L.*The Tiv Farm and Settlement*, London: International African Institute, 1954.

274.Ivande, P. 'Trends in Social and Technological Changes in Agriculture among the Tiv of Nigeria'. M.SC Dissertation of Agricultural Extension Service, University of Nigeria, Nsuka, 2014, P.22.

275.Oral Interview with Kpamor Mwuese Magdalene, Age 54 Years, Teacher, Interviewed at her residence at Amaafo, 03-03-2019.

disagreed that '*tsav*' was not the prerogative of elders' hence young men, women as well as children possesses it.An elder who at old age known with 'tsav' started this craft at early stage and grows with it. This means, a Tiv elder who did not born with '*tsav*' nor acquired it through '*akombo*' (charms), initiated in '*tsav*' did not know it but was still the head of the family. By virtue of his responsibility, he assumed the position of '*ormbatsav*'.[276] And as a head of the family, he accepted any allegation of 'tsav' against him. Apart from this factor, respect for elders was the core value of Tiv pre-colonial society and elders were respected even though they were harmless or ignorant of the 'tsav'.[277]

*Abinitio, 'Tsav'* was used for protection and destruction, and once an elder withdraw his protective 'tsav'over a person, he certainly dies. Because of this singular reason, Tiv fears not to invoke the displeasure of the elders who could use '*tsav*' negatively on them.N. Abanyamenriches this argument with the picture of negative '*tsav*' which instils fear and respect for Tiv elders in this way:

> Men with supernatural powers (mbatsav) inflict and afflict their victims with disease, which often are incurable through conventional therapies. Sickness like igbe (diarrhoea) for example can be inflicted on a victim which can subsequently result to death. A mild fever or headache is also believed to be caused by witchcraft.[278]

The belief in '*mbatsav*' (plural) made Tiv society to live in constant fear. Heads of the family among the Tiv were acknowledged as 'mbatsav' probably because of their very old age and as such had powers to control their various compounds. In this way, the '*ikyar-ya*' settlement was maintain. Hitherto,

276. Oral Interview with Mtemdoo Igbanongu, Age 60 Years, Business Man, Interviewed in Mbadwem, 06-04-2018.
277. Oral Interview with Revered Pastor Akase Terkula, Age 39 Years, Interviewed in Mkar Seminary, on 17-09-2018.
278. Oral Interview with Noah Abanyam, Interviewed in Gboko, 19-06-2020.

Tiv believe that any '*ku*' (death) is cause by '*mbatsav*' and to avoid being killed by either diseases or accident from 'mbatsav', members of the family were careful with the way they do things, and conform with Tiv traditional values. In this way also the pattern of Tiv settlement in '*ikyar-ya*' system was maintain.

It must be emphasise that Tiv pre-colonial society was in fear of '*tsav*' which instils general fear among the people such that land related matters were carefully followed with right procedure. Land was owned by a family not a single individual and this defines the kind of settlements visible within this period as well. But it should be noted that the fear of 'mbatsav' among the Tiv did not stop '*mbatsav*' from cruel killings. It is in light of this understanding that several anti-witch movements were experienced among the people. The first of its kind was 'budeli', followed by '*ijov*' in 1912, 'na akaa' in 1929, and '*inyambuan*' in 1939.[279] Even in the contemporary Tiv society the resistance of 'mbatsav' among the Tiv men of God is visible. The exploits of Rev. Father Hyacinth Alia from 1994 and beyond, as well as Rev. Father Moses Utov and Rev. Father Asue are too early to be forgotten. Even the Nyamor of Gaav whose powers were questionable was set to fight and end 'mbatsav' vestiges among the Tiv, but 'tsav' still persist in Tiv society till today. And finally, Tiv religion was the basis of their social structure and of the moral code. It's bonds the family together and was an instrument that cheek the social behaviour of the society. The comprehensiveness of Tiv society which defines its '*ikyar-ya*' settlement pattern derives more fundamentally from the traditional religion through thousands of 'akombo' each with its own area of human behaviour control.

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279. Oral Interview with Iorpuu Terhemba, Age 46 Years, Businessman, Interviewed in Aliade, 16-07-2017.

**Conclusion**

Settlement pattern of Tiv from earliest times to the present day is not static but transformational. Tiv had lived on hilly enclaves for self protection against their external enemies. The defeat of their enemies busted their confidence to settle in dispersed fashion in the rich plains of the Benue Valley. Although these settlements were larger and in certain instances fenced with strong poles of hardwoods and such measures were for self defence and protection hence there was no government apparatus to provide security for them during the period under review. Government at this point was a collective effort by a group beginning from the lowest to the highest echelon of the society in this wise, from the level of household to the entire Tiv nation. The comprehensive nature of Tiv society which was built on unity, oneness, and love, strict adherence to complex religio-cultural and political organisation kept Tiv '*Ikyar-ya*' settlements together. Tiv '*ikyar-ya*' settlements were advantageous in so many ways: they ensure Tiv security from internal and external attackers, adherence to principles involved in family land usage, respect for elders, and above all unity among the people. All these cherished values have been destroyed with the advent of British colonialism and western imperialism.