

**JEALOUSY AS ENCUMBRANCE TO AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
MILLENNIUM: A REFERENCE TO THE TIV SONG**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper concerns itself with Africa's development challenges in the Millennium. The write up focuses mainly on identifying areas that constitute threats to Africa's development. To achieve the objective, the discourse opines that Africa is in dilemma concerning her search for development. This means that while some Africans are striving for development of the continent, some of them are exhibiting attitudes that hamper it. The essay considers such attitudes as manifestations of jealousy. To expound on this point, the paper analyses some songs of Tiv origin, and the messages from them show clearly that jealousy is a constraint to Africa's development. The write-up observes that jealousy propels Africans to go any length in a bid to frustrate or eliminate other enterprising members of the society. This practice is considered as a major huddle to Africa's development in the millennium. Based on the observation, the paper recommends that Africans should foremost acknowledge the high prevalence of jealousy among them, they should unite to fight the menace by loving one another, they should always aid their prosperous members rather than being jealous of them, they should channel their loyalty to Africa and her development, and commit themselves to the study of African orature since it has the potentials to educate them on moral development. The nucleus of the discourse is that eradication of jealousy is one of the bedrocks of development in Africa.

**Keywords: Jealousy, Encumbrance, Africa's Development, Millennium, Tiv Song**

**INTRODUCTION**

The African region is caught up in a dilemma, a situation that poses some challenges to her quest for development in the millennium. On the one hand, Africa like every other continent seems to be ambitious for development, while on the other hand the said development seems elusive due to certain attitudes by the same Africans which are considered as militating factors against it. Thus, development in Africa is seen to be characterised with theory and practice. Theoretically, the continent strives for development, while in practice the quest for development is being neutralised by some social vices perpetrated by the citizens. Surrounded by such waves of contradiction, efforts are being made by different individuals and bodies to mitigate the overwhelming effects of underdevelopment in Africa through discourses on ways of enhancing development of the region. This paper is therefore, considered as a response to the call on intellectuals to deliberate on Africa's development challenges in the millennium.

The primary objective of this paper is not to conceptualise development. However, it is worth stressing the point that the term is not commonly defined, as Ugoh and Ageda (2019) have opined. Despite the variations in the definition of development, the duo have viewed that it is all about the advancement and welfare of the people.

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To corroborate their opinion that development is a concept that defies a single definition, Ogoyi and Udechuchwu (2017) assert that "development like any other concept lacks universal acceptance..."(p.39). In a bid to prove their point, the scholars equate the term with others like 'growth', 'change', 'industrialization', 'transformation', and so on.

Sharing the same point of view is Tumbo (2018), who says "development connotes different things to different people depending on their intellectual capacity, ideological background and the issue in question"(p.16). A survey of the definitions of development made by Tumbo as contained in the source mainly projects the basic idea that the concept implies improvement in the standard of living. Based on the sources quoted above, this paper has a summation that development entails a step forward in the course of enhancing the living condition of the people.

Inferring from the above summation; stressing that development hinges on upliftment of the people, both individuals and groups aspire for it. At the national level, it is always the constitutional institutions that play the major roles in development, especially in the third world countries. It is in recognition of this fact that Adole & Onah (2017) say "national development is an aspiration very close to the heart of virtually all the governments of the third world countries"(p.139). Emphasis on the third world as contained in the opinion above automatically places Africa in the centre of the search for development.

The quest for Africa's development notwithstanding, it is pertinent to observe that her development stride is not without challenges. These challenges, according to some analysts impede the development of the region. For instance, Adejo (2003) observes:

*Africa's development challenges are enormous and varied especially as the age gets more aggressive and competitive in composition. Much of what is read about Africa hovers around crises, conflicts, wars, poverty, debilitating social and economic issues, HIV/AIDS pandemic, dwindling per capita, unequal terms of trade, asphyxiating, international patronage as witnessed in the haranguing massive external debt 'palavar' and unequal access to information and communication technologies.(p.58).*

The scholar's position above has shown that Africa's development is staggering. In spite of the long list of factors posing challenges to Africa's development as provided by the analyst, this paper considers it in exhaustive since there is no inclusion of jealousy. In essence, the paper views jealousy as one of the major challenges of development in Africa, consequent upon which it is set to illuminate on the vice as it is captured in some Tiv songs, and suggest the way forward.

### **METHODOLOGY**

It may not be out of place saying that jealousy is a threat to humanity. Due to its negative connotation, many composers or oral artists, especially in Africa might expound on it. However, this paper restricts its coverage to the songs of two singers of Tiv extraction: Gabriel Oryina Anyiman and Torcker. The work considers their biographies irrelevant; hence, lays emphasis on their art. The songs analysed in this discourse are in respect to their reflections on jealousy and how it affects development of the society.

It is important to highlight here that the compositions of the singers are not utilised in their complete forms. Rather, the work selects only the verses of the songs that are applicable to the subject under discussion. It illuminates on their messages with the view to unveiling the negative consequences of jealousy, and influencing the people to shun the vice and embrace love for the sake of development.

In the bid to achieve this aim of fast-tracking development to Africa, the paper uses the Tiv experience as a microcosm of the target community. The messages contained in the verses focus on jealousy as a major cause of underdevelopment in Tiv-land. Thus, the paper considers it apt to assert that the experience of the Tiv people in Nigeria is applicable to Africa as a community.

### **Jealousy and Development in Africa**

Jealousy is not a material or an object to behold and describe. However, to explain it, the International Student's Edition of the *Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary* (New 8<sup>th</sup> Edition) says it is a feeling of being jealous: an action or a remark that shows that a person is jealous. According to the source, being jealous means feeling angry or unhappy because you wish you had something that somebody else has. The two terms 'angry' and 'unhappy' clearly indicate that jealousy is a social vice. It causes one to be angry and unhappy, consequent upon which the person could become dangerous. When people are angry and unhappy because other people possess what they wish but do not have, they nurse grudges against them. The worst is that when such grudges are not controlled, their evil side pushes them to take a step of destruction. The possible result of such actions is bringing down of those envied.

Unfortunately, despite the negative connotation of jealousy, the society seems to allow it prevail in different forms and at different levels. The geographical setting of the songs under review, which serves as a reference point of the African experience is considered to witness high prevalence of jealousy. Given the nature of Tiv society which seems to deny the citizens of absolute freedom, but guarantee her supremacy, individual enterprise often attracts jealousy from envious forces. It is because of this practice that Ugoh & Okpe (2011) observe:

*The Tiv people constitute a society that emphasises the supremacy of the clansmen (ityô). The people adore the institution so much that it determines their fate and destiny. Given such veto powers... it is the society that regulates the successes and failure of her members. Where members aspire higher... she frowns... This development projects a society that is characterised with envy and jealousy. The essence of this practice is to frustrate the individuals' struggle and reduce them to nothingness. (p.60).*

The commentary above has depicted the spate of jealousy in the society. The mention of 'society' presupposes the people that constitute it as perpetrators of the vice. Saying that people's struggle is being reduced to nothingness paints a clear picture of the contemporary society. This analysis justifies the paper's earlier position that Africa is in a dilemma in terms of her development stride. While the continent is searching for development, some of her members, heavy with jealousy are pulling down the enterprising ones. This trend constitutes a threat to the development Africa is yearning for in the millennium, given the fact that individual struggle culminates in national development.

### **The Songs and their View on Development**

Development has earlier been explained in this paper. The hallmark of it has been considered as the progress from one level to another, with the view to improving people's condition of living. It is important to note that the quest for development is high among average people. This is why when factors against it are noticed, individuals and groups naturally respond in order to rectify the anomalies. In Africa, development is characterised with some challenges which necessitates the call for addressing them in the millennium.

## Jealousy as Encumbrance to Africa's Development in the Millennium: A Reference to The Tiv Song

In their bid to contribute to the discourse on the way-forward, the singers concerned have discovered jealousy as a challenge, and their songs serve as a medium to educate the people on the need to shun the vice and embrace positive attitudes that can facilitate development. Following is a textual analysis of the songs.

Foremost, is the song by Gabriel Anyiman which decries jealousy saying:

Zaki Meeme	Chief Meeme
Kwagh ngu hen tar u Tiv	There's a trend in Tiv land
U vihin kpishi gande	which is too bad
Wan ka nan a lu ken toho	When a child in the diaspora
Man iyange i nan za ve a	Brings home some food
kwaghyan hen ityô la	
Inja wan la i kuma ku	Such a child deserves death
Mbayev mba cian	The children are afraid
U maan ken uya	To build their homes
Mba za maan ityar igenegh	They're developing other nations
Yô se mba hemban u kungun	Leaving us poorer

The short verse above has presented the nature of jealousy in our society in simple and straight forward language. The basic truth in the song is that our contemporaries do not want to see that anything good comes the way of others. Once it is noticed that one's star is shining brightly, the evil nature of others is provoked; thereby propelling them to set their machineries to eliminate them. Significant to note is that the jealous minds would not appreciate the fact that the prosperity of individuals is the prosperity of the society. As individual members of the society progress, so would the society progress. It is practically impossible for individuals to prosper and only they benefit from their prosperity. Whatever people get, they must in one way or the other share with their communities. This is presented in the song as "bringing home some food". However, when such a generous gesture is reciprocated with evil, as the song maintains that "such a child deserves death", the society will perpetually dream for development without attaining it. Obviously, the prosperous members of the society may become apprehensive of attracting development to their communities. With little opportunities, they may explore the possibilities of expanding their empires outside their places. Thus, the song reflects, saying that the children are afraid to build their homes, but are developing other nations, leaving theirs poorer.

To further lament the menace, the song in another verse says:

Mbayev asev	Even our children
Mba shi ve lu a ishima	Who're determined
I eren kwagh hen ya kpa	To develop their localities
Num ka u a hii	Once there's outbreak of violence
Saa a nande u ya	Their houses must be burnt
Man num la	Before the crisis
A mase kuren ye	Would come to an end

The foregoing is a clear manifestation of man's cruelty against others, propelled by jealousy. It is true that development has several dimensions, one of which is infrastructure. In a situation whereby people's assets are enough reason to infuriate others, pushing them to devise strategies to destroy them, such societies cannot develop. The attendant consequence is underdevelopment, since prospective developers of the affected communities resort to taking refuge in other societies which in turn become opportuned to enjoy their wealth as expressed in the first verse.

The menace as highlighted above is predominant in Africa. Often, Africans are criticised as abandoning their countries to invest in the developed countries. Going by the realities of jealousy in the region as reflected in the song, such Africans may opt for external investment as a result of the fear of the uncertainties. This paper wishes to warn Africans that such practices have no benefits for the region, but are potential causes of perpetual underdevelopment which the song decries as leaving us poorer. In order to correct the mistakes and pave the way for development, the second verse ends with some words of advice to Africans, as follows:

Zaki Meeme	Chief Meeme
Mtem tor wou	Your reign
Hen tar ne	Over this land
Mayange dan lumuninja ne ga	Never subscribe to such menace
Yila ambayev ou	Call on your children
Ve va sôr tar	To come and develop the society

Inferring from the context of the advice, challenging the traditional ruler not to subscribe to the menace but call on his children to come and build the society is simply advocating a change of attitude. The song is advising African leaders to use their positions and ensure that they rid the continent of jealousy; thereby assuring their people in the Diaspora and the wealthy ones at home of safety. The assurance of safety will serve as a call for them to commit their resources for development of the region.

While Anyiman's songs have discussed the general prevalence of jealousy as a challenge to Africa's development, those of Torker have pointed out specific instances of the effects of the menace on African's developmental moves. Through his songs, Torker cites instances to show that jealousy is an encumbrance to development as can be viewed below:

Ka me umbur mgbejime u	Whenever I recall the backwardness
Ityô yam ônuv Mbazumne	Of my clan Mbazumne
Bisibi Ati Ikyôngu	Bisibi Ati Ikyôngu
Ishima i vihim	I'm saddened
Engineer Ati o...	Engineer Ati o...
Kemberagya mba a nyi?	What does Kemberagya have?
Kemberagya mbanyon mba sen ne o...	Kemberagya the birds are laughing at you o...

The lines above have prepared the stage for the song to demonstrate its points; proving that jealousy has dealt a blow to development in the area. Kemberagya, a remote area in Tiv of Benue State in Nigeria is used as a reference point. The song has established that the community is so poor, the situation which always make the singer sad. The lines emphasise the intensity of the community's poverty by asking a rhetorical question "what does Kemberagya have?" To further bare the seriousness of poverty in the area, the song maintains that even the birds are laughing at Kemberagya. The thrust of this part of the song is to stress the fact that Kemberagya as a clan is totally poor. The song sees no other factor as being responsible for the abject poverty of Kemberagya than jealousy. The song has expressed the disillusionment of the singer with his clan, as contained in the following lines:

Or a zeren ityô	If people were to dress in their clans
A hungwan angbiôr a mi yô	and enter the mud
Bridget Erkwase	Bridget Erkwase
Man m hongu angbior a ityô yam	I would have entered the mud with my clan

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It is obvious that when people are made to unavoidably enter the mud, they prefer their rags on them. This is just because the rags are considered no more attractive since the clothes have lost their value. In essence, the song is saying that due to indulgence of the Kemberagya clan in jealousy, and the attendant poverty, they have lost their value and only good the attendant poverty, they have lost their value and only good to be treated like rags. Following the mental picture of the impoverished Kemberagya, the song continues to unveil the instances to prove that the condition is a manifestation of jealousy as perpetrated by some wicked members of the society, thus:

Yange Ordughga Iornyagh	Once Ordughga Iornuagh
Lu maan imakeranta ningir	Was building schools round the world
Va nyôrun hen ityô na yô	Having reached his clan
Honourable Mathias	Honourable Mathias
Or Mbayemagwa o....	Man from Mbayemagwa o...
Mba ma i lu wan wam	Those that felt it would be their sons
Zenda Ordughga	Chased away Ordughga
Tsa kpa ka tsa na ga	Saying the land wasn't his
Heela kpa ka mgbejime	There too is backwardness

The first instance cited is enough demonstration of jealousy at work. The song has made it clear that the victim is a proprietor of several schools elsewhere, but as soon as he brings the legacy home, he incurs the wrath of the community. This confirms the former singer's assertion as contained in his song that once the children in the diaspora bring home some good things, they deserve death. Ironically, the outside society accepts the proprietor and he builds several schools there, while he is rejected by his clan. This is symbolic of the developed countries welcoming African investors in their countries while they are hunted at home. The outcome of such cruelty as analysed above is development for friendly nations overseas and underdevelopment for Africa. One of the verses analysed before sums up the effect of the menace of Africans developing other nations while Africa is left poorer.

In the second instance, the song says:

John Cembe Aju	John Cembe Aju
Va maa se iyouchi	Built a hospital for us
Kumen akume diing	It was very lively
Ayange atar ga	But it wasn't up to three days
John Cembe zua a ityou	John Cembe incurred headache
Ityou ki nanden	Painful headache
John Cembe ta toho	John Cembe fled
Iyouchi na hingir kule...	The hospital became deserted
Heela kpa ka mgbejime	There too is backwardness

The gravity of jealousy displayed here is in no measure less than that of the first incidence. Someone who has the good intention to build a hospital for his community is considered only good for being hunted with witchcraft. To save his life, the victim flees the community to an unknown place. As the case in the first event, the victim would certainly establish in the host community that provides a conducive environment for his career, thus ignoring his community.

The common feature with the two instances is the song's commentary as contained in the last line of each of the verses, saying "there too is backwardness." The backwardness as observed in the song is not that of the victims but of the aggressive communities.

While the personalities are opposed in Kemberagya, they are welcomed in other communities, thus making their clan lose the benefits of their investment which is now enjoyed by their host communities. This serves as a warning to Africa that her steadfastness to jealousy would only make their development difficult, aiding the outside world to continue benefiting from her resources. Thus, if an African makes a discovery, as in the case of Dr. Abalaka who said he had developed a cure for HIV/AIDS, because he is an African, he would only be ridiculed while the people keep depending on America for remedy. When a suit is sewn in Nigeria it becomes "Made in Aba" and not worth wearing. Similarly, shoes made in Cotonou are too local for use. However, when products from Africa are tagged "Made in USA", "Made in Italy", and so on, they are marketable in Africa. These are all indicators of jealousy at work, forming a barrier against development of the region.

Other instances as cited in the song are as follows:

Dr. Dan mough	Dr. Dan mough
Yange wase ityar-ityar	Helped different communities
Va nyôrun hen ityô na yô	Coming to his clan
Dr. Dan Mough	Dr. Dan Mough
Yange hingir iwan kpatu	Became a clipped cat
U numben a ikyegh o...	To play with fowls o...
...	...
Mase shin wan wene	It was only through your son
Oliver Aye ne	Oliver Aye
Kemberagya ve lu zuan a gwa ye	That Kemberagya was famous
Kpa er i lu gado ve yô	But since it is their custom
Oliver kure yange ga	Oliver couldn't live long

Two instances are cited in the lines above: those of Dr. Dan Mough and Oliver Aye. Concerning the former, he is seen as a hero in other communities, but once he comes back to his clan he becomes a man of no consequence. This means that the jealous ones have conspired to bend him low so that he does not tower above them. The latter, Oliver Aye, who used to bring fame to his clan through his compositions is reported dead. In a community that people are blindfolded by jealousy, they hate to see that someone else is making a name. This is why the song maintains that since it is the tradition of the Kemberagya people, Oliver Aye is no more. The tone of the song suggests that the victim did not die in a natural way, but was hunted down by those who were jealous of his fame as a singer.

The remote Kemberagya is a true reflection of Africa even at the last point. For example, there are cultural dances in Africa that are endowed to portray the rich culture of the people to the world. Yet, to the disappointment of many, African musicians prefer to emulate the perverse traditions of the western world. This manifests in their dressing, costumes, hair styles, beating, dance patterns, and so on. It is however sad to note that while they are promoting the pervasion of the western world, they are impeding the development of their culture.

Similarly, African football fans have no appetite for watching African teams. When teams like the Super Eagles, Bafana-Bafana and other African teams are playing their matches, the said fans are tuning the channels on their televisions to watch Chelsea, Manchester United and other European teams, whereas such is not found for the African teams. The implication of such obsession with the outside world at the expense of Africa is the truth that Africans are developing the foreign nations while under-developing their fatherland.

## **Jealousy as Encumbrance to Africa's Development in the Millennium: A Reference to The Tiv Song**

The paper faults jealousy as a major factor responsible for such disloyalty by Africans. Most of them feel that once they are not the key players, it should not be others around them. Such misgivings propel them to pledge their loyalty to the foreign land instead of Africa.

### **Observation**

This paper observes that Africans are too jealous of their kin. Allowing the menace to lead them, they do everything within their reach to ensure that their fellow Africans are frustrated or even eliminated in their bid to rise up to the task of development. This retrogressive tendency becomes a challenge to the effort to develop Africa.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the position of the songs analysed above, the paper suggests measures that could be adopted in order to tackle the challenges of development in Africa in the millennium.

Foremost, the paper suggests that Africans should acknowledge the prevalence of jealousy among them. The suggestion is made based on the belief that the first step to solve a problem is to accept that the problem exists. No people would be determined to fight a cause they do not believe in its existence.

Secondly, after acknowledging the prevalence of jealousy, Africans should unite to fight it. They should resort to loving and aiding rather than hating and frustrating one another.

Thirdly, Africans should learn to provide enabling environment for their prosperous members to commit themselves to the development of Africa. This could be achieved through patronage of African indigenous creations.

Also, Africans should commit their loyalty to Africa. The thought that everything black is evil should be removed from the hearts of Africans. They should develop the culture of rating high their culture and performances. This should be done without the consideration of who is to be honoured.

Lastly, Africans should learn to dedicate themselves to the study of African orature, especially the song. The art has a lot to educate them on how to develop their continent.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This paper had concerned itself with the challenges of Africa's development in the millennium. The main focus was to identify the major areas that constitute threats to the region's development. In doing so, the paper opined that Africa is caught in a dilemma, given her developmental stride. On the one hand, the paper viewed that Africa desires development, on the other hand it is viewed that the desire is encumbered by the attitudes of some Africans. Such attitudes were considered to be products of jealousy. To buttress this fact, the paper analysed some songs of Tiv origin, drew out their messages which were clear indicators that jealousy is a cause of Africa's underdevelopment. The paper observed that Africans are too jealous of their brothers and sisters, the tendency which makes them to go extra miles to frustrate or eliminate the aspiring members. The write-up considered this as a major constraint to Africa's development in the millennium. Based on this analysis, the paper recommended that: Africans should acknowledge that they are jealous of one another, they should unite to fight the menace, aid their prosperous members, commit their loyalty to Africa and dedicate themselves to the study of African orature since it has the potentials to educate them on morality.



To conclude this essay, it is apt to reiterate that Africa's development challenges in the millennium are enormous, but one of the worst is jealousy. Therefore, Africans should eschew jealousy among them as suggested in this paper, and pave the way for development.

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