

The Impact of *Ati Ator* (Honorific Chieftaincy Title Holders) on the Development of Tiv Society of Central Nigeria

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Abstract

Societies worldwide employ diverse strategies to foster development within their communities. The Tiv community, in pursuit of this goal, utilizes the bestowal of *ati ator*, honorific chieftaincy titles, upon notable individuals within the Tiv society or friends of the Tiv. The aim of this paper is to examine the impact of honorific chieftaincy titleholders on the progression of the Tiv society. The paper employs qualitative and descriptive research approaches. It utilizes the multidisciplinary method encompassing historical, descriptive, and analytical techniques. Both primary and secondary sources were utilized in gathering information. In the primary method of data collection, information was gathered via oral interviews and observation. On the other hand, secondary sources were drawn from documented sources in books, journals, e-sources and other texts related to the subject matter. Information so collected from the above procedures are evaluated using the descriptive method. The paper established that the bestowment of *ati ator*, honorific chieftaincy titles by the Tiv Traditional Council (TTC) has not significantly contributed to the development of the Tiv society as anticipated, barring a few exceptional cases. This is diametrically opposed to other societies in Nigeria where such titles are bestowed on deserving individuals who attract development to the awarding community. Seeing that Tiv society cannot be an exception, the study suggests that the Tiv Traditional Council should limit the bestowal of *iti tor* or *ati ator* to deserving Tiv sons/daughters/wives and or friends of the Tiv who have demonstrably impacted the development of the Tiv society. Similarly, the study concludes by calling on the TTC to consider withdrawing honorific chieftaincy titles bestowed on individuals who have not in any way contributed to the development, growth and progress of the Tiv society.

Keywords: *Ati Ator*, Tiv Society, Cultural Development, Chieftaincy Title, Social Impact.

Introduction

In all societies across the world, there are individuals who are prime movers, harbingers, agents, forerunners and precursors of the development of such societies. This means that such individuals spearhead the development of their societies owing to their vital contributions. These are individual who are selfless and uncompromising as far the issue of the development of their societies is concerned. The societies in which these selfless individuals live often recognise the myriads of contribution of these outstanding personalities to the development of society. It is thus, in acknowledgement of the roles and contributions these forerunners impact on the development of their society that they are singled out for recognition by their societies in several ways including the award of honorific

chieftaincy titles and such related honours to spur them further in advancing the development of their societies and beyond.

The above said, it is also worthy to note that the development of societies is not necessarily predicated on the role or contribution of the sons and daughters of such society; but foreign nationals, aliens and the indigenes of other ethnic nationalities could be the precursors of development of societies they live in other than their own. Such category of persons could also be honoured by their host communities. This explains why such honours are often bestowed on indigenes and non-indigenes of a community alike.

The Tiv are known to have honoured individuals who are instrumental to the development of their society from time immemorial. According to Gbakighir {2014:44} the Tiv did not randomly awarded these honorific chieftaincy titles just to anyone; but the honorific titles were given to individuals based on their area of specialisation, proficiency and what such an individual was renewed for. He maintained that the Tiv traditional society had such honorific chieftaincy titles as: *Tor Ishor* (best dancer), *Tor Iwa* (king of the smithy), *Tor Agee* (the most powerful), *Tor ruam* (king of food), *Tor kwagh-hir* (best storyteller/king of the puppet theatre) and *Tor gbande* (drum chief). There was also the *Tor Sule* (chief farmer) and *kur* or *Tor u tya* (warlord, General, Commander), *Tor Kwase* (women's leader) and the likes that were bestowed on deserving members of the Tiv traditional society. Thus, it is clear that the honorific titles spoke volumes as they were not just bestowed on every, Tom, Dick and Harry, but on individuals who were renowned for certain deeds in society.

In this respect, it was/is difficult for the Tiv to honour a stingy individual, a miser with the *Tor ruam* title. Similarly, a lazy person could not be honoured with the *Tor sule* (chief farmer) title. On the *Kur* or *Tor Tya* for instance, East {1965:382} informs that the man suitable for election to the office of the *Kur* (war commander) was a brave warrior who had a following of good fighting men. He noted that the Tiv received the title of the *Kur* from Takum and Donga; and that the name is derived from the Chamba word for chief, *Kuru* which he reported corresponds to the Jukun *aku*. The insignia of office of the *kur* was a cap/straw hat, a white gown and a broad-bladed spears or a sword to use in battle {East 1965}. The paper is therefore motivated by the desire of the researcher to assess the impact the honorific chieftaincy title holders have brought to bear on the development of the Tiv society of Central Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Honorific title holders across various African Societies are known to have attracted development to the awarding communities and institutions. However, it is observable by the researcher that this rule has an exception in Tiv society where the *ati ator* {honorific chieftaincy title holders} have been bestowed on individuals who have not significantly contributed to the development of Tiv society; but their choice primarily based on the personal achievements of the awardees and or the personal interests of some political gladiators in Tivland to achieve some political goals. This has deprived Tiv society of the much needed development that would have accrued from the award of these honorific

chieftaincy titles. It is with the above background that the paper seeks to find out ways by which the Tiv society would come out of this social malady and attract development to the society.

Conceptual Clarity

Ati ator: This is derived from *iti tor* (singular) and *ati ator* (plural) which signifies honorific chieftaincy title or titles as the case may be. The two concepts in each sense of usage are nouns i.e *iti/ati* meaning names giving to a king for the purposes of identification. To Karshima {2013:144} *iti tor/ati ator* refers to royal or chieftaincy title. In his conception, Gbakighir {2014:44} is of the view that *iti tor/ati ator* refers to an honour bestowed on a man or woman in recognition of his/her excellence or outstanding performance in a given area/endeavour in order to encourage and uplift the person.

Odogwu in his blog states that, title taking is an inherent element of culture of most ethnic nationalities in Africa. Title taking is valued as it is one of the greatest instruments of social control and authority which confers a great deal of respect on titled men. In this perspective, Odogwublog.com further argues that it is a sign of respect to confer an individual with traditional or chieftaincy title; pointing out that such titles are conferred on men/women of substance or people who have distinguished themselves from others by a traditional ruler. It therefore, implies that honorific chieftaincy titles are supposed to be conferred on highly accomplished men/women of any given society or community.

Adega{nd:1} similarly intimates that *iti tor/ati ator* honorific chieftaincy titles like any other award of honour attracts certain privileges, recognition, prestige and honour to the recipient who in a reciprocal gesture also have certain contributions which the recipient or honouree makes to the development or betterment of the awarding institution and or community/society. In addition, the recipient/honouree promotes the values and ideals as well as protecting the interest of the awarding institution, community or society in all circumstances.

In Tiv society, there are certain titles that are the prerogative of the male gender while some other titles are the exclusive reserve of women. For instance, it is rare to have a woman assume the title of *kur* or *Tor u tya* (a general, warlord, war commander); not because the Tiv society lacks brave women but on the account of nature and gender inhibitions. On the one hand, it would be foolhardy for a man to aspire to the title of *pendatyo* (a husband's pillow) which by nature and gender inclination is a female oriented title, hence the *pendatyo* is a title of respect accorded a man's most loved wife in whom the man finds solace, peace and comfort.

From the foregone, it is to be noted that honorific chieftaincy title institution plays a fundamental role in grassroots development in particular and community development at large in contemporary Tiv society and Nigeria as a whole; especially if those honoured are not so honoured out of the personal interest of the awarding institution.

Brief History of *Titor/ati ator* (Honourific Chieftaincy Titles) in Tiv Society

Aye {2020:99} notes that the Tiv originally did not have any administrative divisions nor chiefs and councils. That means that prior to colonialism, leadership in Tiv society was based on age (gerontocracy), influence and affluence. The above scenario explains why when the idea of honourific titles was first introduced in Tiv society, the honourees/recipient of such honours/titles went to the Jukun (*Tor Agbande*) and Chamba (*Kur/Tor u tya*) for ratification. However, the egalitarian and classless status of the Tiv did not remain for long as the Tiv started agitating for a paramount ruler, and began to honour outstanding members of the Tiv society albeit haphazardly and uncoordinated.

Gbakighir{2014:44} attributes this phenomenon to the increasing population of the Tiv, influence of western education, government officials and the socialisation of the Tiv without other ethnic nationalities from the Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria from among whom the Tiv first developed and imbibed the idea of honourific chieftaincy titles from. While pointing out the fact that such *iti tor/ati a tor* (honourific titles) were bestowed on deserving individuals without pomp and ceremony as it is the case in contemporary Tiv society; Gbakighir further went a step further in fingering the Ikyurav-Tiev of the present Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State as the first clan to have so honoured a distinguished son of theirs. The recipient being Atim Ateze who was honoured with the *iti tor* of "*kur utya*" (war commander) Gbakighir{2014}.

He maintains that, following this development, other prominent Tiv sons started adopting *ati ator* such as "*kpereketange u Tiv*" (spider of the Tiv), *Wantaregh u Ipusu* (Son of the soil from Ipusu lineage) and the like *iti* or *ati ator* on their own accord. Thus, since the honourific titles had been introduced into Tiv society but were operating without any guiding principles; the Tiv Traditional Council under the leadership of Tor Tiv III, HRM Orchivirigh Dr. James Akperan Orshi, OON inaugurated a committee to work out the modalities upon which the award of *iti tor/ati ator* would subsequently be conferred on deserving Tiv sons, daughters and friends Gbakighir {2014:44}. Sadly enough, shortly after its inauguration, the committee would not complete its assignment before HRM Orchivirigh Dr. James Akperan Orshi, OON would transit to join his ancestors in 1990.

Contributing on the origin of Tiv Honourific Chieftaincy titles, Torkula {2006:133-134} avers that in the Tiv culture, every achievement was respected and recognised. He opined that the significance of achievements in Tiv worldview was hinged on the belief that the person's potentials, ability and hard work alone could not bring about any significant achievements, unless it was backed by *tsav* (witchcraft) and *akombo* (rituals/mystical forces). This was because, for an individual to be initiated into *tsav* and *akombo* and for the person to be able to manipulate these paranormal forces to realise any objective, was no mean achievements; hence not everybody in Tiv society was opportune to do this or had the wherewithal to come about these. Thus, in traditional Tiv society, certain members attained certain statuses through the instrumentality and mediums of *tsav* and *akombo* Torkula {2006:135}.

Ati ator (Honorific Chieftaincy Titles) and Contemporary Tiv Society

To Torkula {2006:133}, every achievement in the society is usually honoured, respected and recognised. As a worldwide practice, achievements could be attained owing to one's potentials, ability or hard work. He further stated that in some cultures, an achievement could be hereditary from the person's family, parents, lineage or clan. He alluded to the fact that some achievements are greater than others due to such factors as the nature and opportunities that are available to the person. Also, knowing that achievements are accompanied by psychological and material benefits, everybody aspires towards achieving one thing or the other in life Torkula {2006:133}. This is the secret behind every human person having an ambition, short or tall depending on the opportunity available to the individual, supported by his personal and "perhaps spiritual" abilities.

In furtherance of achieving the above objective, Dr. Torkula on April 2, 1993 inaugurated an 11-man Tiv Honorific Chieftaincy titles organising Committee at the Tor Tiv Palace in Gboko, Benue State. The steering committee was chaired by HRH Chief Thomas Tule Jam Gbinde, *Ter Kyoorl*. The committee thus recommended to the Tor Tiv that for any individual to be qualified for the honorific chieftaincy title of the Tiv Traditional Council; he/she must be a person of truthful character, proven integrity and also humble.

The Committee further suggested that other criteria for the award should be based on the recipient's promotion of togetherness, peace, progression in his/her chosen field as well as the development of Tivland, Benue State and Nigeria as a whole. Posthumous awards to deserving Tiv sons, daughters and friends who were deceased was also suggested by the committee. The honourific chieftaincy titles of the Tiv Traditional Council (TTC) was to be two pronged: (i) in recognition of the recipient's worthy character/good will (ii) appreciation with the latter category specifically reserved for the female folk Gbakighir (2014:47).

Since the inception of the honourific chieftaincy titles conferred on deserving individuals by the Tiv Traditional Council in 1994; the following personalities of Tiv extraction, wives, sons and daughters and or friends, living or dead have been honoured with different chieftaincy titles by the Tiv Traditional Council. These titles confer on the recipients the prefix chief to their names.

A. Maiden Edition: April 16th, 1994 at Tor Tiv Palace, Gboko

S/no.	Name	Main Title	Complimentary Title
1.	Senator Dr. Joseph Sarwuan Tarkaa	<i>Ikyarem i Tiv</i> {Green Snake of the Tiv nation-totem}	-
2.	Hon. Ayua Num	<i>Ishua i Tiv</i> {weaver Bird of the Tiv nation}	-
3.	Hon. Athanasius Angereke	<i>Ibugh Ashe i Tiv</i> {wise one of the Tiv nation}	-
4.	Mr. Martins Joseph Dent	<i>Asôr Tar u Tiv</i> {Administrator of the Tiv nation}	-
5.	Shagbaor Ako Dzungwe Shande	<i>Ityungu mnger i Tiv</i> {Pool of the Tiv nation}	-
B.	May 22, 1994		
6.	Mr. Aper Aku	<i>Akinde u Tiv</i> {Uniter of Tiv nation}	-
7.	Brig. Gen. J. Atom Akpera (Rtd)	<i>Nom or u Tiv</i> {valiant of the Tiv nation}	-
8.	Eng. Barnabas A.I. Gemade	<i>Nom Iyange i Tiv</i> {Radiant Sun of the Tiv nation}	Mrs. Victoria Mngunyi Gemade- <i>Wankur u Nom Iyange i Tiv</i> {source of radiant sun of the Tiv nation}
9.	Mrs. Lucy Yahemba Anapine Katsina-Ala	<i>Kasev Kyundu u Tiv</i> {Favourite/unequaled wife of Tiv nation}	-
10.	Sir Ignatius Nomhwange	<i>Ivaan Ayange i Tiv</i> {Barbed arrow of the Tiv nation}	Mrs Catherine Ngudzan Nomhwange- <i>Ako u Ivaan ayange i Tiv</i> {Shaft of the barbed arrow of the Tiv nation}
11.	Mr. Ambrose Pine Iortyer	<i>Nomhwange u Tiv</i> {Pole of the Tiv nation}	Mrs. Margaret Ngi Iortyer- <i>Gbamule u Nomhwange u Tiv</i> {Shade of the pole of the Tiv nation}
12.	Hon. Padopads Dooga Awunah	<i>Tagher-Tagher u Tiv</i> {Prominent son of the Tiv nation}	Mrs. Helen Avershima Awunah- <i>Shagba Kwase u Tagher-Tagher u Tiv</i> {Distinguished wife of the prominent son of Tiv nation}
13.	Mr. Denen Tofi	<i>Ijor-Agboghol i Tiv</i> {rocky well of the Tiv nation}	Mrs. Ayangeahungur Tofi- <i>Kucha u ijor-Agboghol i Tiv</i> {calabash of the rocky well of the Tiv nation}
14.	Mr. Joseph Kennedy Nyikwagh Waku	<i>Wan Begha u Tiv</i> {Cub of the Lion of Tiv nation}	-
C.	October 22, 1994		
15.	Mrs. Victoria Mbakaan Tsenzughul	<i>Alomade u Tiv</i> {Plum of the Tiv nation}	-
16.	Brig. Gen. Stephen Gbehe Ikya	<i>Jime Nor i Tiv</i> {Back of Elephant of Tiv nation}	Mrs. Mary Ikya- Ulum U jime Nor u Tiv {prestige of back of elephant of Tiv nation}
17.	Hon. Elizabeth Afadzwana Ivase	<i>Pendatyo u Tiv</i> {favourite wife of the Tiv nation}	-

18.	Dr. Joshua Atume Adagba	<i>Atakpa u Tiv</i> {Herbal antidote of Tiv nation}	Mrs. Susan Atume Adagba- <i>Ityegh ki Atakpa u Tiv</i> {pot of the herbal antidote of Tiv nation}
19.	Alh. Ahmed Ibn Anyamikyegh	<i>Igyuve i Tiv</i> {Eagle of the Tiv nation}	Mrs Sussy Dooshima Amina Anyamikyegh- <i>Iya-i-Igyuve-i-Tiv</i> {Nest of the Eagle of the Tiv nation}
20.	Dr. Ignatius Aker Gajir	<i>Ikpamkor i Tiv</i> {Trumpet of Tiv nation}	Mrs. Veronica Nyieii Gajir- <i>Kolugh ku Ikpamkor i Tiv</i> {Alarm of the trumpet of Tiv nation}
			Source: (Gbakighir 2014: 50-52).
D.	December 31, 1994		
21.	Prof. Daniel Iyorkegh Saor	<i>Igyungu-i-mfe-i-Tiv</i> {Fountain of knowledge of the Tiv nation}	Mrs Stella Fasoron Saor- <i>Iwanger-i-Igyungu-mfe-i-Tiv</i> {Brightness of the Fountain of knowledge of the Tiv nation}
			Mrs. Judith Mnguecia Saor- <i>Jingi-i-Igyungu-mfe-i-Tiv</i> {Mirror of the Fountain of knowledge of the Tiv nation}
22.	Col. Benjamin Ityôkumba Aboho	<i>Ikyuen i Tiv</i> {Precious stone of Tiv nation}	Mrs. Juliana Movihinze Aboho- <i>Ishan-i-Ikyuen-i-Tiv</i> {Star of the Precious stone of Tiv nation}
23.	Air Commodore Jonah David Jang (Rtd)	<i>Hur-or-u-Tiv</i> {Friend of the Tiv nation}	Mrs. Tabitha Jang- <i>Ya-u-Hur-or-u-Tiv</i> {Home of Friend of the Tiv nation}
24.	Judge Angwe Asen (Rtd)	<i>Yar-Asuwa-i-Tiv</i> {The Deer of the Tiv nation}	Mrs Blessing Iveren Angwe Asen- <i>Shima-i-Yar-Asuwa-i-Tiv</i> {Heart of the Deer of Tiv nation}
25.	AVM. Yusuf Kwaghdo Allam (Rtd)	<i>Kumuntya-u-Tiv</i> {war commander of the Tiv nation}	Mrs. Theresa Ngozi Allam- <i>Daka-u-Kumuntya-u-Tiv</i> {Strength of the war commander of the Tiv nation}
26.	Alh. Aliyu Mohammed	<i>Zege-mule-u-Tiv 1</i> {Big shade of the Tiv 1}	-
E.	December 31, 1995		
27.	Chief Emmanuel Allagh	<i>Garyô-u-Tiv</i> {Iron fence of the Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs Eugenia H. Allagh- <i>Nguliamga-u-Garyô-u-Tiv</i> {Unmistakable of the Iron fence of the Tiv nation}
28.	Chief Edward Ashiekaa	<i>Torfanatindi-u-Tiv</i> {Legal Luminary of the Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Nguungwan Ashiekaa- <i>Idyer-i-Torfanatindi-u-Tiv</i> {The wig of the Legal Luminary of the Tiv nation}
			Chief Mrs Msurshima Ashiekaa- <i>Ikyondo-i-Torfanatindi-u-Tiv</i> {Gown of the Legal Luminary of the Tiv nation}
29.	Chief Joseph Zendesha	<i>Gafa-u-Tiv</i> {The Falcon of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Rachael W. Zendesha- <i>Ashe-a-Gafa-u-Tiv</i> {The eyes of the Falcon of Tiv nation}

			(Gbakighir 2014:53-54)
F.	December 27, 1996		
30.	Chief. Mrs Ashitile Avaa Lôhô	<i>Alakpa-u-Tiv</i> {Special yam of the Tiv nation}	-
31.	Chief Asôn Bur	<i>Anongo-Tar-u-Tiv</i> {Builder of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Bur- <i>Mhen-u-Anongo-Tar-u-Tiv</i> {The thought Builder of Tiv nation}
32.	Hon. Chief Mrs. Keziah Nguher Agundu	<i>Nagbaa-u-Tiv</i> {The best loved wife of the Tiv nation}	-
33.	Hon. Chief Dan Mou	<i>Ato-a-Tiv</i> {The ears of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Victoria Mou- <i>Mungwa-u-Ato-a-Tiv</i> { Cottons of the ears of Tiv nation}
34.	Chief Isaac Wakombo	<i>Imenger-i-Tiv</i> {Lamp of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Wakombo- <i>Mkurem-ma-Imenger-i-Tiv</i> {Oil of the Lamp of Tiv nation}
G	December 17, 1997		
35.	Engr. Chief. Raymond Ihyembe	<i>Tsar-u-Tiv</i> {The bridge of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Obiageli N. Ihyembe- <i>Ityough-ki-Tsar-u-Tiv</i> {Head bridge of Tiv nation}
36.	Chief Chia Surma	<i>Ganden-u-Tiv</i> {Elder statesman of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs Franca Mchivir Surma- <i>Mlu-u-Ganden-u-Tiv</i> { The outlook of Elder statesman of Tiv nation}
H.	April 7, 2001		
37.	Hajiya Chief Mrs. Mzamber Farida Waziri	<i>Shagba-wan-kwase-u-Tiv</i> {Distinguished daughter of Tiv nation}	Alh. Chief Adamu Waziri- <i>Zege-wankem-u-Tiv</i> {Great in-law of the Tiv nation}
I.	May 27, 2001		
38.	Hon. Chief Mrs Margaret Icheen	<i>Shagba-kwase -u-Tiv</i> {Distinguished woman of the Tiv nation}	-
39.	Alh. Atiku Abubakar	<i>Zege-mule-u-Tiv II</i> {Big shade of the Tiv nation II}	Hajiya Titi Abubakar- <i>Mkunduyol -u-zege-mule-u-Tiv</i> {The comfort of the big shade of the Tiv nation II}
J.	June 9, 2001		
40.	Hon. Chief Abu King Shuluwa	<i>Sema-wan-u-Tiv</i> {Core son of the Tiv}	Chief Mrs. Elizabeth Shuluwa- <i>Ishuwen-i-sema-wan-u-Tiv</i> {Supporter of the core son of the Tiv}
K.	November 29, 2003		
41.	H.E. Rev. Chief. Jolly Nyame	<i>Zege-Hur-or-u-Tiv</i> {Great friend of the Tiv nation}	H.E. Chief Mrs. Priscilla Nyame- <i>Doashe-u-zege-hur-or-u-Tiv</i> {Beauty of the Great friend of the Tiv nation}
L.	December 11, 2004		
42.	H.E. Chief Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedion	<i>Zege Gbenda-u-Tiv</i> {Great road of the Tiv nation}	H.E. Chief Mrs. Eki Igbinedion- <i>Mdoo-u-Zege-Gbenda-u-Tiv</i> {The beauty of the Great road of the Tiv nation}

43.	Coach Chief Godwin Koko Uwua	<i>Tor-Fan-Bol-u-Tiv</i> {The best footballer of Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Rebecca Koko Uwua- <i>Agirigi-u-Tor-Fan-Bol-u-Tiv</i> {The field of the best footballer of Tiv nation}
M.	March 9, 2012		
44.	H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	<i>Zege-jende-i-Tiv</i> {Great companion of the Tiv nation}	_____
N.	June 22, 2012		
45.	Hon. Dr. Joseph Kenneth Iorhemba Ugela	<i>Orwasen Tar-u-Tiv</i> {The helper of Tiv nation}	Mrs. Monica Nguyan Ugela- <i>Shima-i-Mhoon-i-orwasen tar-u-Tiv</i> {The merciful heart of helper of Tiv nation}
46.	Rt. Hon. Goddy Igbaraav Ikerave	<i>Imaagh-ki-Abaver-a-Tiv</i> {Structure of information of Tiv nation}	Mrs. Bridget Hussaina Ikerave- <i>Ikyamegh-ki-Imagh-ki-abaver-a-Tiv</i> {Brick of the Structure of information of Tiv nation}
47.	Chief. Jonathan Terlumun Akputu	<i>Orfan-sev-u-Tiv</i>	Chief Mrs. Bridget Demvihin Akputu- <i>Mtsegh-u-orfan-sev-u-Tiv</i>
48.	Dr. Terhemba Shija	<i>Zege-kwaghfan-u-Tiv</i> {Great knowledge of Tiv nation}	Barr. Mrs. Susan Shija- <i>Mhen-u-zege-kwaghfan-u-Tiv</i> {The thought of the Great knowledge of Tiv nation}
49.	Dr. Terkura Joseph Suswam	<i>Zege-iwanger-i-Tiv</i> {Great light of the Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Achenyo Suswam- <i>lengem-i-zege -iwanger -i-Tiv</i> {The brightness of the Great light of the Tiv nation}

It is worthy to note that all the honourific titles from inception on April 16, 1994-June 22, 2012 were conferred on the honourees by HRM Orchivirigh Dr. Alfred Akawe Torkula, CFR. The honourees by their titles are accorded the privilege of being advisers to the Tor Tiv and members of the *Ijir tamen* (Supreme Council of the Tiv) (Gbakirghir 2014: 58).

Sequel to the honourific titles conferred on deserving Tiv sons, daughters, wives and friends of the Tiv by HRM Orchivirigh Dr. Alfred Akawe Torkula above; HRM Orchivirigh Prof. James Iorzua Ortese Ayatse, Tor Tiv V on the 8th April, 2021 at the Tor Tiv palace in Gboko conferred seven (7) honourific chieftaincy titles on some personalities. They were the first since those conferred on June 22, 2012 and also the first by the Tor Tiv V since he ascended the throne of his ancestors in 2016. Those so honoured included:

S/no.	Name	Main Title	Complimentary Title
0.	April 8, 2021		
50.	Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila	<i>Iwasen i Tiv</i> {The helper of Tiv nation}	Hajia Salamatu Femi Gbajabiamila- <i>Agee a Iwasen i Tiv</i> {The strength of the helper of Tiv nation}
51.	H.E. Alh. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal	<i>Ikyar i Tiv</i> {Friend of Tiv nation}	Hajiya Mariya Aminu Tambuwal- <i>Ishuwen i Kyar i Tiv</i> {The support of the friend of Tiv nation}
52.	H.E. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike	<i>Igyuve i Tiv II</i> {The Eagle of the Tiv nation II}	Justice Eberechi Suzzette Wike- <i>Iya i Igyuve i Tiv II</i> {The nest of the Eagle of the Tiv nation II}
53.	H.E. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi	<i>Tyemimongo i Tiv</i> {Good neighbour of the Tiv nation}	Chief Mrs. Monica Ugochi Ugwuanyi- <i>Msurshima u Tyemimongo i Tiv</i> {The comfort of the good neighbour of the Tiv nation}
54.	H.E. Engr. Abdullahi A. Sule	<i>Asôr Mtem u Tiv</i> {Peace Builder of the Tiv nation}	Hajia Silifat Abdullahi Adamu- <i>Hwan u Asôr Mtem u Tiv</i> {Rib of the Peace Builder of the Tiv nation}
55.	Chief Kanu Agabi SAN, CON	<i>Ijende i Tiv</i> {Companion of the Tiv nation}	Dr. Mrs. Imaji Kanu Agabi- <i>Shima i Ijende i Tiv</i> {Heart of the Companion of the Tiv nation}
56.	Prof. Shima Gyoh	<i>Atakpa u Tiv II</i> {Healing recipe of Tiv nation II}	Mrs. Samlat Gyoh- <i>Ityegh ki Atakpa u Tiv II</i> {Pot of the healing recipe of Tiv nation}

(Shinyi Tyozua 2021:1)

It is to be noted that while the Tor Tiv V and his guests celebrated, dined and wined at the Tor Tiv palace in Gboko; the Nigerian Army was busy carrying out reprisal attacks on the Shangev-Tiev kindred of Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State. The attacks left wide spread destruction of lives and property including the residence of the then longest serving traditional ruler in Tiv land, HRH Chief Lazarus Unaha Kôkô.

It was rumoured that the attacks and destruction in the Late Chief Lazarus Unaha Kôkô's kindred, including his residence by the Nigerian Army and his subsequent arrest and detention by the Gov. Ortom's administration hastened the steps of the late monarch in joining his ancestors earlier than anticipated. This incidence left a sour taste in the mouth of the Tiv who had experienced a similar ugly incidence in the year 2000. This was When the Nigerian Army invaded the Sankera geopolitical area of Tiv nearly annihilating residents in Gbeji, Vaasem, Sankera and Zaki-Biam towns in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

The Impact of *Ati Ator* (Honorific Chieftaincy Titles) on the Development of Tiv Society

Impact as used in this section of the study refers to influence or an effect brought to bear on something (institution) as a result of the introduction of a new idea or system. It is thus not uncommon for any system to experience an effect when a new idea has been introduced to it. When the understanding above is applied to the subject of discussion in this study; one would be looking at the influence which the honourific chieftaincy titles have brought to bear on Tiv society since its inception in 1994.

On the one hand, development as a concept implies change, growth, and increase in size. More specifically, development has to do with the transformation of a society through its institutions, organisations, social rules, customary usages and attitudes to an extent that makes the society more and more positive and responsive to desired modern changes {Ikumelu and Mezieobi 1992: 56}. It is on the strength of the above conception that Garba and Shamija {2005:16}. Augustine citing Thirlwall contended that the change or transformation of society exemplified above must necessarily affect or impact all strata of life ranging from economic to administrative, political, social and even attitudes and values. From the above analysis, it can be seen that the concepts impact and development both imply change or transformation brought to bear on a system as a result of the introduction of new ideas. If this be the case, it can be conveniently argued that the introduction of *ati ator* by the Tiv Traditional Council is supposed to have influenced or ushered in some level of change, development or transformation of Tiv society. However, the question that begs for answer is, have the *ati ator* impacted change or attracted development to Tiv society in any way? The answer would be in the negative, because there has been no significant change in terms of the socio-economic, political and physical development of Tiv society. In other words, the *ati ator* honourific chieftaincy holders have not been able to attract development to Tivland. This does not however, mean that a few of the honourees/recipients have not distinguished themselves.

The above background established, it is worthy to note that from its inception in 1994 - 2021, a total of 91 Tiv sons, daughters, wives and friends of the Tiv have been invested with different honourific titles reflecting their professions, careers and achievements in life. However, no sooner were the titles bestowed on the honourees/recipients that they went to sleep utterly neglecting the Tiv and Tiv land that has been longing for development. There has been noticeable isolated cases here and there of some of the honourees making genuine efforts to facilitate the growth and development of Tivland.

This brings to mind of Alhaji Aliyu Mohammed, the *Zege Mule u Tiv 1* who devoted much time pursuing Tiv course. It was even said in unofficial quarters that the late *Zege Mule u Tiv* (Big Shade) of the Tiv was instrumental to the appointment of Chief Senator B.A.I. Gemade as the Secretary of Works during the Gen. Ibrahim Babangida regime. When the Tiv reportedly on a courtesy visit to Gen. Babangida complained of not having representation in his government, Babangida reportedly told them they had a representative in Alhaji Aliyu Mohammed, the *Zege Mule u Tiv 1*. The *Zege Mule u Tiv 1* proved his mettle as he died in the cause of service to Tivland in a fatal motor accident on the Makurdi-Lafia road while going

back to Kaduna from Gboko where he attended the *Ijir tamen* (Supreme Council of the Tiv) having conferred with the Tor Tiv.

Iti ator like Mr. Martin Joseph Dent, Rev. Jolly Nyame in the non-Tiv/friends of the Tiv also made some level of impact on the improvement of Tiv lives. For instance, Rev. Nyame protected the Tiv from the Jukun organised pogroms in 1990s and early 2000s when he was the executive Governor of Taraba State. Some Tiv were appointed into government positions during Rev. Nyame's tenure as Governor of Taraba State. However, most abysmal in performance in the non-Tiv/friends of the Tiv recipients of *ati-ator* is Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, (the Turaki of Adamawa and *Zege Mule u Tiv II*).

Since his bestowment on May 27, 2001, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar has not shown in any way that he is a friend of the Tiv and is a recipient of an honorific chieftaincy title, *Zege Mule u Tiv II* which translates to the "Big Shade" of the Tiv. One cannot see in what way the *Zege Mule u Tiv II* has helped the cause of Tivland or the Tiv apart from perhaps, a few personal friends whom he may have helped. It was thus not completely shocking when in the midst of Fulani herdsmen invasion and killings of the Tiv and expulsion from their ancestral lands following the enactment of the anti-open grazing law that Alhaji Atiku Abubakar maintained a dead silence.

Similarly, the last honourees of the *ati ator* in 2021 conferred on six non-Tiv by the *Begha u Tiv*, HRM Orchivirigh Prof. James Ortese Ayatse were seen to be misplaced by some analysts and commentators on Tiv affairs. Most Tiv reasoned how Chief Nyesome Wike (then Governor, Rivers State), Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal (Governor, Sokoto State), Alhaji Abdullahi Sule (Governor, Nasarawa State), Chief Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi- (Governor, Enugu State), Chief Femi Gbajabiamila and Chief Kanu Agabi SAN, and others in this category have impacted on the development of Tiv society to warrant such recognitions. Also, since their conferment with the honorific titles what have they done or have been doing with respect to the upliftment of Tivland? This has made many a Tiv to conclude that the awards were politically motivated to achieve political goals and alliances of those who hitherto recommended the recipients to the Tor Tiv for honours. Most of the politician recipients only come to Tivland during electioneering campaigns.

Turning the roles as recipients of TTC honourific titles the other way round by which they are supposed to attract development to Tivland and also promote peace through good conduct; these recipients only think of what they can gain from Tivland and not what the Tiv and Tiv society can gain from them. Thus, like a fruit, they eat the flesh and throw away the nut. The truth of the matter be told that while these recipients may have made personal achievements in their chosen fields of endeavour; they never really deserved these titles as shown in their inability to impact the educational, social, political, economic and physical development of Tivland.

The above analysis has also led credence to insinuations in certain quarters that those who have "heavy pockets" simply pay for a title of their choice and pick it. As such, they do not have any obligation to anyone Tiv person or Tivland as a whole. Mediocrity, politics,

favouritism, and personal interests have extended their negative tentacles on the selection and investiture of the *ati ator*.

In other climes where honourific chieftaincy titles are given to deserving individuals, they spearhead the development of such societies such as in the sinking boreholes (portable water), construction of roads, churches, electrification projects, establishment of schools, and building of healthcare facilities. Other areas include institution of scholarship for indigent students, citing of industries etc. If the Tiv saw this practice as projected by the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani and have borrowed it; why have they only borrowed the respect, prestige and glamour that goes with the awards but not the good that the recipients of such awards bring to the awarding society, community or institution? How or why is the case of the Tiv different? It is observable that a few of the scholarship instituted by some Tiv sons/daughters are only activated during political campaign periods aimed at winning elections only.

To have a balance of the discussion, it is pertinent to analyze the performance of the *Ati ator* that have been bestowed on Tiv sons and daughters. A careful look would show that most of the honourific title holders of Tiv extraction may have been bestowed such honours in recognition of their personal achievements in their chosen fields of endeavour. This would mean that the contribution of such honourees as regards the physical development of Tivland may not necessarily be seen, since their awards are but a pat on the back in recognition of their personal achievements in life and a nudge to do more for themselves and Tivland generally.

The above said, it would not be out of place to recognise the efforts of a few Tiv who have impacted greatly through the establishment of schools, hospitals, business ventures and such related activities. These ventures have employed many a Tiv youth who would have been unemployed. This has given such employees economic and social power. People living close to such ventures have also benefited by engaging themselves in petty trading like food vending, provision stores, barber shops, Petrol stations etc to enhance their economic wellbeing.

Worthy to be mentioned in this category include: Chief Denen Tofi, Chief Jerome Tilley Gyado, Chief. Mrs. Ashitile Avaa Lôhò, Chief Padopads Awunah, Brig. J.A. Kpera, others are Chief Mrs. Victoria Mbakaan Tsenzughul (Naira and Kobo), Chief Aker Gajir, Mrs. Lucy Katsina-Alu, Shagbaor Ako Dzungwe Shande. In this category too, Chief Dr. Terkura Joseph Suswam also created significant social, political, economic and physical impact through his Ashi Conglomerate business empire. The Ashi conglomerate had several subsidiaries including: Ashi Rice, Ashi Farms, Ashi Foods (processing company), Ashi Waves (Radio), Ashi Polytechnic. Chief Dr. Terkura Suswam also was instrumental to the physical development of Anyiin his ancestral home through the many gigantic modern structures he erected there, transforming the village into a semi-urban town. If other *ati ator* were this zealous as Dr. Terkura Suswam, the development of Tivland would not have been negotiable.

The Way forward

Following from the preceding discussions and with the idea in mind that *ati ator* are supposed to attract development to Tivland; the study having discovered that this had not really been the case, makes the following suggestions as a way out of this dilemma thus:

1. That Tiv Traditional Council and its Committee on Honorific Chieftaincy Titles should go back to the drawing board and make a proper reassessment of the investiture of *ati atotr* on deserving individuals. The process should be reevaluated, reorganized and repositioned for optimal performance and benefit to Tiv society.
2. The Committee should ensure that only deserving Tiv sons, daughters, wives and friends of the Tiv who have the interest of the Tiv and Tivland are honoured. Since honour is reciprocal, those honoured by the TTC with honorific chieftaincy titles should equally explore ways of honouring Tivland by influencing the citing of developmental projects to Tivland.
3. The committee on honorific chieftaincy titles should be allowed to do its work without undue influence from the political class. In this regard the Tor Tiv and the TTC should be bold to resist the political class from influencing the selection process as in most cases such suggestions are meant to serve the personal interest of those making such them. As Adegan and Degarr {2021:28-29} advice; Tiv politicians should ply their trade in politics and leave the traditional institution to handle matters of culture.
4. Above all, the study calls for the withdrawal of the *ati ator* from individuals who have been so honoured but who have not positively influenced or impacted Tiv society or its development in any way. The withdrawal of such titles should include the rights and privileges that go with such titles. Also, recipients who do not show personal concern on matters affecting the Tiv, TTC, Tor Tiv particularly those who have for years refused/have not been in attendance at the *Ijir tamen* of the TTC where deliberations on matters affecting Tivland are tabled and discussed.

Conclusion

It is a non-negotiable fact that individuals who are so honoured with honorific chieftaincy titles also reciprocate in cash or kind; but most importantly, an honouree becomes a part and parcel of the investing community or society. The land, community or society in which the person is so honoured becomes his second home; a home away from home. This is the reason behind any honouree's effort at attracting development to his home away from home. In societies where this has become an established norm; recipients owe it a duty to site projects that would impact the lives of the awarding community or institution in roads, electricity, health care centres, scholarships and the like. They also personally see to it that sons/daughters of the awarding society are enlisted into the Military, Para Military, Police, Customs, Immigration, Correctional Service and other related appointments at the Federal level etc.

Given the above, it would not be out of place to call on the Tor Tiv and the TTC to ensure that the *Ati Ator* of the TTC should be reserved for only Tiv sons, daughters, wives and or friends of the Tiv who have meaningfully impacted the development of Tiv society and have the interest of the Tiv and anything Tiv at heart. The titles should not like commodities on the shelves of a supermarket be bestowed on individuals who have the wherewithal and resources to "pick and pay" for on account of their personal achievements. Such recipients would never work for the development of the Tiv or Tiv society. They would have the feeling that the awards are based on "cash and carry" and so their money bestowed the titles on them.

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