



Research Paper

Effects of Ethnic and Communal Conflicts in Ekoi Tribe: The Old Obubra Experience 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 threelocal 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_0) and alternative (H_1) respectively. H_0 : 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.

Key words: Effects; Communal, Conflict, Ekoi Tribe, Ethnic, Old Obubra.

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I. 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 between 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 as virtually every part of Ekoi tribe has experienced its own share of inter and or intra-ethnic conflicts. These conflicts have to a reasonable extent resulted to the break-up 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 chunk 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 Iyauntet in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State. Furthermore, other objectives are to study the causes and effects of communal conflicts between communities in Ekoi tribe with a motive of 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_1) in respect of avoiding skewedness.

H_0 : Communities and ethnic conflicts in Ekoi tribe have not lead to the socio-economic development of Ekoi tribe.

H_1 : 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 questionnaires and oral interview. The questionnaires was segmented into, Section A and B. Section A seeks the bio-data of the respondents, while Section B sources responses from the respondents on the factors that often caused communal conflicts in Ekoi land. The questionnaire was made up of a set 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 set aside for Undecided (UD); 2 points for Disagreed (D); and 1 point for Strongly Disagreed (SD). Therefore, the higher the points the stronger the fact the factor is responsible for the conflict that have taken plan in Ekoi land in the circumstance. Also, a mean rating is also estimated by estimating the total rating and dividing the total by the total frequency, where the mean rating is used to make decision concerning the respondents' agreement. Wherefore, the rating result in 3.4 and below, it remarks that the respondents' response was not in the affirmative, but where the mean value records 3.5 and above, it is presumed that the 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 accept 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.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Contemporarily, they are numerous views on the nature, causes and effects of communal and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, Africa and the world. It is obvious that conflicts have threatened the peaceful co-existence of many states in the world. The communal and ethnic conflicts threatening the stability of many states are beyond a reflection of traditional sentiments to modernization which have equipped communities with novel political resources and selfish aspirations. The literature reviewed in this paper is focused at the opinions of some scholars which are concerned with communal and ethnic conflicts.

Struggle for Farmland as Cause for Communal Conflicts.

According to Abuul and Abuul (1993), there have been over thirty 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 in this review.

Communal clashes in Tiv nation have been recognized to be the result for the struggle for farmlands and the exploitation of lands related resources. These crisis are therefore linked to the mode of economic production and distribution practiced in the society. In the pre-colonial Tiv society, land, then, the major means of production was commonly owned. Farming, hunting and fishing were collectively carried out and the proceeds were equitably shared. There was little surplus and therefore no exploitation. The society was egalitarian and government was gerontocratic (Hembe, 200). Under such conditions, it was relatively easy to handle disagreements and disputes in such a way that grievances did not reach such point at which disrupt the

peace, the economic life, the tranquility or the progress of one or more of the communities involved. Pre-colonial Tiv society at its communal mode of production was therefore relatively free from land disputes. Disputes which occasionally came about were usually handed by established conflict management mechanism such as the "Orya" (Village head) or "Mbakwaw" (Age-grade), (Fater, 2005).

However, with the experience of colonial rule which resulted in the fixation of boundaries and the introduction of new methods of farming, new crops such as tree crops (citrus tree) and several other aspects of the capitalist economy which have since continued to erode the base of communalism, Tiv-related conflicts had become intermittent and destructive. The efforts by retired civil servants, ex-service men and politicians to privatize previously communal lands, as has been gathered have also helped matters (Aule, 2011). Tiv farmers as well as their neighbors abandon farmlands in preference for bigger and better ones, and consequently they encroached on other peoples farmlands. They thus have to fight fierce battles to maintain the farmlands (Hember, 1995).

In another dimension, Avax and Myeba (1992) have pointed out 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 (Ahu 2006).

Another case of communal clashes in Tiv-land is rooted in internal instability among ethnic groups such as Idoma, Jukun and Alago, who are the neighbours to the Tiv; as the conflicts gives rise to internal alertness and practical cessation of progressive enterprise among the Tiv. These creates tension in the atmosphere in case they will be some spill over into Tiv localities. This may explain why some Tiv communities after waiting for too long, abandon their agricultural livelihood and, upon provocation, descend on fellow communities. The destruction that is consequent upon such action leave both parties the poorer and oppressed (Utov, 2000).

The basis of so much of the inter-personal and communal clashes, as well as underdevelopment of Tiv-land is Iyue (envy) which, to many observers, is prevalent in Tiv society (Jibo, 1994). His submission reveals that indeed the Tiv mercilessly kill fellow Tiv and destroyed their property on a gargantuan scale.

Another major cause of crisis in the Tiv nation is rooted in politics, 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 (Varvar, 1999). Often these elite centered political fractions were manipulated to be intolerant of each other that they related only the basis of the mutual violence. Jebuhee (1991), succinctly captures the above scenario of political violence in Tiv nation. In fact, Tiv politics has always been characterized by killings, maiming, witchcraft and intimidation of political opponents (Joseph, 2011). Often times, the lead to lawlessness as it was glaring in the 1960 political class tussle between the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) of Tarka and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) led by Balewa which was introduced in Tiv land by Akiga Sai. This bitterness diffused into the 1964 politics in which countless people were killed and property wantonly destroyed (Abuul and Abuu, 1993), thus providing that Tiv politics has been a game of violence and a major factor for underdevelopment of Tiv land.

Ethnicity and Colonization

Nwosu (1999) says the colonization of Africa and several other Third Worldstates ensure that people of diverse culture were brought together under one country. He assets 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. To 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) see violent and intractable internal conflicts in recent years in Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan as the failures of states in sub-Saharan Africa to cope with ethnicity. He examines the association of ethnicity identities with the colonial period and the instrumentalist contention that ethnicity was invented for political purposes. He notes 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 that because most Africans states are artificial colonial creation, the major problems they have all faced since attaining independence have arisen from the deep cleavages which exist between the diverse people who constitute state. To him, these cleavages are often marked by sectional loyalties that compete with much desired loyalty to the nation or nation-to-be. Consequently, the major problem in the most African states, he argued, has to do with creating overarching loyalties to the nation over and above the

primordial and sub-national loyalties. Once the sub-national loyalties are eradicated, it is usually claimed, national integration and, with it, political instability is assured. Furthermore, he sees ethnicity as basically a product of competition for scarce resources between groups in multi ethnic societies.

Communal Conflicts and Economic Reforms

Ogachi (1999) relating ethnic conflicts and economic reforms in Africa believes that violent ethnic conflicts have increased in Africa, especially from the mid 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, he emphasized that three observations can be made to help build a holistic theory of studying conflicts in Africa. The first has to do with the manner in which the reforms (both political and economic) were introduced and implemented. While donors have insisted that democratic political systems are crucial for the success of the economic reforms, they have always not put into place. The second observation on his view related to the nature of the current state of the ethnic conflicts in Africa. The level of violence and organization make them slightly different from those that were experienced during the colonial period and may therefore not adequately capture the internal dynamics of these conflicts – cause and effects. To him, new theoretical postulations have to be sought. Thirdly, the point that has already been made about the occurrence of the present conflicts in Africa, concurrently with the economic and political reforms policies, to him persuades one to seek a framework with which locates the converging points of ethnicity, economic austerity and adjustment regimes in Africa. In his submission, ethnicity should not always be seen as a colonial intervention on Africa or just a continuation of the pre-colonial manifestation of the sheer tribal emotions as postulated by the modernization school (Ogachi, 1999).

Magubane (1962) argued 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 furtherance of their own special interest which at time and again are constitutive of interest of emerging social classes. In this way, ethnicity becomes a mask for class privileges.

Ethnicity and Nationalism

Ottawa (1999) observes some shift as he declared that after a long time of being treated as some kind of periphery ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism have gained strength and even a degree of legitimacy in recent times. To him ethnic dynamics could also be viewed as struggle by the dominated and oppressed groups for greater autonomy and for the protection of their rights. Wallerstein (1979) asserts that ethnic consciousness and conflicts occur when groups feel threatened loss of previously acquired privilege or conversely feel that it is an opportune moment politically to overcome a longstanding denial of privilege. He posits that the mechanisms and machinations through which these groups advance their aims is what causes ethnic tensions and conflicts. To him, the present manifestation in Africa is an elite and class phenomenon where one community's elites feel excluded by another from control of economic and political power. They then indoctrinate members of their ethnicity to believe that this is a conspiracy by a whole community against another, which should be violently resisted.

Nnoli (1995) asserts that ethnicity holds individuals together, gives them internal cohesion, encourages them to provide internal security for each other and promote their sense of identity and direction. To him, ethnicity offers a personal solution to the problems of exploitation, expressions, deprivation and alleviation; and further noted that the ruling class use the state to build up their business enterprises.

Ibrahim (1995) says a major or contributory factor to ethnic conflicts is the under democratic nature of governance. He says many African regimes and rulers have repressed sections of the people, and by implication, ignored their aspirations. Diamond (1988) attributes crisis and conflicts in post-colonial politics in Nigeria to the emergence of a modern state with vast economic resources. To him, the legacy that colonial rule left was the development of a modern state that dwarfed all other organized elements of economic and society. He agreed that the state in the post-colonial era was a capitalist type because the dominant few usually controlled it and translated political power into the means of accumulating for themselves the wealth and resources of the states. Furthermore, Synder (1993) believes that the state has been designated as a principal actor in the source of conflicts in Nigeria. He says ethnic nationalism predominates when institutions are not fulfilling people's basic needs and when satisfactory alternative structures are not readily available, that is, when there is lack of effective statehood. He posited that options emerged from a failed state phenomenon: where political society reveals in anarchy and there follows the process of carving out mini states-around dominant ethnic groups.

It can therefore be stated 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. This keeps on generating a confliction process, which eventually returns the state failure experience.

The United Nation Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) stated in 1995 that ethnicity is a resilient paradigm used in explaining the nature of conflict in Nigeria. In the UNRISD Report, it is held that Nigeria as a political society comprises many ethnic groups, which rub shoulders with each other, so there is bound to be conflicts. The central assumption of this view point is that ethnicity has the potential to transcend other loyalties and obligations and become the sole basis of identity. This may lead to conflict when people's multitude identities are narrowed down to a single focus, and social division become deeper and more rigid. The submission of the UNRISD Report is that, ethnicity as a deeply emotional basis of mobilization that not merely distinguishes one group from the other, but also dehumanizes the other group.

Ethnicity and 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 states further that elsewhere on the African continent, violent and bloody conflicts are more often assuming inter-ethnic and inter-ethno/religious proportion. He believes that on the attainment of independence from European colonial domination, mostly from the 1950s many African leaders and regimes kept on with the tempo of denouncing the threat posed to the new state by ethnicity and regionalism. He asserts that a paradox of the position was the reality that many of the proclaimed anti-ethnicist and anti-regionalist, leaders were themselves using ethnicity and regionalism as weapons to exclude, to hold onto power, marginalize and repress those in the oppositions-as well as to forces perceived either as rivals or enemies.

Nwaezeigwe (1998) is of the view that ethnicity is an instrument of groups' consciousness which serve to elevate one's pride and sense of being. It serves as the crime fond as one's belongingness to the essence of his Nigerianess. Every Nigerian is so by the fact of his identity with a particular ethnic group geographically situated in the present political Nigeria. 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 geo-political setting". Agbese (1985) says Nigeria's problems were partly made-made 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) argued that the most serious threat to harmony, progress and integral nationhood of Nigeria over the years, has been the over sharpened ethnic loyalties 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. For him, the nation inadvertently have been promoting circumstances that not only sensitize, but also politize the ethnic differences in the country.

Nnoli, (1978) in another book expressed sentiment in an atmosphere of extreme socio-economic competition and political scarcity prevailing in Nigeria. He further argues that the ubiquitous malaise of ethnicity had infected all facets of communication. Ethnicity, in the process of socialization has become internalized and increased. Consequently, the ethnic factor assumed a self-fulfilling and sustaining dynamics of its own which daily reinforced the individuals internalized ethnic sentiments. The persistent and growth of ethnicity in Nigeria had become inevitable.

Ethnicity and Political Power

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. He is makes a case for economic deregulation as a recipe for conflict management. Sule, (2000) traces the request for power and the resultant ethnic conflicts to ambition and greed. These negative instincts of man have continued to sour human relations and fortunes, with the result that incidents of population displacement is getting more and more acute.

Oyokenmi (2000), though, reckons deprivation; a scene of alienation and a determination by ethnic groups to be part of the control of resources are the primary factors that cause ethnic conflicts in Africa. She adds that these groups resort to violence when they are not assured of other ways of seeking relieves and getting justice. Agbu (2000) believes poverty alone can provide inducement for such conflicts. He says, we all know the economic condition of most people in Africa. We have seen whole groups impoverished. Unless such groups are empowered deliberately, strife may never end on the continent.

From the fore-going literature reviewed, ethnic situations acknowledges the heterogeneity of ethnic groups in terms of culture and languages that are endemic in diverse origin and history. Ethnic conflicts erupt when the claims of one party to land and territory become incompatible with the desire of others to satisfy their own basic interest and needs within the same physical territory. The consequences of the ethnic conflicts, whether in Africa or elsewhere, could be nation destroying. Failure to resolve conflicts over access to commonly valued scarce resources, over divergent perceptions of socio-political situations, has the high potential of degenerating into genocide or fratricide as it occurred 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 societies consist of system and interrelated parts which are always changing largely through internal contradictions and conflicts. He emphasized the factor of economy which is 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.

Conflict is regarded as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Coser, 1956). It is conceptualized as a way of settling problems originating from opposing interest for the continuity of society.

To Shapiro (2006), conflict is a process of social interaction. It involves a struggle to over claims to resources, power, status, beliefs, preferences and desires.

Ethnic conflict theories have been viewed by several schools of thought, in various permutations, manner and combinations but the issues on which they are divergent are numerous. But the difference can be reduced to hard views of ethnic conflicts versus soft view, hard and soft 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 ethnocentrism 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 (Horowitz, 1998).

In the case of 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 irreconcilable objectives than strategic dilemmas. The above ascertions see hard and soft views as ethnic affiliations as made of stone, and made of Putty (Horowitz, 1998).

Therefore, 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 bourgeoisie, make her ethnic situation perhaps the most complicated in the African region (Osaghae, 1994). Therefore, Marxian paradigm for application to the topic under perspective, economic resources are scarce relative to demand in Mbembe land or Ekoi tribe at large, just like in Nigeria and several other developing nations; and the competition for the scarce resources between groups and individuals is an open source of conflict among the Ekoi nationalities.

The Causes and Effects of Communal and Ethnic Conflicts in Ekoi Tribe

Out of 300 questionnaires administered to respondents in the sampled local government areas that constitute the Ekoi tribe, 220 were returned while 80 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 220 respondents and filled and returned the questionnaires.

Responses of respondent on the Table 1. The Causes and Effects of Communal and Ethnic Conflicts in Ekoi Tribe.

| S/N | Causes of Conflicts | SA | A | SD | D | UND | Total |
|--------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Quest for political Hegemony | 80 | 55 | 30 | 25 | 30 | 220 |
| 2 | Land disputes | 90 | 60 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 220 |
| 3 | Holding to Aborigine status | 60 | 70 | 30 | 25 | 35 | 220 |
| 4 | Chieftaincy tuzzles | 60 | 65 | 20 | 35 | 40 | 220 |
| Total | | 290 | 250 | 100 | 115 | 125 | 880 |

Source: Owa survey work, 2017

Table 2: Computing for Mean Rating

| Factors | SA | A | SD | D | UND | Total | Mean | Remark |
|---------|-----|-----|----|----|-----|---------|------|--------|
| 1 | 400 | 220 | 30 | 50 | 90 | 790/220 | 3.6 | Agreed |
| 2 | 450 | 240 | 20 | 60 | 60 | 830/220 | 3.8 | Agreed |
| 3 | 300 | 280 | 30 | 50 | 105 | 765/220 | 3.5 | Agreed |
| 4 | 300 | 260 | 20 | 70 | 120 | 770/220 | 3.5 | Agreed |

\bar{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 220 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

H₀: Communal and ethnic conflicts have not underdeveloped Ekoi tribe

H₁: Communal and ethnic conflicts have underdeveloped Ekoi tribe

The factors raised has beini the causes of conflicts in Ekoi tribe were subjected to Chi-square (X²) statistical tool of analysis.

Table 3: Computation of Chi-Square

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | $\sum \left(\frac{O-E}{E} \right)$ |
|----|------|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 80 | 72.5 | 7.5 | 56.25 | 0.78 |
| 55 | 62.5 | -7.5 | 56.25 | 7.5 |
| 30 | 31.3 | -1.3 | 1.69 | 0.05 |
| 25 | 28.8 | -3.8 | 14.44 | 0.5014 |
| 30 | 25 | 5 | 25 | 1 |
| 90 | 72.5 | 17.5 | 306.25 | 4.224 |
| 60 | 62.5 | -2.5 | 6.25 | 1 |
| 20 | 31.3 | -11.3 | 127.69 | 4.0796 |
| 30 | 28.8 | 1.2 | 1.44 | 0.05 |
| 20 | 25 | -5 | 25 | 1 |
| 60 | 72.5 | -12.5 | 156.25 | 2.1552 |
| 70 | 62.5 | 7.5 | 56.25 | 0.9 |
| 35 | 31.3 | 3.7 | 13.69 | 0.4374 |
| 25 | 28.8 | -3.8 | 14.44 | 0.5014 |
| 30 | 25 | 5 | 25 | 1 |
| 60 | 72.5 | -12.5 | 156.25 | 2.1552 |
| 65 | 62.5 | 2.5 | 6.25 | 1 |
| 40 | 31.3 | 8.7 | 75.69 | 2.43 |
| 35 | 28.8 | 6.2 | 38.44 | 9.64 |
| 20 | 25 | -5 | 25 | 1 |

$\sum 41.41$

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: if the calculated X² is less than critical value, the null hypothesis will be accepted and reject the alternative hypothesis, vice versa.

Considering the DF of 12, the critical chi-square value of 5% level of significance is 21.03; while calculated X² = 41.4; 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 Obubra

The Ekoi tribe could also be compared to a biological cell, which sub-divides and sub-divides again, and miniature Nigerian state, creating more and more replicas of yourself. Obubra was formed in 1902 by the constitution of various ethnic groups and communities in the central Cross River State, as this was encouraged by British colonial administration through communal sentiments among the different ethnic groups. It seized every available opportunity to spread the myth 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 because exclusion and inbred with a serious level of tribal selfishness, animosity and hostility against one another. That is, Ekoi tribe in itself has been transformed into ethnic group

for itself through the colonial contact situation. The basis for the emergence of a common consciousness among these ethnic groups has been inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources resulting in ethnic and communal conflicts.

Obubra was created in 1902 was dominated by a majority tribe or ethnic group constituting about 2/3 of the entire population: the Mbembe in the North; the Yakurr in the South and Bahumono in the East. The remainder of the population in the division consisted of a number of minority tribes with their own separate culture and languages. The most prominent of these were the Agbo, Okoi, Isobo, Nkum-Yala and Inyima. Despite the fragmentation of the local government area into three (3) local government areas today by successive government for administrative convenience, with the aim of easing ethnic tension and prompting development and cultivating unity in diversity, the spate of inter-ethnic and community rivalry still persists at alarming rate.

The trend of violent ethnic conflict spreading through Obubra in recent years has intensified in the past months, leaving hundreds of people dead, with thousands of people displaced, and ofcourse destroying property with multi-millions of naira. From present Obubra in the North to Yakurr in the South and Bahomono in the East, neighbouring communities have pounced on each other with destructive fury justified by long standing rivalries. Despite the ethnic lines often dividing belligerents, some of the most intense fighting has been between people of the same ethnic groups, such as the mbembe communities of Iyamitet and Ababene in Obubra; Apaipum and Ofatura; even between the people of Ofudua. The Nko and Mkpani in Yakurr; and the Ediba and Usumotong; Ebom and Ebijakara in Abi respectively. In most cases, the ethnic and communal conflicts are rooted in age-old disputes.

Iyamitet- Ababene Conflicts

Iyamitet and Ababene communities are in Obubra local government of Cross River State, who have occupied a volatile posture in the history of inter-group conflicts and tension in central Cross River State. These communities have experienced complex conflicts, occasionally violent, and mostly assuming an ethnic form. Linked with this have been questions of community rights over a parcel of land called "good -bye". Recently, the conflicts became fratricidal, were many lives were lost and property worth over 100 million was destroyed leaving 75, 000 inhabitants homeless. The conflicts have been there time from whence Obubra was created in 1902. This has conform with that Kazah-Toure (1999) who asserts that since when Nigeria got her independence from the British in 1960, the various contradictions and points of inter-ethnic conflicts had not been resolved. That the post-colonial order was founded on the same socio-economic and political structures, which are already in existence. The institutions and mechanisms for generating conflicts remained the same. Thus ethnic conflicts were to remain part of the history process (Kazah-Toure, 1999). Therefore, the history of the Ekoi people is essentially a history of residence and struggle by the various ethnic groups to the possession of land boundaries which were imposed on the area by the British colonial indirect rule system. These struggles have continued in various forms resulting into very bloody clashes in Ekoi.

The dispute between between Iyamitet and Ababene people goes beyond the quarrel over the relocation of the former college of agriculture, rather between them, there has been a protracted misunderstanding over land ownership at their "good-bye" axis. The Iyamitet people claimed the land on which the Ababene cultivated farms was theirs; and that the Ababene people were only settlers. These entails set back and hence the underdevelopment of the Ekoi tribe and it negatively impacts on such society.

From the foregoing, in our view, Ekoi tribe is not yet a united tribe, as there is inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic distrust and destructive rivalry. Claide 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".

III. CONCLUSION

It is observed that the negative events of conflicts which undermined the development in Ekoi tribe are universal and these events are by no means restricted to Ekoi. Therefore, conflicts should be discouraged or avoided in all ramifications, and to achieve this proposition, mutual understanding between the warring communities to pursue peace should be encouraged.

Order was founded on the same soci-economic and political structures, which were already in existence. The institutions and mechanisms for generating conflicts remain intact. Thus ethnic conflicts were to remain part of the history process. Thus the history of Iyamitet and Ababene is essentially a history of residence and struggle by the various ethnic groups to the "good-bye" land, which has continued in various forms resulting into bloody clashes between the two communities. These conflicts are by no means restricted in reality to the Ekoi tribe. Therefore, conflicts should be discouraged or avoided in all ramifications in society. To achieve this, it is important to encourage a situation of mutual understanding and to bring the parties involved to

the pursuit for peace, where both parties, government and arbitrators should have roles to play in the propagation of peace.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the forgoing discourse, it is pertinent 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 and be charged with the responsibility of reviewing the relationship between the warring communities Iyamitet and Ababene.
- 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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