

THE AGE OF TURBULENCE IN EMOHUA OF IKWERRE, RIVERS STATE, 1966 TO 1999

CHIDI AMADI, PhD.

Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt

Abstract

The work examines communal conflicts among the Emohua of Ikwerre, Rivers State from 1966 to 1999. It argues that most conflicts in the area were rooted in farmland disputes, party politics, chieftaincy struggles, and Nigerian Civil War. However, none has specifically gained scholarly attention as to finding sustainable solutions to the conflicts. The study tried to fill this gap in scholarship by revealing the indigenous methods of conflict resolution in Emohua of Ikwerre which were used by Ohna Rundele at the eli udele shrine in conjunction with the gods. The study also explored the methods adopted by the Strategic Committee on Peace in Emohua (SCOPE) in the farmland crisis and chieftaincy struggles which can be used to foster peace and unity in contemporary times. The study recommended the use of Ikwerre indigenous methods of conflict resolution, the sharing of farmland to individuals rather than through the family heads.

Keywords: Farmland, Party Politics, Indigenous methods, Spiritual message, Conflict and Emohua

Introduction

Emohua is the headquarters of Emohua Local Government Area of Ikwerre ethnic nationality in Rivers State of Nigeria. The clan is made up of 8 villages namely, Oduoha, Elebrada, Isiodu, Rumuakunde, Mgbuetor, Rumuohia, Mgbuitanwo and Rumuche. Emohua people lived in brotherly relationship in the early period of their settlement. However, trivial matters were all settled by the family head and other elders within the compound except on grounds of appeal to higher bodies which rarely happened. There were occasional disagreements and skirmishes among members of the communities which were generally short-lived and easily resolved.

Onyekpe (2012:182) posits that a major problem of predominantly agrarian rural communities in Nigeria is the growing scarcity of cultivable land especially in areas aggravated by the large-scale expropriation of land by urban based private interests. As an agricultural community, Emohua people attach great importance to farmlands. Acquiring large farms helped in providing food for the family as well as meeting their economic needs and social obligations. There were farmland boundary disputes which resulted to minor quarrelling among the people in the pre-colonial period but this did not result to killings, maiming, looting and destruction of property through arson or weapons. The post-colonial era of Emohua was marred with farmland disputes, Civil War crisis, political party crisis and chieftaincy struggles. But for the indigenous methods used in resolving the conflicts, the community would have been submerged in crises.

The Remote Causes of Emohua Crises

The Nigerian Civil War Crisis

The Nigerian civil war crisis was between Chief Emmanuel Joshua Anachor Orij and Chief Gilbert Asejiri Eke both from Rumuche village in Emohua. The crisis resulted to loss of lives including the Royal Highness Chief Wenu Agala Okor the *nne-nwe-ali* Emohua. Chief G.A Eke accused E.J.A. Orij of conspiring with the government of the day to deal with Chief Wenu Agala Okor over a minor chieftaincy wrangle. E.J.A. Orij was a commissioner at that period

under the administration of Lt. Commander Alfred Diete Spiff and failed to move for the bailout of the traditional ruler. This was seen as sabotage against the entire community (Oti, 2017).

It was alleged that E.J.A Oriji supported the government that detained the traditional ruler. The negative aspect of it all was that Chief Agala Okor later died in detention. This polarized the entire Emohua into two factions between E.J.A. Oriji and G.A. Eke. The difference posed by the death of Chief Agala Okor also manifested in their support on the Nigerian-Biafran war. While E.J.A. Oriji was on the Nigerian side G.A. Eke supported and even fought as a soldier on the Biafran side. Consequently, this old disagreement continued to trigger most conflicts in Emohua (Iwedi 2016).

Political Party Crisis of 1979

During the 1979 democratic process, political parties were formed which guided representative democracy that rested on competitive method of selecting or electing political leaders. To this end, Chief E.J.A. Oriji was chosen as the leader of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in Emohua. He later contested the party's primary for senate with late senator Ellah and failed. However, Chief G.A. Eke became the leader of Nigerian People's Party (NPP) in Emohua, contested the party's primary for senate and won. Chief E.J.A. Oriji saw it as a slight on his personality because he felt that Chief G.A. Eke was not matured and experienced to hold that position. He viewed himself as the most competent for the position since he had in the past won election into the Eastern House of Assembly representing Ikwerre/Etche in the former Eastern Region.

Wahua (2014:138) posits that E.J.A. Oriji in his memorandum of January 1980 to Hon. Justice Fiberesima Commission of Inquiry narrated the causes of October 28 1979 Emohua crisis. It was gathered that the NPN scheduled a meeting at Rumuohia on October 28 1979 and that before the meeting they got a security alert that NPP supporters would disrupt the meeting. They alerted the Ahia-Ezi police post about the meeting and the purported plan by the NPP supporters at Rumuche to scatter the meeting. The NPN supporters for fear of being attacked decided to shift the venue from the village square to Emeh's compound in Rumuohia. No sooner had they concluded the meeting and started going home that the NPP supporters from Rumuche abused, molested, insulted and assaulted the NPN supporters. The tension and upheaval between the two factions continued till the next day (Chinnah, 2016).

However, Chief G.A. Eke the leader of NPP had the majority supporters including the then paramount ruler Chief Willie Owonogwu Onuekwa. He therefore, perceived Chief E.J.A. Oriji's coming for the NPN Party meeting at Rumuohia improper as he was on self-exile in Port-Harcourt, which also meant that he had to pass through Rumuche to attend the meeting. The faction led by G.A. Eke alleged that before E.J.A. Oriji was to be allowed into the community, he was supposed to make peace with the community due to the rancour that earlier existed between him and the community leading to his decision to embark on a self-exile (Uchendu, 2017).

They claimed that in spite of this, E.J.A. Oriji still had the boldness to hold a meeting with his party in the community. The NPN members felt very proud of this situation and decided to make some inciting and provocative statements against the NPP. The disagreement between them culminated to violence in Emohua.

On Monday 29, 1979 which is the second day of the NPN meetings, their members and supporters from Runuakunde village who had earlier attended the Rumuohia meeting the previous day planned and executed a reprisal attack targeted at the people of Rumuche. They wanted a "payback" to the saboteur role which Rumuche had played because Rumuche had to

pass through their village to Rumuohia. These youths who are members of NPN from Rumuakunde barricaded the boundary between Rumuche and Rumuakunde so that Rumuche people could not go their normal businesses as they have to pass through Rumuakunde. This generated violence between the two villages as armed youths maimed, killed and destroyed property worth millions of Naira. Emohua people became refugees in Rumuji, Ndele, Ibaa, Choba and Port Harcourt.

The government of Rivers State after the 1979 crises set up a commission of inquiry headed by Hon. Justice J.A. Fiberesima to look into the problems of the community. The mandate of the commission included inquiring into the circumstances which led to disturbances in Emohua on October 28 and 29, 1979. To also ascertain the extent or degree of the involvement of the people, the extent of damage of property and lives lost, to identify the people responsible for such destruction and to make recommendations in the light of its findings. Attempts were made by Chief G.A. Eke of Rumuche to stop the commission of inquiry by filing a suit in the High Court but he eventually lost the case and the commission concluded its report and formally handed it over to the then governor Chief Melford Okilo on February 1981 (Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Emohua Crises)..

In their findings, the commission maintained that "politics" was the root cause of the violence. The NPN members who attended the meeting of October 28 were attacked on their way home by a large body of NPP supporters organized by G.A. Eke. The commission acknowledged that G.A. Eke of Rumuche was the key man responsible for the crises. The commission also revealed that unemployment was also a factor among the causes of the conflict. Many youths of Emohua were idle and unemployed. Therefore, they easily fell prey to G.A. Eke of the NPP who readily ushered them good food and money and instructed them on how to terrorise and subjugate his political opponents. This is driven by the view that economic factor remains the underlying cause of conflict propelled by quest for competition for power which will guarantee full control of the resources. Olarimonye (2012) agrees that the unemployed youths could for a paltry sum of ₦5,000 carry out heinous attack on unarmed civilians. Iwundu (2015:26) advice that to end kidnapping and restore a stable and secure environment, the government must create jobs for the teeming youths who are often recruited as kidnapers.

The commission also stated that more than 122 buildings were maliciously damaged or destroyed and the loss of several lives including a 15 year old boy. The commission recommended that the police post in Emohua should be upgraded to a police station to contain the population of the community (Wahua 2014:146).

Farmland Crises in Emohua (1985-1986)

Land is very important in the economic life of the Emohua people in particular and the Ikwerre in general. The above statement therefore points to the fact that, there must be an acceptable way of allocating or sharing community land for farming purposes otherwise there would be attendant confusion over land allocation that can effectively destabilize the entire community.

The scenario above was depicted in the farmland conflict between the members of Rumungbooh, Rumuche, in Emohua in 1985 to 1986. Many issues are involved in the crises including the method used in sharing the *Akpna-Olua* farmland which summarily created factions among the members of the community. The aggrieved faction forcefully gained entry into another section of community land at *Ngerenge* and *Akwaka* set aside by the paramount ruler for the next farming season. The factional party took this action because they have to

undertake their economic venture which mainly was to farm and produce foodstuffs for their own survival (Awuse, 2017).

The main cause of the disagreement was over the purchase of a traditional title called *urie* which made recipients automatic heads or leaders of their families. The *urie* title was always given to the most senior elder of the family. However, it was discovered that certain persons who were not yet elders in their respective families bought the *urie* title. The duty of an *urie* title holder includes the sharing of an already allotted land by the paramount ruler to the members of their own families. Since the *urie* title has been sold and bought by some over ambitious fellows, it now meant that some family will have more than one *urie* title holder.

This illegality if accepted will generate more conflicts in the community. The entire community however decided that only the most senior elders with the legal and recognized *urie* shall be given the authority to share their respective family portion of farmland and asked the other *uries* to drop that title and submit themselves to the eldest recognized *urie* holder in their families (Beke, 2017).

This decision to invalidate all *urie* allegedly bought and to recognize only one *urie* in every family generated several crises in Emohua. Consequently, all persons who became *ele-ru-urie* by virtue of a purchased *urie* were stripped of their *urie* title and asked to be subject to the recognized *urie* holders being the eldest in the family. This exercise affected many people like Egwenike Adum, Wosu Ogonu and Bila Ama. When, it was decided that *Akpna-Olua* farmland should be shared to the people for farming, the leadership of the community maintained that the farmland will be allocated to persons holding the recognized *uries* to share to their subjects including those stripped from their *urie* (Onuekwa, 2016).

This arrangement annoyed those holding the unrecognized *urie* so much that they decided to form dissent group to resist the decision of the community leadership. They therefore summoned and restrained the community from sharing the farmland by "locking" it in the *Ohna* Emohua. During the judgment, the holders of the unrecognized *urie* were fined and they actually paid the fines and were asked by the adjudicators to report to the people holding the recognized *urie* in their families for their shares of farmland. This verdict did not go down well with them and so they reported the matter to the Divisional Police Officer (D.P.O) at Isiokpo. The paramount ruler then was Chief Willie Onuekwa who admitted that he gave farmland to all and sundry through those with recognized *urie* and they should go to them for their shares. The D.P.O pleaded with the paramount chief to let every person have his *urie* and equally have access to his own share of farm land to avoid confusion even if the unrecognized *urie* were not conferred by him (Iwedi, 2016).

In addition, the D.P.O in his wisdom asked a prominent son of Emohua E.J.A. Oriji to further look into the matter with the aim of settling all parties. At home, E.J.A. Oriji advised that every person should be allowed to have his *urie* whether purchased or not to avoid problem. It was decided that every *urie* should revert to *status quo ante* (positions before the invalidation exercise). Following this decision, the people resolved to reshare the already shared farmland at *Akpna Olua*. Obina (1989:3) posits that on the appointed day of resharing the farmland, confusion ensued at the point when they asked who should take first amongst Egwe Adum and Ejiwoke the two *uries* of Abah family. However, Egwe was told to take the portion given to him which was his rightful place. He refused and went away taking along with him all the others whose *uries* were formally invalidated (Wordu, 2016).

Chief Egwe Adum and all the members with the unrecognized *urie* mobilized a section of the community and forcefully entered into another community farmland at *Ngerenge* which was meant for next farming season and shared the land among them, with Egwe Adum acting

as the traditional ruler. Egwe Adum and his faction were sued by the community alleging that what they did was capable of starving them by destroying the fallow land kept for the next farming season. Egwe Adum and his group entered another fallow farmland at *Akwaka* and also shared the same among themselves. The traditional ruler announced through the town crier that everybody should assemble in that farm. On arrival, he ordered the removal of boundary demarcation stakes and started sharing that said farmland when Egwe Adum arrived the scene with police men. The traditional ruler was formally invited to come to Isiokpo with members of his own faction.

Again, at Isiokpo, the D.P.O instructed that all the parties should not go into any of the community farm lands for the purposes of farming or agriculture which at that time kept the people hungry. Development became a mirage and every member of the community felt insecure and hunted. The economic hardship resulted in social, educational and political stagnation. There were loss of lives and property as occasioned by the attendant violence that ensued as a result of the farmland disputes (Obinna, 1989:6).

Meanwhile, Chief G.A. Eke supported the Egwe Adum faction and hailed his decision to share the *Ngerenge* farmland since they were denied farmlands. He also reported to the police and the D.P.O advised that there should be a peaceful sharing of the farmlands. This advice was not taken by the paramount ruler as he refused to name portions of farmland against individual owners but preferred to name it against the recognized *uries*. Being deprived of the only source of livelihood, they were forced to share or do the same at the community farmland at *Ngerenge*.

It is a truism that denial of access to basic economic activities constitutes one of the major causes of communal conflicts in Ikwerre. Therefore, the deprivation of farmland to a group of people triggered the community conflict that resulted to loss of lives and property as the people struggled for basic economic advantage. Igbudu (2015) affirms that the two factions attacked themselves with knives and guns in the bush which resulted to loss of lives and property. It resulted to reprisal attacks until Egwe Adum's faction obtained a court order restraining either of the parties from entering any of their communally owned land.

Chieftaincy Struggle 1996-1999

The genesis of the 1996-1999 Emohua chieftaincy crises was the feud between the paramount ruler Chief E.J.A. Oriji and Chief Sampson Ozuru over his *urie* installation which entitled him to be the leader of Ozuru family in Rumuche, Emohua. Chief E.J.A. Oriji questioned the system that brought Sampson Ozuru to the leadership ladder and maintained that he (Sampson Ozuru) was not supposed to be conferred with an *urie* title and leader of the Ozuru family when he is the third male child in the family.

But Sampson Ozuru being an ambitious man, had already convinced his elder brothers on the need to allow him have the *urie* title and the leader of Ozuru family. He equally told them his ambition of becoming the traditional ruler someday which will earn the family a recognition among the families that have ruled the entire Emohua community. This will put the name of the family in the *ononunkwume* king list of the history of Emohua (Wahua, 2014:164).

No sooner had the brothers accepted and recommended him that trouble and disagreement started in Ozuru family between Chief Sampson Ozuru and his elder brothers over the already settled issue. Sampson Ozuru suspected Chief E.J.A. Oriji as the invisible man behind the crisis in the family by instigating his elder brother Mr. Nkesi Ozuru to kick against his *urie* installation. To make the matter worst, Chief E.J.A. Oriji refused to recognize Chief Sampson Ozuru as an *urie* title holder and the leader of Ozuru family (Chinnah, 2016).

This disagreement polarized the entire Emohua community and helped in fostering tension, violence and hostility in the community. This perceived hatred must have prepared the stage for further crises as seen by the full readiness displayed by Sampson Ozuru in becoming the traditional ruler when the conflict produced a vacancy in the leadership.

Immediate Causes of Chieftaincy Struggle in Emohua (1996-1999)

The chieftaincy struggle was between Chief E.J.A. Oriji and Chief Sampson Ozuru. Both of them hailed from Rumuche village in Emohua community. The traditional throne of the community rotates among the families in Rumungbooh quarter of Rumunche. It is normally given to the most senior elder in the family. Chief E.J.A. Oriji became the rightful person as he became the most senior elder among the free born and was eventually crowned as the traditional ruler of Emohua community.

Chinnah (2016) posits that problem started when E.J.A. Oriji became so autocratic that he used his power to intimidate the people. This led to the factionalization of the entire community as more than half of Emohua community withdrew their support for him. He was a one time commissioner in the former Eastern Nigeria. Being exposed, he often used his power against the people. His children were always molesting the people and often used guns to harass the villagers. Apart from this, he ordered his children to tie Mr. Ifeanyichkwu Ikpella at stake in his compound at night alleging that he was caught stealing in the palace.

Chief E.J.A. Oriji and his children were found guilty by the entire Emohua community for committing such an abominable act. The people saw it as an insult and an act of intimidation and as such demanded for a change in leadership. The level of autocracy displayed by him called for his dethronement which eventually took place. Chief Sampson Ozuru became the new *nne-nwe-eli* Emohua. Immediately, he was sworn into office, he started carrying out his duties as the paramount ruler of the community. This aggravated the deposed ruler E.J.A. Oriji and his faction and resulted in violent clashes between the two factions (Keje, 2017).

The course of the conflict was so grave and wide that Chief E.J.A. Oriji and his supporters were chased out of the village. They ran to the neighbouring communities of Rumuji, Ndele, Ibaa, Choba, Degema and Port Harcourt. Many people from the community lost their dear lives. Among those who lost their lives include Ogechi Ogonu, Kelechi Okor, Awolome, Obisike Chezu. The houses destroyed include E.J.A. Oriji's house, Mr. Sydney Ikpella's house and several buildings belonging to his supporters (Iwedi, 2016).

Again, the then governor of Rivers State, Col Musa Sheik Shehu on January 19, 1996 appointed Hon. Justice .T.K. Osu to head a judicial commission of inquiry to look into the disturbances in Emohua. They were also charged to investigate the immediate and remote causes of the conflict, the extent of damage and the loss of lives recorded, to identify the people responsible in carrying out the act and to recommend solutions to the problem. The commission was still in the process of its finding when some persons in Ozuru's faction at home started having some secret meeting with Chief E.J.A. Oriji and his group in exile urging them to come back home. The people admitted that they have compared the two leadership pattern and found out that Chief E.J.A. Oriji leadership style was better than that of Ozuru (Igbudu, 2017).

A day was set aside in Emohua specially known as "Emohua day with God" which saw the participation of philanthropic peace loving socio-cultural organization and St. Lukes Anglican Church members. The church was already having their annual thanksgiving service when they saw E.J.A. Oriji and his supporters returning home after the crisis that led to the death of many Emohua people. As they were still in the mood of prayer, a divine message

came to them from the clergy requesting that the spirit of God mandated him to tell the people that there should be a divine prayer by the Emohua people for restoration of peace.

The spiritual message was taken very seriously by the entire Emohua community under the leadership of Mr. G.A.W. Agorom. On 1st January, 2000, all the men of God in Emohua were summoned including prominent and well-meaning indigenes of Emohua. Clubs, churches, organizations, youths, children, women groups and all the people of Emohua were asked to assemble at Government Secondary School Emohua for a special thanksgiving Service.

The guest speaker was Apostle Zilly Agrey who interpreted EMOHUA to mean "Expecting Miracle of Heaven Under Agreement". Chief E.J.A. Oriji and the Emohua council of chiefs also attended and witnessed the dedication ceremony. Emohua Day with God has always been commemorated every third Sunday of January every year following the first outing in the year 2000 (Wahua, 2014:168).

Resolution of the Crises in Emohua

Due to the crisis generated by the farmland dispute, the *Ohna* Rundele met at *eli-udele, shrine* in Emohua on 20th to 21st February 1989 and successfully resolved the conflicts through the use of the Ikwerre indigenous methods of conflict resolution. This was after the efforts of several other bodies, organizations, prominent individuals within and outside Emohua had all failed. The Diamond club under its able president Feddy Mini in 1988 set up a body known as Strategic Committee on Peace in Emohua (SCOPE) chaired by D.I. Obinna and charged to look into the issues of disputes in Emohua especially Rumuche using the indigenous methods with a view of finding lasting solution.

After listening to all the factions, the panel observed that the purchase of a high traditional title like the *urie* with money and wealth was a misnomer and those who sold and bought this title contributed greatly to the violence. They also stated that the invalidation of the purchased *urie* in order to retain one *urie* in each family was a step in the right direction. But was not properly timed and as such smirked of bad faith especially when the people who bought the *uries* were made to pay huge fines and still to be denied their portion of land.

The panel further observed that the re-instatement of the *uries* as a peace measure following the violence and disagreements which arose from the sharing of *Akpna Oluwa* farmland on the intervention of the D.P.O at Isiokpo was good. It served as an interim measure to retain peace in the community. On the method of sharing of farmland it was observed that in as much as the demography of the community is increasing, the sharing of farmland should be done on individual basis since some families are greater in number than others (Awuse, 2017).

The panel observed that the destruction of lives and property has become the style of expressing anger during disagreements and quarrels in the community. This attitude portrayed the community in bad light capable of destroying the growth and development of the community.

It was seen that some members of the community wrote to various establishments and ministry where their sons and brothers were working and called for their sack from their legitimate sources of livelihood. These acts are capable of fostering dis-harmony, ill-will and violence in the community. They noted and regretted that the community imposed very oppressive and painful fines on the people without considering the status and income of the person on whom these fines are imposed. Moreso, no thought was shown on the effects of these huge fines on the individual. These dangerous and exorbitant fines could generate violence from those who are unable to pay (Obinna, 1989:9-12).

At the end, a verdict was given to the satisfaction of all the factions. First, was on the issue relating to the purchased *urie* by some members of the community. The people holding

such *urie* title shall not head their families. They should rather belong and remain as holders of *urie* title without portfolios and should be in their life time and not to be inherited. It was also resolved that there should be no platform for the sales of this traditional title in the community. Egwe Adum was warned not to perpetrate such acts of rebellion again by entering into the fallow land set aside by the community. He was fined one goat and a bottle of hot drink which should be sent to the paramount ruler within seven days.

On the method of sharing farmland, it was resolved that farmland sharing through family was no longer sustainable therefore farmland should be shared by the community on individual basis. The formal system created dissatisfaction, grumbling and dis-harmony in the community. However, it was recommended that the community should immediately revert to the new system of sharing farmland. They also appealed that all those affected by the violence such as those whose properties were destroyed to forget and forgive in the interest of peace. Oppressive fines to members of the community even on those who committed minor offences should be abolished. The fine on any offence should not be more than one goat and a bottle of hot drink. All cases in the court arising from the present violence should all be withdrawn and be regarded as already settled or resolved and no party should prosecute each other.

However, Mr. D.I. Obinna initiated the peace move and even went to court to withdraw all the impending cases on the chieftaincy crises. The court issued a white paper that brought all the exiles home. After the necessary arrangement Chief E.J.A. Oriji and his group were given a date to return home after which he was restored back to the throne. Before he started performing the duties and functions of the traditional ruler, there was a traditional *ovuvu-ta-onu* ceremony between the two factions signifying the end of conflict.

Finally, it was agreed that there shall be the traditional *ovuvuta-onu* at the *eli-udele* shrines as a ceremony signifying the end of conflicts in Emohua community. This ceremony was performed by the priest using some items such as goat, palm oil, salt, pepper, yam, one bottle of *kai-kai*, a jar of palm wine, potash, mortar and pestles. The goat was cooked with the yam and eaten by all the parties. Thereafter, potash and palm oil were pounded into a paste to be tasted by everyone. This served as a binding factor among all the parties so that nobody can harm the other. *Eli udele* will kill or paralyse anyone who would do evil or harm any member of the community. This brought lasting peace in all the villages of Emohua (Obinna, 1999:13-17).

Conclusion

Emohua has experienced myriads of communal conflicts arising from the Nigerian Civil War, political party, farmland disputes and chieftaincy struggles. The Nigerian Civil War crisis was between chief Emmanuel Joshua Anachor Oriji and Chief Gilbert Asejiri Eke over the arrest and detention of the traditional ruler, Chief Agala Okor who later died in detention. During the 1979 democratic process, Chief E.J.A. Oriji was the leader of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and later contested the party's primary for senate and failed while Chief G.A. Eke won the primary for senate under the Nigerian People's Party (NPP). Chief E.J.A. Oriji felt insulted and declared that Chief G.A. Eke was not matured and experienced to hold the position. The disagreement aggravated crisis that led to self-exile by E.J.A. Oriji. The conflict resulted to loss of lives and property.

The method used in sharing the *Akpna-Olvia* farmland also created tension among the members of Rumungbooh, Rumuche, in Emohua in 1985 to 1986. The aggrieved faction forcefully gained entry into another section of community land at *Ngerenge* and *Akwaka* set aside by the paramount ruler for the next farming season. The remote cause of the disagreement was the purchase of a traditional title called *Urie* which mandated recipients as automatic heads or leaders of their families and only to the most senior elder in the family.

Yet, certain persons who were not elders in their respective families purchased the *Urie* title. It therefore meant that some family will have more than one *Urie* title holder. This generated conflict in the community as the community decided that only the most senior elders with the legal *Urie* shall be given the authority to share their respective family portion. This decision generated several crises in Emohua that resulted to destruction of properties with many sustaining injuries.

The Emohua chieftaincy dispute was between E.J.A. Orij and Sampson Ozuru. Emohua people accused chief E.J.A. Orij the incumbent king of being so autocratic and decided to depose him. He was later re-instated when Sampson Ozuru became too autocratic in ruling the people. The chieftaincy wrangle led to loss of lives and property. Many people fled to neighbouring communities such as Choba, Rumuji, Ndele, Ozuoba, Alakahia and Rumuosi for refuge.

Recommendations

The work recommended that;

- The Ikwerre indigenous methods of conflict resolution should be used in resolving conflicts in Emohua. The involvement of the gods and ancestors in resolution guarantee total acceptance of the verdict by the parties concerned. This will foster peace and national development in Nigeria State.
- The sharing of farmland in Emohua should be done on individual basis rather than through family heads. The relevance is that larger families will benefit as well as the smaller families instead of sharing equally to the various families. This system often generates conflict within the community.
- Chieftaincy should rotate within the royal family. It does not belong to an individual. Thus, the study recommends that it should go round within the royal family after the demise of the ruling *Nne-Nwe -eli* Emohua. This will bring lasting peace to the community.
- Provision of employment for the teaming youths of Emohua. Many youths of Emohua were idle and not employed. Therefore, they easily fell prey to politicians who often ushered them good food and money and instructed them on how to terrorise political opponents. Thus, creation of jobs will reduce the level of youth restiveness in Emohua.

References

- Awuse, K. (2017). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Oral interview, CDC Member, Retired Civil Servant, Rumuche, Male (65).
- Beke, C. (2017). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Oral interview, CDC member, Farmer, Elibrada, M (62).
- Chinnah, C. (2016). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Oral interview, Assistant Financial Secretary, Baptist Church, Rumuagholu, Lecturer, Rumuche, F (42).
- Igbudu, G. (2015). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Oral interview, Elder, Farmer, Oduoha, M (70).
- Iwedi, G. (2016). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Oral interview, President, Emohua Women Meeting, Civil Servant, Rumuche, F (62).
- Iwundu, C.O. (2015). *A Nosological Approach to the Epidemiology of Crime and Criminality Among Nigerian Youths: Towards Social Re-Engineering Based Prophylactic and Psychotherapeutic Interventions: An Inauqural Lecture Delived in IAUE Port Harcourt*, Pearl Publishers Ltd.

- Keje, U. (2017). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Oral interview, CDC Member, Farmer, Rumuohia, M (60).
- Obinna, E.M. (1989). *Rumuchanya (Emohua) Disputes*. Port Harcourt, Diamond Club.
- Olarinmoye, O.O. (2012). "Youths and Conflict in Yoruba land, 1999-2003" in Albert I.O. (ed) *A History of Social Conflict and Conflict Management in Nigeria*. Ibadan, John Archers Publishers, 73-84.
- Onuekwa, I. (2016). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Elder, Legal Practitioner, Rumuche, M (68).
- Onyekpe, J.G.N. (2012). "Land Disputes and Inter-Group Relations in West Niger Igboland" in Ogbogbo, C.B.N., Olaniyi, R.O. & Muojama, O.G. (eds.), *The Dynamics of Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria Since 1960: Essays in Honour of Obaro Ikime @ 70*. Ibadan: BWB Wright Integrated Publishers Ltd, 182-209.
- Oti, W. (2017). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Elder, Farmer, Rumuakunde, M (70).
- Uchendu, H. (2015). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Leader, Emohua Market Women, Civil Servant, Rumuche, F (57).
- Wahua, O.V. (2014). "A History of Emohua Community from Foundation to 2011" Long Essay Submitted to the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Port Harcourt.
- White Paper (1981). Report by the Commission of Inquiry on Emohua Crises.
- Wordu, O. (2016). "Causes of conflict in Emohua". Elder, Farmer, Rumuakunde, F (67).