Effects Of Ethnic And Communal Conflicts In Ekoi Tribe: The Experience Of Old Obubra In Cross River State

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Abstract
Ekoi tribe of the Cross River State extraction has experience ethnic and communal conflicts at an endemic proportion, a situation that has plunged the area into underdevelopment. This crises has often be caused by primordial sentiments. The paper attempted to unravel the remote and immediate causes of the ethnic and communal conflicts in Ekoi–land and their corresponding consequences on the development of the area, with focus on the old Obubra. Moreso, to proffer solutions through recommendations to curb the menace in order to enable the Ekoi nation to develop to greater height. Old Obubra of Cross River State comprises of three local government areas which are: Abi,Obubra and Yakurr respectively. Data for the study were elicited through primary and secondary sources. The study discovered that the causes of ethnic and communal conflicts include the quest for political hegemony, land resources-territorial inhabitations, holding claims to aborigine status, and chieftaincy. The theoretical framework that guided the study is the Marxian social conflict theory, with the objectives of exploring the causes and effect of ethnic and communal conflict in Ekoi-land, with the view of finding solutions to stem the tide. The study stated both the null (H_o) and alternative (H_1) respectively. H_o: Ethnic and communal conflicts have not underdeveloped Ekoi-land. H_1: Ethnic and communal conflicts have underdeveloped Ekoi-land. Recommendations were made to include that the traditional institutions of the Ekoi-tribe should be strengthened to be able to settle issues that border on political power,land, resources-territorial inhabitations, and chieftaincy. There should be the prohibition of ethnic infractions through constitutional review and that enlightened elites should be encouraged to hold traditional positions to be able to contribute their wealth of experience gathered during their service years in their respective careers.

Keywords: Effect; Communal, Conflict, Ekoi Tribe, Ethnic, Old Obubra.

Introduction

The Ekoi tribe, like other of the neighboring tribes in Nigeria have not mastered the indices of peaceful co-existence. The inability to maintain inter communal relations among themselves have been the resultant effect of conflicts among the converging communities of Ekoi. Some of these conflicts have been experienced in, Obubra local Abi and Yakurr local government areas. These conflicts have been experienced in Yakurr between Idomi and Ugep, Nko and Nkpani. In Abi beteween Usumutong and Ediba, Ebijakara and Ebom, and in Obubra between Ababene and Iyanitet, and between Apiapum and Ofatura respectively. The causes of these conflicts are innumerable since almost every part of Ekoi tribe has experienced one form of inter and or intra-ethnic conflicts. These conflicts have to a reasonable extent resulted to the break-up of relations between communities in terms of socio-economic, political and cultural relations; and have also strained the relationship between those who have once domiciled together in peaceful co-existence. The communal and ethnic conflicts in Ekoi tribe have so held a good chuck of communities from progress and sacrificed on the alter of underdevelopment, as these fratricidal conflicts are embedded with impending sacrilegious consequences that could send the communities into extinction if they are not put to strict check and outburst into holocaust in Ekoi tribe.

The major objective of the paper is to examine the effects of communal conflicts on the socio-economic development in Ekoi tribe with focus at the conflict between Ababene and Iyamitet in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State. Furthermore, other objectives are to study the remote and immediate reasons and their effects on communal conflicts between communities in Ekoi tribe and an attempt to proffer solutions that may lead to growth and development of Ekoi tribe. Hypothesis that were postulated for the study are both the null (H_0) and alternate (H_I) in respect of avoiding skewedness.

H_O: Communities and ethnic conflicts in Ekoi tribe have not lead to the socio-economic development of Ekoi tribe.

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H_I: Communities and ethnic conflicts in Ekoi tribe have lead to the socio-economic development in Ekoi tribe.

The conflict that is in focus was the protracted communal conflict between Abebene and Iyamitet people in Mbembe land of Obubra local government area of Cross River State. The survey design method was adopted for the study with 300 respondents sampled from the two communities. 300 questionnaires were administered for the study, but 220 questionnaires were returned while 80 questionnaires were not returned. From the 220 questionnaires that were returned, 105 were from Ababene while Iyamitet community returned 115 questionnaires. The choice of the purposive sampling technique of the population was based on the fact that these communities experienced more communal conflicts in Obubra Local Government Area, this there ensured a fair representation of facts that relates to the causes and effect of conflicts in Ekoi tribe.

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources for the study. Primary data were collected from the 220 respondents through the administration of questionnaire and oral interview. The questionnaires was segmented into, Section A and B. Section A seeks the bio-data of the respondents, while Section B seeks sources responses from the respondents on the factors that often caused communal conflicts in Ekoi land. The questionnaire was structured into of multiple choice Likert scale questions on the Five point scale where: 5 points is represented with Strongly Agreed (SA); 4 points is Agreed (A); 3 points for Undecided (UD); 2 points for Disagreed (D; and 1 point for Strongly Disagreed (SD). Therefore, the higher the points it showcases stronger facts that the factor is responsible for the conflicts in Ekoi land. Also, mean rating is also adopted to estimate the total rating of the respondents and dividing the total by the total frequency, where the mean rating is used to determine the respondents' agreement. Wherefore, the rating result in 3.4 and below, it remarks that respondents' response negated the affirmative, but where the mean value records 3.5 and above, it is presumed that respondents responded in the affirmative. A Chi-Square table was computed to test the hypothesis stated at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is to affirm the null hypothesis if the calculated chi-square value is less than the critical value (X^2), but the contrary is the case, where the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Secondary data were sourced from books, journals, periodicals, internet to complement the data that were sourced from primary sources for the study and analyzed through the application of chi-square statistical tool.

Review of Related Literature

Contemporarily, there are numerous opinions on the nature, causes and effects of communal and ethnic conflicts in the world. It is obvious that conflicts have threatened the peaceful co-existence of mankind. The communal and ethnic conflicts which threatens the stability of many nations are beyond traditional holdings, rather they triggered by modernization which has equipped communities with new resources and selfish aspirations. The literature review in this study is focused at the opinions of some scholars which are concerned with communal and ethnic conflicts.

Struggle for Farmland as a Cause of Communal Conflicts.

According to Abuul and Abuul (1993), "there have been over thirty (30) recorded cases of intra and inter-communal crisis that involved the Tiv people which were mostly related to land dispute". Many cases were probably unknown to their study and many more have occurred since after the conduct of the study. The frequency, intensity and persistence to which communal crises happen in Tiv land compel careful attention, hence the need to explore their political and economic causes.

The struggle for farmlands and other land related resources have been blamed for the prevalence of communal clashes in the Tiv nation. Therefore, these crises have links to the economic practices of early Tiv society. Hembe (2000) noted that in the pre-colonial times, the Tiv society had a gerontocratic governing system, and was egalitarian; the land were commonly owned, with economic practices such as fishing, farming, and hunting carried out collectively and the proceeds therefrom shared equitably. As a result, little surpluses were recorded with there being no need for exploitation. In such a condition, handling disputes and disagreements was relatively easy, and grievances never got to the extent that the peace, tranquility, and the economic life of the society were disrupted. Fater (2005) mentioned that, "when the minor and rather scarce disputes came about, they were effectively handled using various conflict management approaches like the "Orya" (village head) or "Mgbakwav" (age grade)".

However, as a result of the establishment of boundaries and new farming methods, improved variety of crops like the citrus tree and others introduced by the colonialists encouraged conflicts in Tiv communities and took a new dimension by becoming more destructive and intermittent. According to Aule (2011), this situation has been further worsened by the attempts of ex-service men, retired civil servants, politicians and other entities to privatize lands that were previously owned by the community. Tiv farmers as well as their neighbors abandon farmlands in preference for bigger and better ones, and consequently they encroached on other peoples farmlands (Hember, 1995).

Avax and Myeba (1992) summarized the level of cooperation that existed between the ethnic groups of the area at the inception of the colonial era. They stated that "…. The Jukun, Etulo, Chauba, Nyifon and Abakwa were not particularly

interested in the fertile farmlands during the colonial era, they were basically fishing communities on the bank of river Katsina-Ala and Benue. The non-Tiv people brought fish while the Tiv brought the yams that were combined for the production of pounded yam meals that were beneficial to the groups. The relationship as at then was therefore cordial; so intimate that in 1854, when the leader of the Second Royal Niger Expedition at Ibi (in present Taraba state) wanted to know where the Tiv/Jukun boundary was, the informant supply inserted his ten fingers into each other to indicate that the two groups were thus mixed together as one .

Another reason for the high prevalence of communal clashes in Tiv-land is the instability that exists among the neighbouring ethnic groups to the Tiv, including the Jukun, Idoma, and Alago. Utov (2000:19) explained that, "As the conflicts gives rise to internal alertness and practical cessation of progressive enterprise among the Tiv, this creates tension in the atmosphere in case they will be some spillover into Tiv localities". This may explain why some Tiv communities, upon provocation, abandon their agricultural livelihood and, descend on fellow communities. The result of this is usually destruction which leaves the communities poorer (Utov, 2000).

Varvar (199:43) identified "politics" another major cause of crisis among Tiv communities. He noted that, the "Nande" "Nande" (burning burning) and "Atemtyo" (head crushing) crisis of the First Republic in Tiv land were clear cases of politics of violence. Violence has ever since, remained a significant feature of Tiv politics which today, is characterized by factions built along personalities lines. The elite-centered fractions were adopted to show a high level of intolerance for one another using the instrument of violence. This submission by Jebuhee (1991), that "Tiv politics has always been characterized by killings, maiming, witchcraft and intimidation of political opponents" is a succinct representation of the situation of political violence in Tiv nation. This sometime the lead to lawlessness, as was clearly shown in the political crisis of the 1960s between the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) led by Tarka and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) of Balewa led by Akiga Sai in Tiv land. This crisis was extended to the 1964 politics in which numerous people lost their lives and property were wantonly destroyed (Abuul and Abuu, 1993), which indicated that the politics of the people has been that of violence and a major factor which retarded rdevelopment of Tiv land.

Influence of Colonialism on Ethnic and Communal Conflicts

Nwosu (1999), observed that "the colonization of Africa and several other Third World states ensure that people of diverse culture were brought together under one country". He asserts further that "due to the mission of colonization, most of these people were not well integrated into the new states, instead some of the imperial powers cashed in on the cultural divergences of these countries to ensure the examination of their objectives". In the opinion of Vandenberg (1998), "the problem of communal and ethnic conflict was mooted under colonialism because Africans had no control over the central power and often were kept divided into administrative districts by Europeans". Welsh (1996) averred that, "in recent years, the failure of states like Liberia, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, and Sudan in sub-Saharan Africa to cope with ethnicity was due to the violent and intractable internal conflicts". He examined the association between ethnic identities and the colonial period, and the instrumentalist contention that politics was behind the invention of ethnicity. In his words, "both that the imperial powers in Africa did little to prepare the colonies for independence and also that given the imperatives of the colonial system; it was unrealistic to expect them to do the more."

Osaghae (1986), believes in the fact considering that most Africans states are artificial colonial creations, the major problems these states have faced at their independence have been as a result of the deep seated cleavages that had existed between the different ethnic nationalities who constitute the states. Furthermore, these cleavages, which often were characterized by sectional loyalties, compete with the desired loyalty to the nationhood. Therefore, he argued that, "the major problem in most of these African states is the creation of overarching loyalties to the nation over the sub-national loyalties". He claims that the eradication of the sub-national loyalties creates national integration and political stability.

Effects of Communal Conflicts on Nationalities

On the ground of relating ethnic conflicts to economic reforms in Africa, Ogachi (1999), observes the increace of violent ethnic conflicts in Africa, especially between the 1970s, and the 1980s. To him, "this was a period during which most African countries entered a state of economic austerity. At the same time, pressure was put on these countries from the international community to initiate programmes of political and economic liberalization. As a result of this, by 1980, most African countries had entered into agreements with international financial institutions on specific areas of economic reforms without much on political reforms".

From the foregoing, three observations were made towards building a general theory of conflicts study in Africa. The first was the introduction of politics and economics, and the methodology that was adopted to implement the reforms. Although donors did emphasize the crucial role played by democracy for the success of the economic reforms. But such systems have not always been implemented. Secondly, it was the spate of current ethnic conflicts in African continent. Recent conflicts have shown higher levels of organization, and more violence, than was the case from previous conflicts

of the colonial period. Therefore, the internal dynamics (cause and effect) of these conflicts may not be adequately captured; hence, there is the need to seek new theoretical postulations. The third observation was that, the occurrences of the current conflicts on the African continent that are running concurrently with political and economic reform policies, has made it pertinent to go in search of a framework that suits the converging points of economic austerity, ethnicity and structural adjustment regimes in Africa. Ogachi (1999), therefore reasons that, "ethnicity should not be seen as a colonial intervention in Africa or a mere continuation of the pre-colonial manifestation of the tribal emotions which the modernization school postulates".

Magubane (1962), argues convincingly that "…a focus on ethnicity impedes a serious effort to understand societies because it ignores the ownership of a primary productive forces, the material basis of societies, and the nature of the social system. Similarly, Sklar (1963), views the focus on ethnicity as "obscuring the fact that in Africa, ethnic movement may be created and instigated to action by the new men of power in furthermore of their own special interest which at time and again are constitutive of interest of emerging social classes". This made ethnicity to become a mask for class discrimination.

Effects of Ethnicity on Nationalism

Ottawa (1999), observes certain deviation as he declares that "after a long time of being treated as some kind of periahs' ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism have gained strength and even a degree of legitimacy in recent times". He also viewed ethnic dynamics as, "a struggle by the oppressed and dominated groups to secure greater autonomy and the protection of their rights". Wallenstein (1979), asserts that, "ethnic consciousness and conflicts occur when a group feels threatened to loss previously acquired privilege or conversely feel that it is an opportune moment politically to overcome a longstanding denial of privilege". He posits that, "what causes ethnic conflicts and tensions is the mechanisms by which these groups advance their aims". To him, Africa presently manifests "an elite and class phenomenon in which one community's elites feel excluded from the control of political and economic power by another community's elites". These elites who feel marginalized then proceed toindoctrinate members of their ethnic group to violently resist what they perceive as a conspiracy by the other community.

Nnoli (1995), asserts that "ethnicity holds individual together, gives them internal cohesion, encourages them to provide internal security for each other and promote their sense of identity and direction". Therefore, in his opinion, "ethnicity offers a solution to the problems of deprivation, exploitation, expressions, and alleviation". He further noted that, "the ruling class uses the state to build up their business enterprises".

In Ibrahim's (1995) contribution, he assertes that "a major or contributory factor to ethnic conflicts is the under democratic nature of governance". He noted that many African regimes and rulers repress sections of their people, therefore ignoring their aspirations. According to Diamond (1988), the crisis and conflicts in post-colonial politics in Nigeria are as a result of the, "emergence of a modern state which vast economic resources". To him, "colonial rule left a legacy of the development of a modern state which dwarfed all other organized elements of the society and economy". He agrees that the state in the post-colonial era was capitalist in nature, because it was controlled by a dominant few who used the political power they wielded to accumulate state resources for their selfish interests. Furthermore, Synder (1993), believes that, "the state act as a principal source of conflicts in Nigeria". He says ethnic nationalism predominates conflicts when basic needs are not provided by institutions and there are no readily available satisfactory alternatives; which means that political society revels into anarchy and mini states are carved out by dominant ethnic groups. This implies that, "the process of state making was constructed along the line of alienation and exclusion of ethnic societies from political participation and exercise of power".

The United Nation Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (1995), report explains that, "ethnicity was a resilient paradigm used in explaining the nature of conflict in Nigeria". It further holds, that, "Nigeria as a political society, comprising of many ethnic groups, which rubs shoulders with each other is bound to fact conflict situations. The supposition here is that ethnicity can go beyond other loyalties and obligations and become the sole basis of identity. This may lead to conflicts when these multiple identities are narrowed down to a single focus, and social division become more rigid and deeper. The UNRISD Report therefore concludes that,, ethnicity as a deeply emotional basis of mobilization that not merely distinguishes one group from the other, but also dehumanizes the other group".

Effects of Ethnicity on National Unity

Kazah–Toure (2000), asserts that "the spread of a mighty wave of ethnic tension and conflicts threatens national unity and harmonious inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria, irrespective of the fact that more complex factors have been at the base". He further stated that, "elsewhere on the continent of Africa, violent and bloody conflicts were assuming inter-ethno/religious proportion; that, on the attainment of independence from European colonial domination, mostly from the 1950s, many African leaders continued to denounce the threat posed to their states by ethnicity and regionalism". Yet,

the paradox of this was that, "many of these self-proclaimed anti-regionalist and anti-ethnicist leaders were themselves using ethnicity and regionalism as instrument of self-perpetuation, marginalization, exclusion and repression of those in the opposition, rivals or enemies."

Nwaezeigwe (1998), conceives ethnicity as, "an instrument of group consciousness which elevate one's pride and sense of being". Thus "ethnicity in its fundamental sense is an exhibition of common ethnic identity in difference to the members of other cultural groups within a definable geopolitical setting". (Nwaezeiwe, 1998, p. 24). Agbese (1985), says "Nigeria's problems were partly manmade and tailored it perfectly by nature itself and relates mainly to the manner of the country's colonization, while problems created by nature concern its geography and ethnic composition". Obiatuegwu (1985), argues that, "the most serious threat to harmony, progress and integral nationhood of Nigeria over the years, has been the over sharpened ethnic loyalties who have become so infused into the psyche of the nation, that only have elegant phrases emerged, but such decadantants-nationalistic obsession have form the basis for much of the national policies". In his words, "Nigeria has inadvertently been promoting circumstances that politicize and sensitize the ethnic differences in the country".

Nnoli, (1978), argues that, " the ubiquitous malaise of ethnicity had infected all facts of communication. Ethnicity has become internalized and increases in the process of socialization. Consequently, the ethnic factor has assumed a self-fulfilling and sustaining dynamic of its own which daily reinforced the individuals internalized ethnic sentiments".

Effects of Ethnicity on Politics

Omuabor (2000), believes that, "the quest by ethnic groups to wield political power is not a new phenomenon. To him, the history of Africa could easily be described as a running tale of ethnic struggles. The colonial experience reinforce ethnic rivalry especially where colonist entrenched ethnic minority elite, as in Rwanda and Burundi, or even created them, as in Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Angola where freed slaves became rulers, or European settlers intermarried to form a creole elite". Osaghae (2000), says that "since its colonial beginnings the African state has centralized the production and distribution of resources, patronage and privileges, and this has made it the object of political competition". His arguments is in favour of economic deregulation which serves as a recipe for conflict management. Sule, (2000), blames greed and ambition as the reasons behind the obsession against power and the resultant ethnic conflicts. Human relations have continued to be sound by these negative instincts of man, with the resultant incidence of population displacement.

From the fore-going literature reviewed, ethnic situations seems to acknowledge the different nature of groups in the form of their culture and languages that are endemic in diverse origin and history. There is an eruption of ethnic conflicts when one party's to the fact that land and territory become incompatible with the desire of others, who desire to satisfy their own basic interests and needs within the same physical territory. Whether in Africa or anywhere else, the consequences of the ethnic conflicts could destroy a nation. Their failure to resolve these conflicts over access to commonly valued scarce resources and different perceptions of socio-political situations, can degenerate into genocide as it often the case among Nigerian ethnic groups.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for the treatise is the Social Conflict Theory posited by Karl Marx. He asserts that, "human society is a system with, interrelated parts that are always changing largely through internal contradictions and conflicts". He emphasizes that, the factor of the economy are torn between two different and opposing classes. Those who own the means of production and those sell their labour and are exploited by the owners of the means of production. Conflict is therefore inherent in the relations between these two classes".

Coser (1956), defines conflict as, "the struggle by contending groups over values and claims to resources, power, status and wealth in which the opponents aims to injure, eliminate or neutralize their rivals". Shapiro (2006), defines conflict as a "process of social interaction, involving a struggle over claims to resources, status, power, preferences, beliefs, and desires".

Horowitz (1998), asserts that, ethnic conflict theories have been viewed by several schools of thought, in their respective approaches, permutations and combinations. But the issues on which they are divergent are numerous. But these can be reduced to hard views of ethnic conflicts versus soft view. Hard and soft views, refer to the nature of group affiliations and the end of conflict behaviours. The hard views of ethnic conflict, sees ethnic groups as ascriptive, firmly bounded entities based on a strong sense of commonality, producing considerable loyalty, persisting over time, providing large affective rewards to group members, inclined to ethrocentrism and to hostility to and a desire to dominate outsiders, liable to conflict behavior based on passion, and engendering a great willingness on a part of group members to sacrifice for collective welfare."

He opines further that, in soft views "ethnic groups are entities whose boundaries are problematic and malleable, whose solidarity is based on the material reward they provide for their members rather on diffuse affection, those behaviour, based on the interest of their members, is vulnerable to strategic manipulation, whose apparent affect can often be reduced to calculation, and severe conflict with other often result less irreconcible objectives than strategic dilemas. Osinubi and Osinubi (2018), see the hard and soft views, "as ethnic affiliations as made of stone, and made of Putty."

Osaghe (1994), asserts that, "Nigeria with a wide spectrum of ethnic groups, inequalities among them in various spheres in size, resource endowment, education and access to power and resources, are highly developed and fractionalized indigenous bourgeoise, make her ethnic situation perhaps the most complicated in the African region." Therefore, the Marxian paradigm application to the study tribe and other developing nations, is suitable. The competition for the scarce resources between groups is an open source of conflict among the Ekoi tribe.

Results

Out of 300 questionnaires administered to respondents in the sampled local government areas that constitute the Ekoi tribe, 219 were returned while 81 questionnaires were not returned, which constitute 3.45% and could not alter the result of the study adversely. Therefore, the analysis of the study prevised on the 219 respondents and filled and returned the questionnaires.

Table 1. The Causes and Effects of Ethnic and Communal Conflicts in Ekoi Tribe.

S/N	Causes	SA	A	SD	D	UND	Total
1	Quest for Hegemony	75	60	35	25	25	220
2	Land	90	60	20	30	20	220
3	Idigenship status	60	70	30	25	35	220
4	Chieftaincy tuzzles	60	65	20	35	40	220
Total		290	250	100	115	125	880

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 2: Computing for Mean Rating

Factors	SA	A	SD	D	UND	Total	Mean	Remark
1	350	240	35	45	80	780/219	3.5	Agreed
2	455	230	20	58	62	825/219	3.7	Agreed
3	299	270	30	55	105	759/219	3.6	Agreed
4	290	255	20	65	120	750/219	3.6	Agreed

$\overline{X}$ 3.4

The mean rating stated above in table 2 was used in arriving at the decision as it relates to respondents views. The information shows that 219 respondents who were used for the study had their opinion in the affirmative, that the factors pointed at as having being the cause of conflicts in Ekoi tribe, as it showed a mean score of 3.4.

Test of Hypotheses

H_0: Communal and ethnic conflicts have not underdeveloped Ekoi tribe
H_1: Communal and ethnic conflicts have underdeveloped Ekoi tribe
The factors raised have been the causes of conflicts in Ekoi tribe and were tested with Chi-square (X^2).

Table 3: Chi-Square Computation for Hypothesis

O	E	O-E	(O-E)^2	$\sum\left(\dfrac{O-E}{E}\right)$
79	72.0	7.0	55.24	0.77
50	62.4	-7.0	55.20	7.4
29	30.5	-1.4	1.68	0.05
24	28.9	-3.9	14.45	0.5014
31	26	7	26	1.02
95	72.4	17.4	306.23	4.023
59	62.4	-2.4	6.24	1.02
22	31.4	-11.4	127.65	4.0496
31	28.6	1.0	1.43	0.05
22	24	-4	26	1.01
59	72.4	-12.4	156.26	2.1550
69	62.0	7.4	56.24	0.9
34	31.2	3.6	13.68	0.4372
24	28.7	-3.7	14.43	0.5013
29	24	4	24	1.01
59	72.4	-12.4	156.24	2.1550
64	62.4	2.4	6.24	1.01
39	31.2	8.6	75.68	2.42
34	28.7	6.1	38.43	9.63
22	24	-4	24	1.01

$$\sum 41.41$$

Degree of Freedom (df)
= (R-1)(C-1)

Where
R= Row
C= Column
Thus, (5-1) (4-1)
Therefore 4 x 3 =12

Decision Rule: Where the calculated X^2 is less than critical value, the null hypothesis would affirmed be accepted and the alternative hypothesis, would be rejected and vice versa.
Considering the df of 12, the chi-square value of 5% level of significance is 21.03; while calculated $X^2 = 41.3$; we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. It portends that communal and ethnic conflicts have indeed underdeveloped Ekoi tribe.

Communal and Ethnic Conflicts in Old Obubra

The Ekoi tribe could also be considered to a hypothetical case of a biological cell, with various division and sub-division. Obubra was created in 1902 and it is made up of ethnic groups and communities in the central Cross River State. It harnessed the available opportunity to spread the story and propaganda that they were separated from one another by great distance, by difference of history, band tradition, and by ethnic tribal, religious and political barriers. The various communities in the Ekoi tribe are involve in conflicts because of exclusion and tribal sentiments, animosity and hostility against each another. It could say that, Ekoi tribe has been transformed into an ethnic group through the instrumentality of the colonialists contact. The reason for the emergence of a common consciousness among them has been inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources which have often resulted into ethnic and communal conflicts.

Old Obubra was predominantly consisted of major tribes or ethnic groups which constituted of about 2/3 of the entire population. They are: the Mbembe people in the North; the Yakurr people in the South and Bahumono people in the East. The rest of the other ethnic groups were made up of minority tribes with their own separate cultures and languages. Prominent among them are the Agbo, Okoi, Arondon, Ayigha, Isobo, Nkum-Yala and Inyima. Despite the fragmentation of the local government area into three (3) local government areas of Obubra, Yakurr and Abi, the spate of inter-ethnic and community conflicts are still hydra-headed and permists at an alarming rate.

The measure of violence among the various groups in Old Obubra has intensified over the years, leaving hundreds of people dead, with thousands of people displaced, and destroying property worth billions of naira. From the present Obubra in the North, to Yakurr in the South and Bahomono in the East, neighbouring communities have been on each other's throats, with destructive fury which is justified by long standing rivalries. Despite the ethnic lines often dividing the belligerents, some of the most intensed conflicts have been between people of the same ethnic groups. For example, Mbembe communities like Iyamitet and Ababene in Obubra Local Government Area; Apaipum and Ofatura; even between the people of Ofodua. Nko and Mkpani in Yakurr Local Government Area; and Ediba and Usumotong; Ebom and Ebijakara in Abi respectively. These conflicts are most rooted in age-long disputes of different magnitudes.

Case Study of Iyamitet- Ababene Conflicts

Iyamitet and Ababene communities are in Obubra local government of Cross River State, who have been in a fratricidal conflict over time in history. These communities have experienced complex conflicts, occasional violence that mostly consumed lives and property. In relation to this, has been the questions of community claims of rights over a parcel of land called "good -bye". Recently, the conflicts became fratricidal, where many lives were lost and property worth over 500 Million Naira was destroyed and leaving about 75, 000 inhabitants homeless. The conflicts have been there from time, from when Obubra was created in 1902. This has conform with the position of Kazah-Toure (1999), who asserts that, "since after Nigeria's independence from the Britain in 1960, the various points of inter-ethnic conflicts are yet to be resolved. The same political and socio-economic structures that existed during the colonial era, still persisted thereafter. Therefore, the mechanisms and institution that generated conflicts remained the same, which means that ethnic conflicts remain a history of the inhabitants." Therefore, the case of the Ekoi tribe is like that of a struggle by the various ethnic groups for the possession of land boundaries that have been imposed on the there by the British colonialists.

The dispute between Iyamitet and Ababene people goes beyond the conflict over the relocation of the former College of Agriculture, rather, it is due to the protracted misunderstanding between the two communities over land ownership at their "good-bye" axis. While the Iyamitet people claim that the land on which the Ababene cultivate farms is their own,

and that the Ababene people were only settlers, the Ababene people claim otherwise. Hence, the conflict entails consequences that have caused underdevelopment of the Ekoi tribe and it negatively impacts on such societies.

From the foregoing, therefore, in our view, the Ekoi tribe is yet to unite itself, as there seems to be inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic distrust and destructive rivalry among the constituent communities. Ake (1992), said, "if not addressed soon, when there is still a chance, that unity can be salvaged, we will all be losers, prevailing illusions notwithstanding, Nigeria can only be held together by negotiated consensus not force".

Conclusion

It is observed that the negative events of conflicts which undermined the development in Ekoi tribe are universal and this event are by no means restricted to Ekoi. In this regard therefore, conflicts, should be discouraged in all its ramifications. And to attain this position of peace, there should be mutual understanding between the waring communities.

Recommendations

In view of the forgoing discourse, we to recommend as follows.
1) The traditional councils of both Iyamitet and Ababene in conjunction with Obubra local government traditional ruler's council should synergise to resolve the issues that resulted to the crises.
2) The government of Cross River State set up commissions of ensuring to settle the impending crisis that rock the two communities of Iyamitet and Ababene.
3) The elites from both communities should be encouraged to dialogue or negotiate on the way forward in the resolving of the crisis between the warring communities.
4) Enlightened members of the communities who are experienced should be encouraged to lead their various communities as often times the illiterate chiefs and titles holders are benefit of ideas that could curb communal and ethnic crisis.
5) There should be a convocation of a joint peace and conflict resolution committees of both communities to discuss the way forward in the ameliorating of any further crisis.
6) The youths from the communities should be engaged in vocational orientation to dissuade them from restiveness, as they are observed to be the progenitors of the crisis.

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