

**INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF OMOKU CONCERNED CLERGY IN
CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN OMOKU, RIVERS STATE, 2014-2021**

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Abstract

Man is seen as a social animal that lives and interacts together in the society. This is why he always sees himself to thrive and achieve his purpose in the midst of others. In this process of live accomplishment, he tends to have interest and clash of interest over things and issues which have always led to conflicts within the society. It is a well acknowledged fact that conflict as part of human existence must always occur. It is neither positive nor negative but is dependent on how it is seen and handled. In this regards, it will not be wrong to posit that a lack in the ability to bring out the positive side of conflict has always presented it with the garb of destruction and chaos. Some individuals, governmental and non-governmental bodies have made their contributions in conflict resolution in Omoku but that of Omoku concerned clergy has not been conspicuous which gave rise to this work. This study will be done using a sociological method and will adopt the transformational peace building management theory as framework. The paper finds that there are conflicts in Omoku which occur between individuals within the society. It also observes that these conflicts are as a result of struggle over limited available resources or clash of interests. It finally observes that conflicts have continued to exist despite attempts made by several individuals in their contributions. The paper therefore concludes that conflicts are unavoidable in the society of which attempts should always be made to resolve it in order to have a peaceful environment. It therefore recommends that people should not be seeing conflict as the end of relationship but should always give way to its

resolution with the attending positive effects. It also recommends that appropriate strategies should be implored at the perception of conflict in order to prevent it from escalating to crisis which is unhealthy to every society.

Keywords: Investigating, Role, Omoku Concerned Clergy, Conflict Resolution, Rivers State.

Introduction

Conflict is a concept that is as old as family institution and part and parcel of human existence. It is usually seen as a condition in which some identified group of persons in a given environment is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more identifiable human groups because of the pursuit of what is or what appears to the group as incompatible goals. It involves a simultaneous occurrence of two or more mutually antagonistic impulse or motives with huge struggles for opposing ideas, values and or limited resources (Chaphin, 1979). Conflict is a result of human interaction in the context of irreconcilable ends and where one's ability to satisfy needs or ends depends on the choices, decisions and behaviour of others. Issues of conflict usually result in huge violations of human rights and in most cases lead to the destruction of properties and bring about death. Hence, it suffices to say that conflict is endemic to human relationships in the sense that it brings about disunity and the bridging of peaceful co-existence in the society.

More so, conflict as perceived to be a common and unavoidable phenomenon in all human society has been a reoccurring decimal all over the world. This is because the society is a combination of people with different interests and values. Therefore it is natural in the opinion of Afagbua (2010) that conflicts exist where there is inequality in access to control of natural resources and political power which leads to discontent, opposition and controversy. A survey of the African Continent, Nigeria nation and various communities will show signs of conflicts that are characterized by violence, civil strife, enmity, hatred and incessant killings. These have brought about an increase in destructions of lives and properties, massive displacement of people, huge refugee crisis, huge economic costs and disease. In view of this, Schmidt (2016) makes bold to opine that Africa evokes an image of a continent in crisis, riddled with war and corruption and imploding from disease and starvation. Against this backdrop, it will be germane to say that conflict always lives with man of which needs to be adequately resolved/managed. It is in view of this backdrop that this work is intended to investigate the role of omoku concerned clergy in conflict resolution in omoku, Rivers State, 2014-2021.

Theoretical framework

This work adopts the theory of Transformational peace building management theory. This theory is designed to reframe the way in which peace building initiatives are discussed and pursued. Its focus is on reducing or diffusing outbreaks of hostility with emphasis placed on addressing the underlying conditions and circumstances that brought about such conflict. Hence, in his opinion, Simon (2012) perceives it as an approach which seeks to transform the system, structure and relationships that give rise to violence, conflict and injustices.

The concept as introduced by John Paul Lederach of the Eastern Mennonite School of peace building is assumed to go beyond conflict resolution to building long standing relationship through a process of change in perceptions and altitudes of the parties. Its aim is to change the parties, their relationships and the conditions that created the conflict (Miall et al, 1999). In agreement to this point, Jeong (2000) posits that the theory entails the coming into being of new situations involving conflict issues, perceptions, relationships and communication patterns. Furthermore, Lederach (1995) sees it as a change which can be seen descriptively in the changes created by social conflict and prescriptively in the deliberate intervention by third parties to create change. This concept takes place at different levels and has a number of dimensions. At the personal level, it involves emotional, perceptual and spiritual aspects of change desired for the individual. It also affects relationships touching on communication between parties that need to change to positively affect poorly functioning communication. Change also needs to affect structures that generate conflict through deprivation, exclusion and other forms of injustice and also seeks to understand cultural patterns and values of parties.

The idea of transformational peace building theory comes from the recognition of the dialectical elements of conflict about the inevitability of change. Secondly it recognizes the neutrality of conflict as such and maintains that conflict can be either positive or negative but parties can transform it into positive in order to use it for maximizing opportunities. Finally, it presents the idea of the continuity element which means that parties and interveners can continue to work on problem areas to achieve continues change (Best, 2001). It can deductively be said that this theory is concerned with the exploration of every possible means of achieving justices, reconciliation and sustainable peace in societies where deep rooted and persistent conflicts have had devastating effects. This theory is seen to be suitable in this study because it gives way and guideline on how conflicts can be resolved and its root totally eradicated, hence giving room for no further conflict to exist.

Area of Study

The area of this study is Omoku. Omoku is the headquarters of Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers state which was created in the year 1991 from the old Ahoada Local Government Area. It is situated in Rivers state which is one of the states in the South-South geo – political division of Nigeria. The town is bounded by Elieta, Okposi, Obrikom and Ndoni. According to Afdevinfo retrieved 28-05-2022, the people inhabiting Omoku are part of the people speaking Igbo language in Rivers state, although the Omoku people have their language which is known as Ogba language. Omoku is made up of twenty four villages which are Uwaoma, Odumelu, Obuloko, Ebilechi, Okwulowaya, Okwugu, Obakata, Ehioha, Obiohuru, Ogwualioma, Obosi, Ibuzoha, Obuoma, Ohukwu, Obokuruoha, Obitima, Egwe, Usmini, Owhuoma, Usomini eluoha, Agbogwe, Okwuoba and Obiohuru (Osima, oral interview:08-04-23). The Ogba people and language is the largest tribe in the local government and has twelve legislative wards. Omoku area is upland and has a huge number of oil and Gas exploration activity in the local government Area and the State. The ancient traditional stool of the Omoku people is the Oba of Ogbaland (Heyplaces.com.ng retrieved on 28-05-22). The Omoku people have their social cultural life and behaviour. They also have colourful festival called Nchaka with their masquerade which is known as Okorosu. They entertain visitors and organize different social gathering, they are good in wrestling and football (Okoronkwo, 2018:167).

Economically, the town is blessed with huge deposits of crude oil and natural gas, which it's mining within and around the town, has contributed greatly to the economic development of the town. It is also seen as the economic hub of the local government Area because of the busy nature of its market. Furthermore, Omoku people are economically into fishing which is a popular enterprise among them. They have vast arable and fertile land for agriculture purposes. In the opinion of favour Ucheoha in an oral interview (18-10-22), he maintains that before the oil boom in the area, Omoku people were known for food production and processing. They were into the production of cassava, garri, yams, cocoyam, plantain, vegetable and others. They were also known for palm wine tapping, local craft such as basket making, mats, fish traps and trade on all the produce from the land. With the oil boom, they are among the largest oil producing in the local government and have almost depended on the proceeds from the oil. The people of Omoku now have royalties from the oil companies which are always given to communities according to their memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the community. In the view of Mr Cyril Oburu in oral interview (17-09-2022), Omoku people are majorly into farming, fishery, businessmen and women and few of them that are into white collar job.



Map of Rivers State showing Omoku in Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area.

Social life, religious worldview and traditional/political institution of Omoku people

Omoku as one of the towns in ONELGA in Rivers State has her social life, religious worldview and traditional/political institution. It has been noted that Omoku is the Headquarters of ONELGA and has turned to a mega city due to the influx of people living in that place. In their social life, Chimezie Oburu in an oral interview (23-01-23) maintains that Omoku is peaceful and hospitable, very good at entertaining visitors. They have their festivals which are celebrated every year like the Nchaka festival and the wrestling festival. They have many other social dances from one clan to the other and from village to village like Asawa, Nwokrogbo, Ewele and many more. Stressing further, Salvation Alokwurru in an oral interview (22-01-23) posits that the Nchaka festival celebrated in Omoku town is also done in Ali-Ogba (Ogbaland). He goes on to say that the Egwu Nchaka is a new yam festival event celebrated in the entire thirty nine towns and clans that make up of Ogbaland, this festival is said to be an age-long tradition. The Nchaka festival is done annually between the months to November and December. There is Nchaka celebration by the women which is known as Nchaka-Ki-inyenwa (Nchaka for the women). When the women have finished their own celebration, the men will start their own and it is also known as Nchaka-Ki-ikenwa (Nchaka for men). Many activities are

lined up for the five days, namely; singing, dancing and merrymaking, which involve eating foods and drinking local drink throughout the festival period. The reasons for the festivals are believed by Omoku people is for cleansing, fertility and chasing away of evil spirits.

Religiously, before the advent of Christianity in Omoku as well as Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, the people believed in African Traditional Religion with individual families having their own idol (gods) and what they call Egbo, a protective identity in both the physical and spiritual realms. They also believe on the gods protecting them at various gathering like wrestling at the period of festivity. Denis Izime in oral interview (02-01-23) observes that with the arrival of the missionaries in ONELGA which began with their arrival at Ikiri town for trading and further passed through Ekpe – Mgbede and then to Omoku and other areas to propagate the gospel, the people have embraced Christianity. He goes on to say that with the coming of Christianity and rise in denominations in the area, about ninety percent of the people are now Christians. This is in line with the opinion of Mr. Sunday Eke, in an oral interview (24-09-22), who maintained that the people of Omoku in the olden days were predominantly practicing idolatry before the advent of Christianity. It was gathered that when the missionaries brought western religion to the land of Omoku, it was rejected by the people just like every other Igbo land because the people saw the new religion as been against their own religion. As time progressed in the course of their mission work, many positive changes were brought into the land which made the people to gradually adapt to the new found faith. He goes on to say that this was the beginning of Christianity in the land which has widely been accepted today as the formal religion for Omoku people. Notwithstanding, some people are still in the worship of idol but good number of the people of Omoku have fully embraced Christianity.

The traditional and political institutions are other areas of concern in the study of the people of Omoku. In the opinion of Chimezie Oburu in oral interview (23-01-23), the Omoku people are made up of many villages and clans with each of them having their leaders. In the family levels, there are representatives of each of the families in the clan. In the clan levels, they also have their representatives at the village levels which appointment may be by the oldest man in the clan or by election. The omoku people have village chiefs who are representatives of each of the villages in the traditional ruler who is the Oba of Ogbaland. The Oba has the traditional council of chiefs who are working with him in his cabinet. There is the family council of elders, community development committee, the youth executives, women leaders etc. Politically, the Omoku people are occupying one of the six political zones in Ogba/Egbema/Ndon Local Governmet Area, while Egi, Igburu, Usomini, Egbema and Ndoni have one each. The Omoku people have

about seven wards. The sharing and installation of the political positions in the town is by zoning or rotating within the villages. The same is applicable to executive positions that are brought to the town (Izime, oral interview: 02-01-23).

Nature and dimensions of conflict in Omoku

Conflict has continued to exist in Omoku, the headquarters of Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area in Rivers State which has brought about some disadvantages. Among the natures and dimensions of conflict as seen by scholars are conflict that exists between host communities and oil companies due to oil exploitation and exploration, political conflict, cult conflict, communal conflict which is majorly due to chieftaincy tussle, land disputes and others. These above identified points agree with the opinion of Adekola and Enyiche (2017) that carried out a research on examining the effects of insecurity challenges on community projects and development with Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government Area as case study. In their view, conflict in Omoku as well as Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area appears in some dimensions and natures among which they posit as conflict between different cult groups, conflict by political parties which is due to political factions, conflict between oil companies and their host communities because of failure by the companies to do things that are been expected of them by the communities. They also mentioned some conflicts within different communities due to lack of proper distribution of resources by the oil company host communities. Chieftaincy conflict also exists in Omoku and some other communities as a result of who will be the head of the town. There are some land dispute and conflicts between clans and villages that are neighbours to each other with possible land boundaries. In their submission, Adekola and Enyiche are of the opinion that conflict in Omoku comes in these natures and dimensions as stated above, and until they are handled from these angles, conflict will not be eradicate in the town.

Effects of conflict in Omoku

The conflict that has been always witnessed in Omoku has left a serious effect on the town and its inhabitants. It is not wrong to say that conflict has always brought about dwindling of the economy in Omoku. Adekola and Enyiche (2017) posit that conflict has affected the domestic product growth rate, led to the reduction of foreign investors from entering the area and discouraging the local investors from investing on the land. In line with this, Gift Oni in an oral interview (15-02-23), said that an electricity company that was supposed to be installed in a section of the town stopped their project half way and left the place because the lives of the workers were not secured during the time they were

undergoing the project because of issues on ground. This project was intended to give employment to some of the youths of the town and also help in boosting the economy of the town. This also happened in some other communities in the local government and has affected their production rate. Oni also noted that for some periods of time now, it has been difficult for investors to come into the area because both the investors and their investments are not secured and no one invests in a place where he does not have security of life and property. It is important to note that when there are no investments in an environment, it affects the economy and Gross Domestic Product of such society. This is what conflict has brought about in Omoku.

It is imperative to note that whenever conflict exists, it breeds insecurity in the society. Adekola and Enyiche go on to maintain that the rise of insecurity in Omoku as a byproduct of conflict has led to the stunted growth of developmental efforts and projects in recent time. These issues so noted have drastically affected the community because people that are living in the community have vacated due to insecurity challenges that have become part of the present administrative system, hence pushing the people into urban migration which has brought more untold hardship to them. The conflict situations have also made most of the projects that are been carried on by government and other companies to be abandoned and neglected because of insecurity. In this regard, good numbers of projects are left unfinished. Promise Ogbowu agrees to this, (oral interview: 16-02-23) when he maintained that the Obohia community was initiating plans to raise a structure in Obohia which will serve as a youth centre and will also aim at promoting youths activities in the community but the project was stopped halfway and abandoned because of cult conflict and other insecurity challenges prevalent in the land. In a supporting view, Chibuike Uzor in an oral interview (16-02-23) maintains that there are some projects of such in other areas that were neglected because of conflict and crisis in the land especially around 2014 to 2021. This also led to the destruction of lives and properties. Furthering in his view, the Omoku town was doing well economically because they were hosting some visitors from other parts of the nation but with the setting in of conflict in the land, there were hardships and economic downturn.

Response of the Omoku concerned Clergy in conflict resolution in Omoku

Omoku was seen as a conflict area which was due to the rise in insecurity challenges in that area. The indigenes of the area saw and narrated their condition as sleeping with one eye open. At this time, the church and the clergy were not ignorant of the happenings and were not also silent over it because they were part of the system. This made Rev Canon Clinton Ohia, Rev. Fr. Charlse, Rev I. C. John, Ven. Christian Bella, Rev. Samuel Eze, Rev. Christopher Osi, Bishop Bright Eze, Ven Lucky Elioizu, Ven Lekwa Timothy,

Bishop Ekperu, Rev Austine Eleba and some other clergy from the three bloc to come together to form Omoku concerned clergy. It was from this point that the group started to increase in number as other clergymen queued into the vision. Some of the participants interviewed at the cause of this work maintained that the church and their clergy were organizing prayers in both the church and community levels. In his contribution in oral interview (18-02-23), Eliozu Lucky maintains that the people of Omoku with the help of the clergymen were organizing monthly prayers which was rotational within the town and offered prayers for the good of the land. He said that they embarked on prayers because they saw it as the first means of tackling the problems in Omoku. This is because prayer answers and settles all issues. In most cases, they go to pray at the junctions, pray at the market squares, pray at the rivers and pray in some strategic places in the town both in the day and at night.

The second most prominent role played by the clergy in Omoku in contribution to conflict resolution was sensitization and enlightenment of the masses. This was done through preaching in both in and outside the church auditorium. The church has been there as one of the channels to promote and instill morality. It has also served as an avenue to encourage and appeal to conflicting parties to shun evil, desist from conflict and give way for peace and progress in the society. In an oral interview with Canon Clinton Ohia (21-02-23), he maintains that during this period of conflict and problem in Omoku, the clergy made appropriate use of the pulpit in rebuking and correcting some errors in the land. This he said was done on Sunday services, marriage ceremonies, burial services and all other gathering that gave room for preaching. In this regards, he maintained that the appropriate use of the pulpit by the clergy to condemn evil in Omoku was effective and fruitful in the land. In another oral interview, (19-02-23), Raymond Ugem who is a clergyman posits that the pulpit was one of the weapons that helped the clergy in achieving their aim and making their contribution in conflict resolution in Omoku. In this regard, he maintains that they used every opportunity they had to promote peace and to appeal to conflicting parties to shield their sword because it has no good benefit to the society.

The Omoku concerned clergy made serious efforts to interface with the killers and actors in the conflict in Omoku. In his view, Pastor Ebenezer Promise said that the clergy oftentimes had meetings with the cult groups and other groups that were contributing to conflict in the land. He was the person that led the first delegates that met with the people of which they assured them of a positive outcome. Apostle Gift Tew who was the Chairman of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, strongly maintains that the clergy were actively involved in making sure that peace was returned to the town. He said that he led the second delegation to meet the aggrieved groups in making sure that peace was brokered. It was at this meeting with some cult groups, community in conflict over oil

matters and other issues that the cult boy agreed to give room for amnesty, hence the clergy was made to work towards the achievement of granting amnesty in the area as a way to allow peace. But before the amnesty programme, there were other series of meetings which involved the palace, the stakeholders, the traditional rulers, the chiefs, the religious bodies, the policemen and the youths. It was in one of these meetings that the youth came up with the idea of appointing a peace and reconciliation committee which was granted by the house and the committee to be composed of pastors, community chiefs, community Development Committee executives (CDC) and youth leaders. This group was commissioned by the Oba of Ogbaland and was to be chaired by Kingsley Ofurunnwe (Manor). The amnesty was granted by the state government in a ceremony that was conducted in the Omoku civic center. Pastor Gift noted that many of these bad boys came out with their guns and ammunitions and surrendered them to the government.

In another oral interview (18-02-23), Ike Osere posits that the roles of Omoku concerned clergy in conflict resolution in Omoku are enormous. Apart from these above points noted, the clergy has always reached out to the politicians to sensitize them on the appropriate manifestos and characters that will usher in a new dispensation of democratic dividends. This is because if all the works of the clergy above is not concretized, there is likelihood of reoccurrence of conflict. In this regards, he is of the view that the whole problem that has been existing in Omoku is politically undertone and until politicians live up to the lives that are been expected of them, there will still be avenues for conflicts. In other words, when the masses are given the dividends of democracy and the system is effectively functional, there will be no room for conflict to manifest.

In making his contribution in conflicts between oil companies and host communities, Denis Izime in an oral interview (08-04-23) maintains that the Omoku concerned clergy played vital roles in intermediating between the town and the oil companies. This is because the community has always been denied of their right by the companies and this has always caused problem between them. In his words, the clergy mediated in ensuring that the royalties that are due the community are given to them. They also made sure that the companies are keeping to the memorandum of understanding they signed with the communities. This is in keeping to measures that will guide against an occurrence of conflict. Izime goes on to say that there has been some changes in the town in the sense that so many people have recently been gainfully employed which is one of the outcomes of the role of the clergy. For some times, the incessant conflict between Omoku people and oil companies has drastically reduced and the people are now enjoying peace and mutual coexistence with each other. The clergy has always made her impact in every facet of conflict that has existed in the society. This also agrees with what Osima said about community conflict going on in Omoku town. He said that Bishop Eliozu (of the blessed

memory) and some other clergy from the land have contributed to the peace that is been enjoyed today. More so, with the role of the clergy in Omoku, there has been equitable distribution of power and resources which has helped to reduce conflict. In the political sphere, there has been inclusiveness of the youths in the political and administrative structure of the town. Izime concludes that some of the youths have been given the room to hold some political positions in the town, Local Government and the state at large which was not so before. All these have helped to reduce the issue of conflict in Omoku and there is relative peace in the society

How the role and impact of Omoku concerned clergy help to reduce further occurrence of conflict in Omoku

The role of the Omoku concerned clergy will actually help in reducing further occurrence of conflict in the town. According to Samuel Eze in an oral interview (17-04-23), the major role of the Omoku concerned clergy is not only that it has helped to restore peace in the land but it has helped to reduce its further occurrence. In his view, there has been relative peace between the town and the oil companies in the sense that there has not been much clash as before. Some of the people from the land have gainfully been employed in the oil companies. This made some of the cult boys to drop their weapons and embrace the new found job. In a further investigation, it was discovered by the researcher that life in Omoku is now becoming normal and most of the social amenities that have been the demand of the people are now put in place. In Omoku, there has been power supply which although may not be steady but is better than what the people use to see. More so, there have been constructions of good road in and across Omoku. The government in recent time constructed the Ahoada – Egbema road which is dualized and that has given the town a better look. Eze goes on to say that if the government will be keeping to what she ought to do in the town, the cult groups will not see reason to continue in issues of conflict because no one will be unjustly cheated. He also observes that the inclusion of Omoku people in the political sphere and bringing the dividend of democracy to them has helped to reduce political conflict. The town has representatives in the government who stands for them and make sure that the people are represented and with this, the people will have no reason to start conflict in the future.

In a further discussion, Eze posits that prayers and enlightenment from the clergy will continue to be practice in order to always keep afresh in the mind of the people the expectation of the church and the society. In this regard, he maintained that the clergymen have developed the body (Omoku Concerned Clergy) into Omoku concerned churches thereby taking the spectrum to cover all the believers in Omoku town. This prayer movement has also turned into monthly affairs in Omoku on which the venue is rotated

within the churches in Omoku and the attendance is much encouraging. It is important to note that the prayers of the concerned clergy have always been effective in directing the activities of the people mostly the cult groups.

In the view of Clinton Ohia, he posits that conflict occurs because the society is not balanced in the sense that there are few people enjoying the resources that are meant for everybody while the rest of the people are suffering. These classes in the society have always made the lesser class which is the suffering masses to show their dissatisfaction by reacting to the undue treatment they are receiving from the rich few. In his idea, the impact of the clergy has reduced the gap by enabling equitable distribution of resources in the society. This has to begin by how the town shares the royalties that are given to her by the oil companies that operate in the land. Before now, the rich men have always monopolized the royalties for themselves and the families which have always made the cult group to be troubling both the oil companies and the town.

A critical study of the main cause of conflict in Omoku from the year 2014 till 2021 will understand that it was majorly as a result of oil dividend but is wrapped under cult and political conflict. This was why Igwedibia Johnson (a. k. a Donny Wannu) and his group hijacked the activities of the oil companies and kept them restless in that area. Donny Wannu and his group was terror in the life of the oil companies in that area and when he has caused much damage to them, they were paying him and his gang huge amount of money every month. He was even taking what was meant for the town and no one dare talk to him if such person still likes to live. But with his death and the new dawn in Omoku and its environ, there has been changes seen because what is meant for the people have been coming to them and that has helped to reduce conflict. If things continue as it is now, there is hope for the reduction of conflict in the near future. Ohia also goes on to say that if the companies will keep to their agreement and develop the town by giving them social amenities, further conflict will be reduced. When there is a balance in the society that there are no classes, conflict will be reduced to the minimum. Also the role of the clergy in making sure that amnesty was granted will go a long way in reducing subsequent conflict. This is because most of these people are gainfully employed and they have handworks which is fetching them money. A survey of Omoku will see that there are so many youths that are roaming the street without job and any source of livelihood; hence they will become agents of bad work. It is said that an idle man is a devils workshop which is not so if such person is engaged and have no time for indulging in evil and issues that will bring about conflict in the society. In this way, the impact of amnesty will help to reduce future occurrence of conflict because majority of the cult boys have been settled by the government. Notwithstanding, there is the likelihood that some of the cult boys will go back to their bad life but there are some individuals who have also

changed and repented through the amnesty programme. In this way, conflict is reduced in the future.

Conclusion

The present day society is often engulfed with incessant occurrences of conflict which has always affected the smooth flow and administration of the society. It has also been a barrier that delays and truncates the achievements and set goals in the society. This is not different from what was recently observed in Omoku, a town in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State from the year 2014 to 2021 which has its numerous negative effects in the lives and properties of the people. In recent time, there have been records of conflicts in Omoku which include cult conflict, political conflict, chieftaincy conflict, boundary conflicts and host communities/ oil company conflicts. These conflicts compelled some of the inhabitants of the town to relocate to other places for safety of lives and properties. The conflict drastically affected businessmen and women and oil companies in this area. Hence calling for the attention of individuals and cooperate bodies to make their contribution in restoring peace in the society.

It was at this time when contributions were made from different angles with little or no significant difference that the impact of the clergy was paramount. It will be worthy to note that the clergy is part of the society and there has been the existence of the clergy who are not only part of the suffering but their members are also part of it. They cannot hold their hands to observe and feel ignorant of the happening with its adverse effect hence they have to make their contribution in ensuring peace and sanity in the society by resolving and managing the conflicts. The Omoku concerned clergy thereby perform their dual roles of satisfying their spiritual function as mediators between the people and the Supreme Being and making their contributions to the betterment of the society. It is on this note that this research investigated the roles of the Omoku concerned clergy in conflict resolution in Omoku and concludes that the concerned clergy in Omoku made remarkable impacts in conflict resolution in the town which helped in ensuring the maximum peace that is witnessed in the society today.

Recommendations

Having gone through this research work on investigating the role of Omoku concerned clergy in conflict resolution in Omoku, the researcher makes an attempt to recommend the following:

Clergymen should always endeavour to make their positive impact to the betterment of the society. This is because they are entrusted with human resources management and

have control over people who listen to them and obey them as their leaders. More so, clergymen are channels through which God is seen and they have both spiritual and social oversight functions over the lives of the people they care for. This therefore places a predominant role on them which they must always play in contributing to conflict resolution and to the betterment of the society.

The youths should always try to give way for peace and unity and desist from being used as agents of conflict. This is because the research shows that youths are often used as machineries in most of the conflicts in Omoku, like cult conflict, political clash/conflict, boundary conflict and host communities/oil companies' conflict and in most cases, they are at the worst receiving end.

The political class should also live up to the expectations of the people on her. Politics should not be seen as an avenue to kill and destroy but opportunity to make positive impact and change in the lives of the masses and the society at large. More so, politicians should not use their political offices as avenue and privilege to revenge or repay evil done to them by others but should always use their offices to better the lives of the masses and bring about a better society.

Furthermore, the traditional leaders have their roles to play in the peaceful atmosphere of the society. They are the custodians of custom, law and order and should desist from any form of instigating conflict in the society. This is because it was discovered in the course of this research that some traditional leaders are engineering to conflict in the area.

The researcher also recommends that oil companies and the community should see themselves as the left and right hands, which the washing of one another makes each other clean. The oil companies are engaging in the exploitation and exploration of oil in the land and should treat the community with respect by keeping to all the agreements signed in their memorandum of understanding, which will help to bring the expected development in the community.

The researcher finally recommends that clergy of other religious traditions should make their contributions to the betterment of the society. This is because the maintenance of peace and security is the responsibility of everybody which the leaders should be taking the lead. The non religious and nongovernmental organizations should also contribute in ensuring a peaceful atmosphere at every given time.

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