
Ogbakiri Community Conflict and its Management Approaches

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article was to analyze the method used to handle communal conflict in Ogbakiri using a descriptive survey. A sample size of 400 was drawn using Taro Yamane from the study's population of 201,901. The respondents' information was gathered using a 33-item questionnaire that was self-designed. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data that had been obtained. Result showed that traditional leaders, town criers, vigilante groups, social institutions, eleawerenzi (married women), omereny (adult daughters), the authority of the ancestors, elders, the use of law enforcement personnel, the use of courts, and the constitution of fact-finding committees were the main conflict management systems in Ogbakiri because only the government cannot resolve intercommunal disputes hence, committees comprising of archeologists, historians, and traditional rulers should be set up by the government to put up all historic facts right to avoid twisting of facts.*

Keywords: *Ogbakiri Community, Conflict, Management, Approaches.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In many developing societies, such as Nigeria, ethnic and sub-ethnic groups move across other ethnic zones in the search for socio-economic survival, and wars are caused by competition for resources. These conflicts are inevitably supported by differences in resource endowment, socio-cultural minor distinctions, and state laws that modulate or regulate human excesses in societies (Oravee, 2015). These societies are also pluralistic, which is a social structure based on respect for the various groups that comprise a society. In pluralistic societies, inferior groups



are not required to give up their way of life and traditions but can instead express them and engage in larger society without facing prejudice, which sees problems based on the recognition, legitimization, and representation of various identities and modes of emigrating, as evidenced by the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, rather than on questions of territory, boundaries, and sovereignty (Schaub, 2014). Multiple communities' ongoing communal disputes have had disastrous effects on national growth. To put it another way, wars have a propensity to seriously obstruct efforts at development by damaging infrastructure, disrupting the manufacturing process, and diverting resources

The Ikwerre people have been involved in various forms of violence for many years, which have frequently led to the loss of lives, property, and human habitation. The underdevelopment of Ikwerre land is largely a result of these battles. As the players perceive a mismatch between their valued skills, the occurrence of social conflict in Ikwerre land presupposes the interaction between individuals or in the structure of the economic, political, or social system. According to Okoli and Atelhe (2014), the majority of social conflicts in Ikwerre have been political, such as chieftaincy conflicts, economic, like oil-induced social conflicts, environmental, like scarcity and land issues, and social, like youth unemployment and restiveness, which all have roots in the political structure of the Ikwerre people. The Ikwerre people, he said, are culturally homogenous and share a common ancestry. The Ikwerre also have a stateless and divided governmental system. Each sector is self-governing, comparatively independent, and autonomous due to its political order and pattern (Al Chukwuma Okoli & Ochim, 2016).

The inhabitants of Ogbakiri are blessed with an abundance of natural resources and human resources. Effective and good management of these resources will ensure Ogbakiri's economic, social, and political development, leading to a tranquil society free from many crises. Unfortunately, Ogbakiri's history has been marked by ineffective leadership, unstable political conditions, inadequate infrastructure, a high percentage of poverty, and widespread illiteracy. It is true that it is commonly believed that a man who is poor and frustrated will always be aggressive. The lack of functional infrastructure, essential amenities, functional education, and unemployment in Ogbakiri is the root cause of the issues that have arisen as a result of chieftaincy disputes, community conflicts, environmental shortages, and youth restiveness. The consequences for the Ogbakiri people's socioeconomic and political lives included fatalities, total eviction from six settlements, dissatisfaction for those whose homes were destroyed as a result of intercommunal fighting, and economic stagnation. This background informs the research being done to determine the origins of the communal conflicts in Ogbakiri, the effects of the crisis, and the conflict management strategies used there over time, as well as to provide useful recommendations for preventive measures that could be taken to avoid the emergence of new conflicts in Ogbakiri.

2. RELATED WORKS

Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) assert that communal conflicts have a variety of dynamic reasons that depend on the current socioeconomic and geopolitical environment. Intergroup violence has been linked to societal issues like population increase, economic migration, and anti-poor



policies, according to S. Egwu (2016). Politics, politicians, and their pursuit of personal gain were named as the main drivers of communal conflict by S. G. Egwu (2006). According to Otite and Albert (1999), a variety of factors, including the indigenous/settler problem, religious differences, ownership of land and its resources, and personal goals and aspirations, could result in community strife in the country. While Gyuse and Ajene (2006) emphasized political strife and colonization, Ayuba (2014) mentioned loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, deforestation, bush burning, and flooding as some of the reasons for communal conflict. Ibeanu, Garuba, and Ibrahim (2009) found that severe economic hardship, a high prevalence of illiteracy, the desire for and fear of outside group supremacy, land disputes, market ownership, chieftaincy difficulties, and party politics were the main causes of intergroup violence. Best (2004) proposed that issues such as rising agricultural land prices, unemployment, hunger in rural areas, poverty, and destitution contribute to communal violence. Community instability may be brought on by problems with leadership, discrimination against minorities by dominant ethnic groups, and poverty, according to Ayih (2003). Traditional chieftaincy issues, religious disagreements, and competition for resources are among the factors that Al Chukuma Okoli and Nnabuihe (2019) listed as potential sources of communal strife in the country. In the North, disagreements over chieftaincy and territory are the main sources of community conflict. For instance, in Nasarawa, where Alago, Hausa, and Tiv all clashed, the Egburra and Bassa in Toto fought over territory, chieftaincy, and politics from 1995 to 2005. In 1989, 1990, and 1997, conflict between communities broke out in Ipav, Gboko, due to a land dispute. The Chamba, Jukun, and Kuteb chieftaincy disputes in Taraba State have endured since they started in 1996. Between the Bachama and Hausa/Fulani, a conflict over land ownership, politics, and religion broke out in Adamawa State in 2004. On March 5, 2005, a fight broke out between Maruta (Jigawa) and Burmin (Bauchi) over the market's relocation. In a conflict in June 2003 between the Kogi and Edo States, Ekepedo and Ogori fought over who owned the land. Best (2004) argued that the high demand for land in the Benue Valley, which comes from all directions, leads to an increase in ethnic, communal, and political conflicts, the bulk of which are caused by the land issue. According to Albert Chukwuma Okoli and Ayokhai (2015), the majority of Africans who identify as either Christians or Muslims still go to shrines and have high confidence in their ability to resolve exceedingly difficult conflicts. The managers and priests of these shrines, he continued, are perceived as middlemen, and when their involvement is necessary, their judgment is regarded as final. In his conclusion, he mentioned adjudication, facilitation, adjudication, non-binding arbitration, and ombudsman as traditional methods of problem resolution. (Asiyanbola, 2007). His inability to analyze every traditional strategy for resolving disputes in Africa limits the scope of his research. The majority of Ikwerre components in Nigeria, including age grade, the council of elders, as well as lineage and village meetings, women's organizations, proverbs as a tool for conflict transformation, and the role of the ancestors in Ikwerre society's conflict management, according to Ajodo-Adebanjoko, Okwudili, Okoli, Olaku, and Iortyer (2015), were not directly addressed. With this endeavor, the efforts of this lineage will have traveled a long way. The historic event of colonization had a significant impact on the Ikwerre people's traditional methods of resolving disputes. The introduction was highly criticized and imposed upon the original conflict management concept. Transitional justice, according to the Encyclopedia (2006), is "informed by societal will to reestablish social trust, fix a fragmented

judicial system, and construct a democratic system of government" (Ajo & Upav, 2017). Similar to this, Brickford (2004) defined transitional justice as a set of actions taken by societies to address the legacies of pervasive and systematic human rights abuse as they move from an era of oppression and violence to one of peace, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for individual and collective rights. It includes both legal and non-judicial techniques that the nation may use to redress historical wrongs done against individuals. According to Alimba (2014), it was difficult to think that Nigerians had achieved justice because the principal suspects in the alleged human rights violations disregarded the panel. The Justice Oputa judicial panel, which was constituted in 1990 at the start of Obasanjo's presidency to look into many incidents of human rights breaches, injustice, and mass atrocities during the military dictatorships of Babangida and Abacha in Nigeria, looked into this issue (1985–1998). Given the background information, it is possible to infer that Ikwerre's contemporary method of conflict resolution has several drawbacks. For instance, transitional justice failures led to youth violence in several Ikwerre neighbourhoods (Hilary, 2016).

In their 2014 study of the Ezillo and Ezza-Ezillo dispute in the Ebonyi state from 1982 to 2012, Oji, Eme, and Nwoba (2014). evaluated traditional factors such indigene-settler-problematic, socio-economic, and political resources. The fundamental argument is that disparities in material resources and the existence of groups and subgroups are what lead to the adversarial relationships that are typically ingrained in society. It was found that factors such indigeneity, land ownership, cultural disparagement, resource competitiveness, and tactics used by the government to manage problems were to blame for the conflict, with the government escalating it without involving the people.

A case study of the Ijaw/Ilaje crises was used by Okiki (2008) to examine communal conflict management, information communication, and utilization in Ondo State, Nigeria. The goal was to establish a link between information availability and use and effective communal conflict management in Nigeria. The study demonstrates, among other things, a strong positive association between the information sources and communication channels used in conflict management, which its management style lacks.

Abang (2018) analyzed the communal and ethno-religious conflict resurgence factor within the context of Nigeria's political architecture and found that the common cause of conflict resurgence is suspicion of dominance by the so-called settler group in his article Conflict management and peace building: A review of communal conflict resurgence in Nigeria. From the foregoing, it is obvious that previous authors only examined the primary reasons of intergroup conflict and its communication style, omitting to mention the management strategy that this study fills in.

The aim of this research is to examine Ogbakiri community conflict and management. Other objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Determine the causes of communal conflict in Ogbakiri.
2. Determine the impact Ogbakiri communal conflict.
3. Examine the approaches used in conflict management over the years in Ogbakiri.

3. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was used, the population for the study comprised all the six Ogbakiri communities (Okporowo, Rumuoro, Oduoha, Ahai, Rmuokani, Rumuada) that is 201,901 according to the 2006 Census. The sample size was 400 using Taro Yamane, the sampling techniques was random. The instruments used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire. The retrieved copies of the questionnaire were collated, coded and analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage counts, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the causes of communal conflict in Ogbakiri?

Table 4.1: The causes of conflict in Ogbakiri

S/N	Causes of conflict in Ogbakiri	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Illegal sale of community land	136 (56.66)	35 (14.58)	29 (12.08)	40 (16.66)	3.11	1.16	Agree
2	Chieftaincy tussle	98 (40.83)	84 (35.00)	27 (11.25)	31 (12.91)	3.03	1.02	Agree
3	Land dispute among families and communities	103 (54.16)	31 (12.9)	45 (18.75)	61 (25.41)	2.73	1.25	Agree
4	Twisting of well-known historic facts	196 (81.66)	0 (0)	44 (18.33)	0 (0)	3.45	1.16	Agree
5	Youths unemployment and restiveness	132 (55.00)	40 (16.66)	45 (18.750)	23 (9.58)	3.17	1.04	Agree
6	Cultism among the youths	233 (97.08)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (2.91)	4.0	0.00	Agree
7	Bad leadership style	240 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2.87	0.87	Agree
8	Financial embezzlement and misappropriation by chiefs and elders	78 (32.50)	55 (22.91)	107 (44.58)	0 (0)	2.86	0.92	Agree
9	Forceful acquisition of land	98 (40.83)	43 (17.91)	51 (21.25)	48 (20.00)	2.79	1.17	Agree
10	Discrimination among the so-	57 (23.75)	50 (20.83)	122 (50.83)	11 (4.58)	2.63	0.89	Agree

	called non-indigenes							
11	Injustice and Human abuse	138 (57.5)	31 (12.91)	71 (29.58)	0 (0)	3.27	0.89	Agree

From table 4.1, it shows that Illegal sale of community land, chieftaincy tussle, land dispute among families and communities, twisting of well-known historic facts, youth unemployment and restiveness, cultism among the youths, bad leadership style, financial embezzlement and misappropriation by chiefs and elders, forceful acquisition of land, discrimination among the so-called non-indigenes, and injustice and Human abuse are causes of violence conflict in Ogbakiri. Above all, Bad leadership style ranked highest with 100 percent as a major cause of conflict in ogbakiri, followed by cultism among the youths with 97.08 percent, and twisting of well-known historic facts with 81.66 percent, among others since they all have a mean value above 2.5.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of communal conflict in Ogbakiri?

Table 4.2: Impacts of communal conflict in Ogbakiri

S/N	Impacts of communal conflict in Ogbakiri	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Loss of lives and properties	154 (64.16)	22 (9.16)	56 (23.33)	8 (3.33)	3.11	1.16	Agree
2	Mass poverty	84 (35.00)	98 (40.83)	43 (17.91)	15 (6.25)	3.03	1.02	Agree
3	Loss of effective community leadership	65 (27.08)	61 (25.41)	95 (39.58)	19 (7.91)	2.73	1.25	Agree
4	Loss of social amenities	156 (65.00)	30 (12.50)	45 (18.75)	9 (3.75)	3.45	1.16	Agree
5	Insecurity	102 (42.5)	40 (16.66)	52 (21.66)	46 (19.16)	3.17	1.04	Agree
6	Distortion of government developmental project	161 (67.08)	16 (6.66)	49 (20.41)	14 (5.83)	3.35	0.99	Agree
7	Proliferation of arms and armed groups	123 (51.25)	44 (18.33)	51 (21.25)	22 (9.16)	3.11	1.04	Agree
8	Breakdown of both health and educational sector	109 (45.41)	27 (11.25)	33 (13.75)	71 (29.58)	2.72	1.30	Agree
9	Loss of traditional values	119 (49.58)	41 (17.08)	71 (29.58)	9 (3.75)	3.12	0.96	Agree

10	Psychological traumata	97 (40.41)	33 (13.75)	74 (30.83)	36 (15.00)	2.63	0.89	Agree
11	Underdevelopment	155 (64.58)	0 (0)	85 (35.41)	0 (0)	3.29	0.95	Agree

From table 4.2, It shows that Loss of lives and properties, Mass poverty, Loss of effective community leadership, Loss of social amenities, Insecurity, Distortion of government developmental project, Proliferation of arms and armed groups, Breakdown of both health and educational sector, Loss of traditional values, Psychological traumata, and Underdevelopment are the consequence of violence in Ogbakiri .Above all, Distortion of government developmental project ranked highest with 67.08 percent, followed by loss of social amenities with 65.00 percent, underdevelopment with 64.58 percent and loss of lives and properties with 64.16, among others since their mean value is more than 2.5

Research Question 3: What are the approaches used in conflict management in Ogbakiri?

Table 4.3: Ogbakiri conflict management approaches

S/N	Ogbakiri conflict management approaches	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Traditional rulers	94 (39.16)	49 (20.41)	73 (30.41)	24 (10.00)	2.88	1.04	Agree
2	The role of town criers	53 (22.08)	36 (15.00)	107 (44.58)	44 (18.33)	2.40	1.02	Agree
3	Vigilante groups	163 (69.91)	0 (0)	77 (32.08)	0 (0)	3.35	0.93	Agree
4	Church	116 (48.33)	19 (7.91)	46 (19.16)	59 (24.58)	2.80	1.27	Agree
5	Omereny (Adult daughter)	98 (40.83)	71 (29.58)	21 (8.75)	50 (20.83)	2.90	1.15	Agree
6	Eleawerenzi (married women)	99 (41.25)	82 (34.16)	15 (6.25)	44 (18.33)	2.98	1.10	Agree
7	The authority of the ancestors	89 (37.08)	30 (12.50)	70 (29.16)	51 (21.25)	2.65	1.18	Agree
8	Elders	91 (37.91)	34 (14.16)	78 (32.50)	37 (15.41)	2.74	1.12	Agree
9	The use of law enforcement agents	122 (50.83)	20 (8.33)	81 (33.75)	17 (7.08)	3.02	1.04	Agree
10	The use of court	114 (47.5)	34 (14.16)	82 (34.16)	10 (4.16)	3.05	0.99	Agree
11	Constitution of fact-finding committee	120 (50.00)	33 (13.75)	81 (33.75)	6 (2.50)	3.11	0.96	Agree

From table 4.3, shows that Traditional rulers, the role of town criers, Vigilante groups, social institutions, Omereny (Adult daughter), Eleawerenzi (married women), The authority of the ancestors, Elders, the use of law enforcement agents, the use of court, and Constitution of fact finding committee are the conflict management approaches used in managing Ogbakiri conflict. Above all, Vigilant groups ranked highest with 69.91 percent, followed by Constitution of fact-finding committee with 50 percent, the use of law enforcement agents with 50.83 percent and Church with 48.33 among others since their mean value is more than 2.5

In relation to research question one which attempted to identify the sources of communal conflict in Ogbakiri, the finding revealed that illegal sale of community land, chieftaincy tussle, land dispute among families and communities, twisting of well-known historic facts, youths unemployment and restiveness, cultism among the youths, bad leadership style, financial embezzlement and misappropriation by chiefs and elders, forceful acquisition of land, discrimination among the so called indigenes, injustice and human abuse leads to communal conflict. This outcome is supported by Fred (2013) & Alemna (2015) who opined that chieftaincy tussle has always been a source of conflict in Ogbakiri. Ikurekong, Udo, and Esin (2012) also affirms the fact that land dispute is a major threat to human existence while Nwagwu (2016) confirms that illegal sales of land have led many to death. The researcher feels that bad leadership style, injustice, human abuse and twisting of well-known historical facts by elders have lured the youths and some elders into illegal sales of communal land and financial embezzlement thereby creating room for cultism, youth's unemployment and restiveness. Gaps in leadership, chieftaincy dispute, crude oil induced conflict, environmental conflict, and youth restiveness and unemployment largely contribute to the crisis that rock Ogbakiri communities. Also neglect of human development as a priority of government suggest inadequate acquisition of literacy, entrepreneurial, productive and peaceful living skills among the people thereby limiting their wealth creation capacity. Furthermore, formal and non-formal education programmes were neglected in conflict prevent and management initiatives

For research question two which sought to determine the effects of communal conflict in Ogbakiri, the finding of the study showed that loss of lives and properties, mass poverty, loss of effective community leadership, loss of social amenities, insecurity, distortion of government developmental project, proliferation of arms and armed groups, breakdown of both health and educational sector, loss of traditional values, psychological traumata, and underdevelopment are the major effects experienced in Ogbakiri communities. This is in affirmation with the research carried out by Al Chukwuma Okoli and Uhembe (2014) which revealed that loss of traditional values has ruined the social system in Ogbakiri also, A. C. O. Okoli and Iortyer (2016) opined that loss of lives and properties comes as a result of conflict while Al Chukwuma Okoli and Lenshie (2018) confirms that poverty, loss of social amenities, distortion of government developmental projects are consequences of conflict. The researcher feels that the sources of conflict bring about the following effects as an outcome of the communal conflict.

In terms of research question three, which attempted to determine the management approach used in managing the communal conflict in Ogbakiri. The finding indicated that the following were used to curbing the conflict; traditional rulers, town criers, vigilantee group, social organization such as church, Omereny (adult daughters), Eleawerenzi (married women), the authority of the ancestors, elders, law enforcement agency, the use of court, and constitution of



fact-finding committees. This agrees with the research carried out by Tian, Tuttle, and Xu (2016) which confirms that married women played a vital role in resolving crisis. Also UNDP (2017) added that authority of the ancestors is feared by the people and has helped in settling conflicting issues while Nwanegbo, Odigbo, and Ochanja (2014) affirms that the role of vigilante cannot be overemphasized in a communal settle. The researcher thinks that the traditional approach which has been neglected in managing conflict has led to crisis by using modern approach such as law enforcement agencies, the use of court and constitution of fact-finding committees. The modern approach can easily be influence by the corrupt leaders and the political elites thereby creating more problems rather than managing it.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that poor human development emanating from gaps in leadership explains the phenomenon of social conflict in Ogbakiri. Data also revealed that conflict management initiatives of the state and non-state actors such as the police, JTF, SSS, and security agencies, traditional rulers, and women were used towards conflict management to tackled poverty, unemployment as well as youth restiveness in Ogbakiri. Notwithstanding, there is a need to improve on youth development and empowerment to boost conflict prevention and transformation. A joint problem-solving model as well as adequate prevention of economic empowerment programme, formal and non-formal peace education will not only harness male and female youth potential but will promote sustainable peace and development. However, it is the management aspect of it that must be given a thorough consideration if conflict is to be reduced among communities. It is therefore necessary that the use of dialogue rather than violent means be adopted for lasting solution of conflicts in the communities. Government should recognize, strengthen and empower the traditional institutions in Ogbakiri in order to involve the traditional rulers in governance. Government should initiate strategies such as to provide functional education to the people in order to enhance their potentials and empowerment opportunities. Conflicts should be discouraged or avoided in all societies. In order to achieve this, it is imperative to foster a climate of common understanding and to bring the aggrieved parties together to negotiate for peace. Both the government and the communities have a role to play in this regard. Therefore, conflicts should be discouraged or avoided in all societies. In order to achieve this, it is imperative to foster a climate of common understanding and to bring the aggrieved parties together to negotiate for peace. Both the government and the communities have important roles to play in this regard.

Recommendations

1. Government should engage the traditional leaders on leader development programmes with modern conflict management approach or techniques.
2. Government should initiate a historic policy that will create committee involving historians and archeologists that will find out the true history and the leadership regime of Ogbakiri community to avoid assumptions.
3. Ogbakiri communities should distance themselves from partisan politics or alliance because the pressure of alliance and politicking the stool have weakened the community leadership and brought hostile relationship among members of the communities.



4. Government should recognize, strengthen and empower the traditional institutions in Ogbakiri in order to involve the traditional rulers in governance.

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