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IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNAL CONFLICTS ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED DEVELOPMENT CENTRES IN EBONYI STATE

[1]**Nwakamma, M.C.**
[2]**Oketa, C.M.**
[2]**Oginyi R. C. N.**
[1]**Edeh, J.N.**
[1]Department of Public Administration, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
[2]Department of Psychological & Sociological Studies, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

Abstract

This study is titled "Implications of Communal Conflicts on Socio-Economic Development of Selected Development Centres in Ebonyi State". The study sought among other things to: ascertain the extent to which communal conflict has resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State; and determine the extent to which communal conflict has hindered consistent growth and development of small- scale businesses in the selected Development Centres in Ebonyi State. Group Theory propounded by Truman (1951) was used as the theoretical framework of the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted to select three (3) Development Centres used for the study. The main instrument for that data collection was a structured questionnaire administered on the 390 respondents of the study. Chi-square statistical tool was adopted as the instrument for data analysis. The paper revealed that communal conflicts optimally resulted to abandonment of projects meant for the development of the communities in the study area; Communal conflicts hinder the growth and development of small-scale businesses in the selected Development Centres in Ebonyi State. The researchers therefore recommended that Government and other relevant stakeholders should regularly engage the affected communities in peace talk to sustain peaceful coexistence in the area. This will go a long way to guarantee political stability and timely completion of development projects in the DCs. Conflicts result to projects discontinuity and abandonment and this can be curtailed through peace education. Small-scale businesses are the engine of socio-economic development. In order to reap the benefits accruable from the growth and development of small-scale businesses in the study area, government should create enabling environment for the businesses to thrive as this will not only engage the youths but also assist in reducing conflicts in the area. There is also need for the government and the stakeholders in the DCs embark on massive youth empowerment programmes to forestall reoccurrence of conflicts in the affected areas.

Keywords: Conflicts, Socio-Economic Development, Small-Scale Business, Programmes

Introduction

There is now common understanding among conflict management scholars and writers all over the world that conflict is inevitable in human existence. The inevitability of conflict is predicated on the fact that people of different colour, background, culture, perception, belief, community, ethnic nationalities, among others exist and often times live together. These groups in plural societies exist to share and most times differ in various interests, and each time there is real or perceived clash of interests, there is bound to be conflict. The cause could be boundary adjustment, farm land, or who represents what for the people, resource control, etc (Edeh, Nwakamma & Ibeogu, 2021). Nnoli (1998) in Onwe, Nwogbaga and Nwakamma

(2015) defined conflict as contradictions arising from differences in interests, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies of the people concerned. These contradictions are inherent at all levels of social and economic interactions of human race. It may therefore exist at the individual, group, national and international levels. Urhiewhu and Sale (2015) on the other hand, define conflict as clash or disagreement, often violent between two opposing groups or individuals. They further argued that just as peace is a by – product of justice, likewise is conflict a by – product of injustice, perceived or real. Available literature on conflict studies shows that different types/levels of conflicts exist. Conflict can occur at intra-personal, group, national and international levels. Conflict can take different dimensions such as political, religious, communal, intra-communal, inter communal, etc. In recent time, communal conflicts constitute the major cause of crisis among communities in Nigeria.

Drawing from history, Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular have had its own share of social/communal conflicts which have affected the stability of the polity. Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria experienced inter-kingdom dynastic feuds, and inter-community conflicts. Many contemporary Nigeria communities have experienced several lots of conflicts. Some of the notable examples include the Zango-Kataf in Kaduna State (1999 – 2001), TIV – Jukun wukari conflict in Taraba State (1999 – 2001), Aguleri – Umuleri conflict in Anambra State (1995 – 1999) Iteskiri – Urhobo Warri crisis, (1999 – 2000), Yelwa – Shendan conflict (2003 – 2005), Mangus – Bokoss crisis (1989 – 1999), the Ife – Modakeke crisis (1999 – 2000), (Otite, 1999, Ubi, 2001 & Onwe Nwogbaga & Nwakamma, 2015). Omatayo (2005) and best (2007) argued that one common feature of these conflicts has to do with their confrontational and violence dimension which led to loss of lives and property of the people who hitherto lived together in relative harmony.

The creation of Ebonyi State in 1996, and subsequently Development Centres is a welcome development aimed at improving the political and socio-economic wellbeing of the people of the area. However, the quest for sustainable development of the state seems to be undermined by the outbreak of conflicts. Among these conflicts, there are notable ones that brought the state to lime light. For instance, the Ezillo-Ezza Ezillo conflict, the Enyigba- Enyibuchiri communal conflicts, the recent Effium-Ezza Effium conflicts across the senatorial zones of the state is just few of the conflict cases. One common feature of these conflicts is that they were linked to struggle for land ownership in these communities. But the worst hit has been people residing in the affected Development Centres.

Development Centre as it exists in different states in Nigeria today is a form of lower level or fourth tier of government established in order to bring government and development more closer to the people in the rural areas. The nomenclature of Development Centre or Local Community Development Authority is a new trend or concept of lower level of government that is created to partner with the mother local governments in rural development of the concerned states.

The perceived inability of the existing thirteen constitutionally recognized local government areas in Ebonyi state to address the plight of the rural community dwellers in bringing about accelerated development, such as accessible and affordable healthcare facilities, electricity, pipe borne water, good road net-work and increase the awareness of the people about the activities of government concerning the welfare of the rural dwellers were some of the reasons for embarking on the creation of Development Centres (Ejem, 2015). This reason was aptly captured by the pioneer executive Governor of Ebonyi State Dr. Sam Egwu in June 2001 where he reaffirmed the urgent need to develop the rural areas of Ebonyi State. The elusive development which characterized the state rural areas left the Governor with no option, rather

than thinking fast to provide a solution to the lack of development syndrome confronting the state. He argued thus:

> On assumption of office, we promised to bring development to the grassroots through the third tier government because the state government cannot stay at the centre to develop the rural area without the participation of the grassroots. So far, our genuine effort to attain elaborate development of our grassroots shall no doubt be better addressed through the third tier government. More so, for Ebonyi State that is considered a rural state with greater rural population. Indeed, our government from onset has always focused on this silent majority as it is our burning desire to touch their lives. It is to realize these noble ideals that the state government has acted in partnership with the State House of Assembly to consider and endorse the local government creation bill in order to live up to the expectations of our people.

In view of the above, section 3, 4 and 5 respectively of 2008 Local Government Area/Development Centre Law of Ebonyi State as amended, provide for the functions of the Development Centres to include:
1.   To ensure stable and balanced state
2.   To decentralize power to the rural populace, and
3.   To enhance the structure of political and social mobilization in the state.

From all indications, Development Centres are closer to the people and should be abreast with the feelings, pains and developmental needs of the people better than the mother local governments. They are expected to drive socio-economic development from below by ensuring that there is improvement in the quality of life of the people. However, instead of peace, predictable economic behaviour, promotion of micro-medium scale businesses, productivity, entrepreneurship and innovation, social cohesion and support, employment opportunities, savings, harmony, etc the reverse is the case which seems to have resulted from conflicts. It is based on the above backdrop that this study became imperative.

Statement of Problem

Development centres were created to among other things the socio-economic wellbeing of the people through their programmes and projects. Development Centres are expected to assist in improving access to quality education, provide quality and accessible road network, pipe-borne water, rural electrification, improvement in agriculture, support small-scale business to grow, provide modern health care facilities, establish skill acquisition programmes, etc. Unfortunately, development centres in Ebonyi State have failed in their quest as instruments for development at the grassroots. Violent conflicts across communities including Ezillo-Ezza and Ezillo, Enyigba and Enyibuchiri, Effium and Ezza- Effium undermine efforts targeted at grassroots development and hinder the people from enjoying the dividends of a stable polity such as relative peaceful environment, steady supply of farm produce by the farmers, and consistency in the implementation of development programmes. Although, conflict often initiates change in society, its violent form is negative and reverses societal progress, promoting poverty, anarchy and leads to wars and state failure (Ayuba & Ismaila, 2018, Brig-Gen, 2013).

Policy discontinuity and abandonment of development projects such as building of clinics for the rural people, construction of feeder roads, schools, and rural electrification are products of conflict and political instability which seem to have impeded development of the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State. Coupled with the forgoing, is the fact that conflicts usually result to suspension of Coordinators of Development Centres and other political stakeholders of the affected areas and this seemingly disrupts any meaningful effort at consistent implementation of grassroots development programmes. In the events of violent conflicts markets are usually set ablaze, farms often destroyed, government institutions and people's properties are hardly spared. These ugly states of affairs appear to have resulted to low yield of farm produce, and seemingly increased the level of poverty and hunger among the people. More worrisome is the issue of healthcare needs of the people where clinics, drugs and other healthcare facilities may have been destroyed as a result of conflict. Conflicts divert funds meant for development to settlement of cases and maintenance of peace. Unfortunately, funds that could have been used to improve the living conditions of the people are usually expended for the management of the conflicts which often times yield very little result.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to determine the effect of communal conflict on socio-economic development of selected Development Centres in Ebonyi State: The specific objectives are:
1. To ascertain the extent to which communal conflict has resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State.
2. To determine the extent to which communal conflict has hindered consistent growth and development of small- scale businesses in the selected Development Centres in Ebonyi State.

Conceptual Clarifications

Communal Conflict

Conflicts are common and unavoidable in all human society, all over the world, conflicts occur because society is made up of people with differing interests and values. Conflict, generally is a reality of social relations. Conflicts at any level arise from divergences of interests, desires, goals and values aspirations in the competition for resources to meet imposing demands on social life in a defined socio-physical environment (Otite, 2001). As a matter of fact, Man in a socio-physical environment lives in continuous process of dependence and interdependence which often produces contradictions and conflicts. In this regard, Mulin (2016) notes that conflicts in any social system (society), result from differences in perception, limited resources, role conflicts, inequitable treatment, violation of territory etc. Communal conflicts arise over the production and consumption of goods, socialization, social control, and social participation (Warren, 2018).

Communal conflicts are therefore products of social relations. Communal conflicts are threat or action of one party directed at territory rights, interests or privileges – of another party, because of differences over economic issues, power or authority, cultural values and beliefs (Robinson, 2019; Coleman, 2017). It has been posited in the literature that most communal conflicts are mainly economic issues of which land constitute about 90% (Otite and Albert, 2019).The thesis then is "if community is place where people interact to meet their daily needs, then communal conflict takes place within a geographical area and relates to peoples' interaction.From the foregoing, there are salient, impinging critical variables that can be isolated. Importantly, conflicts are system driven at both social and physical levels. In other words, pluralism and divergences are fundamental to the development of conflict. But violent

conflict inherent in the organization and community deserve study as it can be functional and dysfunctional to the goal of development and so should be properly managed.

Development Centres

A development centre is a sub-unit local authority usually created from the mother local government to expand the scope of development to the localities. They perform functions such as building and maintenance of local markets, provision of pipe borne water, clinics, human capital development through building of class room blocks and awarding of scholarships to indigent students among others. Presently in Ebonyi State, we have 64 development centres carved out of the 13 mother local governments for the purposes of grassroots development.

Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development is therefore a key concept central to any problem of change in the socio-economic sphere. It is made up of processes caused by exo- and endogenous factors which determine the course and direction of the development (Adam, 2010). Socio-economic development is a deliberate change to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of the people through provision of basic social and infrastructure facilities such as pipe borne water, constant supply of electricity, quality road networks, recreation centres, hospitals, clinics and social services and structures such as education, human capital development, poverty reduction among others. It cuts across diverse sectors namely; educational sector, health sector, water sector, transport sector, rural electrification sector, natural resources/environmental sector and it is driven at different levels by both governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Contextual Review

Rationale for Creation Development Centres

Maddick (2003) suggested that development engineering in developing countries requires decentralized structures and attitudes of cooperation between those at the centre and those at the rural settings. He further suggested that bridging the centre and the localities would require the establishment of administrative and governmental institutions at the local level, in which the villages and towns can be brought together to realize what they lack in the way of better mode of living within the country. What the foregoing comments seems to suggest is that local governments can play an important role in the process of harnessing human and material resources for local and national development.

Development Centres therefore exist to draw government even more closer to the people just as the local governments. Meanwhile, the needs to set up local government and Development Centres (development areas) as well as the purpose they serve are identical, hence Okoli (2002) summarized the purpose for establishing local government system to include; To fill the gap in remote areas which the national government is unable to fill, complement and extend the national government closer to the people among others. The idea of creating Development Centers by some states in Nigeria is perhaps one of the institutional approaches to effective rural development in Nigeria (Onah, 2010).

Development Centers are administrative centres created from existing local governments in the states backed by Edits of the state Assemblies. They are prototypes of local government councils in a state, with officials appointed by the state governors. For example, in Ebonyi state law No. 7 of 2001 local government creation and transition provision, amended on August, 2006, there exists 64 Development Centres. The Development Centres are headed by a coordinator and a 5-memeber management committee. Agreeably, most local government

areas are pretty large and differently characterized. This partly gives reason for the development centres which assumes to be indeed closer to the people. Development Centres are therefore, growth poles, or growth centers which cater and care for the peculiar needs of the rural areas (Nwali 2003). Development Centres like local government has been regarded as the fourth tier of government, which aid the development of grass roots where states and central government (federal government) cannot fully cover. It was therefore designated to ensure even development of the nation from the below while filling the gap the federal government is unable to fill (Okpata, 2004).

The reason for the creation of Development Centres brought to bear in the official broadcast of the pioneer Executive Governor of Ebonyi State, Dr. Sam Egwu who announced the creation of Development Centres on 21st July 2001 thus, "it should be clear by now that this administration is firmly set on a course of participatory democracy and government by consultation. Since the assumption of office two years ago, we have repeatedly affirmed our commitment to leadership of responsibility and service to the people. Indeed, we have repeatedly demonstrated those qualities in all aspects of statecraft; we are familiar with our political history which brought about our demand for the creation of a state of our own, where our problems and interest would be better solved and protected. This is because the Ebonyi State is primarily aimed at addressing the myriads of problems created by the neglect of successive governments. Indeed, the government does not honour megaphone leadership, rather, we believe in the leadership that will stand and identify with the people in their greatest moment of need. Thus, on assumption of office, we promised to bring development to the grass roots through the third tier of government because the state government cannot stay at the centre (state capital) to develop the rural areas without the participation of the grass roots. So far, our genuine effort to attain to elaborate development in our grassroots shall no doubt be better addressed through the third tier of government.

More so, for Ebonyi State, which is considered a rural state with greater rural population. Indeed, this government from the onset has always focused on the silent majority, as it is our burning desire to touch their lives. It is therefore, our expectation that the grassroots should respond and complement government efforts by cooperating to ensure deliberate development of the areas through investment in modern amenities. It is to realize these noble ideas that the state government acted in partnership with the State House of Assembly to consider and endorse the local government bill in order to live up to the expectations of the people. Indeed, it is our believe that before the end of this administration, Ebonyi State shall cease to be rural state but compete as a modern geo-political entity with her other counterparts of the federation. As a government, this administration is conscious of the fact that leadership fell on us at a period when all advanced societies have developed their human and material resources". In view of these, especially with the inability of the local governments in Ebonyi State to address the challenges prompted the first civilian governor of Ebonyi state, Dr Sam Egwu to create about twenty one (21) local level authorities known as Development Centres in the governance of the rural people. It was later increased to about fifty one (51), all to bring governance further to the doorsteps of the people at the grass root. In an interview to mark his fiftieth (50th) birthday, the former governor, Dr. Sam Egwu, revealed that the purpose of creating development areas was meant to give the various communities, freedom, hope, participation in democracy, local independence, and most importantly is opportunity to manage their own resources efficiently and effectively for the more accelerated and prompts development of their locality. The tempo of local development was sustained by the immediate past administration in the state under the leadership of Chief Martin Elechi, who on assumption of office in 2007 created additional thirteen

(13) local areas out of the existing thirteen (13) local governments, bringing to sixty-four (64) local authorities or Development Centres. This was in response to the cries of marginalization by some communities during the previous exercise.   The complexity of modern national government coupled with their increasing shift of interest from domestic to international policies has indeed created a gap in the provision of the needed services and development of infrastructure to local communities. The situation culminated in the deplorable state of affairs in community's development and hence the neeed for Development Centres.

History of Communal Conflicts in Ebonyi State

It is important to identify the nature of the communal clashes in Ebonyi State, having attempted the definition of clash, though not comprehensive. The unending conflicts or clashes ravaging some part of the state are communal clashes. The clashes have escalated to different parts of the State, taking the posture of both inter communal clash and inter-states communal clashes, respectively. Nwogha, (2021) reported that not less than eight persons have been confirmed killed and more than 60 others arrested following clashes between Effium and Ezza Effium communities in Ohaukwu Local Government Area, Ebonyi state. Confirming the report, the State Commissioner of Police, Aliyu Garba,on Sunday 24th January,2020 made the disclosure during a joint security operation, which included the state Deputy Governor, Dr. Kelechi Igwe, to the affected areas. Commissioner Garba, while stating that normalcy had returned to the communities, also confirmed that about eight houses, including a petrol station, were razed down. According to him: "The crisis was fuelled by a leadership tussle at the area's branch of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, involving old and new executives.

Further explanation of the situations in the state as it concerns various communal clashes show that the inter-communal clash is between the people of Enyibuchiri community in Ikwo Local government area and their neighbouring community of Enyigba in Abakaliki local government area. The crux of the matter centres on land space which is the centre of our study. The two warring communities lay claims to a portion of land with natural resources, including lead and salt. The crisis which began sometime in May,2017 had continued despite some efforts and steps taken to bring it to an end. The lingering crisis which engulfed the two communities has only not consumed human lives, but has destroyed a lot of property including farms and livestock. On 15 May 2019, a family of about twelve who attended the matriculation ceremony of their daughter was ambushed by their opponents from the other community and allof them were killed, leaving only the newly matriculated student who did not come back with her family members.

On the other hand, the other communal clashes in the state are between the people of Ngbo in Ohaukwu local government in Ebonyi State and Agila community in Benue state over Territorial boundary. According to the parties in dispute, there have been accusations and counter accusation of boundary violations. Similarly, there is also another communal bloody clash going on as a matter of territorial boundary alleged violation between the people of Igbeagu community in Izzi local government area of Ebonyi State and the Ukele community in Iyala Local Government Area of Cross River State. These communal clashes have incurred huge losses both in human and material resources from the parties involved in the communal clashes. Despite clarion calls by different individuals and groups to the communal clash in the state, it is rather becoming endemic. Every community in the state groans under acrimonious communal clash without a commitment to resolving it. It would appear that it has come time, according to former war-time UK Prime Minister, Winston Churchill's statement at a White House luncheon, June 26, 1954, to jaw-jaw (talk) than to war-war (fight). Virtually all wars end at the negotiating table. Therefore communication should be emphasized and could be

usedas a means to resolve communal clashes in Ebonyi State. When this is urgently done it will promote peaceful and harmonious co-existence of the communities in Ebonyi and by extension-usher in healthy development and progress in the state in particular and its neighbouring states, in general.

Effects of Inter-communal conflicts on Socio-Economic Development in Ebonyi State
Inter communal clashes have been destructive in nature and the impacts of any destructive conflict are usually devastating and far-reaching. The impact of the Inter-communal conflicts will be examined under the ambit of the seven components (food security, health security, environmental security, economic security, personal security, community security and political security) of human security.

1. Food Security: In Ebonyi state and indeed in Nigeria where majority of its population reside in rural areas and agriculture, the main preoccupation of rural population, inter-communal conflicts have had serious negative implications on accessibility and availability of food. Ebonyi state is essentially dominated by peasant agricultural based communities (Mbah and Nwangwu, 2014:685) of which the Enyibuchiri and Enyigba communities are not an exception. Since the conflict began, agricultural land, water and social resources for food production, crops, livestock, harvest and food reserves have been destroyed. Vanguard Metro (2019) learnt that hoodlums went into Enyibuchiri community with guns and machetes and destroyed livestock. Scores of people have migrated to safe areas, living behind their farms and livestock. Vanguard Metro (2019) further reported that the Enyibuchiri market was burnt down and shops razed down, vehicles burnt and other properties destroyed. Thus, low agricultural productivity has been experienced within these communities and has increased the problem of food insecurity already experienced in these communities and the state in general with widespread problems of malnutrition and under nutrition especially in women and children. This is in line with Ewete (2010: 63) who states that "wars directly impact agricultural productivity due to large migrations of populations from conflict areas leaving fertile land idle and livestock abandoned; the destruction of crops and livestock by armed groups; and the destruction or decay of rural infrastructure and transport to markets." The prices of food have continued to skyrocket as a result of food shortages. This is consistent with the Food and Organisation-National Programme for Food Security (2009) argument that, the rise in food prices may not be unconnected to the persistent communal conflict and violence in developing countries especially Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Sambe, Avanger and Alakali (2013) are of the view that "the impact of communal violence on food security often lasts long after the violence has subsided because assets have been destroyed, people killed and maimed and populations displaced...." This is to say that food insecurity will continue to be a threat to the security of the people communities and the state in general as these communities continue to engage in constant violent activities with each other. Hence, necessary sustainable actions are imperative to forestall further conflict, because when food insecurity becomes chronic (long term) it can lead to massive loss of lives and grave health-related issues especially in women and children.

2. Health Security: Rumun (2019) states that conflict around the world has devastating effect on the health and wellbeing of the community. As the World Health Organisation (WHO) Report on Violence and Health launched on October 3rd 2002 states, "Each year, more than a million lives are lost and many more experience non- fatal injuries as a result of various forms of violence". Hundreds of people have lost their lives and sustained non-fatal injuries as a result of these recurring conflicts by the Enyibuchiri and Enyigba communities. Also, due to running long distances, many have experienced cardiac arrests as well as other respiratory

complications. The increasing numbers of the injured at different times of the conflict also led to overcrowding of the already inadequate and poorly equipped health care centres and hospitals with so much pressure on machines leading to their breakdown as well as the breakdown of health staff working overtime. In Rumun (2019) "essential services such as primary and reproductive health care are often disrupted or inaccessible during conflict situations". This is true as women and girls are often threatened by the likely increase of reproductive health problems such as STIs, unwanted pregnancy, and maternal mortality. As a result of the outbreaks of this conflict, pregnant women have experienced miscarriages, some forced to give birth before full term and others have had complications that have left them permanently damaged.

Briggs (2010) states that "studies emanating from the University of Port Harcourt have shown that aside from the physical disability which those who survive violent crimes and warfare sustain, psychiatric disorders are rife and manifest commonly as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as well as anxiety conditions, hard drugs related ailment, schizophrenia, psychosis, depression and other forms of affective disorders." This shows the extent to which conflict can affect the lives of people forever. People of these communities constantly filled with fear and anxiety, not knowing when the conflict will begin again. Some still have unpleasant pictures in their memories about the incidents. This tends to disrupt normal life patterns as their mental state becomes unstable. Also, there is destruction of health care centres and facilities that are needed for proper health of the people. Some health workers themselves who live in these communities and around are also victims and thus, have fled from their duty posts and moved to other areas of safety.

3. Economic Security: Economic security is an important component of human security, and it is often threatened by inter-communal conflicts. The Enyibuchiri and Enyigba conflict has inflicted damages on livelihoods and fractured social structures, formal and informal institutions in both communities. Thus, people have abruptly lost their jobs and have remained unemployed for years. Those who still had their jobs have abandoned them to flee to places of safety. According to the Nigerian News (2018) "…some citizens of both Enyibuchiri and Enyigba have sought refuge in neighbouring communities of Ezza, Echara Ikwo, Nkaliki and some churches in Abakaliki, the state capital". Also, the levels of income of the communities have continued to dwindle gradually as well as the standard of living which is decreasing regularly. This has caused widespread poverty among the members of these communities. Here, it is important to note that poverty is as much a consequence of conflict and also a cause of conflict. Thus, the more widespread poverty becomes, the more it could incite conflict between these two communities. Nonetheless, Ikejiaku (2017) opines that "conflict impacts on poverty in any economy are widely and generally accepted, both during and after conflict situations, and the negative consequence on development is evident".

4. Environmental security: Fawole (2016) avers that, "environmental security requires a healthy physical environment, security from environmental threats such as degradation of the local ecosystem, air and water pollution". Inter-communal conflicts are huge threats to the security of the environment. In the Enyibuchiri and Enyigba communities, there have been cases of pollution (air and water), loss of agricultural land, toxic waste contaminants. Resource depletion is another environmental problem that is affected by this conflict. These communities are blessed with rich agricultural and mineral resources that have been depleted as a result of this conflict over the years. Without the protection of the environment, the security of the citizens is threatened.

5. Personal security: Personal security is an essential aspect of human security. The indicators of personal security are fear of violence, level of crime, prevention of harassment and gender violence. Gender violence is often prevalent in conflict areas; women and young girls are most affected in times of conflict; they are often raped or sexually harassed by both the parties involved in the conflict. More explicit is Rumun (2019) who states that, women and girls have been raped in front of the male members of their families, who were beaten and forcibly restrained by the attackers. She added further that "women reported that most rape victims did not scream during or after the rape and did not report incidents as a means to avoid scandals in the community". Klin reports (2019) stated that "at least five women have allegedly been sexually molested by soldiers deployed to restore peace between the two warring neighbouring communities of Enyibuchiri and Enyigba in Ebonyi state". In an interview by Klin reports (2019), one of the rape victims lamented that the soldiers used to lay ambush for the women inside their farmlands and sexually abuse them. The level of crime has also increased as thieves use this conflict as avenues to loot people of their hard earned resources and properties. Also, fear and anxiety is widespread across these communities and even beyond. One is not sure when the next incident will occur as the event of December, 2011 remains unforgotten in their hearts.

6. Political security: Political security is the defense against any form of political oppression. It is concerned with the respect for human rights and freedom. Human rights are often infringed upon in times of inter-communal conflict. There have largely been cases of human rights violations in the Enyibuchiri and Enyigba communities. Newswatch Times (2015) reported that the "minority leader the House, Enyi C. Enyi jolted his colleagues with the revelation that 86 members of his constituency are still in prison detention over the Ikwo-Izhi communal clash". This was clearly an infringement of their human rights, because they have been arrested unlawfully and held in detention, perhaps tortured and maltreated, over a long period of time without trial to ascertain if they actually partook in the violent acts or not. Also, there has been loss of life which is a violation of the right to live; destruction of properties which is a violation of the right to property; rape, a violation on personal security, etc.

7. Community security: In times of conflict, there are violations of the integrity of cultures and traditions, loss of languages and values. The Enyibuchiri and Enyigba conflict has violated the integrity of their respective communities and the protection of the indigenous people has been eroded.

Theoretical Framework
Communal conflict is conflict at conscious level otherwise called group level conflict. This is why this paper adopted group theory of conflict propounded by Truman (1951). The assumption of the theory is that every society is a complex collection of groups in interaction. Every group in a social system has interest it protects and whenever there is clash of interests, conflict is bound to occur. The significant point in this proposition is that a good understanding and subsequently analysis of events in any country or state must begin with the acknowledgement of the fact that every state consists of interacting groups that have converging and divergent goals. Thus according to Okereke (2018), the Nigerian society including Ebonyi State could be viewed in the contexts of men, women, the youth and the elderly, the ethnic groups, communities, Christians, Muslims and other religious groups, among other categories who interact and agree in some issues, but disagree on divergent interest. As posited by group theorists; "When the activity of the groups, is stated, everything is stated" (Varma, 1985). This means that social activities are actuated and propelled by the

activities of the groups, rather than the individual persons. Indeed, the application of the group framework of analysis exposes the basis of communal conflict and antagonism.

An individual is a social animal who finds a sense of identification and functions in the group. The group according to Sapru (2013) is a coherent ideas and actions that produce mutual compatibility and harmony among its members. Follett (1924) in Sapru (2013) maintains that differing interests and conflict among the members of a group cannot be avoided. Hence, communal conflict is bound to occur among different groups. The task of the society is to produce, therefore, harmony and unity from dissonance and conflict as diversity is assimilated into the larger whole through the interpretation and interviewing of ideas and actions.

Group theory explains communal conflicts that pervade Development Centres in Ebonyi State. As different communities that make up the Development Centres struggle for who occupies what of the insufficient resources including land, conflict is bound to occur between and among groups. Group theory has aided the understanding of the kind of disagreement or feud that takes place between two or more sectarian groups, ethnic groups, communities, or interest groups. It is based on the above backdrop that the theory is considered relevant for the study

Methodology

Descriptive survey design method was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Ebonyi State. Three (3) development centres were used which include; Ikwo East Development Centre, located at Enyibichiri in Ikwo local government area of the state; Effium Development Centre Located at Ezza-Effium of Ohaukwu Local Government Area of the state; and Edda East Development Centre located at Edda in Afikpo local government area of the state. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to draw 390 respondents across the development centres studied. In each of the DCs 100 members of the communities and 30 staff of the selected DC were selected. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data for the study were analysed using frequency distribution tables and simple percentage methods, while Statistical Chi-Square was used to test the hypotheses that guided the study.

Results/Findings

Hypotheses 1

Ho: Communal conflict has not optimally resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State.

H1: Communal conflict has optimally resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State

Using the Chi-square statistical tool, we have that:

The chi-square formula:

$$X^2 = \frac{\Sigma(0\text{-E})}{E}$$

X^2 = Chi-square statistics
O = observed frequency
E = expected   value   or frequency
Σ = summation

Table 1: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.630[a]	9	.005
Likelihood Ratio	23.094	9	.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.013	1	.083
N of Valid Cases	1048		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 24.00.

Critical Value
Degree of freedom (v) = (r-1) (c-1)
Where: r = Number of rows = 4
        c = Number of columns = 4
v = (4-1) (4-1)
= (3) (3)
= 9
The level of significance = 0.5
Then, X^2 0.5:9 =7.82

Decision
Since the value of the calculated chi-square (48.40) is greater than the critical value (21.03), the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Hence, it was concluded that communal conflict has optimally resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected development centres in Ebonyi State. Moreover, the p-value of the chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Communal conflict has optimally resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected development centres in Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis2
Ho: communal conflict has not significantly hindered growth and development of small- scale businesses in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State
H1: Communal conflict has significantly hindered promotion of small- scale businesses in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State.
Using the Chi-square statistical tool, we have that:
The chi-square formula:

$$X^2 = \frac{\Sigma(0\text{-}E)}{E}$$

X^2 = Chi-square statistics
O = observed frequency
E = expected   value   or frequency
Σ = summation

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47.412[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	47.253	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.768	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1048		

 a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.00.

Critical Value

Degree of freedom (v) = (r-1) (c-1)

Where: r = Number of rows = 4

   c = Number of columns = 4

v = (4-1) (4-1)

= (3) (3)

= 9

The level of significance = 0.5

Then, X^2 0.5:9 = 7.82

Decision

Since the value of the calculated chi-square (47.41) is greater than the critical value (21.03), the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Hence, it was concluded that Communal conflict has significantly hindered promotion of small- scale businesses in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State. Moreover, the p-value of the chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that communal conflict has significantly hindered promotion of small- scale businesses in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The creation of development centres was to accelerate development in rural areas through provision of accessible and affordable healthcare facilities, electricity, pipe borne water, good road net-work and increase the awareness of the people about the activities of government concerning the welfare of the rural dwellers. Attainment of these development indicators is possible where the polity is stable; where there is policy and programme consistency and where the development centre coordinators are allowed to carry out their assigned responsibilities without undue interference from the chairmen of the mother local governments and the state government; where implementation of development programmes is not put to abrupt end as a result of removal of coordinators and above all where the political environment is devoid of preventable conflicts.

However, conflict has been a major bane on achievement of these objectives. The study showed that communal conflict has significantly hindered stability of tenure of Development Centre coordinators in the study area. Communal conflict has significantly disrupted steady supply of produce by the rural farmers to cushion the effect of poverty in the affected area. Communal conflict has optimally resulted to abandonment of development projects in the affected development centres in Ebonyi State. And communal conflict has significantly hindered promotion of small- scale businesses in the affected Development Centres in Ebonyi State.

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and other relevant stakeholders should regularly engage the affected communities in peace talk to sustain peaceful coexistence in the area. This will go a long way to guarantee political stability and timely completion of development projects in the DCs. Conflicts result projects discontinuity and abandonment and this can be curtailed through peace education.

2. Small-scale businesses are the engine of socio-economic development. In order to reap the benefits accruable from the growth and development of small-scale businesses in the study area, government should create enabling environment for the businesses to thrive as this will not only engage the youths but also assist in reducing conflicts in the area. Idle mind they say is the devil's workshop; there is need for the government and the stakeholders in the DCs to also embark on massive youth empowerment programmes to forestall reoccurrence of conflicts in the affected areas.

Author Note: **Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr Chibugo Oketa, Department of Psychology/Sociological Studies, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Email: kelechinwonyi@gmail.com or chibugom@yahoo.com**

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