

**OMU INSTITUTION AND PEACEMAKING IN ANIOMA KINGDOM,  
DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this work was carried out by Mrs. Akinpelu-Ayodele Immaculate Nneamaka in the Institute for Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies, University of Ibadan.

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**DEDICATION**

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO THE ALL SUFFICIENT GOD;

AND

MY LATE FATHER (Pa. DANIEL O. NZEAGWU) AND MY  
MOTHER (Mrs. MARIA.A. NZEAGWU)

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## ABSTRACT

Traditional institutions play prominent roles in conflict management and peacemaking processes in Nigeria. In Anioma Kingdom, *Omu* is recognised as the head of women and the only female allowed in *Izu-ani* (council of elders). Previous studies have examined the religious, transgender, political and economic aspects of *Omu*, with little attention paid to its peacemaking role. This study, therefore, examined the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom, with a view to determining its influence in peacemaking, mechanisms adopted in achieving peace in its domains, and factors affecting the discharge of its peacemaking role.

The Yoruba *Omoluabi* and the Zulu *Ubuntu* concepts of peace served as the framework, while the case study design was utilised. Primary and Secondary data were used. Two local government areas in Delta State, namely Oshimili North and Oshimili South, were purposively selected owing to the existence of well-structured institutions. Four communities (Okpanam, Asaba, Ibusa and Akwukwu-Igbo) were purposively selected owing to the presence of functional and sitting *Omu*. In-depth interviews were conducted with *Ndi-Omu* (4), *Otu-Omu* (6), *Ndi-Eze* (3), and *Ndi-dibia* (2). Key informant interviews were conducted with *Ndi-Olinzele* (6), Divisional Police Officers (2), Officers of the State Community Development Unit (2), an officer each from the Ministries of Culture and Tourism, Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs and Women and Social Development, three adult males and three females. Focus group discussions were also conducted with *Ndi-Oza* (untitled men), *Ikoho azu afia* (market women) and *umu-ikoloobia* (youths). Secondary data were obtained from relevant publications, such as Emeka Esogbue's *A Short History of Omu*. The data were analysed using a narrative approach.

The *Omu* institution consists of biological daughters of Anioma decent selected from *Umu-Omu* (*Omu* family's lineage) through *Igba afa* (divination) to serve the clan. Selection into *Omu* is through *Ebo-anna* (paternal home). Its key roles in Anioma Kingdom as *Nne-obodo* (mother of the clan), *Onyeisi-afia* (market leader) and *Anyanndi mmo* (eyes of the gods/spiritual guardians) to the community underlie its influence in peacemaking processes. Peacemaking mechanisms adopted in settling communal conflicts, such as *Ije-alilio mgbayalli*, *Ido-akanti*, *Ida-nha*, *Itegbama-egwu* and *Ihoka* look simple, but they have helped sustain peace in various communities in the Kingdom. The peacemaking activities of the *Omu* institution have been affected by the cost of initiation into the *Omu* society and non-recognition of the mediatory role of the institution by the state government. Despite the challenges faced by this institution, more eligible persons enrolled as members of the society as a result of eminence and respect accorded to the institution.

The peacemaking roles of the *Omu* institution have helped in engendering and sustaining peace in Anioma Kingdom of Delta State, Nigeria. Therefore, the *Omu* institution should be strengthened by giving it constitutional roles and financial support to reduce the high cost of installation of members.

**Keywords:** *Omu* Institution, Peacemaking, Anioma Kingdom.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Traditional institutions have remained custodian of the people's cultures for many centuries (Balogun, 2010). This has played out in everyday life and in the practices of the African people. These institutions have also played significant role in both spiritual and physical well-being of the people (Ashiru, 2010). By its structure as reservoir of customs and cultural practices, traditional institutions were the sovereign authorities within their respective jurisdictions. They were also seen as sacred and as such revered. This also played out in the four corners of Africa as far back as the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006).

In Africa, the two prominent traditional institutions that were therefore, predominant, according to Nweke (2012), were the centralised and decentralised authorities. Authorities in this regards refer to indigenous political arrangement that provides for persons with credibility the opportunities to occupy their ancestral stools. These stools were therefore not only occupied, rather they were ascended upon in line with certain requirements of the native laws and customs of the people (Orji and Olali, 2010).

Likewise, the people's laws and customs eventhough varied from one culture to the other, were regarded as social habits, which were mould of behaviours; which sometimes tends to evolve without express formulation or perception. It in course, coalesce or blend into rules which are observed and become binding on the members of such societies (Egwummuo, 2003:86).

Basically, in traditional societies, rules were therefore, not only enacted but were also regulated by traditional authorities who were not without different titles peculiar to their culture. Some of these titles include: *Hene* for the Akan, *Nii* for the Ga, *Togbe* for Ewe, *Oba*, *Alafin*, *Ooni* for Yoruba, Sultan, *Sariki*, *Emir* for Hausa and *Eze*, *Obi* for the Igbo and so on. These traditional authorities were seen as the *defacto* determinants of leadership and rules in various African societies (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006

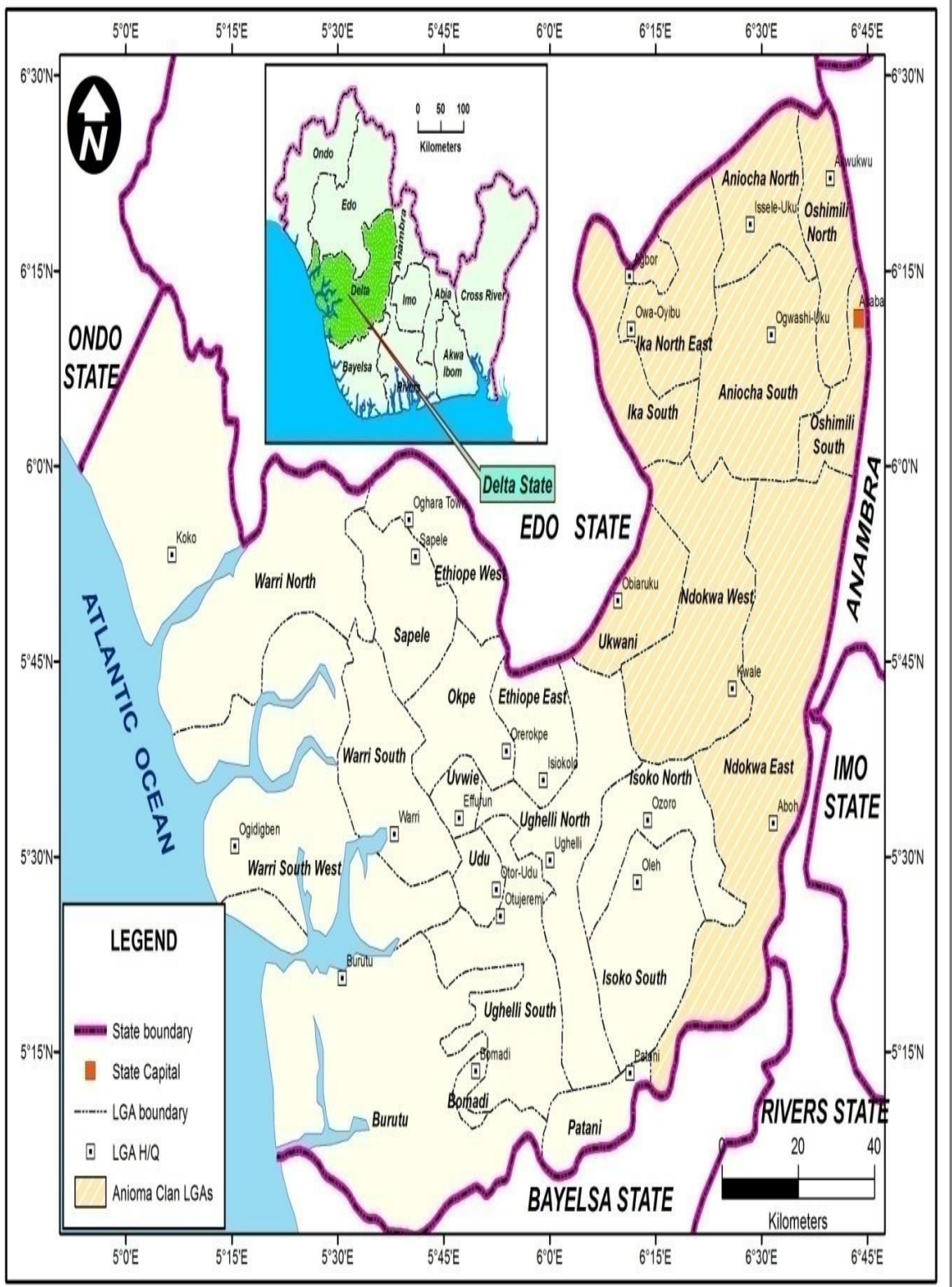
Meanwhile, Nigeria, an entity made up of various societies, which became one in 1914, has strong roots with regards to traditional chieftaincy institutions. The existence of these chieftaincy institutions, pre-dates colonialism and literature suggest that the institutions till date have continued to be the focal point of the people's culture (Oruwari, 2006; Oseghale and Osiki, 2010). Equally, as a central point of the people's culture, traditional institutions have had a great influence on the Nigerian society to the extent that it becomes difficult to research today on the emergence of the Nigerian state and her political institutions without adequate references to the traditional chieftaincy institutions. Notwithstanding, scholars such as Farawe (2010), posits that the institution has not effectively contributed meaningfully to development narratives of the society. Nevertheless, apart from being a rallying point for the people, history is replete with societal developmental contributions of traditional institutions in conflict resolution, management and peacemaking processes not only in their immediate communities but in Nigerian societies at large (Oruwari, 2006). A case in point is observations made by Bell-gam (2002:86) cited in Osiki and Oseghale (2010) while working on the Opobo community in Delta State where he identified the role of the traditional rulers in peacemaking.

Furthermore, peacemaking has being central in the duties and responsibilities of the traditional chieftaincy institutions in the country. Unarguably, the country plays host to different mode of traditional rulership structures such as the monarchical system (Yoruba and the Fulani Emirate systems), the gerontocratic lineage system found among the Igbo, the plutocracy which is the government of the wealthy found among the Urhobo of Delta State, the sovereign female rulership, Queen's mother institution and dual-sex or gender balanced political structure of the Anioma people (Olasupo and Afolabi, 2010; Olasupo, 2015). Even though patriarchal leadership structure has been identified as the oldest form of leadership in Nigeria, traditional female institutions constituted a major aspect of the socio-political arrangements in several Nigerian kingdoms, such as the Yoruba land, Benin Kingdom, Iuleha Clan, Ubulu-Uku and so on (Oseghale and Osiki, 2010; Fasiku, 2010:557).

The *Omu* institution is perhaps, one of the oldest female chieftaincy institutions in Anioma Kingdom. It is an institution that consists of matured biological daughters of Anioma descent selected from *Umu-Omu* lineage through *Igabafa* (divination). The

*Omu* institution is knowledgeable in the traditions and customs of the people. The institution has been key in the evolutionary processes of the socio-economic system of Anioma Kingdom.

According to Esogbue (2015), Anioma people are found in the contemporary Delta State, Nigeria. Delta State is located in the Niger Delta region, South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Anioma people are also spread over nine Local Government Areas of the State namely: Aniocha South, Aniocha North, Ika South, Ika North East, Oshimili North, Oshimili South, Ndokwa North, Ndokwa West and Ukwuani, respectively as shown in fig 1 below. Esogbue (2015) further submits that Anioma people have a common language known as *Enuani* language with different dialects. The Anioma people engage in diverse economic activities such as farming, fishing, trading and manufacturing.



**Figure 1.1: Map of Delta State showing the Study Area: Anioma Towns and Communities**

Source: Cartography Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan (2017)

It is worth mentioning that apart from Anioma people found in Delta State, Anioma people are spread across other neighbouring states of Anambra, Edo (Igbanke), Rivers (Ndoni). These disperse of the people were attributed to balkanisation of the area by the colonial masters following the Ekumeku uprising (Esogbue, 2015). Politically, Anioma people practice a dual-sex or gender balanced traditional structure. Dual-sex or gender-balanced structure is a political system of administration that allows for male and female traditional sovereigns to exercise their political authorities simultaneously in the same community. Ibewuike (2006), describes dual sex as a traditional system of organisation into two kinds of single-sex association, one for men and one for women. According to her, the expression two sexes do not serve as a link in one or two chains for access to any kind of rights, rather the men and women are granted certain equal rights by virtue of their respective sexes. She avers that in this wise, the woman can make decisions concerning particular economic, political and religious issues. She further described the relationship as “parallel organisation” or “organisation of parallel gender institutions”

Drawing from the foregoing, in the case of the Anioma people, the male traditional ruler is referred to as *Obi* (not without peculiar appellations based on ancestral/historical antecedence of those communities). For instance, in the case of Asaba, the Asagba is the father and the political head of the community, while the female is called *Omu*, the mother and leader of the women in the community. Equally, the *Omu* is the only woman that is allowed by tradition to attend and participate in *Izu-ani*. *Izu-ani* refers to the meeting of traditional rulers and elders in the community. It is also the central body that directs the political affairs of the people. The memberships of *Izu-ani* were regarded as *ndi-nzei* or *ikei-ani* (elders of the land). It is noteworthy to say that the dual-sex organisation did not afford slave women the same rights as freeborn women. Although, slave woman could become members of women’s economic clubs, they could not achieve any titles, or any respected positions in these associations in Anioma Kingdom.

As the only woman in the council-of-elders, *Omu* institution, in their communities, has remained fundamental in peacemaking. This institution is saddled with spiritual, economic and physical roles that have equally promoted peace and built social cohesion among the people. They were also responsible for the welfare of women in

their clans as well as the regulations and supervision of economic activities in Anioma communities (Oseghale and Osiki, 2010; Olasupo and Afolabi, 2010; Akpuh, 2013). Their activities in the market domain have also earned them the title *Omu bu eze afia or eze ashia* meaning *Omu* is the king of the market. Interestingly, its key roles as *Nne-obodo, onyesis afia and anya ndi-mmo* (eyes of the gods/spiritual guardians) underlies its influence in peacemaking processes. This is attributed to their motherhood agency that is anchored in patience, trust, honesty, confidence and resilience. They have been able to build bridges of reconciliation to sustain the peace. However, the activities of the institution in the context of peacemaking have remained in the dark.

In the light of the above, this study examines the *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria. This is important in articulating the origin of the institution, influence of the institution in peacemaking and the peacemaking mechanisms employed in domestic and national context within which the institution has striven to sustain a lasting peace in Anioma Kingdom.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

*Omu* institution has attracted interests within the academic disciplines of History, Anthropology, as well as Gender studies. However, with key interests on the origin, politics, religion (ritual and rites) and gender balanced practices; Ekejiuba (1967); Okonjo (1976); Olasupo and Afolabi (2010); perceived the *Omu* institution as an exclusive female traditional chieftaincy institution in existence in Anioma clan. Mba (1982) viewed the institution from its gender perspectives; Uchenna (1993) focuses on the role of women in Nigerian pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial politics and also role of the *Omu* and *Umuada*, in the Igbo pre-colonial society; Egodi (2006) discussed the *Omu* institution, pointing at the unequal power relations of Anioma male and female chiefs. Afolabi and Olasupo (2008) examined the phenomenon of women rulership in some traditional societies in Nigeria. Emordi (2002:158) sees the *Omu* institution as a female chieftaincy position meant to oversee certain sections of the royal domain for the purpose of political as well as spiritual administration. Nwanze (2005) mentioned the *Omu* institution as a cult-like organisation of matured women. Ndili (2010) focuses on the *Omu* institution as the oldest female chieftaincy institution in Anioma Kingdom.



Close to Ndili (2010), Esogbue (2016a and b) equally examined the presence of the institution in Anioma clan. As important as these existing studies may be, there is dearth of information on the institution with respect to peacemaking, and challenges confronting the institution in the context of peacemaking which is the gap this study intends to fill. Deriving from the foregoing, this study provides answers to the following research questions.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What is the historical origin and evolution of the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom?
2. How has the *Omu* institution been able to influence peace in their communities?
3. What has been the peacemaking mechanism adopted by the institution?
4. What are the challenges facing the institution, and how can it play more effective roles in sustaining peace in the clan?

### **1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to examine the *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom of Delta State, Nigeria. In light of the challenges confronting the institution earlier highlighted in the statement of the problem. The study was founded on the following objectives:

1. To historically examine the origin and evolution of the *Omu* institution.
2. To examine the influence of the institution on peacemaking in their communities
3. To identify the peacemaking methods adopted by the institution.
4. To evaluate the challenges facing the institution, and how it can play more effective roles.

### **1.5 Justification/Significance of the Study**

The *Omu* institution has contributed immensely in peacemaking within Delta State especially in Anioma Kingdom. Their influences in peacemaking over the years have helped to contain conflicts among and between community dwellers. Although, scholars have written about the *Omu* institution as a trans-gender institution, much has not been done in the area of peacemaking. It is against this backdrop that this research is significant. Besides, the findings of the study will serve as a reference point or academic material for those who would want to research on the *Omu* institution.

Equally, if people are well informed about the peacemaking roles of this institution, especially with regards to their methodologies, it will offer credible, effective and acceptable alternative to the state-centric approaches to peacemaking. It will also help to bring to fore the practice of gender-balanced rulership structure that exists in Anioma Kingdom. In addition, it would also help to reduce negative beliefs people would have formed about the *Omu* institution, thereby creating a true picture of the institution. The study would add another dimension to feminist research.

Finally, the study is significant because it will bring to limelight the origin and evolution of the *Omu* institution, the make-up or constitution of the institution, their influence on peacemaking, methodologies adopted to sustain the peace as well as the challenges facing the institution with regards to peacemaking and how it could be helped to improve on the identified challenges. In addition, the knowledge got will also contribute to existing body of literature.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study discussed *Omu* institution and Peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom. The study is important because it brings to fore a traditional peacemaking institution that have been in existence before the arrival of the colonialists in Anioma Kingdom. It also considered peacemaking methods adopted by the institution in Anioma Kingdom. This work also examined the historical origin and evolution of the *Omu* institution, their influence in peacemaking and the challenges facing the institution.

The work was carried out in selected villages, towns and streets that make up Anioma Kingdom. This is justified as the *Omu* institution, is considered as one of the oldest and most prominent institutions among Anioma people and it is almost exclusively practiced in Anioma Kingdom. The study examined the varied origin and evolution of the institution.

The study takes off from existing studies on the origins and evolution and the influence of the institution on peacemaking in their domain. The challenges facing the institution and how it can be helped in performing its mediatory roles.

### **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

To enhance comprehension, the key terms in this study are contextually defined as follows:

- *Omu*: refers to an exclusive female traditional chieftaincy institution that has been in existence in Anioma Kingdom before the arrival of the colonialists.
- Institution: an important practice, relationship, or group in a society or culture.
- Peacemaking: This is a diverse method to resolving conflicts, ending injustice and preventing violence among groups, organisations and communities.
- Anioma Kingdom: These are Igbo communities in Delta State, that occupy Delta North senatorial District, which consists of Oshimili, Aniocha, Ika, Ukuani/Ndokwa zones of Delta State.
- Dual-Sex: Traditional system of organisation into two kinds of single sex associations, one for men and one for women.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Preamble

This chapter attempts at exploring existing concepts to enhance greater understanding of the subject interrogated. In this regard, conceptual framework has been adopted. The importance of conceptual framework in an academic study cannot be overemphasised.

It is necessary in developing a better understanding of ethnographic issues that are peculiar in the socio-political milieu of Africa, Nigeria, Delta State and Anioma Kingdom. A combination of concepts from a range of cultural background is required in addressing an ethnographic study of this nature. This aided in investigating existing information into a comprehensive and coherent account of the *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom.

Several scholarly works were examined with specific reference to *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom. Attempt was also made at examining the historical origin of the institution with a view of establishing the historical and evolutionary origin of the institution, their influence in peacemaking, their approaches to peacemaking and the challenges facing the institution and how it can play more effective roles in Anioma Kingdom.

The *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom lies within the array of third party intervention in peacemaking. It revolves within the gamut of facilitation, conciliation and negotiation which falls in the ambit of mediation and traditional arbitration. This makes it imperative to find a line of thought between the *Omoluabi* Yoruba and Zulu's Ubuntu African concepts of peace. The *Omoluabi* concept revolves round ethical moral qualities that are acceptable by the society (Abimbola, 1975). The concept is used to analyse the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom. It is also explored in

examining the roles and approaches adopted by the institution in peacemaking. The concept of *Ubuntu* is explored in analysing the *Omu* institution backed up by communalism. Its key is Desmond Tutu (1995).

Several scholars' work is explained with specific reference to *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom. An attempt is also made at evaluating literatures on peacemaking with a view to establishing the approaches employed by the *Omu* institution in peacemaking in Anioma communities.

## **2.1 Conceptual Clarification**

### ***Omu***

Kaine (1963), Ekejiuba (1967), Henderson (1972) and Okonjo (1982), described *Omu* as a female chieftaincy title bequeathed to post-menopausal women, from specific patrilineal lineage or descent called *umu-omu*. It is ascended to through inheritance, rotation or selection sustained by oracular pronouncement sustained through *Igbafa* (divination). According to Awe (1992) *Omu* means queen. Achebe (2011:105); Olasupo (2015) and Afolabi and Olasupo (2008) see *Omu* as a mini-king presiding over the womenfolk in the community and market places. Ibewuiké (2006) describes *Omu* as an important female official. This rightly explains the reality of the ethical virtue that placed the institution as viable tool for peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom.

### **Peace**

Nwoye (n.d) in her study of the Cameroonians describes peace as freshness, health, well-being, harmony, calm and tranquillity. She however, submits that it is harmony that provides farmer with good crops, fisherman with abundant catches and hunters with game and when there is enough of food for everyone peace would reign in families, clans and tribes. The idea of peace presented by Nwoye (n.d) refutes the dominant narratives that peace is the absence of war. It therefore justifies the fact that traditional African society's ex-ray peace from diverse perspectives hence it becomes logical to explore into the traditional peacemaking mechanisms of the *Omu* institution.

## **Peacemaking**

According to Mohammed (2003) from an African perspective, peacemaking is a process of maintaining equilibrium in the society. It is akin to a seed that germinates and flourishes on a manure powered by the presence of certain key Africa cultural values such as respect for elders, communality, mutuality, compassion, regards for due discretion, gentleness, hard work, self-control, moderation, flexibility and open mindedness. This largely explains the qualities that feature the *Omu* institution in peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom. Several scholars' work is explained with specific references to *Omu* institution in Anioma communities. An attempt is also made at evaluating literatures on peacemaking, its dynamism as well as approaches or and channels with a view of establishing the involvement of the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom.

## **Anioma Kingdom and Ekumeku Movement (1889-1911)**

According to Iweze (2016) an outcome of Royal Niger Company (RNC) treaty with Asaba chiefs 1881-1883 and attempt to exert political influence was a trigger to the western Igbo resistance by the league of men called *Otu-Ikolobia*. He maintains that while the British officials, traders and missionaries advanced into the interior, it afforded the *Otu-Ikolobia* liberty to organise themselves; and formed the Ekumeku secret cult that resisted the British administration. Afigbo cited in Iweze (2016) captured this militant pattern of response to the British colonial administration as "letting the guns talk first". However, while the *Otu-Ikolobia* was the driving force for the resistance of the British, this research attempts to examine in concise, the causes of the balkanisation of Anioma communities. It also aids in examining the historical origin of the *Omu* institution in relation to neighbouring communities.

According to Asenime (2001) Ekumeku refers to an onomatopoeic word connoting "do not talk about it" or "do not reveal it;" This in his view, associates Ekumeku with the clandestineness deployed in resonant operations and identities of the leagues. He avers that the mode of manoeuvrings of members have attracted diverse interpretations by both African historians and British colonial officials. He asserts that the secretive and nocturnal tactics launched into the activities of Ekumeku have attracted the name "invisible", "whirlwind", "devastating" and "uncontrollable". He avers that Ekumeku in its indigenous meaning conveys the idea of something breathing, or blowing or

dispersal. He contends further that it gives the idea of something that grew out of a secret society of young men that combined the function of undisclosed police and guerrilla army. Egodi (2007) defines Ekumeku as *Otu-Ochichi* that denotes secret cult that carries out its activities at night. According to her, Ekumeku is characterised by mystery, silence and darkness. Meanwhile, British Colonial Officer, Captain Ian Hogg quoted in Iweze (2016), described Ekumeku as an “anti-European club” while Rev. Father Strub perceived it as “a surreptitious police force-cum-guerrilla band”. who engaged in cowardly and sordid activities. According to Iweze (2016), Ekumeku warriors were “brigands who engaged in nocturnal activities including robbery, siezures, and other criminal acts which provoke disorderliness and lawlessness”.

Ohadike (1994) cited in Iweze (2016) avers that the initiation requirements necessary for recruitment of members was laden with substantial secrecy. In his views, it was a taboo for members to reveal the leadership, initiation, operational headquarters, movement and sources. He affirms that the Ekumeku undertakings such as meeting venues, timing and days were not disclosed to non-members. He advances reasons for the assertions. According to him, drawing from the name Ekumeku rooted in absolute silence, only members had classified information of the activities of the cult. However, he avers that the assumed operational headquarters was located at Ogwashi-uku, Issele-Uku, Onicha-Olona, Ubulu-Ukwu and Ezi, where it fought aggressive battles with the British.

He contended further that Ekumeku resistance movement existed in many towns and villages in the Asaba hinterland. He asserted that the *Otu-Ikolobia* (youths) resistance was a show of prowess in the face of the new challenge imposed by the spread of colonialism; and its distruptive effects on the social and political institutions of the society. It is evident that this attempt of resisting the British adopted guerrilla tactics. Meanwhile, extant literatures, suggest that the failure of the Ekumeku movement was first; the problem of disunity among western Igbo communities. Second, the poor equipment such as bows, arrows, cutlasses, clubs and shields was catalyst for its defeat. The belief in the usage of charms, whose potency would intervene and repel the British forces propelled the Ekumeku attacks on mission stations and colonial government institutions.

According to Iweze (2016), while the Ekumeku warriors displayed tenacity and resilience against British penetration of the western Igbo area. However, possession of superior modern firearms and corresponding disunity in African states, extricated the Ekumeku warriors. He avers that subsequent to the dislodgement, in September, 1910, the British colonial government enacted the “unlawful social ordinance” in October of 1910; which outlawed the Ekumeku movement and forbade the people from carrying guns, except when going to farm. He argues further that the ordinance did not only found the people guilty of insurgency, rather it weakened the determination of Ekumeku warriors and undermined the people’s existing traditional ways of dispensing justices. According to Egodi (2007) the conquest of Ekumeku warriors led to British re-location of Asaba district headquarters to Ogwashi-Uku. She advanced the reason. According to her it afforded the British the opportunity to ensure effective conciliation of the conquered areas on one hand and the balkanisation of Western Igbo by the British into two on the other hand. She avers that the outcome was the emergence of Asaba and Aboh Divisions and joined with the neighbour who were given political precedence over them occurred in 1910. She pointed out that while Asaba Division was placed under the rule of Benin Province; the Aboh Division was under Delta Province. From the foregoing, it is presumed that the balkanisation of the Western Igbo people in present Anioma Kingdom was precipitated by their interaction with the British colonialists.

### **2.1.1 Conceptual Framework**

#### ***Omoluabi* Concept:**

Lawal (2014:61), describes conceptual framework as a product of a crucial review of one or more theories and related views and findings. Just like theoretical framework, he avers that conceptual framework assists the researcher to arrive at a possible design, methodology and general course of action towards resolving the research problem by identifying the important variables, the connections among them and how they can be measured statistically.

According to Olanipekun, (2017:217-218); ethical theories and principles are focus of moral evaluation of human action and behaviour. He opines that behaviour is differentiated on “right or wrong” as well as “good or bad”. He asserts that good or bad virtues are instrumental to the concept of character that prescribes the attitudes of a



moral agent. He adds that more than any individual, Abimbola (1975) cited in Olanipekun, (2017) strengthened the idea that virtue moral agent should live virtuously and exhibit a virtuous character. He observes that, what is ascribed as character in western worldview is akin to the expression of the Yoruba's moral philosophy *ki eniyan gege bi Omoluabi*. Awoniyi (1975) cited in Albert *et al* (1995) alludes the foregoing asserts that to be an *Omoluabi* is to be of good character in all its ramification.

According to Fayemi (2009) *Omoluabi* stems from the Yoruba philosophical worldview. It is found in an expression that describes the worthiness and nothingness of human character. Contextually, human personality remains an inner expression of an individual that manifest in the outer behaviour that do not only credits one as an *Omoluabi* but also *eyan buburu*. Meanwhile, the proponents of this concept were concerned in one way or another on how an individual moral conducts can affect him/her as well as the society. They contend that Abimbola (1975) postulation on his *Iwapele: "The concept of Good Character in Ifa Literary Corpus"* used the term such as *iwa rere* and *iwa buburu* to draw distinctions on moral expectation in human society; however, it is the same society as described by Bewaji (2004) that determines the right character.

According to him, Abimbola (1975) quoted in Olanipekun (2017) *Omoluabi* serves as a moral virtue (*iwa*). *Iwa* according to him is an attribute that distinguishes an individual from the others as well as social attainment. He contends further that while the personal character is associated with biological trait, the central idea is the ripple consequences of an individual's action on the society. That is, the core message of *Omoluabi* continues in the Nigerian social space and core life, to be that of personal virtues. However, Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2016) contend with Fayemi (2009) on the problem of personal virtues and the danger of a society in an iron cage of vices. According to them, the most defining problem of *Omoluabi* is the expression of vices at the expense of virtue. They asserted that people increasingly identifies humans who act out of compassion, altruism and empathy. This view explains in part the cultural interpretation of how the *Omu* institution of peacemaking is a core reserved of women with sound moral character (Ndili 2016).

In the views of Johnson (1921:101) *Omoluabi* is defined as the standards which determine the morality or immorality of an act. He avers that morality of an act associates with *iwa* (character) and virtues and also the very essence of life. He investigated character in two sites; the *iwarere* and *iwa baje* or *iwa buburu*. According to her, *iwa rere* (good character) or *iwapele/ iwa tutu* (gentleness) is the aspect of behaviour that is considered valuable, whereas *iwa baje* or *buburu* involves unethical and morally disapproved behaviours. In her views disapproved or unethical behaviours have adverse effects on personal moral virtue. This also explains the rationale behind the peacemaking agency of the *Omu* institution of peacemaking that is rooted on moral virtue.

According to Olanipekun (2017) moral virtue refers to a set of institutional ideal, which guide and direct the pattern of life; character trait or inner disposition that makes a man good and do his assignments well. This, in his view, involves being moved to act in accordance with acceptable standard, being a form of moral excellence. He avers that moral life exemplified by an *Omoluabi* have positive contributions in all types of traditional social order in quite an unprecedented fashion. He asserts that in both internal and external, the aesthetic moral beauties embedded in *Omoluabi* are more alluring than most sorts of unethical trait characterised in our contemporary world. On the internal trait it serves to demonstrate act of moral probity, honesty, integrity and dignity. In the external, he postulates that *Omoluabi* is positioned to showcase some fundamental principle and personal features of our existence. This explains why the *Omu* has recorded great feats in peacemaking in spite of the presence of other patriarchal institution.

Furthermore, Omobola (2008) has argued that, there are connectivity between the concept of *Omoluabi* and the western concept of social capital. He sees social capital as akin to successful socio-economic living, in an interdependent society. Omobola (2008) asserts that the risk of alteration or loss of *Omoluabi* status is one of the dreaded part by both the leader and the led. He argues further that according to primordial principle, history can be told in terms of the story line that supports the superiority of the elders upon the younger. He contends further, that history begins with the ancestors, elders and moves through the development of institutional structures, culminating in the emergence of chieftaincy institutions in the human

societies. He identifies several factors that highlight relationship that promote cooperation and peaceful co-existence in every social institution. He argues further that one of the distinguishing features is the sheer metaphysical powers conferred by the gods and ancestors.

In the same line of argument, Olaoba (2011) contends that the ancestral presence may have been considerably factored than any individual. For instance, the *Omu* Anioma Kingdom pointed out that more often than none, people respond to summon not only by the virtue of their status which she referred to as *Nne Obodo* (meaning mother of the community) but also the personalisation of crown of office, believed to be vested by the metaphysical powers (the gods and ancestors). Hence the *Omu* in her domain is eulogized as *Nne-Igwe* (her Royal Majesty or one with authority).

According to Ndili, (2017), this conveys the meaning that the *Omu* is the representative of her community and her authority being divine demands respect on the plain of metaphysical visitation of evil by gods either directly or on invocation. This serves as a premise in analysing the effectiveness of the peacemaking processes of *Omu* institution of peacemaking.

In addition, Omole (2014) avers further that *Omoluabi* in the form of moral virtue is highly valued and it could be described as wisdom with great integrity, with high level of responsibility. She contends further that the idea of wisdom gives an image of somebody that is a paragon of moral excellence. In addition, the influence of the elders in a gerontocracy structured Africa society, were epitomised by wisdom especially when they stand in the position of head of a family or a patron.

Olanipekun (2017:218) defines *Omoluabi* in terms of eight basic principles; *oro-siso* (spoken word or expert use of language); *Iteriba* (Respect); *Inu-rere* (Good will, having a good mind towards others); *Otito* (truth); *Iwa* (character); *Akinkanju* (bravery); *Ise* (hardwork) and *Opolo* pipe (intelligence). According to him, expert use of words is characterised by appropriate use of proverbs, conversational prudence, sagacious usage of spoken words and intellectual maturity. The second is respect (*iteriba*) the recognition of the right of others that transcends stratification (age, gender and social status) rather upon being human. He contends that respect, is not limited to the elderly, male or female as it affected an array of other things such as social,

political, religious and cultural responsibilities. Thirdly, the basic principle of *Omoluabi* does not only derive essentially from *iterriba* (respect), but from the good intentions towards others, which are the fundamental moral and psychological expectations through truthfulness and honesty Abimbola (1975:393). The view offers an additional guide in assessing the feats recorded by the *Omu* institution of peacemaking in spite the presence of other patriarchal institution in their communities. It also presents a platform in explaining the cooperation that exists between the different traditional institutions in Anioma communities.

*Iwa* (character), the fourth principle, deals with valuable and less valuable morals. This view provided grounds for analysing the acceptable moral standard that placed the *Omu* institution above board others. While the three last principles are gamuts that qualify an *Omoluabi*. This also proffers the platform of examining the strength of the *Omu* institution in a male dominated environment.

*Omoluabi* in Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2016) mannerism is articulating systematic ways of thinking by essential aspect of beliefs, values, customs, practices and social behaviours. They argued that with the concept of *Omoluabi*, social behaviours increasingly become entrenched in the philosophical tradition anchored in character, that is, character are thoroughly shaped in terms of cultural values, ethics and moral which defines a people: the visible form of character encompasses communal, social and civic responsibilities which determines repute. They also contend further that in the traditional settings, much more attention is given to character than any other values and the wellbeing of the society is grossly depended on acceptable character which the society dictates.

Societal dictates remain the potent driver to sustaining a harmonious environment while being regulated by traditions and customs. It serves to create vastly greater opportunities for human beings to enjoy social interaction that promotes culture and civility. They are contained within the traditional institution. Arguably, cultural dictates and norms have also somber side, which has become apparent in our contemporary society. However, norms and expectations are distinct in every culture, but speak the same language of right ethical expectations embedded in honesty, dignity, integrity, truth and communalism in a more concentrated form, translating into

a harbinger of peace. This provides further grounds in analysing influence of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking in Anioma communities.

### ***Ubuntu* Concept**

This concept evokes the images of African thought of acceptable ideas and deeds, expressed in human relationship in a communal environment. It also relates to bonding with others expressed in most African languages. According to Mugumbate and Nyangura (2013), *Ubuntu* in Africa worldview symbolises being human. They assert that same meaning is expressed by *ubuthosi* in Ndebale, Zimbabwe language, Botswana, the *botho*, Tanzania, Bumuntu, Congo, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda, *bomoto*, *gimuntu*, *umunthu*, *vumuntu* and *umuntu* respectively (p.85).

According to Samkange and Samkange (1980) cited in Mugumbate and Nyangura (2013), there are three maxims that explain *Ubuntu*; one that sees one's humanity in recognition of the humanity in others, on the basis that establish respectful relationship with people. According to them it upholds the consensus and collectivity that shuns vengeance, retributions and confrontation thereby, expressing values for human existence. Second, it represents a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of lives of others caught in the web of life's uncertainty and options for the preservation of life and third, it portrays that position of this paper that the king owed his status, and the corresponding powers associated, to the will of the subjects. This explains in part the influence of *Omu* institution in peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom.

According to Bolden, (2014:1) the concept of *Ubuntu* is an alternative to individualistic and utilitarian philosophies that tend to dominate in the west. He contends that, *Ubuntu* is a Zulu/Xhosa word, with parallels in many other African languages. However, its cardinal embodiment is situated in the Zulu expression *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*; literary meaning a person can only be a person through others which would mean "I am, because we are". He avers that *Ubuntu* as a concept that denotes the essence of humanness. It describes group solidarity that is central to the survival of society in the context of scarce resources. This explains the origin of the *Omu* institution as a peacemaking agency with the key function of building communal solidarity through their ritual practices. It must be emphasised that *Ubuntu* is an Africa view of life. It sees the society as a building block of different layers; no part is a stand-alone. This is true of all societies primitive as well as civilised, more so as the

society exists in an iron cage of violence, therefore *Ubuntu* could be construed as the collective interdependence and community's solidarity of affection. This would also be used to explain the necessity that brought about the existence of an exclusive female institution (*Omu* institution) in the midst of other patriarchal institution as well as role differentiations, division and compliments in Anioma traditional polity.

Bolden (2014), has averred that *Ubuntu* as a social philosophy can be summarised under three key principles; care and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness. Desmond Tutu; could perhaps be said to be the famous proponent of the notion that peace in Africa, are largely depended on re-engaging with its value system. Unarguably, it could also be said that Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were the foremost African leaders of the post-colonial and post-apartheid who described *Ubuntu* as a philosophy of peace. They saw *Ubuntu* as a guiding concept of African Renaissance. According to Bolden (2014), *Ubuntu* is agreed as a form of human act that reflects human generosity or consideration towards others. He contends further, that it has been seen as a form of concept that cuts across African cultural worldview, with a wider acceptance. *Ubuntu*, though captures differently provides the platform of human manifestation of communalism, togetherness and sacredness of human life and existence. Similarly, Mugumbate and Nyangura (2013), supports the foregoing when they captured the Chewa phrase in Malawi "*kali kokha nkanyama, tili awiri ntiwanthu*" meaning "one person is like an animal, two are a community" and "*mwana wa mnzako ngwako yemwe, ukachenjera manaja udy*a" meaning your neighbour's child is your own which reflect collectivity and togetherness of *Ubuntu*.

Among African nations *Ubuntu* has been an important concept in the reform of education and public services in post-apartheid South Africa and also offered a framework for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (that bore witness to the injustices of the apartheid era from the perspective of both perpetrator and victims). The rules of social ethic clearly play an important part in every society. For example, relationship with others have major influence on the way we act, attitude to legitimacy and authority, and have thus also influence social structures, systems and values Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013).

Bessler (2008:43) avers that value systems are expressed in compassion, justice, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and morality. However, the role of individuals, groups,

also has an organising effect on those value systems. Groups can attempt to build and strengthen or weaken them. However, Bessler (2008) believes that *Ubuntu* articulates our common humanity that results in our responsibilities to others. This explains in part the roles of the *Omu* institution as a peacemaking agent. It also explains the communality and interdependence existing in a political social web metamorphosing into a dual-sex or gender-balanced institution in a well-defined cultural setting.

According to Chachine (2008) “I am because you are” articulates a deep rootedness in community that gives inspiration and exposes one to others. He further opines that such exposure expresses the difference in humanness with the determination to enriching others. This also explains the position that no individual can live in isolation. Thus, his view about the society as a building block of many layers working to achieve a common goal becomes ideal. While the *Omu* institution is actively involved in peacemaking in a patriarchal featured society, the price for their efficiency is subsumed within masculinity. This would serve as a base to explain some of the challenges facing the institution amidst other institutions.

Metz (2007:240) contends that *Ubuntu* is a normative concept of right action that has an African pedigree in which the requirement is harmony; in which discord is reduced; in which communal harmony is a matter of identity and solidarity. According Metz (2007) the need to build communal solidarity arises from reverence of human life. He asserts that the premium on the worth of other people’s life provides a flourishing part of loving and promoting harmony. He contends further, that life and dignity are like two sides of a coin which has a perfectly definite functional significance growing out of the cultural values. It serves to contribute significantly to the development of ethical disposition either simply or relational to the group. He avers that given some of the values that are implicit in *Ubuntu*; altruism, kindness, generosity, benevolence, courtesy, respect and love.

Nkondo (2007:95) contends that *Ubuntu* has the potential to deepen our disposition for compassion and caring. He opines that political ideal of *Ubuntu* associated with communalism seeks to reconcile two ideal; first that of the society possessing a morally privileged status; which should be enshrined and protected by certain inviolable rights and freedom against exploitation and domination and second, the right of individual that should not conflict with the common good of the society. It

would be expected that this will provide a foundation for the explanation of the sustained peace in the community. It will also serve to explain successes recorded by the institution in a well male dominated society.

According to Bolden (2014) *Ubuntu* is universally political ideal. It is founded on the idea that we live in a moral space mapped by shared values. He avers that *Ubuntu* has also been seen as a form of framework which defined the shape of a life worth living with emphasis on communalism. He argued further, that *Ubuntu* condition of thinking would involve interpretation of shared understandings and meanings that bore on the political life of one's community. To this end, people will realise themselves in the process and acting with others in a social practice. He opines that, in an *Ubuntu* governed society, highlights are on duties and virtue through rights are always implied. Thus; it values has always been viewed as a basis for a morality of cooperation, compassion, communalism and concern for the interest of the collective respect for the dignity of personhood.

Furthermore, Matuhun (2011) sees *Ubuntu* as a philosophy that is premised on acknowledgement that human being is a social being; thus everyone should participate in society. He contended further that tradition of consultation and decision making by ordinary member of the society is also embodied in *Ubuntu*. He contends further, that *Ubuntu* remains a derivation of an old age pre-colonial African ethos that arguably permeated all pre-colonial African societies (decision making in traditional African societies was governed by consensus) He argues that in African societies consultation preceding decision making in most pre-colonial societies has led to the conclusion that most African societies were inherently democratic even though the word democracy may not have been in use then. This also could serve to explain complements in the discharge of functions in existence in a dual-sex political system prevalent in Anioma communities.

*Ubuntu*, community is relevant because a person fulfils his potentials; hence *Ubuntu* defines a person through one's relationship with others (Matuhun, 2011). Understood from the perspective of *Ubuntu* signifies a plurality of personalities corresponding to the multiplicity of individual relationships in which the individual in question stands (Matuhun, 2011:71). This will also serve to explain the influence of the *Omu*



institution in peacemaking as well as their relevance in governance in spite of the existence of other patriarchal institutions.

Hence, a thorough exploration of the *Omu* institution of peacemaking, the focus of the study lies on the applicability of *Ubuntu* as an African concept of peace that is rooted on ethical values that promote peaceful co-existence. The study positioned that *Ubuntu* concept is inherently democratic as it features some inbuilt mechanisms for protecting individual right and that of the society.

## **2.2 Literature Review**

This sub-heading is committed to a review of literatures relating to the area of this research. The review is done under the following themes:

1. Historical examination of the origin and evolution of the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom.
2. The influence of the *Omu* institution on peacemaking in Anioma communities.
3. Peacemaking methods of the *Omu* institution
4. Challenges confronting the institution and how it can play more effective role in peacemaking in Anioma Clan.

### **2.2.1 Historical Origin and Evolution of the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom**

In a scholarly attempt at examining the *Omu* institution and peacemaking among the Anioma people of Delta state, it is imperative to examine the term institution. According to Hodgson (2006), the term institution has a long history of usage in academics especially in social sciences, dating back at least to Giambattista Vico in his *Scienza Nuova* of 1725; since then, there is no unanimity in the definition of the concept.

According to Sahn and Sarris (1994), the term institution has numerous connotations and remains difficult to define and overwhelmed by ambiguity in its usage. Hodgson, (2006), defines institution as systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interaction. According to Logan (2013:353) institutions in African have proved to be reliant, remaining just as much as art of the modern political landscape at any legislative or local council... the public values the roles traditional institutions play in managing and restoring conflict, and leadership qualities and

accessibility to ordinary people. Hence, it becomes important to examine the *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom, Delta state.

Meanwhile, the study on chieftaincy institution is not a new phenomenon. This is due to sharp increase in scholarly attention to chieftaincy studies in recent times. A study on traditional chieftaincy institution in Nigeria titled *the chieftaincy Institution in Nigeria* observes that while the statuses of chiefs continue to change, there is no reason to believe that the institution will go into extinction in the nearest future. The study advances reasons for the assertion. It further argues that, because chieftaincy institutions are rooted in certain antecedence and traditions, it cannot be altered. Although, honorary chieftaincy titles can be withdrawn or suspended, chieftaincy built upon certain traditional relic has thus far cannot be broken (Babawale 2010).

Corroborating with the above assertion, Adjaye and Misawa (2006) affirm that, the notion of chieftaincy evokes a multiplicity of images and issues about chiefs in Africa. They argued that this image resonates with a romantic fascination that is symbolically timeless. This image they averred, Bowdich had earlier observed and depicted of the Asantehene during his visit to Kumase nearly 200 years ago. In their well-researched work: *Chieftaincy at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity, Transforming African Rulership in Ghana and Nigeria*, contended, that often this image is indelibly etched in memories each time chieftaincy is recalled, however, there were lowly chiefs whose regular appearances is no different than that of ordinary citizens. They argued, that between these two polarities are innumerable shades and types of chiefs however, and they asserted that in many respects, focus on chieftaincy has been narrowly limited to high ranking traditional chiefs like Asantehanes, Emirs, Sultans, Kabakas and so on to the neglect of grass root chiefs.

Accordingly, Oku (2013) contends that even though chieftaincy institutions emerged from the social fabric of the land, the history of the institution is largely different in Africa. He argued further, that chieftaincy institution had remained the most visible and prominent political institution in Africa, yet, some Africans did not have centralised government under chiefs but lived in what is described as acephalous group with no centralised political heads.

According to Ali et al (2018) Nigeria is herogenous in nature comprising of people of different background. Coroborating Ali et al (2018), Sowumi (2017), posits that Nigeria made up of many ethnic group with majority Yoruba in the west, Hausa in the north and Igbos in the south, have diverse culture and traditional systems of administration which differs from one community to another. He argued further that these diversities in no doubt manifested in their rulership arrangements. Usifo (2017), Isaac (2018) argued further, that traditional institutions were the administrative organisation and that the institution is rooted in the history, cultures and tradition of several ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds.

Modi (2018) posits that the name Anioma connotes at least four different things; first, it refers to the loose conglomeration of various peoples; Nri and Isu (Igbo), Benin/Iduu and Ishan (Edo), Yoruba, Igala and Isoko brought together by various method to recognise the *Omu* institution. Second, it is a geo-political expression that brings under a common umbrella the people constituting the present northern Delta, who have a common political identity and share the same linguistic features. Thirdly, a sub-group that make up the Igbo of west of river Niger (Ukwani, Enuani and Ika). Lastly, the area occupied by Aniocha, Ndokwa, Ika and Oshimili decents in the present day Delta North senatorial district.

While the Delta North senatorial district consists of nine local government areas, Ndili (2010) argues that the Anioma culture has remained distinct to them, however, undisputedly, it has borrowed from cultures of its neighbours. In his examination of the origin and migration of the Anioma settlements, Esogbue (2015) states that Anioma reflected the heterogeneous historical traditions that gives credence to varied origin of the *Omu* institution. He asserts that:

Anioma comprises of diverse ethnic origins that have over the centuries developed syncretise culture and values different from their neighbours. These cultural homogeneities and values brought the people of Anioma together as a united and determined people sharing together common destiny (p.21)

In the absence of major documented source of the origin of Anioma people, Ndili, (2010) seeks a more oral tradition of the Anioma people and its *Omu* institution. According to him, Anioma traces its roots to diverse origin; the Benin; Igala and Nri in

the East. He contends further that the Anioma political structure was an admixture of the Benin/Igala monarchical system and the patrilineal kinship system of the Igbo heartland (Nri). He asserts that this combination, metamorphosed into a patrilineal kinship structure with male monarchs, male title-holders and male elders in control of local politics.

Esogbue (2016a), Mordi (2018), Ndili (2010), Egodi (2001) scholars of the Anioma historical tradition, argued supportively of the varied movements that; of the Anioma communities as a precursor for its emergence. They contend that Anioma interaction with other culture reflected in the variegated local administration as well as a practice of female chieftaincy institution. However, Esogbue (2015) avers that Anioma, having a core population made up of the Benin substratum of Ezechime, sub-group of the Nri and Igala with defined boundaries as well as political organisation qualifies as a distinct political and cultural entity.

Mordi (2018) has advanced the argument that while certain socio-historical coincidences tend to swallow minorities, the evidence that Anioma has a certain historical uniqueness that has engendered their sense of identity is clear from anthropological and historical evidences. He argued that the Benin factor in the history of Igbo speaking people west of the Niger, was a topical issue in the study of pre-colonial intergroup relations in Nigeria; which Mordi (2018) investigated in the micro study of Ubulu-Ukwu. Meanwhile, Atanda (1980) cited in Mordi (2018) has argued that cultural identity has remained fundamental and could only be gleaned from the hints provided by the people of their traditions and origin. This presupposes that the people hold the key to their histories. He avers that traditions and origin of the people consists of group consciousness in relation to territories as well as the emergence of distinct socio-political institutions central to constitutional changes. Drawing an analysis from Atanda (1980), pre-colonial Nigerian communities preserved these fundamental developments in myths, which are subject to diverse interpretations and applications. He contends that these applications demand the dynamics which produce and modify the mythology; which placed the contexts from which they cannot be detached, this lends credence to the position of Bradbury (1970) cited in Afigbo (1987:13).

According to Mordi (2018), anthropological and historical evidences show that undoubtedly, Anioma has been affected culturally by neighbouring ethnic groups. He avows that even when local administrations and the origin of Anioma traditional institutions reflected that of the neighbouring ethnic groups; history is replete of the evolution of kingship insitutions of the Anioma people before contact with Benin Kingdom. He argued that though early historians like Egharevba (1968) did not capture the people and their institutions in their “proper historical context” Anioma has remained an automomous socio-political and territorial unit. He contended that scholarly presentation of Anioma in what he referred to as “footnote to the history of the much celebrated Benin empire” contributed to the inadequacies. He further blamed the situation to the pre-occupation of British colonial rulers in 1930s. He argued that while the British was “bulding up large paramountcies at the local levels”, the adjoining small scale societies was reduced “to dependencies of those empires” which became the yardstick from which to explain “the origin and migration of Anioma’s political structures and cultural heritage (p.2).

Esogbue (2016b), Ndili (2010) posits that the most important social political organisation that distinguished Anioma Kingdom is the *Omu* institution. In the same line of argument, Nwaneze (2005) avers that the Anioma towns were characterised by three political organisations; first the sacred, kingship of one clan *Obi* with segementary lineage council of *Olinzele*, *Ozo* and Age-grade association or gerontocracy found in Agbor, Owa, Aboh, Ubulu-Ukwu, Ogwashi-Ukwu, Onitcha-Ugbo and Issele-Ukwu. Second ascriptive leadership of segmentary lineage council with *Ozo* based *Olinzele* and age grade/gerotocracy associations found in Ibusa and Illah and third, a seminary lineage of appointive leadership of *Olinzele Ozo* council, age-grade associations; a gerontocracy system found in Asaba and Okpanam. Furthermore, he draws a line of similarities, concluding the peculiarities in segmentary lineages based on paternity. In the same vien, Mordi (2018) observed that the raise of Benin empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries resulted in the introduction and emulation of Benin political institutions in the forms of title systems and rise of compact villages a nd towns which was based on war readiness.

Deepening the discussion on lineage system in Anioma Kingdom, Ibewuiké (2006) avers that in the case of Asaba, the town is divided into villages (*ogbo* or *ebo*), which

are sub-divided into extended families. According to her, the families were further divided into smaller groups of descendants of the same paternal lineage. She explained, that each of the family units has its own administrative organisation with a lineage head. She contends that while each lineage is divided into a number of sub lineages, a group of kin-based unit known as *umunna* emerges. his *Umunna*, she avers constitutes of children of same father but different mothers economically independent with a man as the householder.

According to her, the entire group of the lineage recognises the authority of the compound head who performs numerous ritual, moral, legal duties and obligations. She contends that the compound head makes sacrifices for the welfare of the people and settles disputes such as matrimonial problems in the lineage and also holds the lineage *Ofo*, made from a branch of *Detarium elastica* tree, symbolising the authority of the ancestors; and acts as the intermediary between the living descendants of the lineage and ancestors and offers sacrifice to the earth goddess (Ani) for their overall welfare and in return receives their obedience. He represents the compound members in external dealings with other social groups.

Arguing in same vein, with Nwanze (2005), Egodi (2001) advanced the argument that several Anioma towns were patrilineal featuring men dominance of the local politics. However, Akpuh (2013) contends with marked difference, pointing to the fact that some substrata of the Anioma pre-colonial society had female chiefs. Esogbue (2010), Egodi (2001) negates this view and while asserting that female chiefs existed, but had little obvious political functions before and during colonialism. They argued further, that Anioma cultures were patriarchal portraying and rooted in patrilineal decent structure. Corroborating the above assertion, Ibewuiké (2006) affirms that social organisation of the Igbo is generally referred to as patrilineal descent. She avers that individual is considered to belong to the decent group of his fathers and forefather. According to her, patrilineal descent as a principle, advances political and economic rights down from one generation of men to the next. She avows that the patrilineal descent does not mean anything else rather one receives one's rights (political, economic and religious rights) through the men or paternity. She contends that in such society, the woman does not have political and economic rights by virtue of her sex, however, she accesses land for cultivation through her husband.

Irrefutably, local polity in most African communities featured patriarchy, which expressly is a manifestation of structure of a set of social relations with material base; which enables men to dominate women; and set parameter for women's structural and unequal position in families and market; which condone gender differential in terms of inheritance right and legal adulthood (Makama 2006). She contends that patriarchy entrenches male domination into the structure of social organisation and institutions at all levels of leadership (p.116)

Meanwhile, social organisation and institution of Anioma culture presents a dual leadership structure (Esogbue 2016b) of a male and female; where the male is referred to as the *Obi* and the female *Omu* with varied responsibilities complementing each other. Corroborating Esogbue (2016b), Oluyemi-Kusa (2009) opines that cognisance was Yoruba traditional axiom *Bi okurin r' ejo ti obirin paa, ki ejo ma saa ti lo* (meaning if a man sights a snake, and a woman kills it, all is well as long as the snake does not escape) (p.207). Ibwuike (2006) drawing inference from Asaba traditional political structure presents the *Omu* and the *Asagba*. According to her, the *Omu* and *Asagba* have recognised, separate but cognate, functions and duties in the community. She further argues that the *Omu* possesses a separate cabinet for government, which answers to her and helps in her administrative duties. Kusa (2009) negating the foregoing, avers that as much as gender relations encourage inequality between women and men; distinct gender functionality does not nullify its perception, however, the degree of inequality varies from one society to another. Obijiofor (2010) describes Nigerian society as intolerant and heavily gendered because many hold the view that men are preordained to subdue women in all facets of life. So it could be averred that the gendered nature of the society also influenced membership of the traditional institutions driving the affairs of a community.

Furthermore, in his examination of the pre-colonial Anioma culture, Esogbue (2016b) asserts that the *Omu* was the pivot around which the socio-economic and spiritual activities of the people revolved. The core of the activities was the shrine known as *Ogwa* (palace). According to Ndili (2010) the Anioma local council was built round three grades of chiefs; the *Obi/Eze*, *Omu* and the *Olinezele/Olineze/NdiNze*. The *Omu* was regarded as the representative of the ancestors and she was surrounded by a great aura of mystery, fear and respect. At the apex of the political administrative structure

was the *Obi/Eze* whose basis of power resides in the traditional mystical attributes attached to the sacred institution of kingship. Ibewuiké (2006) furnishes us with the Asaba kingship structure. She also traced the right to political rulership of the town to *Asagba-in-council*. She contends further that *Asagba-in-council* consists of two groups; *Otu raza* and the *Ichioakwa* who assisted in the political, religious and social administration of the community. According to her, the *Asagba* makes decision concerning the town affairs and his palace was the highest court of appeal before the creation of the Asaba native court in 1900. This supports the aforementioned point that Anioma political structure was a parallel-sex arrangement.

According to, Egodi (2001) the *Omu* institution is dominated by women entrusted with the maintenance of peace. She argued that “when kingships become weakened from rival claimants”; women took up the role of peacemakers being the ones most affected when their male relatives died in succession disputes and battles. A case in point is the *Omu Okewi* (1872-1943) who was said to have had a war canoe but never went to war Egodi (2001). *Omu* is the head of the women in the community. She is also an important female official who is responsible for the market affairs and takes part in the socio-political administration of the community. The *Omu* has been presented by various anthropologists, socioogists and historians (Thomas Northcote, Henderson, Basden) as the queen of the village group, since her political roles in the community is parallel to that of the king. But it should be noted that is not a queen in the western sense or is she the wife of the king or the dugther of a king who died without a child, she doesnot owe her position to any relationship to the king.

Supportive of the foregoing, scholars of Anioma history claimed that while the activities of the *Omu* and their military prowess made the institution popular, they were responsible for the Anioma believing strongly in the mystical powers of the institution although excesses where check to avoid ultimate usurp of the central authority. Ndili (2010) has furnished us with mode of ascension to the *Omu* throne. He also traced the right to conferment of such title as a peacemaking strategy by elders through oracular consultations. He contends further, that to be able to ascend the throne, *Omu* among other things, kill a cow which entitles her the greeting *Ogbueshi* or *ogbuefi*. According to him after performing the necessary rites and rituals, the *Omu* appears to the monarch who will rub her all over with native white chalk known as *Nzu*



a process dialectically referred to as *Ima Nzu* and on the seventh day thereafter wash away the native white chalk (*Iwucha na Nzu*).

The foregoing supports the aforementioned assertion that the involvement of the *Omu* institution in the local council of the Anioma people was necessitated by needs to effectively make peace rather than the impetus of gender relations in politics as people may think.

However, the origin of the *Omu* institution, their roles, peacemaking approaches adopted and the challenges facing the institution and how they can effectively discharge their responsibilities have been largely unexamined by most scholars. There is need to examine the *Omu* institution as a peacemaking agent as this has not been the focus of many scholars.

**(b) *Omu* Institution and Decent practice in Anioma:**

According to Jack Jackson (2015) social groups in Africa are closely related with membership depending on a common mythical ancestral decent commonly referred to lineage. The scholar contends that the meaning of decent starts from series of parent-child-link through a divine connection to the ancestors. In the same vein, an ancestral descent Charles (2008) has contended is determined at birth and as such is life-long with status ascribed.

Charles (2008); further argued that in Africa, is the ordering of principle in which individuals hierarchically trace their genealogy to a common ancestor. He avers that in many parts of Africa, geological root is also traced to one apical ancestor who stands at the apex. He further defines decent group as all those who are lineally connected but to a common apical ancestor.

Onwuejeogwu (1995) cited in Jack Jackson (2015) contends that decent system emerged from two broad categories; first, the cognate (bilateral) and second, the agnate (unilateral) system. He avers that while the cognate consist of bilateral or double decent system characterised by multiple ancestors on one hand, the unilateral (agnate) comprises of patrilineal and matrilineal where decent is traced via paternity exemplified by Igbo and Yoruba culture and via maternity as it is a practice among the Nembe in Bayelsa and Ohiafia in Abia state (Okaba 2005).

In a similar vein, Jack-Jackson (2015) has also argued that while the core members of a patrilineage descended from a single male ancestor; it stretches within eight to ten generations that inhabit a single territory. This territory he contends further comprises settled villages interlinked by dispersed farm stead in some cases. In furtherance, he opines that lineage system remains the matrix of a social unit creating the ground for religious and political structures, but they also imply exclusion of matrilineality, affiliating lineage only to the male decent.

Ndili (2010) has averred that the basic socio-political organisation of the Anioma decent was the compound (*ezi na uno*) closely related with the *Umuanna*. The *ezi na uno* is the basic institution among the Anioma communities which serves as a social context which members of the umuanna derived their identity. Uchendu in his study (1965) cited in Opone (2012) has argued, that Umuanna was a territorially kin-based unit that subdivides into compound (*ezi obi*) headed by a grandfather or great grandfather. According to him, a group of Umuanna is bounded by common lineage. This common lineage he further referred to as *Idumu/Ebo* (quarter) which is a group of umunna tied by same immigrant decent. The scholar contends that while the *Idumu* holds, the total *Ebo* constitute the clan where the headship of *Diopka* subsists.

According to Ndili (2010) *Diopka* consists of a living male considered the head of the family, clan or community, in most cases the senior male. Administratively the *Ogbe* (village) is a conglomeration of *Idumu* who hold in esteem the authority of the *diopka* (Opene 2012). In the same vein, Onwuejeogwu (1972) quoted in Opene (2012) reveals that the *Ogbe* is a confederation of autonomous settlements; politically equal to other component parts that made up the town.

Meanwhile, Opene (2012) avers that the territorial and kinship grouping were organised based on elaborate Age grade system. He further argued that most senior Age grade was headed by *Okpala-Uku* who's *Onu-Okwu* (spoken words) was *Iwu* (law). A point in case is Asaba kinship where the governance was domicile in the hands of the *Otu-Rasa Age-grade* (Ndili 2010).

Ndili (2010) has contended that the *Eze/Obi* was the supreme administrative authority. He argued that *Eze/Obi* titles among Anioma decents although expressing the same headship varies. For instance, he cited the *Asagba* title and *Obuzor* of Ibusa land as

the supreme head of the land. According to him, they asserted their authority by developing patrimonial relations with people from different *Ogbe*, thereby creating a core of support that transcends decent affiliations, in a manner that decent principles were instrumental to consolidation of their own power. A point in case, according to him, is the case of Akwukwu-Igbo where *Ogbes* united into village was headed by a hereditary *Eze or obi* with his council of elders, who also asserted their authority by developing patrilineal relationship with a network of people from different decent, but they also used lineage principles to expand the size of the royal lineage (p.10).

Opone (2011) has avers that kingship practice in Enuani/Anioma clan was entangled in the web of certain historic precursor located in origin and traditions. He contended that the Nri migration story supports the line of thought that the kingly and ritual civilization of Anioma was an importation of the Nri culture, however it could be argued that ideological principle based on rotational practices where multiple *Eze* or *Ogbueshi* existed was not a derivation from the outside culture, but an indigenous concept of conflict management and peacemaking. In his view, an *Eze* or *Ogbueshi* is not just a physically and politically figure but a ritualised leader, whose driving force is ancestral. According to him the ritual and political powers of the *Eze* earns him the title *Obi bu agu* (meaning king is lion). He contends further, that an *Eze* with his compeer of *Olinezele* and *Ndi-Omu* could assume legal obligation.

While advancing the argument for the *Eze* assuming legal status, he argued that the *Eze* provided essential insurance to the community in times of crisis. Thus, in their view, members also rely on one another in times of political uncertainty or individual crisis. He however, asserts that Anioma political structure is not stereotyped as some positions were exclusively feminised along patrilineal elements as pure decent form of organisation. They have instituted a form of rotational principles in relations and between *Ebo*, *Idumu* and *Ogbe*, thus initiating peacemaking strategy. In strictly patrilineal societies, he asserts that such arrangements had; first, sustained team spirit within and among the people and second symbol of gender and ethnic unity.

Esogbue (2016b) contends that within Anioma communities the *Omu* title was rotated among different quarters that made up the town, representing the consensus voices of the people. He contends further that in their selection and ascension, there is a marked patrilineal bias and emphasis upon biological principles. Arguing in the same line as

Esogbue (2016b) Ndili (2016) contends that the selection process is because of the strict ritual involvement. According to him the rotational practice in the *Omu* institution grew out of peacemaking processes; while whose turn it is produces the next *Omu*.

According to Nwanze (2005), Anioma society is patriarchal in nature. The supreme head is the Obi/Eze, however, the political set up has traditionally created an exclusive female institution. He asserts that the female chieftaincy institution in Anioma is known with the title *Omu*. According to him, the person whom the title is conferred led the group of women called *Otu-Omu*. Unarguably, *Omu* in the pre-colonial times were described variously by scholars (Kaine 1963; Henderson 1972; Sofola 1998) Egodi (2001) supports the varied descriptions as they were not unconnected to their major activities that revolved around rituals with their group functioning as cult. Ndili (2010) contends that the *Omu* draws her force from the *Otu-Omu* as well as the *Otu-Ihaza* for law enforcement.

Similarly, Ndili (2016) has argued that Anioma political structure comprises of male monarchs, male council of chiefs/elders and a strong female chieftaincy institution. He asserts that the institution is an exclusive of women. Esogbue (2016a) has argued that the members were drawn from the various *Ogbe/Idumu* (quarters) that made up the town. He contends further that the *Omu* who is the head of the institution with her mystical powers sees things invisible to the natural eyes. He posits that she has knowledge of events before they occurred, deciphered what each new moon portended for their town, deciphered the future and what to do in malevolent cases.

In his further submissions, Ndili (2016) argues that the *Otu- Omu* worked as compeers with the *Omu* whom they considered to be closer to the gods and ancestors. Esogbue (2016a) and Okpuh (2005) argue in same line as Ndili (2016) that the *Omu* institution determines the spiritual tune of the communities based on their decisions upon the deities to appease and when to sacrifice.

Furthermore, they averred that such sacrifices, not spontaneous but constant contact with diviners and mystics. They conceded that the outcomes of such discoveries were communicated to the male leaders who decides on the action to be taken. They argued

further that the *Omu* assuming the spiritual responsibilities in the service of her people may have acquired some powers.

They explained further, that the *Omu* was responsible for the yearly purification rites before the New Year commenced as well as protecting the king and his realm and an indispensable member of a king's entourage in any of his official outing, thus exercising both profane and sacral powers. They aver that the *Omu* oversees the market and in their view economically the *Omu* fends for herself. However, the economic sustainability of the *Omu* institutions and effect of the presence of the Local Government officials in the market presents a ground for further studies.

According to Esogbue (2016b), one important feature of the *Omu* institution is that it is primarily feminised. He asserts that no man in Anioma community had and can attain/occupy stool of *Omu*. According to him, each community in Anioma clan pursued an inclusionist policy that had given way to the exigencies of communalism. He asserts that the creation of the *Omu* institution was the earliest form of women involvement in local politics.

Esogbue (2016a) contends further that the position of the *Omu* in Anioma communities had sort to have a political influence over rural territories by assuming the title of *Obi* in the case of Asaba (Igwe to exercise the royal functions). He avers that each *Omu* had a body of retinue that it depended on for law enforcement as the superior voice of the council. However, Esogbue (2016a & b) had not examined how the *Omu* institution continues to maintain authority and how they compel obedience.

While not the absurdity of the idea of equated title with the monarch, Egodi (2010) argues that the division of duties in Anioma socio-political system gave recognition of the division of duties between the *Obi/Eze* and the *Omu*. Ndili (2010:113) contend that most Anioma communities were administered politically by the *Obi*, the *Omu* with the *Olinezele* as their compeer. He argued further that there were two types of chiefs; traditional functional chiefs and the honouary chiefs and non-functional conferred chieftaincy title. He further contends that the *Omu* chieftaincy falls within traditional functional chieftaincy institution. This group he avers falls within the *Obi/Eze* title holders who were referred to in colonial times as Red Cap Chiefs (*Ndi-Eze*).

According to Nwanze (2005) *Eze* council serves as the college from where appointive leadership is drawn. He contends further that the *Omu* has the supreme authority in customs concerning women while the *Otu-Omu* is a group of women approximately the same age with male *Ndi-ichie*. He asserts that the *Omu* protects the town against evils and all manners of abomination that defiles relationship with ancestors. According to Olaoba (2011) the roles of the elders, “living elders” and the “dead elders” remain germane in conflict management and peacemaking processes in Africa. He argues further that the living elders held authority in stay for the ancestors, sustaining a continuum of a matrix of communication between progenitors and their offspring where gender has value in the perception of authority.

**(c) *Otu-Umuada***

According to Uchendu (1993) cited in Ibewuiké (2006) aside the *Omu* and her cabinet who represent the women in Anioma Kingdom, are the other women institutions in Anioma Kingdom. According to him, women group system in Igbo traditional system gave the individual a sense of social responsibility, attainment and dignity. He asserted that individuals still seek identification with her village/lineage. He contends that tradition is the immaterial aspect of culture as it is the undercurrent of practises and pattern that ensure cultural continuity. He asserts that it constituted the web that holds the society together. In her study of *Otu-Umuada* association, among the Anioma people, she contends that they are daughters to the village where they were born. It was his contention that *Otu-Umuada* is the bedrock of social political and economic organisation of the generality of freeborn daughters of the village/lineage. He asserted that it is the vehicle through which women identify with their patrilineages in their villages and through it have control several activities affecting the natal homes and ensure the wellbeing of other daughters of the village. According to him, *Otu-Umuada* usually intervene at any point when the constitution of their natal village is violated and give sactions to offenders. It is important to argue here that while the *Otu-Umuada* serves as political pressure groups in their natal villages, it was not the only association that enforced right moral conduct in the community. Ibewuiké (2006) contended that in Owerri province *Otu-Inyemedi* served as instrument of law enforcement and tried women for stealing, committing adultery and breach of marriage laws.

The *Otu-Umuada* exists among towns and villages in Anioma Kingdom and Ibewuike (2006), has given a detailed examination of this institution among Anioma people. She argues that *Otu-Umuada* classification runs from the eldest daughter (*Ada-ebo* or *Ada-isi*) of the lineage/village to the newly free-born girl child. According to her, it is headed by the eldest member (*Ada-ebo*) and she is not appointed by election. She observes that not every woman can be admitted as member of *Otu-Umuada*. This follows the view that pre-colonial Anioma settings debarred slave woman participation in *Otu-Umuada*. However, this scholar has established that modernity and change altered membership pattern as few slave women are allowed to join *Otu-Umuada*. Still advancing the argument on the *Otu-Umuada*, Ibewuike (2006), presents the complimentary roles of women institutions in Anioma societies. She avers that *Otu-Umuade* serves as compeers to the *Omu* institution. She contended that at the town level *Otu-Umuade* serves as helping hands to *Omu* and represents the women on important gatherings in the community where matters of civic interest that affects the women is discussed. It could be deduced from the foregoing, that the influence displayed by the *Omu*. institution in Anioma Kingdom is not unconnected with cordiality with other institution in Anioma communities.

***Otu-Inyemedi*:** According to Ibewuike (2006) institutions, associations and groups vary from place to place in traditional Igbo societies. The scholar contends that *Otu-Inyemedi* in a community starts with the cementing of a marriage relationship to the point where the woman moves into her connubial stead. In the same vein, Okonjo (1983) has contended that *Otu-Inyemedi* refers to woman association that represented the married women in the village. According to her, it consists of women of a localised patrilineage of their spouses based on common dwelling rather than birth. She argues that in many part of Igbo societies, one finds certain institutions, associations and groups that maintain what is called “close link” with lineages be it patrilineal or matrilineal.

Ibewuike (2006) contends that *Otu-Inyemedi* contributed to community development through strengthened cohesion and cooperation between individuals tracing their paternal links elsewhere. According to her, *Otu-Inyemedi* is a formation of group brought together for a common action in diverse spheres. She avers that the distinctions in paternal lineage marked fundamental demarcations between *Otu-*

*Umuada* and *Otu-Inyemedi* however, they were as important as they were in areas of ritual and ancestral worship. She contended further that ritual and ancestral worships were commonplace among most women groups in traditional societies. While advancing the argument on the role of women association in ritual and ancestral worships, she argued that *Otu-Inyemedi* makes sacrifice to the shrine of the wife of the founder of the lineage and during annual religious rites where sacrifices to the shrine of the river goddess called “*Onishe*” for the success of their annual religious rites were made. She argues thus:

“women play a major role in most ritual ceremonies. In virtually every sacrifice of public concern, women especially as wivies (*ndinyom*) provides most of the items including eggs, chicken and cooked foods for the ceremony

However, Ibewuiké (2006) argues that women were left to bear most expense involved in ritual ceremonies. She contended that apart from providing the items for sacrifice, women take custody of the effigies of female divinities.

“...are responsible for carrying them in procession to the respective shrines during public celebrations. Women are also responsible for cleaning and maintaining public shrines, and for the staging of dance”

This ritual sacrifices have been asserted as necessitated by this association to have strong ties with the *Omu* institution of peace. She argued further that *Omu* meets with *Otu-Inyemedi* on judicial matters. She argued further that when a member of the *Otu-Inyemedi* committed a theft, she is reported to the *Omu* cabinet who then imposed a fine on her through the head *Otu-Inyemedi*. She avows that where she refuses to pay, women in the village would start ignoring her. Furthermore, she contended that “the *Omu* and her cabinet acted as an intermediary between the *Otu-Inyemedi* and the men in the community”

However, the relationship between the *Omu* institution and other traditional institutions in Anioma kingdom calls for further study.

#### **(d) Traditional Institution and the Nigerian State**

The idea of the traditional institutions was borne out of the recognition that no society can exist without statutory leadership; and second be it pre-colonial, colonial and neo-



colonial era people's traditions must be upheld or preserved. Traditional institutions involve installation of men and women of repute to oversee the affairs of people within their domains or communities.

Meanwhile, in traditional African domain, tradition simply implies a pristine conception, beliefs and behaviour of a given society (Ekong 1989) which dates back to a mythically unknown period which conjures an aura of sanctimony and inviolability which shows a balance attained over time within a society and an environment. Tradition also connotes indigenous, primitive and archaic. It is based on customs and history.

One basic feature of traditional institutions in Nigerian communities is non-uniformity in practice and operation. This could be attributed to varied systems operational in the variegated communities. In fact, while the Igbo practiced a non-centralised system, which Uchendu (1965) referred to as stateless political system, the Hausa in the North and Yoruba in the West practised the centralised traditional political system (Meek, 1937; Green, 1947; Afigbo, 1972). However, the basis of the Hausa centralised political structure in Northern Nigeria has constituted a kind of debate among scholars.

While some scholars attributed it to traditions and customs, Abubakar (1980) has argued that the Islamic Jihad revolution brought the Hausa in the North under the caliphate system and Islamic rule hence attributed it to the religious practices prevalent in Northern Nigeria in the pre-colonial era. However, irrespective of the system practised, the common characteristic of the institution is that it was revered and respected (Gambari, 1985; Abubakar, 1980; Amusa, 2010).

Falola and Akinrinade (1985), have observed that the Yoruba of the South Western Nigeria, regarded traditional rulers as the representatives of the gods of the land (*Alase Ekeji Orisa*). They added that, Oba personifies the kingdom and represents the reincarnation of the past ancestors of the community. In a similar vein, Atanda (1973) captures the strong political power, authority and influence of the *Emirs* and *Shehu* of Northern Nigeria. In addition, sacredness, divinity, spirituality has been observed as major attributes of the traditional institution (Ashiru, 2010). Traditional chieftaincy institution was seen as the symbols of the people's past, custodians of their history and past, upholder and preserver of their culture and customs, epitome of cultural norms

and values of the society such as truth, discipline, courage and responsibility (Emordi and Osiki, 2008). Although traditional institutions in pre-colonial Nigeria were in most cases absolutely monarchical, this is not to say that they were in any way autocratic or totalitarian. This is due to the fact that there were various mechanisms put in place for checking the abuses of tending autocratic rulers in pre-colonial Nigerian societies (Atanda, 1980).

At this juncture, the conceptualisation of the evolution of the Nigerian state becomes imperative. The evolution of Nigeria dated back to around 1849-1960. Nigeria as a geographical territory became exposed to massive slave trade. The trade, Curtin (1976) termed “heinous”. In fact, the entity called Nigeria was a construction of alien power. Soyinka (2005) posits that “the expression of alien will” was constructed out of the territories which were acquired by the British colonial masters at various times and by different methods. These methods of acquiring these various territories ranged from gun boat diplomacy, military expedition and treaty taking (Ayoade, 2010).

Thus, in 1906 the colony of Lagos became merged with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form what is called the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The reason attributed to this amalgamation was to reduce the cost of colonial administration and because the Northern Nigeria was poor and had no access to the sea, monies that were got from southern Nigeria were used for the development of both Protectorates-Southern and Northern. Thus, the British colonial master was only interested in the economic base of the new colony or nation and did not spare every thought about the sociological compatibility of the nation and the ethnic group that form the new state. Therefore, the effect was noted in Ayoade (2010) as amalgamation without integration. This is often tagged “the mistake of 1914”. Thus Danjibo (2010) observes that, the story of the amalgamation “has and would continue to be a reference point in Nigeria”

Meanwhile, the introduction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade marked the beginning of a new era in the traditional chieftaincy institutions. While some scholars of chieftaincy argued that the involvement of the traditional chiefs prolonged the colonial administration in Africa, others observed that the slave trade was not seen as evil at that time. This is because in the light of reality it was a global commerce that brought

together major world continents such as Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Thus, since the traditional rulers served as the representatives of the people, it was also expected of them to represent their people in the trade.

Furthermore, between 1884 and 1885, the Berlin West African conference recommended what was known as “effective occupation” (Coleman, 1958). The idea behind this was for the colonialists to occupy and have political control on the economies of these territories. Essentially, even though some traditional rulers resisted this occupation, the superior weapons of the British brought them under control (Coleman, 1958). The effect is the deportation of some of them like Kosoko of Lagos, Jaja of Opobo, and Nana of Iteskiri. This act however was criticised and termed by scholars as “Criminality” (Emordi and Osike, 2008).

The traditional structure was replaced by the Lord Lugard’s indirect rule. This system of administration, Mair (1936), a British anthropologist, cited in Masawa (2013) referred to as ‘The progressive adoptions of native institutions into modern conditions’. The reason advanced for the indirect system was that Lord Lugard needed an administrative pattern that was not alien to the natives, in order to carry out their exploitative pranks. Adjaye and Misawa (2006) referred to the grimace as ‘harmonious dual mandate’. Again, this system of administration was to make up for the inadequate colonial personnel to administer these colonies. Because, Northern Nigeria right from the pre-colonial period had a centralised political system of administration; it was easy for the colonial masters to introduce the indirect rule system.

According to Gambari (1985), “the policy of indirect rule once put into practice led to the entrenchment of the power of traditional rulers and their growth beyond the traditional limits assigned them” For example, the stateless and acephalous societies of the Eastern and Midwestern states had no political platform in which indirect rule could stride. What happened was for the British to randomly and indiscriminately hand pick people who were not related to the throne and termed them “warrant chiefs”. The implication was not only the violation of the historic and traditional legitimacy of the traditional institutions but also traditional rulers were brought under one “generic rubric” (Adesoji, 2010). The effect is the categorisation of local chiefs under one

“rubric” for the purpose of co-opting them into colonial administration. All of these negates to traditional principles. This process was however, described by Van Nieuwaal and Van Dijk as “encapsulation and codification”.

It is therefore right to say at this point that the term ‘chief and chieftaincy’ institution was the creation of the colonialists. This confirms the assertion of Robert (2004) that “if Africans were successful in governance in the past, colonialism was equally successful in breaking the tradition of governance through conquest and status; the traditional institutions were restricted to serve the interests of the colonial state”. It was further argued that the intervention in the traditional institution by the state and the governing powers can be traced to colonial era as warrant chiefs in traditional institution of authority gained momentum (Motosho, 2010).

Essentially, the warrant chiefs were given legal powers and authority over land allocations, with some degree of autonomy. The autonomy was noted as servitude and negligent of tradition (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006). However, it becomes imperative to also say here that the added powers became the source of arbitrariness and corruption which its effect translated into dethroning, deposing and punishment of some rulers. For instance, the Alake of Egbaland was dethroned. Besides, the British were not at any time concerned with preserving the spiritual and moral wellbeing of these chiefs; rather their aim was to use them in collecting tolls that could be used to maintain their homeland. Basically, it is right to also say that the colonial era witnessed all forms of manipulations, collaboration, undermining and co-options (Coleman, 2008). More so, some of these rulers were given political appointments. For instance, the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Osamewe of Ondo, Oluwo of Iwo, and Olu of Warri were all given political appointments (Vaughan, 2000).

Meanwhile, the traditional chieftaincy institutions returned as an important political issue in the mid-1950s as a result of African, not any more British colonial initiative. This time the chieftaincy institutions became pluralised along ethnic regions. This was backed up by constitutional reforms patterned along regionalism. It is important to recall here that on the arrival of the colonialists, the Nigerian State was governed as two different regions, the Northern and the Western region comprising of the Eastern Igbo and the Western Yoruba. However, the Yoruba and the Igbo emerged in 1906 to become the Southern Protectorate and in 1914; the Northern and Southern

Protectorate became an entity through the “Amalgamation” (Falola, 1999; Thomson, 2000). Hence, people began to tend towards regionalism from this point onwards. For example, the Richards constitution of 1947 created a common legislative council for both the north and south through the establishment of regional council and House of Chiefs.

Again, it also recognised regionalism through the acceptance of the tri-regional structures for the Eastern, Western and Northern Nigeria. In fact, the 1951 John Macpherson constitution also provided for political participation of Nigerian, but this time around with the creation of regional houses of Assembly, Houses of Chiefs and Executive councils. The Lyttelton constitution of 1954 further created dominant regional structure that finally limited chieftaincy to regional and ethnically based political parties of Action Group (AG), Northern People’s Congress (NPC) and the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) while it is true that the native authority reforms were attempts to create positive changes, the fact remains that the reality were anti-ethical to the chieftaincy institutions.

Several post-independence governments saw the traditional institutions as a conduit pipe for manipulation and implementation of public policy. Furthermore, various constitutional and military interventions in 1966 disrupted the activities of the chieftaincy institutions in Nigeria (Alao, 1990). According to Emordi and Osike (2010) the local government reforms of 1976, 1979, 1989 and the 1999 constitution insulated the traditional rulers from government affairs and made them play advisory roles. The local government reforms created structures for official and political recognitions for the chieftaincy institutions that were hinged on three precepts. One of such was to bring the people closer to the Government. In fact, it also brought with it a system of grading of chiefs into “first class and second class” recognition. The significance of this case is that it made one wondered if chieftaincy has not become a major source of sectarian and communal divide, friction and violence in many sectors rather than instrument of unification (Sklar, 1983).

It has become a common phenomenon that Nigerian politicians, academics and civil servants are parts of the processes of acquisition of chieftaincy titles with or without connection to the institution itself. The purpose and intentions are tied to a well-established reason of getting from the national cake, which is the widely held view of

Nigerian political culture that the more title you acquire the more influential one becomes. Traditional rulers, as Udoji Public Service Review commission of 1974 had put it, were believed to be important even in the context of the development oriented society to act as impartial fathers of their communities and embodiment of local custom.

### **2.2.2. The influence of the *Omu* institution on Peacemaking**

Generally, conflicts come in diverse forms. Adedoyin (2015) categorised conflict in Africa as largely: boundry and territorial; civil wars and internal having international consequences. Meanwhile, most writers tend to think of conflict in Africa as being political conflicts exemplified by such occurrences as war between states, armed rebellion against states, armed secessionist rebellion and coup d' etat. Other types of conflicts especially within African states include urban violence that may sometimes take the form of ethnic or religious conflict, reactions to poverty, labour disputes, and conflicts over grazing land and between herders and settled farmers and struggles between supporters of political parties.

While, it is clear that conflicts occur under varied social, political and economic conditions, however, unless the state takes due diligence to carefully understand the root causes as well as issues involved, it will be difficult to resolve them. Overtime, lack of understanding of the foregoing has led in most cases to a point where there are no strategies, policies or mechanisms for dealing with on-going conflicts, their long-term causes and conditions either at local, national or even regional.

Depending on the level, intensity and length, violent conflict causes huge economic, social and political problems. Conflicts are therefore extremely costly if not well handled. More importantly when such conflict is prolonged, they become traumatic for the state and the people. There will not only be need to manage and resolve conflict ones they emerge developing long-term strategies and policies to prevent and deal with the root causes of such internal conflict is necessary.

While, efficient and effective machnisms to manage conflict requires long-term strategies, which if carefully implemented are most likely to minimise the likelihood of escalations. Although, strict adherence to specific strategies and policies do not

guarantee the absence of conflicts, in this wise, it is important for states to develop mechanisms for managing and resolving conflicts.

In resolving conflict, African countries today have no mechanism for managing and resolving conflicts between groups especially politically instigated conflicts except through the use of military force. It is cautious for countries to assume that they are likely to have several types of conflict which their judicial systems cannot deal with and that resorting to the military may not be the wisest course of action. Thus, it may be useful for countries to think of having a permanent mechanism for dealing with conflicts.

Meanwhile, peace is fundamental to every human society. It remains an ingredient in the maintenance and sustenance of communal security. Every society sustains peace through a framework of laid down rules. This institutional framework could either be international, regional, national or locally. However, in some cases where international concepts and affinity defiles situations at hand, traditional or indigenous institutions subsist.

Meanwhile, peacemaking became widely used notably in the early 1990s, as one of the peace processes within societies. Peacemaking was rooted in the “United Nation’s Agenda for peace” According to the “Agenda” peacemaking encompasses of bring together conflicting parties to an agreement through peaceful means that are outlined in the Chapter VI of the United Nations Pacific Settlement of Disputes (UNPSD).

Regan (2009) presents the link between peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding based on the United Nation’s (UN) outline on the “Agenda for peace”. He further gave clarity and coherence when he defined it as a situation that arises when conflict is high but there are viable conditions for pursuing development. Development in this context refers to multi-dimensional process which involves re-organisation and re-orientation of entire economic and social system.

Furthermore, Todaro and Smith (2006:17) give an insight into understanding the concept of development. To them, development is a process meant for equitable social and economic transformation of the society through institutionalised social structures and people’s positive attitudes for an accelerated and increased growth and poverty

eradication. They concluded that those positive and popular attitudes are important for collective cooperation and tolerance in development.

Accordingly, development implies both physical and state of mind in which society has secured the means for obtaining a better life, ensures growth in wealth acquisition and mental enrichment and betterment of quality of living conditions of all the people (p.22). Quality living which is about the condition of or feeling safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of core values, and absence of threat to acquire values (Francis 2009:22)

This comes against the background of the UN peace mission to acknowledge the growing numbers of identified tensions and economic hardship within states and difficulty in ensuring peace (Rupesinghe, 2008). It also attempts to stabilise with due attention security, peace and equity, justices and respect for human right. Peacemaking in essence is targeted at bringing or restoring peace through the wilful efforts to prevent or mitigate rather than a passive stance that hopes to maintain status quo (Regan 2009).

Meanwhile, peacemaking has assumed different meanings to different scholars. Morphet (2009:184) sees peacemaking as a political process, which aims are to address and resolve the root causes of conflicts. Bercovitch (2011) describes peacemaking as a form of conflict resolution that focuses on the establishment of equal relationship that will be robust enough to forestall future conflicts and establishing some means of agreeing on ethical decision within the community that has previously had conflict.

Conflict according to Peters (2006) is a state of hostility between two or more individuals, a situation that comes up from the pursuit of diverse objectives, interests and aspirations by groups, individuals, communities and nations in a defined and geographical space. It is a state of human or other living organisms' interaction over perceived certain needs that may improve or mar their established relationship (Adedoyin 2015).



Du Pisani (2010) sees peacemaking as a reactive measure that seeks to create an enabling environment for settlement and post conflict reconstruction. In discussing contemporary peacemaking, Darby and Mac Ginty (2008) aver that:

Contemporary peacemaking is often a creation of the international community and their co-opted national elites and ... has bulk connection of citizens in war-affected state..., contemporary peacemaking often reinforces power-holders and replicates exclusion pattern of social and political relations.

Arguably, Darby and Mac Ginty (2008) observations could not be unconnected with many peacemaking operations that took place in African countries. African countries in the 90s were replete of war, to this end, Bercovitch (2011) opines that peacemaking is important for resolution of civil conflicts as it offers a way out of intractability, which leads to a mutually acceptable outcome. Ibeanu, (2006) sees peacemaking as a situation where conflict is high but there are visible conditions for pursuing development.

Meanwhile, Nzimba (2002) sees peacemaking and concludes that it is an arbitration and power mediation directed towards the control of hostility. According to Ermakor *et al* (2016), hostility exists in the latent form and is often defined as an aggression basis. To him, it is a tendency to have a desire of infliction of harm to others or a tendency to endure the effect of anger in relation to other people. He further contended that, it is also a complex of negative attitudes, beliefs and estimates applied to other people, which could be a perception of other people as a probable source of frustration, deception, provocation which is irregular emotionally charged shape of behaviour.

According to Benson and Satana, (2009) peacemaking often does not only bring together disputants to negotiate for peace agreement, but rather it leads to higher degree of perceived fairness and satisfaction. Meanwhile, one of the most common definitions that highlight the ingredients by saying that it is a diplomatic effort that transforms violent conflicts into “non-violent dialogue” through negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration (Ouellet, 2003).

In a conflictive situation, non-violent approach tends to make parties appreciate each other's perceptions. For this reason, efforts toward peaceful reconciliations follow. However, it is equally true that in most cases peace initiatives have helped to freeze rather than transform the conflict; in such situations, conflicting parties end up in a vicious circle of negotiating over in-operative demand and mutual accusation rather than get to the root of the problem. Non-violent approach does not only intend to stop a conflict but to maintain peace after it has been established. Despite the fact that conflict has always been in direct or indirect foreign hands before during or after the active conflict.

The United Nations (UN) (2008) in its Peacekeeping operation principles and guideline document defines peacemaking as action targeted at bringing hostile parties to agreement; Quellet (2003), discussing peacemaking avers that it is the diplomatic effort intended to move a violent conflict into non-violent dialogue. He contended further that this can only be achieved where the difference is settled through representative political institutions.

According to him the objective of peacemaking is not just to put to halt violence rather achieving a lasting result by bringing together the parties. While, Article 33 of the UN charter has identified negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and resort to regional agencies or arrangement as mode of peaceful resolutions, it also in her Articles 41 and 42 of the charter recognises sanctions, blockading and violent interventions as antidotes to peace restoration. While it was said earlier that peacemaking involves large spectrum of concern; the Article 1 of the UN charter states explicitly;

Maintaining of international peace and security and to that end to take effective collective measure for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breach of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means and inconformity with the principles of justice and international laws, adjustment or settlement of international dispute or situations which may lead to breach of the peace (UN 2011)

By implication, Amupanda (2012) has observed that while the UN core concern is that of global peace, the African Union (AU) is saddled with the responsibilities of regional peace through her Peace and Security Council (PSC). The AU according to him was established in 2003 not only as an economic body but as an entity responsible for the peace and the security of the sub-region. He contended that although the AU recorded successes in peacemaking and conflict resolutions in some African countries such as Sudan, Somali, Burundi Sharamo (2006), Annuyi (2005) identified lack of institutional and experienced capacities as some of her shortcomings.

Meanwhile, it is imperative to say that the foregoing discourses on peacemaking have been a reflection of large scale wars; this study focuses on the practice of traditional peacemaking at the local community level (Mac Ginty 2008). The nostalgia for indigenous approaches has taken a centre stage with respect to conflict and peacemaking. Although, peacemaking as a conflict management strategy might have been said to emerge on the global scene with reference to large scale war, the need for countries to localise the concept and moral burdens it places on the international community to support such move in Africa countries cannot be ignored.

To demonstrate this commitment, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have recognised the need to integrate an element of indigenous tradition into their peace and security architectures. As a result, the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution in 1999 created the Council of the Wise as an institution to work with Mediation and Security Council (Onwuka, 2008). In fact, this body used their positions in preventing conflict, monitoring elections and mediating disputes between parties.

According to Nwanze (2005) Anioma community is characterised by sacred kingship structure; a one clan *Obi* with a segmentary lineage council of *Olinzele*, *Ozo* and Age-grade associations or gerontocracy. He asserts that segmentary system is characterised by patrilineal lineage. This he further explains as implicative of patriarchal structure. Deepening the discussion on age grade association, Orietso and Ohikahokhai (2001) contend that traditional age grade bequeathed the individual a sense of social responsibility, attainment and dignity in African societies. They maintained that to

fulfil this objective notwithstanding their status in society individuals still seek identification with their age grade. They contend that tradition is the inconsequential aspect of culture as it is the feeling of practices and patterns that ensure cultural continuity. They assert that tradition constituted the web that holds society together. It is their contention that the age grade system is the bedrock of social political and economic organisation of the people. They assert that it is also the “vehicle through which the young male was initiated into the “deep secrets” of the community and through it all other major rights could be conferred on an individual”.

Patriarchy according to Nwanze (2005) has remained a political structure that splits the society into a dual system of males and females. It manifests in male domination through gender socialisation. Gender in this context is taken as the manner in which the society differentiates appropriate behaviour and access to power for women and men. Kusa (2006) argues that gender relations encourage inequality between men and women. However, the degree of this inequality varies from society to another. Obijiofor (2010) describes the Nigerian society as in tolerant and heavily gendered because many hold the view that men are preordained to subdue women in every facet of life. So it could be averred that the gendered nature of the society also influences the membership of the organ driving the political affairs of a given society.

Arguably, Ndili (2017) avers that though Anioma traditional political structure is epitomised by patriarchy, historical antecedence provided for an exclusive female institution. He asserts that the *Obi* is the supreme political head of the villages, while the *Omu* remains the spiritual head of the villages; leads the communities in maintaining the market, organising the traditional festivals, defending the communities in spiritual matters, settling conjugal disputes and mediating in peace processes. He contends that the *Omu* draws forces from her council (*Otu-Omu*) as well as the productive age grade *Otu-Ihaza* for enforcement of laws.

Similarly, Ndili (2017) supports the argument that the *Omu* institution is backed up by her lieutenants, *Otu-Omu* headed by the *Omu* and a few men who served as advisers and assisted in carrying out ritual sacrifices. He asserts that the *Omu* confers titles peculiar to the institution to its members. Nwanze (2005) has argued that the *Omogwu Omu* represents the father of the institution. He further avers that *Ogene-Omu*, *Ihaza-Omu*, *Ukwu-nje Omu*, *Njie-nwukete Omu*, *Agba-nktata-ogu Omu* and *Akpa-belebele*

*Omu* assisted in the *Omu* institution of peacemaking. He contends that the *Odifili* (vice chairperson) deputises for the *Omu* in maintaining peace in the market. However, there is the need to examine the activities of the *Otu-Omu* in market places.

In his further submissions, Ndili (2017) argues that the *Omu* worked as compeers with the chief priest (*eze dibia*) whom they considered as the spiritual eye of the community. Esogbue argues in the same line as Ndili (2017) that the *Omu* has a second eye that differentiates her from every other being. According to him, such an attribute does not make the *Omu* supernatural being rather it considers the close relationship that exist between the *Omu* and the ancestral beings. He concedes that ancestral beings backs up the *Omu*; as the institution serves as the spiritual eyes of the community, but not obligatory supreme ruler or the political head of the community. However, he asserts that the complimentary or dual rulership political style of the Anioma clans was an outcome of gender balanced rulership structure characterised by duties specifications and division.

Ndili (2017) traditional administration in Anioma socio-political system gave recognition to division of duties between the *Omu* institution and others and such preserves the political structure of the Anioma people. Accordingly, the traditional political structures of the Anioma people arguably, tilts along the corridors of the elders. Thus according to Olaoba (2011), the positions of the elders (living and dead) remain germane in peacemaking in traditional African societies. In his submissions, Olaoba (2011) has argued that the ties between the dead and their living offspring remain unbreakable. He gave reason, being unending communication lines that bind them and their descendants.

According to Ndili (2010) one important feature of the *Omu* institution, is that an *Omu* remains in office until death. He asserts that the *Omu* becomes fully absorbed into the council of elders following the passage of rite of initiations. The rite of initiation compels the *Omu* to slaughter a live cow. This earns her the title of *Ogbueshi* or *Ogbuefi* just like every male in the council of elders. He argues further that the *Omu* institution has supreme authority in matters concerning women and the market place.

Ndili (2015) asserts that one of the factors responsible for the sustainable peace in Anioma clan was its primordial tradition. He contends that most rules and regulations

were enacted by the *Omu* and *Otu-Omu* and enforcement by the *Otu-raza*. He further argues that *Otu-raza* is the collegiate council that works closely with the *diokpa* (okpala-ani Okpanam or the Asagba of Asaba). He avers that the spiritual head of the community is the *Omu*, a position held by the second in hierarchy of the town council of chiefs. Akpuh (2013) in the same vein agrees that *Omu* administer day to day economic activities of the villages. He contends that disputes were settled at the *Omu*'s palace known traditionally as *Ogwa Omu* as well as her shrine in the market square.

Esogbue (2015) avers that parties (trader) to dispute are being summoned by the *Omu* and differences mended and offenders accept their blames and apologies are tendered to the offended. Most times fines were paid and sanctions placed when appropriate. This corroborates with the African traditional milieu, where disputes were settled among disputants, crimes and offences investigated, and punishments were meted out to offenders depending on the nature of offence Kaderi (2013). Punishment could be personal and or at times collective which would bring disaster to the whole community.

Community peace was paramount to all and sundry. Unarguably, the society is made up of people with different idiosyncrasies and of course, there must be scuffle, because man needs a moral limit, authorities are absolutely important. In an attempt to deter and prohibit conflicts that will affect the entire social structures peacemaking evolved. Peacemaking requires the involvement of youth leaders, community leaders and women at all levels to make it realistic. Maintaining communal peace requires observations of norms and customs that had been laid down from antiquity, sanctions and punishment of offenders for deterrence in the society. This is because an atmosphere of sustainable peace cannot be achieved without rules and regulations guiding the conducts of the citizens. Hayman (2013) concludes from a review of peacebuilding "locally-led peacebuilding offers advantages over intentionally-led initiatives for fostering self-help, relevance and sustainability. She notes that International organisations lack awareness of the importance of local capacity to mediate conflict. She concludes that only locally rooted relevant endeavours hold the durable commitment of the people who need help.

The word traditional describes a society in which people use the values and rituals they learned from their forefathers and grandfathers. These societies emphasise relationships and community in contrast to individualistic task orientatation common in the West. Funk (2014) explains that the forms of conflict mediation presented here seek, not merely peace as the absence of conflict, but more importantly, restorative justice, meaning the reintegration of the offender back into the society after accepting responsibility and making reparations in a public ritual that allows all sides to recover their dignity thereby preventing cycles of retribution.

### **2.2.3 Peacemaking Mechanisms of the *Omu* Institution**

According to Curtin et al. (1982), political units and institutions in Africa differ in size, stretching from larger kingdoms down to autonomous self-governing lineages in societies commonly referred to as stateless such as the Igbo and Tiv in West Africa. He contends that the meaning of kin in a lineage starts from a single dead ancestor and comprise all its progenies either through patrilineal or matrilineal relations rather than from an existing person and going back to several ancestors. Cooper, (2005) has contended that social positions in Africa is defined in “the first instance in terms of lineage, comprising of the offspring of one forefather reckoned over a socially orthodox line: patrilineal, via males in the case of Nuer, via female or more rarely via double descent systems in other parts of Africa” He argued further that in many parts of Africa, one finds certain organisations, religious shrines and initiation cultures that cross language and ethnic differences, presenting what some scholars refer to as a “common ‘grammar’” of social knowledge with regions for all the traditional differences and political differentiation that they contain.

Meanwhile, traditional institutions exemplify a wide range of cultural and moral resources, which are configured into the basis of personal and cultural values that supports non-violence modes of conflict management and peacemaking. Understanding the cultural and socio-religious processes that play significant roles in the ways traditional institutions ensures peaceful co-existence in their domains can significantly contribute towards successful peacemaking processes.

Mac Ginty (2008) has seen peacemaking as working together through relationship based on respect, relationships and responsibility. They also noted that by asserting

that peacemaking encourages people to solve their own problem; by opening communication through respect, responsibility and good relationship, he seems to imply that understanding peacemaking and its outcome requires bypassing approaches that stem from alien thoughts and worldviews and instead focusing on indigenous or traditional concepts (Boege 2006, Kirby 2006).

For these traditional peacemaking concepts, Kaderi (2013) in exploring the indigenous approaches to conflict resolution in Bawku Ghana, noted that they have a cultural flavour in which peace is sustained and universal approaches cannot be used to generalise. He asserts further that using alien approaches in peacemaking could be the reason while some communities have not adequately enjoyed positive peace. Furthermore, Boege (2006) captures positive peace as implicative of reconciliation and restoration through creative transformation of conflict. According to him, sustaining a positive peace is not just an abstract, intellectual analysis and persuasion, but an opportunity to helping people reconcile and when reconciliation is not possible, separation and restoration becomes possible with minimal hostility and acrimony.

Meanwhile, traditional peacemaking has customary arbitration as one of its prime process which has been vigorously applied in traditional African societies by elders based on knowledge, customs and history of the community Ajayi and Buhari (2014). According to Adekunle (2015) customary arbitration is a process whereby neutral person or persons are required to mediate in disputes between one person and another or between community and another. He sees it as means of settling disputes with parties with a view to maintaining harmony, peace and tranquillity, which is a deeper way of looking at conflict not just winning and losing, but opportunity for people to grow and accept responsibility and relationships they are in and for the portents of apologies and forgiveness.

In furtherance, Adekunle (2015) avers that forgiveness remains an element of customary arbitration. As a tool that fosters reconciliation among parties, customary arbitration is reserved for; first, a situation in which parties do not appreciate the effect of their persistent conflict on the wellbeing of the society and second, when party wants to settle their differences without recourse to losing control over the outcome (Sourdin 2008). Traditional arbitration has the goal of restoring; maintaining peace and



social harmony (Bukari 2013). It functions as a mechanism in which people are encouraged to solve their problem by opening communication. In fact, its purpose is not to apportion blames but rather to replace coercive decisions such as punishment to corrective behaviour Emilola (2013).

By its nature, customary arbitration does not only aim to achieve durable peace but also harmonious resolution of any dispute in the society. It is characterised by agreement between parties. It takes into cognisance the customs, beliefs, ethos, norms, practices and values of the people. It can be applied in different issues such as boundary disputes, marital conflicts, chieftaincy matters, personal disagreements, religious crises, inheritance and succession issues Adekunle (2015). Knowledgeable, skilful and wise crop of people are drawn from all sphere of human endeavour (Ajayi and Buhari 2014).

Traditional arbitration accomplishes this feat by elders and traditional institutions through rituals in which the gods are appeased. Bringing to fore, Coker (1966) quoted in Adekunle (2015:176) posits that:

Every man or woman has a duty to perform, in the maintenance of the equilibrium of the group, socially, physically and economically. The corollaries of this position must be, and are, both a general deflection of any extraordinary points or rights from the chief or headman and creation of a socio-political group maintained purely as a family unit.

Murithi (2005:25) in this direction noted that African traditional approach to peacemaking utilised by Desmond Tutu during his leadership of South African Truth and Reconciliation championed traditional approaches to peacemaking within Africa. He avers that *Ubuntu* as cultural worldview is not only set to capture the essence of what it means to be human but also it offers potentials to restoring a chaotic society through good neighbourliness. Good neighbourliness according to Murithi (2005) serves as antidote to peace and harmonious living which characterises the primordial African settings. In achieving this he adds that *Ubuntu* process includes five stages: acknowledgement of guilt, showing remorse and repentance, asking for and giving forgiveness and paying compensation in reparation as prelude to reconciliation.

Mac Ginty (2008) has observed that western approaches have always been used in current peacemaking. This is done by deploying foreign peacekeepers to initiate peace, international statesmen, international and regional organisations, neighbouring countries, peace support operations and civil society organisations. However, this approach has not only proved ineffective and inefficient but near-complete failure as it continues to defy culture contexts.

Mac Ginty (2008) discuss this fact and calls for an increasing interest and work towards traditional peacemaking. He advances reasons for this assertion, while enumerating common failures of the western approaches to include; top-down, costly, technocratic and inability to deal with issues such as trust, reconciliation and inter-group perceptions. He concludes that western peacemaking approaches is replete of exclusion of locales resulting only on handshakes of elitist, metamorphosing into belligerent forces (Mac Ginty 2008).

Corroborating the foregoing, Gambari (2003) discusses some shortcomings and peacemaking failures of the United Nations in Africa. He points to the difficulties UN faced in Sierra Leone with UNAMSIL in May 2000, when the UN peacekeepers were scandalously disarmed and kidnapped, DRC with MONIK when it had to deploy more peacekeeper. He added that the UN also struggled in Western Sahara like he did in Angola; was also weakened during their operation in Somali 11(UNOSOM 11).

The foregoing becomes an imperative for an examination of a traditional institution and peacemaking institution approaches were inclusive, culturally reliant and sustainable. Mac Ginty (2008) in his study, while arguing in favour of the traditional peacemaking asserts that traditional peacemaking is inclusive, culturally reliant, less costly and sustainable. According to him, it is also replete of local needs and culturally sensible.

Kaderi (2013) in the same vein enumerates some basic elements of traditional peacemaking to include: negotiation, mediation and reconciliation. These processes he argues were led by leaders of the community such as traditional chiefs, kings, priests, healers, elders and other tribal leaders and it takes the forms of rituals in which the

whole community partake. He noted that traditional leaders have brokered peace through wealth exchanges, prayers and sacrificing to the ancestors which were performed, which were accompanied with merry making using laid down principles. He avers further that the restoration of peace, its maintenance and social harmony were potent forces for the welfare of the entire community.

Pkalya *et al* (2004) espoused that social entities such as chiefs, elders of the community, extended families, lineages, clan, tribes, religious brotherhood, local institutions and ethno-linguistic groups have remained important in peacemaking. Arguably, traditional peacemaking processes are not merely about adjudication of who is right or wrong and the punishment of culprits as people may think, but the reconciliation of parties.

In addition, Castro and Ettenger quoted in Kaderi (2013) have argued that traditional peacemaking is about transformation of conflict that is geared towards satisfaction and willingness of parties to let go their pains and forgive each other. This, Boege (2006) describes as restorative reconciliation. According to Boege (2006), restorative reconciliation aims at restoration of justices, order, harmony and maintenance of relationships within the community through reintegrating feuding parties for true reconciliation processes.

Murithi (2006) captures procedural tools towards peace initiative to include; ritual dialogue procedure drawing from the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission Scene in October 1986 in the town of Pearl near Cape town, Wustenberg describes the proceedings in the following abridge form.

... a candle was lit in the sight of all who were present. After the members of the commission took their places, the chairperson signalled with his hand that all in the hall should stand. The victims and perpetrators were then ushered in. Good morning everyone! I welcome you all warmly.

The ritualised framework according to him, canalised anger and impotence and enable the people to tell their stories and so tell the truth. Story sharing, he further avers, serves as central symbolic procedure to the broadening of moral landscapes of those involved. It also serves to challenge the traditional established view of conflict.

In Anioma communities' traditional institutions are used in peacemaking. In essence of their positions in various societies, this has been effective. Within the Anioma cultural milieu a traditional ruler is an elder and the father/mother of the community. Nevertheless, in age by years he/she could be a young person but the positions accord him/her the eldership status. Hence, he/she occupies the prime place of the ancestors among the living. The decisions of the elders were binding on every citizen as it was believed that their spoken words can make or mar.

According to Esogbue (2015a) *Omu* institution were endowed with traditional values that mark them out as leaders in their various clans, lineages and descents. Ndili (2015) noted that an *Omu* is judged by her mental magnitude and self-quest. He avers that spiritual issues and that of women were taken care of by the *Omu* institutions. In doing this, the council of chiefs made the *Omu* institution responsible for the conducts of spiritual exercises and women to be able to check their excesses. The results of these are; the *Omu* foresees every intended calamity that would befall the communities and offers living sacrifices to avert such.

Again, the women rather than incur the ancestral doom associated with marital infidelity and other social ills that would attract sanctions and disgrace if caught or reported to the institution, comport themselves to traditional values that promote chastity and peace. In some communities in Anioma Kingdom, rules guiding the conduct of trading in the markets were mutually managed through meditation. The *Omu* Anioma Kingdom after realising that spaces in the market place often caused issues among traders in *Ashie Orié* Okpanam quickly summoned the women and addressed them on the need to maintain a particular space to allow harmonious co-existence in the market place.

Egodi (2010) in her study observed that while the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) lasts, people within the Anioma communities turned their attention to occupants of the *Omu* office. According to her, the *Omu* serves as the traditional medicine practitioner. She prepared charms to wade off hostile Federal troops and prevented the concentration of soldiers to most Anioma towns and villages. Many *Omu* enjoyed the confidence reposed on them and the *Otu-Omu*. victims of yaws, gonorrhoea, syphilis and other

health problems that were common during the war turned to the *Omu* and other indigenous medical practitioners.

The study is crucial in understanding the *Omu* institution as an institution of peacemaking. However, there were few studies that have bothered to interrogate the *Omu* institution in the context of cultural peacemaking. It is therefore imperative to examine the institution in connection with peacemaking.

#### **2.2. 4 Challenges confronting *Omu* Institution in Anioma Clan**

An attempt in examining the challenges confronting the *Omu* institution of peacemaking among the Anioma people of Delta state, there is the need to literature on colonialism and its attendant effect on traditional institutions. Colonialism is examined in this section as a vital cord in the giant web of feminine depravity. An attempt is also made at examining literature on the introduction of modern religion as a yardstick to determine the effect on tradition vis-à-vis the traditional institution. Thus, it serves as a platform to evaluate the responses of the *Omu* institution to challenges and how it has remained unaltered in Anioma communities.

##### **(a) Political**

According to Egodi (2001) apart from the pre-colonial era, no political role has been found for the *Omu* and her council whose political influence has been challenged by colonialists. She presents gradual excision of the traditional roles of the *Omu* institution in Anioma communities;

“British administrative policies mainly showed interest in the male folk, it did not consider female institutions in what was to become Nigeria; ... In setting up native court, the British did not consider it appropriate to involve *Omu* in their; market ordinance; water works ordinance; the building lines regulation ordinance, the direct taxation ordinance and criminal code” (Egodis, 2001).

However, the implication of colonialism on the *Omu* institution of peacemaking begs for further studies. There is need to study the effect of the alien rule overtime on the

traditions of the Anioma people. While not disputing the Nigerian state as the inheritors of the British exclusionist administrative policies and patterns.

Ezegbe and Akubue (2012) contend that the Nigerian state failed to factor in roles of women in their developmental programmes because Nigeria has experienced exclusionist policies amounting to gender stereotype. They averred that the adoption of the colonial gender ideology during the colonial and post-colonial eras had a direct impact on the women folk and the traditional institution they assume. Corroborating with the foregoing, Ezeani (1998:100) quoted in Ezegbe and Akubue (2012) posited that the basic premise of the colonial gender ideology was the domestication of women.

Arguing in the same line with Ezegbe and Akubue (2012); Ikejiani-Clark (2001) opines that women in the colonial era were prevented from making their contributions to societal development. Development according to Ezegbe and Akubue (2012) entails transformation of the entire society through total mobilisation of every member irrespective of sex, gender or class.

In her well researched work on *Gender and Female Chieftaincy in Anioma, Nigeria*, Egodi (2001) examines the effects of the gender stereotype on the *Omu* institution. She maintains that there is an appreciable effect on the perception and conceptualisation as well as discrimination of women with regards to women involvement in local politics. According to her the implementation of the native administration (the indirect rule) negatively affected the *Omu* office holders. In her opinion;

the British style of native administration and the infamous indirect rule system gave rise to warrant chiefs; centralised political power in Igbo land to degree hitherto unknown, the Igbo accustomed to being ruled by male elders in alliance with a retinue of titled chiefs and age grade saw from 1900 until 1929 warrant chiefs assuming most of the responsibilities of the local ruling elites, making laws and regulating local affairs. These developments resulted in isolation of *Omu* from local administration and the extension of their political roles during the colonial interlude. Where formerly *Omu* were responsible only to male paramount rulers, colonialism found them answerable to the new crop of warrant

chiefs imposed by the British and British districts officers.

Furthermore, Egodi (2006) asserts that the Native Authorities before the 1940 were men. She avers that the rapid reforms in the Native Administrative system which occurred from 1945-1950 aimed at a wider representation in the system. Omozusi (1997), contends that the conditions for selection of the Native Council were basically allegiance to the British. He stated further that the colonial masters were not concerned about rank. According to him, the Native Council was controlled by the District Commissioner or the British Political Resident whose primary responsibility was the maintenance of law and order. According to Igbafe (1991), the Native Council was the administrative and judicial body through which British officers ruled their lands. Thus, the Native Council that was made up of major and minor chiefs and characterised an extreme instance of domination of power in which the elders in the villages were eclipsed.

According to Egodi (2006), while the District Officer of Asaba Division (comprising of all the Anioma communities) had proposed inclusion of the *Omu* women as part of the nominated leaders over group of twenty-five elected members;(three of members of the Native Authority were to be women serving Illah and Ebu communities), District Officer's proposal was approved by resident Officer but met a brick wall of oppositions by male leaders/chiefs (*Olinezels*) whose response were in the negative as thus "after further consideration, the Native Authority does not wish to have any woman at the Federal Council except the *Omu*, but the position is not vacant at the moment". It is therefore pertinent to examine the role of the Native Authority in gender relations in the local politics of the Anioma people in colonial times.

While male leader's reluctance to share power with women including the *Omu* institution on which they ascribed male status, the attendant effect is thwarted of what would have been regarded as a colonial coup in favour of women political equality with men in Anioma clan Egodi (2005). Ndili (2010) avers that, although the proposal of the District Officer would have enhanced the political rights of Anioma women, it however, threatened the traditional political culture and some masculine privileges. He contended that the rejection to conclude women in the local polity could also be

attributed to male control of the political process laced in patriarchy. Again, he explained that, it could also be an assertion of their manliness and safeguarding the existing order against the perils of modernisation. He affirms that it shows that despite the assumed masculinity of the office the *Omu* Institution lacks, the institution still suffers for want of political autonomy.

Egodi (2005) studied an Igbo community east of the Niger during the colonial period and remarked; 'time of crises one become aware of a male-female undercurrent of antagonism or suspicion'. Most likely this antagonism existed among the Anioma Igbo. Sofola arguing differently asserts

For whatever the new alien power dislodged African men from their previous positions, those African men would in turn grab whatever was left of power by dislodging their female counterparts from their own position of power.

In some sense this appears to have happened in Anioma where an existing female vacancy was not filled because male members of the Native authority had no wish to accommodate women in the emerging political structure. However, it should not be assumed that the decision of the District and Resident Officers to increase women participation was targeted at revolutionaries of gender relation in Anioma. Undoubtedly the substance of the ideal femininity remained intact even among those who wanted women to take part in public life.

The colonial experience according to Egodi (2005) played but minimal role in the decline of female political position because there was no exceptionally obvious political role for women in Igbo land before the colonial period. However, colonialism in most respects only intensified the old ways of running local government. Ikime's study of Ukwuani section of Anioma testifies that Native administration was not an administrative revolution but a modification and intensification of old ways of running local government.

However, Anioma incident whereby men refused to share power with women indicated their determination to remain in control, presents ideal masculinity Akuebue (2009). Consequently, only male chiefs were recognised and were paid. Thus,



undoubtedly, puts a pay to the use of patriarchy as a facilitative tool for women depravity.

Meanwhile, Okonjo (1976), Sofola (1992) noted that an outcome of co-rulership in Anioma clan was a realisation of the desire for harmonious and effective division of labour. It enables the entire system to receive adequate attention to the varied needs of both sexes without stereotype. However, while Okonjo (1976) and Sofola (1992) are in favour of the dual sex leadership structure, Egodi (2001) negates their views, arguing that the concept of co-sex rulership structure exemplified by the Anioma society features a gross inequality with regards to numerical strength.

According to her, a juxtaposition of the council of chiefs within the *Omu* institution and that of the *Obi*-in-council, social values and the biological or gender value of the two groups is a replete of pater dominancy. However, what may be regarded as important is the role compliments. In this regard, this research attempts to examine the influence of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking in Anioma communities and how they can become more effective.

According to Egodi (2005) the gender change and the relinquish roles to gain acceptance for the office and earn some recognition by, and equity with men differentiates the institution from any other. However, it could be argued that the *Omu* institution is structured in the interest of men. A case in point is the installation processes. Ndili (2016) pointed out that the peculiarity of the institution lies at the installation processes that transforms a woman into a man. He avers that at the point of coronation, *Omu* gives up femininity for acquired masculinity. This implies that maleness confers more power in a patriarchal culture like Anioma Kingdom Esogbue (2016b).

In furtherance, Ndili (2010) posits that although, *Omu* office is considered a privilege granted to women in a patriarchal society, where the title is exclusively women, status acquired remained masculine. In support of Ndili's argument, but with a little deviation, Mba (1992) argues that while child rearing and domestic responsibilities were the traditional functions of women since pre-colonial times, *Omu*'s

transformation into masculinity and abandonment of major gender functions is an attestation of masculine superiority.

From the foregoing, Akpuh (2013) asserts that, the *Omu* institution makes husband out of female chiefs by marrying in her own rights directly as a man would, with her wife (ves) regarded as hers and not another man's. Ekejiuba (1967) cited in Egodi (2001) toed the same line of argument when he recounts that *Omu* Okwei acquired many women which were used to strengthen her trade contacts; which children born by these women were brought back to Okwei's household. Unarguably, it could also be said that it is only through the ascribed male status that *Omu* performs important social and ritual roles in their pater lineage Egodi (2001).

Furthermore, making *Omu* dress and appear like male has been interpreted differently by different scholars. While, Egodi (2001) sees it as a suggestive of fundamental inequality in the status of male and female, this is the most perpetual deprivation and constraint. A case in point is that the practices of the institution virtually remove every maker of femaleness such as menstruation, motherhood, and female breasts from the occupants of the office. This attests to some cultural constructs that portray women as inferior Akuabue (2009). Esogbue (2016b), Akpuh, (2013) contend that the *Omu's* appearance like a male creates a mark of absolute purity which the office entails; however, he avers that a woman could only be entrusted with masculine form of authority when she renounces her feminine.

#### **b) Economic**

According to Osakede and Ijimakinwa (2015) an outcome of colonial interaction with tradition was alteration in roles and responsibilities of the traditional institutions in Nigeria. They maintain that while indigenous people were incorporated into colonial administration, female chieftaincy institutions loss much of its influence and responsibilities. It also enabled male dominance in the local politics. However, while male rulers were the driving forces for colonial indirect rulership, this work attempts to examine the effects of the economic policies on the *Omu* institution of peacemaking in a dual-sex political structure. The intended point of examination is an assessment of the debilitating effects of an excision of the regulatory roles and functions of the *Omu* institution of peacemaking in the politico-economy in Anioma communities. Whereas

Esogbue (2015b) agrees that colonial interactions with the Anioma people created economic expansion, of further examination is its attendant effects on the *Omu* institution from *eze ashia* (king of the market), economics disempowerment as well as the question of who owns the market.

According to Egodi (2001) the period between 1910 and 1930 witnessed economic reversal in the activities of the *Omu* institution. Ndili (2010) makes a broad distinction between the operations of the local government authorities in market administration and the traditional institutions. It is the concern of this research to focus on the contributions of the institution in sustainable peace development and the control of the markets by the *Omu* institution. In her views, Egodi (n.d) maintains that the period between 1950 and 60 foreclosed indigenous market control of the *Omu* institution.

The implication she argued was usurp and passage of market responsibilities to warrant chiefs and later to local government officials. She contends further that a feature of market supervisions under the local council was first; a deprivation of the *Omu* institution as the traditional market administrators in Anioma and second, economic disempowerment of the *Omu* institution. For example, tolls that were collected from the market ceased to go the *Omu* but were paid to the government coffers, the expectations being that the institution could only live on fines exacted from defaulters and violators of certain norms. The effect of deprivation and payment of market toll to the *Omu* institution begs for further study.

The colonial interlude exposed hinterland Igbo communities especially non-slave based international economy. When therefore there was economic depression in the 1930s its effect was felt all over Igboland and led to influx of men into the retail trade controlled by women. Women were observed to have been in control of trade in retail, however, with the rise of professional male retailers and shift in emphasis to export trade in agricultural goods; women ceased to play a dominant role in retail trade Egodi (n.d). This development would affect the *Omu*'s total control of market and fixing of prices for goods sold in markets.

Esogbue (2015) observed that beginning from the 1940s, membership into the *Otu-Omu* began to include male ritual specialists. According to him, each of the *Omu* group

had one male ritual specialist described as their mentor who provided necessary male backings to the group. The introduction of male ritual specialist arguably, may have been; on one hand, to checkmate the activities of the female dominated group, while limiting its freedom and giving credibility to patriarchy and second more representative of men was needed to appreciate the number of men retail traders.

Notwithstanding, the attempt to accord the *Omu* much honour as male chiefs, the influence of culture, patriarchy as well as growing heterogeneity of Anioma communities continues to undermine the ritual and secular roles of *Omu* and their influence. Again, regulations against showing emotion and engaging in mourning rituals with other women preclude the *Omu* from personally identifying with or being source of comfort to female subordinate during times of sorrow. Although she may delegate members of the *Otu-Omu* to console the bereaved, *Omu* may share in the sorrow of the bereaved; her office denies her the freedom of expression, to the extent that the *Omu* cannot grant audience to any woman in mourning. The rituals surrounding the *Omu* institution as well as their ritual duties do not appeal to particularly to many Christian women as well as the slowly emerging indigenous Muslim female population.

It is worthy to contend that the specific of peacemaking agency of the *Omu* institution in Anioma clan have not been the focus of these scholars. Egodi (2006) extensively discusses the historical origin of the *Omu* institution in Anioma, social and political position of female chiefs and unequal power relation of Anioma male and female chiefs, the female chieftaincy institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa and its manifestation in Anioma clan. In her painstaking examination of gender and female chieftaincy in Anioma, Nigeria, Egodi (n.d) identifies that the Igbo area of West River Niger have a firmly established female chieftaincy institution dating roughly to the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century. This necessitated the examination of the *Omu* institution of peacemaking among the Anioma people of Delta state.

Furthermore, the focus of Egodi (n.d) was not an examination of the effect of other patriarchal institution on the *Omu* institution peacemaking agent in Anioma clan. The implication of unequal power relations of the two gender categories has not been examined. Of further interest is to examine the outcome of the peacemaking agency of

the *Omu* institution n of peacemaking as well as the factors inhibiting the effective discharge of their roles.

### **Culture/Tradition**

Religion is a fundamental, perhaps the most important influence in the life of most Africans, yet its essential principles are too often unknown to foreigners who thus make themselves constantly liable to misunderstand the African worldview and beliefs. Religion enters into every aspect of the Africans and it cannot be studied in isolation. This is because its study goes hand in hand with the practice or culture of the people who practice religion. Meanwhile, Fisher (2002) cited in Ovuede (2016) has argued that religion has been the foundation of life, permeating all aspects of human life. She argues that there are various religious practices found everywhere that there are people. She contends that while scientific materialism assert that religion can be found in every culture around the world, there is the material point that there is nothing like spiritual; only the material that exists. According to her, religion is simply a projection, objectification of people's fears and desires, giving the impression that it is a "universal obsessional neurosis-a cosmic projection and replaying of the living and fearful relations we had with our parents" (p.17).

Unarguably, of necessity is the role of religion in political and social set up of African societies. The gods are feared, custom, tradition and norms are obeyed and complied with. However, it could be argued that the likeliness of all men following the principle embedded in these custom, norms, tradition is non-existence as they are likelihood to drift. According to Ogunbado (2012) religion has been fundamental to the existence of so many lives and culture. In his study the impact of colonialism on religion: An experience of South –West Nigeria, he asserts:

There is no event in the life of the Yoruba without any religious significance. From cradle to grave he is incurable religious. The religion of the Yoruba could not be really understood by any outsider unless he becomes intimately associated with the people, their ways of life and their religious principles.

The foregoing assertion replicates the entire Nigerian societies and specifically Anioma communities. Among the Anioma people, religion represents an overarching system of beliefs and practices concerning the supernatural, which expresses belief in a

divine power, which is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural system which is a worldview that relates to humanity to an order of existence (Akujobi 2016). In fact, from the point of incursion of the colonialist vehicle of prosperous civilisation, the existing cultural principles were threatened. Akujobi 2016 argued that various behavioural pattern were found everywhere. Thus the new civilisation stirred up deduction for its existence as it has justified the establishment of western hegemony and sometimes the erosion of the existing structure.

While it is true that religion is an organised system of belief, there is a traditional point that modern religion concentrated on belief rather than practice. This line of argument is supportive of the view that religion is simply a united system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things. Its component includes highly committed ritualised practices and beliefs shared within community which cantered on the supernatural or divine (Sasaki and Kim 2011). According to Cooper (2007), Christianity brought the convert into relation with the colonier's God. He argues that Christianity implied the colonisation of the mind that infused elsewhere changing a precise length of human behaviour to embrace the change of communicative practises such as personal hygiene, mode of dressing to acceptable and aesthetic appreciation and forms of initiation ceremonies. Cooper (2007) contends that the missionary practise focused on the individual, exclusive of kinships, councils of elders, age grades/groups and other basic collective activities that sustain African social life" (p. 27).

Cohen (2009) sees religion as a specific form of culture or a way to categorise distinct cultural practices. Cultural practices have remained the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion notion of time, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. He argues that these practices were transmitted to institutions whose key roles were in the preservation as custodian of histories and cultures of the people while representing the ancestors. According to Ndili (2010) the kings (traditional institutions) are still expected to fulfil their traditional roles of office. He asserts that the responsibilities for peace and prosperity of the state, for the fertility of land and families solely depend on them. He avers that African traditional rulers are expected to serve the traditional duties even when it is perceived as repugnant .

Emordi (2017) contends that the Portuguese first contact with the South was Benin in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. While Afonso d' Aveira, the Portuguese intelligentsia, came to study the political, commercial and religious situation of the Benin kingdom, trade centres were established in 1400s. According to Columbia Encyclopaedia cited in Bradbury (1973):

The Bright of Benin's shore was part of the so called Slave Coast from where many West Africans were sold to foreign slave traders who enticed them to sell able bodied men into bonded servitude to Europe. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Oba sent ambassador to Lisbon, and the king of Portugal sent missionaries to Benin (p.1)

In view of the ongoing, Adetiloye cited in Egharevba (1968) reports that religion originated in Benin and later transported to Delta region as a result of contact with the Portugal sent missionaries. According to him, the introduction of the western religion was a paradox. On one hand religion brought civilisation that waded off inhuman and mundane practices, on the other hand religion was also fingered for the alteration of the much cherished African cultural practices. In this wise, it could be said that religion, have often be used to manipulate population and often supported and served as a pretext to adherents' opposition of cultural values, norms and practices.

While Nolte *et al* (2009) contended that Nigeria a multi-ethnic, multi religious country its encounter with religion dates as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the political Islam has gained ground in the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D, Christianity, emerged preceding the abolition of trans-Atlantic slave trade in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that ushered the emergence literate African elites, made up of the liberated and returned slave as well as local converts in some coastal cities such as Lagos. However, the collateral effects of this on Anioma clan were the substantial subordination of its citizens to western religion (in this regard Christianity) and erosion of certain beliefs and values to the alien mission.

It is important to argue that while Christianity found renewed activities in this region, it was the activities of this missionaries especially Catholicism and the Lutheran protestant Anglican that had adverse effect on the Anioma traditions. According to Abolarin (2013) while the presence of colonialist in Africa posed a threat to the very

existence of traditional religion, it was justified for its moral, social intellectual and industrial improvement of the people. In practice Abolarin (2013) observed that colonialism transformed the relative peaceful and stable order of the rural areas distorting the traditional values in a complex money economy. What is of note is that Islam and Christianity is in consensus that African religion features idolatry, heathenism and fetishism and Kafirism in Islamic context.

Christianity brought its converts into relation with the God known by the Europeans (Magesa 2002:14). He argued further that the aim of the missionaries was to do away with the religion that is based on superstition. Kruger *et al* (2009) identified three traits of the traditional region; in the belief in a Supreme Being; the realm of the spirit and a unified community. They argued further that African traditional religion (ATR) share the conviction that the worldly and the sacred are closely and interwoven and that its representatives both secular and spiritual forces. It is believed that insight into the forces can be gained through divination and revelation and that they can be influenced through sacrifices, prayers and incantations.

While it is true that Christianity depicts the colonisation of the mind, it permeated beyond alteration of specific dimension of human behaviour, Abolarin (2013) avers that by implication it symbolises a remoulding of Africans in European mould, a process of which Christianity and Islam has crucified the traditional practices. The practice of Christianity in Anioma communities focused on individual, shunning aside kinship group, councils of elders, age grade and other collective basis to African social life.

According to Esogbue (2015a) Nigeria contact with Christianity stripped the spiritual authority of traditional institutions. He asserted that traditional rulers and their council were the religious head of state in pre-colonial states. However, the advent of religion posed a big question mark on their authority constituting; first challenge and then a limitation to their authority. It has changed the simplicity of traditional life and thoughts. A case in point is the refusal of some Christians to partake in traditional religious festivals, taking a position of its contradictions to the new faith, consequently, reinforcing by the fact that the behaviour of an individual's cannot be totally devoid of the influence of his or her religion.



Harris (2006) asserts that the belief of an individual determines his or her vision of the world, behaviour and emotional responses of other human beings; he further argued that, the claim of absolute truth by religion breeds intolerance which reduces the possibility of it, being used as a conflict-promoting tool. Again adherents to the new faith will refuse to work on Sundays terming it as sacred. It also brought with it urbanisation and industrialisation which have disturbed and transformed relative peace in the rural areas.

Traditional rites like puberty which ensures smooth transition from childhood to adulthood giving the youth a sense of moral direction were regarded as profane, archaic and such as fetish. Traditional values were discarded in a complex money economy while traditional sanctions and taboos are no longer treasured and a new way of life begins which leads to new kinds of morality. Traditional explanations for certain happenings were regarded as superstition.

Coleman (1986) asserts that the early Christians at the instance of colonial rule emphasises the abandonment of such customs as initiation ceremonies, dowry payment marriages, dancing and ancestral worships which is the symbol of the communal unity linking the individual to the ancestral heads. The effect of these alien ideas and thoughts on traditional institution such as the *Omu* institution of peacemaking calls for further examination.

Ndili (2010) avers that the traditional institutions are still expected to continue to exist in the face of changes and modernisation. He asserts that they were responsible for peace and prosperity of the community, for fertility of land and communal co-existence. He contended that even when they identify with the new religion they are expected to serve the deities as well as the alien religions. He contends that as the *Omu* institution is respected and honoured, people still look at the institution as the custodian of the ancestral deities and the spiritual antenna of the people. From the foregoing, it is imperative to examine how religion has impacted on the *Omu* chieftaincy institution of peacemaking.

## **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a term that has been variously defined by scholars. These definitions are diversely expressed but have the single feature of consensus. For example, Walby (1990) cited in Asiyanbola (2005) definition of patriarchy seems to generalise consensus with clue to dominance. To him, patriarchy is a system of social structures and practice in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Cockburn (2004) it is a system in which leadership authority, aggressiveness and responsibility resides in men and masculinity, while nurture and compliance, passivity and dependence are the part of women and feminism.

Ferriera (2004) in the same direction of Cockburn (2004) sees patriarchy as a system that is both oppressive and discriminatory. She further identifies areas of oppressiveness to include; social, economic, political and cultural discrimination in its control or access to power, management of resources and benefits and manipulation of private and public sphere (p395). Although these scholars are more specific as they indicated domination, oppression, discrimination and subordination as features of patriarchy, yet generalised groups are involved in their agreement. These identified features are necessary indices for feminine and masculine dichotomy in any given society.

Patriarchy simply implies kinship system in which men exchange women (Mitchell 1971:3). It is a power relation between men and female which men dominate women (Bhasin 2006:3). According to him, it characterises a system where women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. Not only does it cause women subordination; it also creates a system of social differentiation on the basis of sex which provides material advantages to men Aina (1990).

The impacts of patriarchy are almost unpalatable. Patriarchies exist across African societies. It is a historic process, but mostly formed by men and women. Meanwhile, Walby (1998) has identified various forms of patriarchy. He captured some of them in private and public patriarchy. According to him, while private patriarchy is based upon household production as expression of women's oppression; public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and the state (Walby, 1998).

Further importance to this research is the examination of the effect of patriarchy on the *Omu* institution of peacemaking. In explaining the effect of patriarchy, Nzei (1992) notes that the place of creation theory. Creation theory according to him, evolved from the singular assumption that women were meant for men and as such submit and honour the men. He contends that this ideology metamorphosed into patriarchal concept that not only governs the Christians and Islamic worldviews, but also was born, bred and sustained by the biblical teaching from holy bible Genesis 2:20-25 Corinthians 11:28-36) and the Koranic teachings echoed by Suna. He contends further, that being a divine injunction, its compliance was easier for both Christian and Moslem women without questioning. Unarguably, he concluded that the exclusion of women in supreme ritual position termed as sacred within these faiths attested to patriarchal manifestation. A case in point is the restriction officiating position of the priest during worship in the church or mosque (Nzei, 1992).

According to Ejizu (1986), the existence of patrilineal *Ofo* among the Igbo has sapped the spiritual authority of the matrilineal *Ofo*. He asserts that women institutions were the spiritual heads of some deities, so the supremacy and existence of the patrilineal *Ofo* rejected their authority constituted first; a challenge and then a limitation to their powers. He avers further that women were rejected to perform some rituals that seemed to be sacred and confidential. They were also disallowed to carry out ancestress rituals in periods they were regarded as impure and unsafe.

Furthermore, Ejizu (1986), whereas the *Ofo* symbolism demonstrates historic development of authority, ancestress rituals were the purview of the women institutions. Some elders in the communities will now say the *Omu* worships the gods/goddess of fertility. It is the scholar's contention that not only the supremacy attached to the male *Ofo* but also new form of role and status that undermine the female chieftaincy institutions in Africa.

According to Liton (1936:113) status is the collection of rights and duties that attached to particular position; which contrasts roles; which refers to the behaviour appropriate to a given status. Ajodo-Adebanjoke (2013) concurs with Liton (1936) and contends further that the most controversial issue with status in Africa was its clarification of gender role. Gender roles she contends further are neither natural nor immutable but are construed and invented. To this end, Best (2009) avers that gender is about society

and culturally defined sex roles, attributes and values which communities and societies ascribes as appropriate for one sex and the other.

The effect of these role definitions on the female chieftaincy institutions such as the *Omu* institution of peacemaking, its cultural, economic and political base as well as its very survival calls for further studies. Arguing in the same line as Best (2009) and Miller (2001), Ajodo-Adebanjoke (2013) contends that each country has its own unique culture and norms and at the same time views the roles of women differently. These roles she contends are influenced by education, religion and cultural norms, legal status of women and degree of exposure to western education as well as ideas and culture.

Fasiku (2010) avers that women traditional institutions such are still expected to accomplish their roles in office. She avers that the traditional roles of women in Yoruba land still remain the same. She argued that the traditional roles of women in peacemaking must continue. In her further submission, she argued that traditional involvement of men and women in traditional Nigerian societies should continue even when the society tilts towards men dominance of the political institutions. Going by the aforementioned, it is necessary to examine the roles of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking in spite of the existence of other patriarchal institution in Anioma communities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design provides the framework for data collection and analysis. According to Byman (2012), research design is a plan that provides the structure and strategy to be adopted in carrying out a conceived enquiry to enable the researcher to provide scientific answers to research questions. He observes that scientific enquiry emanates from making an observations and interpreting what have been observed. However, scientific enquiry demands a comprehensive plan of what you are going to observe and analyse, why and how. These processes of scientific enquiry necessitate a design. In other words, research design indicates the method to be employed in obtaining and analysing data. It also guides the execution of a research method and analysis of the subsequent data. Furthermore, research design is particularly interested in showing how data relating to a given problem is collected and analysed. It eliminates any uncertainty on how research objectives are accomplished and provides the background for evaluating the findings of the research.

Meanwhile, there are varieties of research designs which are used in the field of peace and conflict studies to conduct research. Due to the socio-cultural nature of this study, the researcher adopted exploratory and case study methods of research. According to Creswell (2013), a case study is a process of inquiry about the case and product of inquiry. Yin (2009) sees a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In the same vein, Simon (2009:21) defines a case study as “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project policy, institution, programme or system in a real life. It involves an up-close in-depth and detailed examination of a subject of study as well as its related contextual conditions

(Mills *et al* 2010). Also it is an intensive analysis of an individual unit (such as a person or community) stressing developmental factor in relation to environment (Emmel 2013). A case study may involve both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It helps to explore in detail events, activities and processes through one or more cases. In addition, it is characterised by a sturdy of a blended system with the boundary defined in terms of time, space or participants (Olutayo 2014). This work adopted the case study because it helped to understand the historical origin and evolution of the *Omu* institution and their influence in peacemaking which are peculiar to Anioma Kingdom.

More so, the case study assisted the researcher to have access and detailed information on the peacemaking practices carried out in the past by this institution based on antecedents. The individuals or groups who had benefitted from the institution's interventions shared their experiences based on their respective cases including the approaches employed by the *Omu* institutions. It also reflected the effectiveness of such approaches.

### **3.2 Study Area**

The study was carried out in Nigeria, precisely, Delta State. Delta State is located in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. Delta State comprises of distinct ethnic groups such as Anioma, Urhobo, Ijaw, Isoko and Itsekiri. Delta State was created from the old Bendel State on August 27, 1991. The Anioma people live in territory bounded by Latitude  $5^{\circ}00'$  and  $6^{\circ}45'$  East and Longitude  $5^{\circ}00'$  and  $6^{\circ}35'$  North of Delta State. The neighbouring states are Anambra to the East; Imo and Rivers to the Southeast; Bayelsa to the South, Edo to the Northwest and Kogi to the North (Aluko, 2009). The Anioma population is spread across nine Local Government Areas out of the twenty-five Local Government Areas in Delta State namely: Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Oshimili South, Oshimili North, Ika North East, Ika South, Ndokwa West, Ndokwa East and Ukwuani. Similarly, out of the nine Local Government Areas mentioned above, the *Omu* institution has a strong presence in four Local Government Areas (Aniocha South; Aniocha North; Oshimili South and Oshimili North).

Equally, the precise locations of the study are: Ibusa, Okpanam, Akwukwu-Igbo and Asaba in Oshimili South and North Local Government Areas, respectively. These localities are traditionally referred to as *Ndi-Oshimili* because of the presence of River

Niger in these areas. The choice of these areas is in their numerical strength as well as the presence of functional and sitting *Omu* in their towns and villages. It is as a result of the aforementioned that these communities were considered for this work

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study focused on Oshimili South and North Local Government Areas (LGA) of Delta State, respectively. Oshimili South occupies an area of 268 square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>) with a density of about 770 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population of 150,032 persons. Oshimili North occupies a land mass of 510 square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>) with a density of 320 persons per km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 118,540 persons (National Population Census, 2006).

Data were collected from targeted population selected from *Ndi-Omu*, *Otu-Omu*, *Ndi-Obi*, *Ndi-Olinezele*, *Ndi-Oza* (adult men) and *ikpoho azu afia* (adult women), officials of Community Development Units (CDU) in the two Local Government Areas (LGA) selected, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs and few police stations within the communities where the study was carried out. This approach created reliable information as the population selected spoke from their personal experiences and vast knowledge on the subject.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

Sample size is a research term used for defining the number of individuals included in a research study to represent a population. It is an important feature of any study or investigation in which the aim is to make inferences about the population from a sample. The sample size references the total number of respondents included in the study, and the number is often broken down into sub-groups by demographics such as age, gender, and location so that the total sample gathers represents the entire population.

Thus, in carrying out this study, purposive sampling technique was adopted. Thus, based on the ethnographical nature of the study, respondents were selected with respect to their experience and profundity of knowledge on the subject that was investigated.

Furthermore, the study conducted 15 In-depth Interviews (IDI) and 19 Key Informant Interviews (KII) totalling 34 respondents. Interviews were conducted across four selected communities in Oshimili South and North Local Government Areas, respectively. The study also carried out three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The sample size was identified through various groups: *Ndi-Omu* (4), *Otu-Omu* (6), one from each town except for Ibusa where three members of *Otu-Omu* were selected along the ruling houses in Ibusa namely; *Otu-Odogwu*, *Otu-Owolo* and *Otu-Iyase*, *Ndi-Obi* (3), *Ndi-Olinzele* (6) were selected from the communities; one from Asaba, two from Okpanam, one from Ibusa and two from Akwukwu Igbo, one (1) *dibia*.

Focus group discussions (FGD) were also conducted with *ikpoho azu afia*, *ndi-oza*, and *umuikolobia* across the selected communities, respectively. The FGDs conducted for *ikpoho azu afia*, comprises of eight (8) market women selected from *Afia Olie* Okpanam and eight (8) men selected from *ndi-oza* in Ibusa respectively, while that of *ndi-oza* men conducted in Ibusa comprises of eight (8) adult men. FGD conducted for *umuikolobia* at Akwukwu-Igbo was made up of eight (8) members. The age category was between 18 and 29 years, respectively. This is in line with the National Population Commission (2013) definitions of youth as citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Furthermore, Local Government Chairman (1), staff of Community Development Unit at the LGAs (2), staff of the State Ministry of Culture and Tourism (1), staff of Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (1); staff of Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (1), Police Divisional Officers (DPO) (1), adult women (3) and adult men (3) who are not members of *Otu-Omu/Olinzele* but community members knowledgeable on the subject matter.

### **3.5 Sources of Data Collection**

Data for the study were gathered through primary and secondary sources. The primary method of data collection included in-depth interview (IDIs), key informant interview (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), respectively. Secondary data was also collected from unpublished materials, books, journals, theses, internet sources and other published research works relevant to the subject. These various sources helped the authenticity and dependability of result of the study. The secondary data was used to complement the primary data gathered.



### **3.6 Methods of Data Collection**

The researcher adopted primary instrument of data collection since the required data for the study could not be collected through secondary sources alone, the researcher visited the relevant communities of Asaba, Igbuzor, Okpanam and Akwukwu-Igbo. The researcher made use of IDI, KII and FGD. The secondary sources for this study were sourced from books, journal and internet materials.

### **3.7 Research Instrument**

The research instrument includes Key Informant Interview schedule, In-depth Interview guide as well as Focus Group discussions. The questions were explicitly designed to elicit information for the study. Most of the questions in the interview guide were also discussed in the Focus Group Discussions. The information got from the respondents helped the researcher in tackling the research questions.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

The method of data analysis adopted for this study is qualitative. Hence, the raw materials for the report were generated from notes, video and tape recordings documented in course of the interview. Information collected through the aforementioned devices and handwritten materials were transcribed using descriptive and interpretative techniques and where it becomes imperative, deductive and inductive reasoning were useful. Similarly, oral interviews that were obtained in the local dialect were transcribed into English Language to ease the analysis. The researcher also adopted the use of historical narratives, first person accounts as well as personal experience in keeping abreast with the tradition of data interpretation and presentation mode in qualitative research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter is a presentation and analysis of the data gathered from the field. It responds to the aim and objectives of the study through the research questions.

#### **4.1 Findings**

Findings are presented in line with the study objectives for precision and ease of convenience necessary inferences are drawn from some of the findings in the light of the conceptual framework of the study, while observed similarities and differences amidst the present study and extant literature are reconciled using appropriate socio-cultural explanations.

##### **4.1.1 Historical origin and evolution of the *Omu* Institution in Anioma Kingdom**

In a historical examination of *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom, it is important to re-examine the varied culture the institution could be traced. Thus, much of what is known today as the historical origin of the *Omu* institution in Anioma Kingdom has remained a product of oral transmission. Equally, there are contentions over how the *Omu* institution originated among Anioma people. A respondent, who has written extensively on Anioma culture, argued that the *Omu* institution originated from Igala culture (KII conducted in Asaba, March 22, 2018). This substantiates Ndili (2010) that the *Omu* institution emanated from Igala people. However, another respondent in Akwukwu-Igbo differs from the respondent mentioned supra. According to her, the *Omu* institution is a product of the *Nri* culture (KII conducted at Akwukwu-Igbo March 27, 2018). Her submission is in sequence with Emordi (2004); Akpuh (2013) and Nwanze (2005) that the *Omu* institution originated from the *Nri* culture in the present Anambra State, Nigeria. According to her, most of the communities in Anioma kingdom trace their origin to *Nri*.

A cursory look at the word “*Omu*” shows that *Omu* is an Igbo word used to describe the tender part of the palm frond. The *omu* in a palm tree gives physical protection to the

embryo of the palm fruit. An *Olinezele* further posits that because of the importance attached to the palm frond (*omu*), it becomes imperative for a female chieftaincy institution to be named *Omu*. The preceding submission is in consonance with Nwanze (2005:4) that the concept of *Omu* seems to have been derived from the idea of “*Mu* or *Mua*” meaning give birth or “*Omumu*” giving birth.

He avows that in Igbo cosmology, the palm tree is regarded as female, while the palm frond connotes fertility and life, just as yam is a male symbolism in Igbo culture. These symbols Nwanze (2005:4) further affirmed were propagated among the Aniocha and Oshimili people of Anioma by early *Nri* immigrants whose cultures still dominate in these areas. Thus, it is consistent for such an institution to be an exclusive female institution considering its symbolic features and benefits to mankind.

Furthermore, a respondent who is the eldest woman as well as acting *Omu* in Ibusa opined that the *Omu* institution was imported into Anioma Kingdom from the Ezechime descent of Benin (IDI conducted at Ibusa March 23, 2018) and it aligns with Akpuh (2013) that the *Omu* institution came out of an ancient Benin cultural heritage. It also correlates with Esogbue (2016a) that the *Omu* institution in Anioma culture is similar to the institution of Queen’s mother in the ancient Benin Kingdom. He contended that Queen Idia was the mother of Esigie who ruled Benin from 1504-1550. He argues that as a result of her military prowess she became the first woman to be bestowed with the *Iyaoba* title (queen’s mother) and was given a palace known as *Egua Iyaoba* (Queen’s mother palace).

He further argues that since a certain segment of Anioma people (Ezechima) are purported to have migrated from Benin, it is possible for them to have imported the idea of *Iyaoba* title into the world view of Anioma people. Thus, it is worth mentioning that since the dominant voices from the field uphold the narrative of migration (irrespective of the locality) and also affirmed in literature, it would not be out of place to postulate that Anioma culture is a hybrid of different cultures, including the *Omu* institution. This confirms the thesis that culture is mutable, transferable and can also be hybridised (Kim, 2018).

In her account, *Omu* Okpanam who doubles as *Omu* Anioma clan narrated that the *Omu* institution was an idea conceived by their ancestors over 700 years ago. She explained that the ancestors felt that a community that has a father must also have a

mother who will always draw the attention of the father to areas he may not see as being important in the community. According to her,

*Omu* institution has been part of Anioma people and I am always afraid whenever people say it was imported from here or there (IDI conducted in Okpanam 13th March, 2018).

The above assertion negates the dominant narrative that traces the origin of *Omu* institution to varied cultures. However, Olasupo (2015) contends that *Omu* means queen while respondents agree that *Omu* in traditional Anioma setting is *Nne* (mother), its interpretation is rooted in antiquity. It must be noted that *Nne* is the generic word for mother in Anioma culture, Therefore, it could be justified that the ancestors could mute ideas that can affect the pattern of doing things by their pedigree which further reinforces the concept of *Omoluabi* popularised by Abimbola (1975) cited in Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2016) that a good child honours the instructions or submissions of the elders as well as the local tradition. Elders in this context refer to the living dead who have gone to their rest Olaoba (2005).

On the contrary, *Omu* Anioma further presents a counter narrative by insisting that the *Omu* institution is absolutely indigenous to Anioma people. In her submission:

“In Anioma land, from Asaba to Agbor, among others, our forefathers designed that every community must have traditional ruler who is a man and another who is a woman” (Interview at Okpanam, 13th March, 2018).

The above assertions of the *Omu* Anioma disprove the postulation of Esogbue (2016) that the *Omu* institution is similar to that of *Iyaoba* concept in ancient Bini Kingdom and concur with Dieyi (2001) that the people hold the keys to their historical origin. These conflicting submissions attest to the challenges that are associated with oral transmission of history, more often, narratives are lost in the passage of time. In spite of these conflicting claims the central point still remains that the historical origin of the *Omu* institution cannot be traced to a specific culture. This is also an approval that Anioma culture is an admixture of different cultures.

Furthermore, there are no consensus as to the exact date Anioma people started the practice of *Omu* Institution. The FGD organised for participants in Asaba, Oshimili South Local Government Area in March 29, 2018 recorded a unanimous agreement, that the exact date the *Omu* institution began among the Anioma people is unknown.

According to them, the *Omu* institution predates the advent of colonialism. The claim of the FGD respondents affirm Esogbue (2016a: xix) that the *Omu* institution predates the arrival of the colonialists. It also confirms Awe cited in Olasupo (2015:119) that the *Omu* institution started around 1872-1914 in Anioma clan.

Moreover, Oseghale and Osiki (2010) also differ in terms of the exact date the *Omu* institution started among the Anioma people. In their opinion, the institution emerged probably between 1349 and 1943 in Ubulu-Ukwu, a community that traces its ancestries to Ezechima. However, the correlation between the Ezechime pedigree and the *Omu* institution in Anioma clan calls for further study.

In addition, a respondent in Akwukwu-Igbo expounded that *Omu* was a title giving to king's mother and that it was first bestowed on one of the wives of a pre-colonial Issele-Ukwu king called Ilogo. She contended that legend had it that Ilogo was an *Olokun* priestess who hails from Uteke, a community in ancient Bini kingdom. According to her, narrative had it that Ilogo as a priestess possessed mystical powers and with which she was able to protect the king and his subjects. She further asserts that Ilogo was crowned *Omu* by the king in appreciation of her efforts. Ilogo in her narrative continued with her spiritual and ritual duties and overtime co-opted some of the king's wives into her group.

Thus, it is not out of place to say that these women overtime, metamorphosed as *Ilogo-Omu* or *Otu-Omu*. *Ilogo-Omu* or *Otu-Omu* she further explained, became compee to the *Omu* in dispensing justices and overseeing the wellbeing of women and the entire community (IDI in Akwukwu-Igbo March 26, 2018).

Furthermore, while the protective virtue demonstrated by Ilogo aligns with the tenets of the *Omoluabi* Yoruba concept of peace, it is certain that *Ilogo* and *Ilogo-Omu* that amongst other things manifested exceptional virtues such as ... readiness to assist the needy and infirmed, sympathy, sociability and courage (Albert *et al.*, 1995).

Equally, there is also continuous contentions over the period *Omu* institution started in Anioma communities. Nevertheless, there is also a general consensus by respondents that the institution is as ancient as the communities in Anioma Kingdom. No doubt it could be argued that *Omu* institution has evolved over the years a dynamic female traditional institutions among people. Accordingly, an *Olinzele* in Okpanam who is above 70 years of age recounted that he grew up to know about the *Omu* institution.

She added, that at the earliest times, its occupants were women who have attained menopause. He added that with the passage of time, the institution began to include few men who acted as advisers as well as assisted in carrying out ritual sacrifices (IDI, with *Obi* Adimabuah in Okpanam March 12, 2018). The respondent's position harmonises with the standpoint of Agborh (2007) that the earliest occupants of *Omu* institution were advanced post-menstrual women, vast in the traditions and culture of the people.

Meanwhile, findings from the field show that the *Omu* institution has evolved from a mere localised traditional institution into an internationally accepted institution. A respondent who is a staff of Delta State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Asaba who has written extensively on the *Omu* institution explains:

The *Omu* institution has transformed from localised institution into international institution. During the pre-colonial era, occupants of the *Omu* chieftaincy stool were basically old women who lacked formal western education training unlike today where many occupants of the stool are young women, well learned in the context of western education.

The respondent further explained

For instance, the *Omu* Ahaba is a Medical Doctor from American Caribbean (AUC) School of Medicine which specialisation in community medicine. *Omu* Anioma Kingdom is also a graduate of English and Secretarial Studies, from LTC, College of English and Secretarial Studies, London, England as well as a recipient of Honorary Doctorate Degree, Doctor of Science D.Sc. degree (Honorius Causa) by Columbus International University, Virgin Island, United Kingdom” (Interview conducted with a staff of the State Ministry of Tourism in Asaba, March 22, 2018).

The above statement tallies with the view of Achebe (2017) that a significant dimension in modern chieftaincy is the rise in diversity of the professional knowledge and executive experience of the traditional rulers in Nigeria. For example, the reigning Emir of Kano, Alhaji Sanusi Lamido was the immediate past Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, the Gwom Gon Jos was a onetime Comptroller General of Custom Service in Nigeria and the current Tor-Tiv of Benue State is an academic professor. Achebe (2017) attributes this phenomenon to the influence of modernisation and globalisation. It further affirms the opinion of Powell (2014) that as we move into

global century, several aspects of socio-economic life changes by virtue of interconnectedness that brings together all the corners of the globe.

Still talking about the evolution of the *Omu* institution, another respondent who is a member of *Obuzor*-in-council posits that in the pre-colonial times the occupants of the *Omu* chieftaincy stool were permanently resident in the community. In this regard, an *Omu* is not allowed by tradition to travel outside her immediate environment. Ndili (2015) submits that such an adventure in the past is tantamount to a taboo.

Today it is no longer the case because *Omu* Anioma claims that she can travel to anywhere, do her business alongside with her paraphernalia of office. In addition, the present *Omu* Ahaba resides in the United States of America and visits home when tradition demands likewise the *Omu* Ogwashi-Ukwu in Aniocha South Local Government Area. The claim of the respondents harmonises with the thoughts of Eze-Uzoamaka and Oloyede (2017) that modernisation is a process of transformation and development through which traditional characteristics be it social, economic, religious, political and cultural environments are advanced to meet international benchmarks.

While in the pre-colonial times an *Omu* was barred from handshakes with people because they were seen as visor of the gods commanding so many powers. However, that has also changed with time. A member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibuzor attested that:

In recent times the occupants of *Omu* stool serve as representative of the womenfolk, which make her attends social functions that involve meeting with people.

She explains further that:

At such gathering, she could not resist exchanging handshakes with dignitaries. Irrefutably, in the pre-colonial times, the office commands political and spiritual powers, in a localised parlance. Nevertheless, with the new waves, the institution now receives political patronage from the local, state and national levels to the extent that they can mobilise the women for political purposes (IDI with a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibuzor March 23 2018)

The foregoing confirms the view of Sokoh (2018) that political office holders in Nigeria endeavour to enlist the supports of traditional rulers in order to attain as well as legitimise their tenure. It is a common sight in all parts of Nigeria to see the President, State Governors, Senators and other highly placed political office holders pay homage to traditional rulers as the first point of call during tour of any part of the

country. It upholds the opinion of Ofuafor (2010) that even in the military era; the government found the traditional institutions as veritable tools for enhancing their popularity and developing the rural areas.

The *Omu* Institution continues to transform as the society began to evolve and various communities began to appoint the occupant of the *Omu* stool in consonance with the demands of change which is a shift from the norm. To this end, a respondent pointed out that:

The installation of *Obi* Martha Dunkwu, a vibrant, highly educated and exposed woman who is not widowed or aged as an *Omu*, has elevated the institution.

He added:

The common characteristics of an *Omu* in the past were old woman knowledgeable in the tradition of their people, without a formal education (Interview with a staff of State Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Asaba, March 22, 2018)

Meanwhile, a member of Asagba-in-council in Asaba explained that “the process of ascension to the *Omu* stool has also changed. According to him, an *Omu* designate has to go through several processes to be accorded certain appellation in the community” (KII with an *Olinzele* in Asaba March 20, 2018). This finding aligns with Ndili (2010) that the *Omu* status in Asaba has taken an upward jump with respect to the processes involved in becoming an *Omu* designate. Equally, she has to attain the status of a chief and *Obi* to earn the greeting *Omu Igwe*. Furthermore, slaughtering a cow for *Ndi-obi*, also earns her the greetings *Omu Ogbueshi* or *Ogbuefi*. It therefore presupposes that the pecuniary involvement in ascending the *Omu* stool is huge. In addition, it also indicates that membership eligibility is a subject of monetary capability and not credibility only as people may think. However, with the assertion from *Omu* Anioma that it is a divine call to service, most women from *Umu-Omu* decent aspire to become members of the institution.

While still considering changes in the institution, *Omu* Anioma explained, that members were not given the recognitions in the past to lend their voices to national issues but now, *Omu* is invited by government at various levels to lend their voices on national issues that affect women, peace and security. According to her:



I was invited to Abuja by His Excellency President Muhammad Buhari in February early this year 2018 to contribute on issues that affect women, peace and security generally in the nation, it was a week long programme and that tells you that this institution is gaining recognition in the country (Interview at Okpanam, 13th March, 2018).

The narration of *Omu* Anioma is consistent with Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2013) that women in the recent past have become highly motivated and able stakeholders in peace process. It also upholds Ecoma (2010) that women's roles in and potentials for peace and security are beginning to gain international, regional and national recognitions. This presupposes that the study of the *Omu* Institution which is the focal point of this study is imperative.

#### **4.2 The Influence of *Omu* institution in Peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom**

In discussing the influence of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom, it is expedient to examine the basic feature of the institution, as well as. It presents a platform in analysing the influence of the institution in peacemaking. making agency of the Institution.

##### **4.2.1. Basic Features of the *Omu* Institution**

The general consensus from the field is that the practice of *Omu* is a common place in Anioma Kingdom. Accordingly, the institution is headed by a woman known as *Omu*. *Omu* institution is made up of biological daughters of Anioma decent knowledgeable in the custom and tradition of the people which makes it an exclusive female institution. Members exercise both sacral and secular powers and have been key in economic administration of Anioma kingdom. According to respondents, the institution is dressed in pure white and red beads worn on the wrist, round the neck and the ankle. The members of the institution dress in native weaved white *Otogwu* also known as *Akwaocha*.

Responding to the question on the dressing of the Institution, a member of *Otu-Omu* asserted that *Omu* by tradition is not allowed to wear any other cloth except *Otogwu* (local weaved white cloth) which must be tied round a little above their breast with red beads round the neck. She added that the white *Otogwu* symbolises purity and sanctity as the institution abhors impurity. She explains that even in the present dispensation, it is difficult for you to see an *Omu* in any other attire other than the *Otogwu*. She also added that the few men in the institution, wear their white t-shirt with *Otogwu* tied

round their waist. She concluded that, aside the physical duties perform by the institution, the ritual responsibilities compare the chastity of *Omu* and the constant white apparel a reminder of call to service as the ancestors may visit unannounced.

In addition, another respondent who is a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa informed the researcher that the principal symbol of authority of the *Omu* is the *Otuluaka* (elephant husk). The pronouncement of the institution is endorsed and stamped by the *Omu* raising and putting down her *Otuluaka*. They added that the *Omu* institution also wears a red cap. Although, it was gleaned that in some communities the male monarchs were not in consonant with the red cap, however *Omu* Anioma kingdom explained that with the picture of *Omu* Ama mungwaonye taken by Anthropologist, N.W. Thomas 1912 were she was seen wearing her red cap, it is generally accepted that *Omu*'s red cap is an attestation of royalty, authority and ancestral endorsement. The common belief is that the ancestors symbolise human spirits who play key role in the community affairs and ensure a link between each clan and the spirit world.

In the *Ogwa-Omu* visited, there is no pictorial representative of any deity. The *Omu* institution engages in oracular consultation and divination as well as work with the *Ndi-dibia*. Their work with *Ndi-dibia* of the town is important because they consult them from time to time to portend what the future has for the monarch and his subjects.

The *Omu* institution also makes use of *Akupe* (hand leather fan). The *Akupe* plays both curative and protective roles against evils that might want to befall the community. In *Ogwa Omu* there are so many seats arranged in rectangular shape with the *Omu*'s throne at the interior end of the *Ogwa* facing the entrance from that position she administers to the people's needs. The *Omu* also wears the red cap known as *Okpu Ododo*. The *Okpu Ododo* (red cap) in Anioma traditional parlance can only be worn by titled chiefs who have passed through the coronation processes to become an *Olinezele*. It also serves as an adornment for the head.



**Plate 4.1: Picture Showing *Ogwa Omu Anioma Kingdom* Derived From Research Survey 2018**

#### 4.2.2 Selection and Coronation Processes of *omu* Institution in Anioma Kingdom

The general consensus from all the respondents is that the *Omu* title is an exclusive reserve of biological daughters of Anioma Kingdom. In an interview with the *Obi* Ndili in Asaba, he accounted that some of the rites involved in the coronation ceremony of would-be-*Omu* were similar to that of the *Obi* (monarch) ceremony. According to him, the would-be *Omu* will be informed by the *Obi*-in-council after divination has been made and the oracle has selected such a person. *Ugba ashie* which had been returned to the *ogwa obi* (palace) at the demise of the previous *Omu* will be taken before the cock crows and dropped at the entrance to the door of the woman selected by the *Eze-dibia*. *Ugba ashie* is very symbolic in *Omu* installation as it symbolises the authority of the *Omu* over market transactions and administration. In the morning the would-be-*Omu* carries the *Ugba* to the *Obi*'s *Ogwa* where she will meet the other chiefs waiting for her response. Her returning the *Ugba* shows acceptance of the pronouncement of the oracle.

However, the respondent argued that in a situation where she refuses the pronouncement, she flew the community to an unknown destination. *Obi* Ndili explains further, that the *Obi*-in-council at this point will send elders to the paternal home of the *Omu*-to-be to plea for acceptance and if she refuses continually, she could be excommunicated from the village and sometimes could be visited with ancestral wrath that could cause death or insanity. She also pointed out that coronation processes commence immediately with the rubbing of *Nzu* on the body of the *Omu* by the sitting *Obi* and she is expected to sit indoors for a period of seven days known as *oge asa*. Accordingly, as emphasised by the respondent, some of the rites involved in the coronation upholds that until the demise of the ruling *Omu* no other woman could be appointed into the position to occupy the stool. Meanwhile, when an *Omu* dies it is referred to as *Omu jie ashie* meaning that she has gone to the market as no mortal has the right to pronounce the *Omu*'s death. She added that the burial of *Omu* is symbolic and similar to that of *Obi*. The *Omu* is expected to be buried in a sitting position in a locally constructed coffin. This explains a form of royalty attached to the institution.

In the same vein, *Omu* Anioma averred that since the inception of the *Omu* institution in many communities in Anioma Kingdom, it is the duty of the *Omu* to install as well as appoint those who will serve in the *Otu-Omu* (*Omu*'s cabinet). The *Omu* in practical

terms feeds the community on assumption of office as a mark of motherhood to the entire community. In a focus group discussion (FGD) with respondents in Ibusa, the respondents supported this view. *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo avers that in modern times, several cartons of beer and assorted drinks (wine and hot drinks) were used for this feast with a lot of food for entertainment of guests. The system of *Omuship* is not rooted in all Anioma social aggregation. Consequently, it could be found amongst lineages with historic antecedence of the institution.

Unarguably, while divination is a basic criterion for selection of an *Omu* in Anioma Kingdom, however, attainment of certain social status within *umu-Omu* lineage presents an exception to the norms. It is thus postulated here that the issue of oracular pronouncement of would-be-*Omu* in Anioma, has a basic symbol to performing certain roles which are complex socio-political labyrinth that risks being over simplified. This complex matrix, it must be emphasised, could be influenced by political manoeuvring to suite the decisions of the sitting powers, secondly, an exception to the rule of divine pronouncement, lies in the ancient belief in Anioma culture that one cannot be perceived as true *Omu* if she is not from ancestry lineage whose rights it is to assume the chieftaincy position. It is not absurd to see an influential and famous woman occupying the *Omuship* stool of her community owing to the fact that the quarter whose turn it is to produce an *Omu*, jettisons the basic principles dancing to the romantic tune of modernisation. It is also convenient to find a young woman within her pre-menopausal year installed as *Omu*.

Okoduwa (2010) supports the argument that most societies in Nigeria compete with the appointment of men and women who are educated into the chieftaincy positions. Respondents argued that if an *Omu* is admitted into the Asagba-in- council known as *Izu-ani*, in the case of Asaba for instance, she is accepted by the council as the only female who attends the *Izu-ani* where political decisions affecting the community are made. The *Omu* Anioma emphasised that during the coronation ceremony of the *Omu*, she assumes a dual-sex position that makes her perform certain masculine rites. Ndili (2010) contended that at that ceremony, performed at the Asagba palace in the case of Asaba, the *Omu* performs the symbolic rite of blowing *Otuluaka* elephant tusk at the palace of the Asagba in the presence of the titled chiefs known as *Ogbueshi* and the popular *Iyomili* (paddling of the canoe). He contended that *Omu* is expected to

provide one big cow, one big live goat, one carton of each brands of beer, one carton of Hennessy or Gordon gin, plenty kola-nuts and garden eggs and a cash of one hundred thousand Naira only, and food for the chiefs to establish her admission into the council of *Ikie-ani*. Other rituals involve *Iyo-mili*, *Ilo ani ebo* and *Ilo ugba Omu* ceremony. According to Esogbue (2016), a woman found to be possessed by fair share of wisdom and proven leadership character is bestowed the *Omu* title. This type of position is attained by women who have been married and possibly with children but currently single, which means a divorcee or widow whose husband's final traditional burial rites must have been performed.

According to respondents, a third exception to oracular pronouncement, is that a mentally disabled and a woman with criminal records as well as whose paternity could not be traced to any quarter referred to as *ebo/Idumu* cannot become *Omu*. However, they contended that such a woman could be naturally integrated into the *Ndi-Omu* or *Otu-Omu* through marriage. According to Ndili (2016), in some cases in Anioma culture the issue of *Omu* in the pre-colonial era was placed on the barren and old woman in the community. An example of a community where the position of an *Omu* is placed on a barren and old woman is Atuma-Iga while Okpanam represents a community where it is rooted in a particular extended family.

However, a respondent contended that with the advent of colonialism and its attendant proliferation of western education, and increased growth in the elitist classes, the traditional process of selection was jettisoned and altered. He contended that this has yielded the noticeable outcome of communal quest for educated and famous *Omu*. This line of thought has become all embracing as it affords the educated elites and the wealthy opportunity to assume the position of *Omu* without recourse to tradition and history. According to respondent, this is seen as an aberration of custom as these civilised women are in no way connected to the traditional lineage expected to ascend the throne (IDI at Ibusa 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2018). However, this is not the focus of this study. It also calls for further study.

According to *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo*, the *Omu* is the mother of the community. However, her position does not imply parallel in the village as she is subject to the *Obi*. She has been called to carry-out ritual sacrifices that protect the entire community

from any form of evil. She contended that no matter her level of education and exposure, she performs spiritual exercises and supervises the women and the market. What is clear is that the major role of the institution is to ensure there is peace in the community (KII in Akwukwu-Igbo on 15<sup>th</sup>, March, 2018). In several interviews with both men and women visited for field work, they confirmed that whatever the challenges facing the community, an *Omu* could go extra miles to protect her community. Cases where the *Omu* cannot prevail alone, such issues were referred to the *Obi-in-council*. Responding to the question of roles of the institution, the acting *Omu* of Ibusa confirms that the *Omu* gives directives to the women through the *Otu-Omu* or *Ndi-Omu*. Ndili (2010) supports this line of thinking arguing that *Otu-Omu* assisted in the market supervision and other activities that affect the women folk. The *Omu* Anioma asserted that the *Omu* appoints the *Otu-Omu* from the different quarters that made up such community; this appointment is done in line with the consent of such women who had fulfilled the requirements for selection into the institution. According to her, in communities where *Otu-Omu* has been dissolved following the demise of *Omu*, the new *Omu* is also free to select new members or a mixture of some new and some from the disbanded members or retain the old members.

Respondents explained that in recognition of the towering influence of the *Omu* over the market which emanates from the perception of her motherly image in the village. The market is closed down at her demise for *Oge esa* (seven days) as part of her mourning rites. This is also replicated in the *Obi*. According to respondents, it is the duty of the *Omu* to carry out sacrifices in the market before commencement of every market section. This is meant to ensure that trading activities boom in the market and traders prosper in their businesses conducted in the market site. It is their contention also that sacrifices performed by the *Omu* in the market also wade off evil spirits that cause confusion and frustrate trading activities. According to them, the *Omu* constructs her *Ogwa* meaning shrine in the market site where violators of the rules guiding the conducts in the market were judged.

According to Respondents in all communities visited for the fieldwork, the presence of the *Omu* in the market place is a catalyst to peacemaking. It is also the contention of the respondents that the erecting of the *Ogwa-Omu* in the market place also serves as potent craft for peacemaking. It is the view of respondents that beyond the *Ogwa*

(palace) situated at the paternal compound of the *Omu*, the *Ogwa* at the market square is a viable site for mediation efforts as cases are treated and reconciled with dispatch at the market site. Respondents also acclaimed that the *Omu's Ogwa* in the market is a symbolism of the presence of the dead elders and it represents an important strategy to peacemaking efforts under the control of the *Omu*. This brings to fore the roles of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking.

The *Obi Akwukwu-Igbo* in a key informant interview conducted on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018 contended that the *Omu* is the catalyst that mobilises the women and the youths towards upholding right attitudes that promotes peaceful co-existence. The respondent recounted that owing to values attached to certain ethical concepts such as the *ezi nmadu* or *ezi nwa* or *nwanta* which is synonymous to the Yoruba ethical philosophy *Omoluabi*, it is the duty of the *Omu* to encourage women to be good mothers and wives to their children and husbands. According to him, events such as infidelity in marriages are abhorred and can easily eradicate entire family. He contended that early exposition of the implications of these vices, especially in this era of inter-tribal and cultural marriage will curb cases of divorces in marriages and in some cases the wrath of the ancestors and the gods of the land. The effects of unethical practices on marriages in Anioma clan is not the subject of this research, however, it is needful to argue that the act of adultery in marriages in these communities where visited with shame and ancestral wraths such as bareness, insanity and swollen belly.

#### **4.2.3 The structure of *Otu-Omu***

The general agreement is that the *Otu-Omu* was mainly elderly women who work closely with the *Omu*. What is clear is that the women folk in Anioma culture only have the highest cadre of female chieftaincy title in its village which is the *Omu* title. However, it has her cabinet members known as *Otu-Omu* or *Ndi-Omu* or *Ndi-Ollogo*. According to respondents the position of *Ndi-Omu* evolved from *Otu-rasa*. Nwanze (2005:6) describes the *Otu-Omu* as women of approximate age with male *Ndi-chi* meaning the red cap chiefs as found in Okpanam and *Otu-raza* meaning male age grade that works closely with the Azagba in the case of Asaba. While Ndili (2010:179) sees the *Otu-Omu* as selected group of women, usually of the *Omu's* age, who work with the *Omu* in the performance of her duties. It was reported that, the *Otu-Omu* attend the *Izu-ani*. They explained that *Ndi-Omu* must not necessarily be wives to the



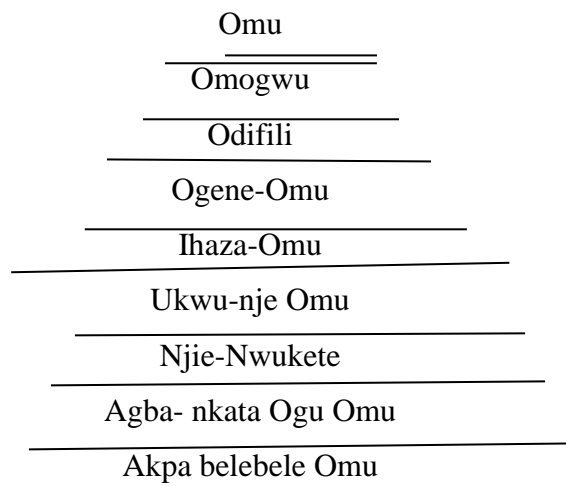
king or the *Olinezele* but must be respected members of the community this affirms the validity of the *Omolouabi* concept alluded by Akinyemi (2015). The position of *Otu-Omu* is recognised and revered. What is unique about the institution is that it is only attained by appointment. According to respondents in some communities, memberships of the *Otu-Omu* are drawn from the various *Ebo* (villages) in that community. For instance, in case of Asaba, it is drawn from the five villages that made up the town.

*Onu diokpa* Okpanam asserts that this traditional method of selecting women from the various *ebo* or *Idumu* is a peacemaking mechanism as every *ebo* is represented in the council and is still in existence. While there are no initiation ceremonies into the various titles bestowed on these women, the *Omu* confers titles peculiar to the institution on them as she appoints them without following any criteria. The *Omu* Akwukwu confirms this position by contending that she appoints her cabinets as the need arises. According to her, the roles of *Otu-Omu* start from home keeping, maintaining fidelity, and market orderliness. *Nne Omu* Okpanam contended that if a woman violates any of the market rules she will be apprehended by the *Otu-Omu* and taken to the *Omu* who presides over the matter. According to respondents, if a woman engages in stealing in the market place, it is more likely for other traders to catch her and report to the *Otu-Omu*. It was their duty to invite the accused to the *Ogwa Omu* (palace).

A respondent from Ibusa emphasised that the *Otu-Omu* had powers of intervening in cases of brutality, whether domestic or otherwise, against women. This position was confirmed by the *Obi* Akwukwu-Igbo, who emphasised that their position could be likened to the contemporary women activists. What is clear is that under the *Omu*-in-council, with the clarion call of the *Omu*, the women mobilise themselves for general working activities during village festivals. They are responsible for the mobilisation of female folks for cleaning the shrines and market sites. It is possible for the *Otu-Omu* to be summoned by the *Omu* to deliberate on issues that affect women. They settle minor conflicts among women in the market and the community. They also summon defaulters to *Ogwa Omu*. They have the traditional role of arresting and imposing fines on men and women that violate the traditional code guiding marriage, adultery and extended family issues. The *Otu-Omu* serves as informant and adviser to the *Omu* and

assists in carrying out ritual sacrifices. In essence, the *Otu-Omu* is responsible to the *Omu-in-council*. *Omu* and *Otu-Omu* from time to time perform certain sacrifices and rituals that promote peace in the community. She contends that mysterious occurrences such as incessant deaths of youths, deaths of pregnant women, and outbreaks of epidemics were seen as mysteries whenever it befalls the people and it must be averted. Kuby (2006) has identified the use of rites and sacrifices of animal as a means of appeasing the gods in Bewku region of Ghana. According to him, these rites were performed with the invocation of incantations calling on the spirit of the ancestors and gods of the earth to forgive us humans for all we have erred against her. This rite is important since it is the first step to making peace. It must be emphasised that in almost all the communities visited for field work the *Otu-Omu* is in place and has served as compeer to the *Omu*.

The *Otu-Omu* was saddled with responsibilities and eligibility was tied to credibility, honesty, and integrity. This fits into the ethical philosophy of *Omoluabi* concept that for one to assume certain position he/she must possess certain acceptable characteristics that distinguishes such a one from others. This corroborates with Biose (2014:36) that *Otu-Omu* were women of impeccable characters who perform spiritual function of cleansing and sanctification of the kingdom and therefore functions as a major intercessor of the community.



**Figure 4.1** The political structure and social hierarchy of the *Omu* Institution  
(Source: Nwaneze 2005:5)

#### 4.2.4. The influence of *Omu* Institution in Peacemaking

While the existences of chieftaincy institutions in Nigeria are rooted in primordial antecedences, there is no doubt that the essence of the institution is to preserve the people's customs, history and traditions. Irrefutably, the influence exerts by traditional institutions in their communities revolve round trust, integrity and confidence the people bestow on them. Thus, this study discovered that *Omu* institution exerts great deal of influence in peacemaking in Anioma clan for several reasons which will be discussed extensively.

Thus, it was discovered from the field that the *Omu* institution is influential in peacemaking because of the confidence people have in them. An *Olinzele* in Asaba pointed out that what is referred as confidence today is the capacity of the institution to dispense justices without partiality and fear. He stated further, that the place of the institution as the representatives of the gods, keeps members on toes while managing issues no matter the enormity and sensitivity of information at their disposal. Likewise, he attributed confidence built around the institution to the belief that to occupy certain position of authority in Anioma community such as *Olinezele* or *Obi* certain virtue would have been found in such an individual or group of people. He explained that while certain virtues are inborn, positions of authority sharpen one's disposition. The institution was seen or regarded as *Olinzele*. It was also discovered that *Olinzele* in Anioma socio-cultural milieu means chiefs. He further disclosed that *Olinzele* in Anioma towns and villages were held in high esteem. Thus, it was easy for members of the community to trust their decisions.

Similarly, a respondent confirmed that in Anioma culture, elders are well respected. This finding is in line with Olanipekun (2017) that in an *Omoluabi* society, elders were accorded unreserved respect by all and sundry. Consequently, for any institution to earn the confidence of her subject, it would have exhibited excellent qualities that placed them above board other members of the community. An *Omu* designate agreed that women take their cases to *Omu* institution for settlement (IDI conducted in Ibusa March 16, 2018). In the opinion of another member of *Otu-Omu*, cases taken to the institution were treated and kept confidential by members. In her words: "*members keep "secret" "secret" no matter what*". She added that *Omu* institution is in-charge of the women and trade in the clan. She submitted that cases such as infidelity,

widowhood practices, female inheritance and so on fall within *Omu*'s jurisdictions or purview (Interview with a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa March 23, 2018).

According to respondent, the mediatory role of the institution makes it significant in peacemaking. Acting *Omu* Ibusa Mrs Kentua, pointed out that the institution plays the role of mediator, customary arbitrator as well as adjudication. She argued that the nature of the issues on ground will determine the approaches to be adopted. This brings to fore the submission of Adekunle (2015) that mediation and customary arbitration are widely used approaches in traditional conflict resolution and management processes. It also alludes to Brown and Marriot (2012), that mediation and customary process are forms of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in which the parties in dispute are guided by independent third party. A respondent explained that arbitrators are not hired. This is because they were elders knowledgeable in the custom and traditions of the people (Interview with HRH *Obi* Azuka, March 26, 2018)

Equally, *Omu* Anioma Dr. Martha Dunkwu, explained that the motherhood role of the institution in Anioma Kingdom made people believe in their peacemaking agency (Interview with *Omu* Anioma in Okpanam, March 13, 2018). Studies have shown that mothers possess some innate characteristics that earn them the accolade of peacemakers (Ajoko-Adebanjo, 2013; Oluyemi-Kusa, 2009; Nwoye, n.d). These characteristics include; patient, commitment, respect, love and diligence. Mrs Oragbue, explained that *Omu* is the mother of the community. According to her, the position makes the *Omu* share in the plights of individuals and the community at large. She submits that one of the primary roles of the institution is to oversee the wellbeing of the women and that is exactly what they are doing. In her words: "*women in Anioma believe so much in the Omu because they are the only one that can fight for them*" (Interview at Asaba, March 21, 2018). The foregoing response aligns with Nwanze (2005:6) that *Omu* has the supreme authority in customs concerning women affairs.

Still probing on the influence of the *Omu* institution on peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom, response from the FGD conducted across the four communities show that the maternal role of the institution in Anioma clan makes it possible for members of the community to turn to the *Omu* institution especially when administrative demands of the town tends to overwhelm the *Obi*. Substantiating the foregoing, a member of *Otu-Omu* in Akwukwu-Igbo disclosed that, in the instance where things are not going

on well in the community, the first question people ask is “*where is the Omu? Is Omu in this town? what is the Omu doing or what is she saying with respect to the happenings in town?*” (Interview with a respondent in Akwukwu-Igbo, March 30, 2018).

The submission of the respondent reflects the spiritual roles of the institution. It also fits into the submission of Esogbue (2016) that the *Omu* possesses supernatural powers that help to portend the future. It also upholds Ndili (2010) that an *Omu* designate must possess extra-eyes that will make her keep the spiritual and physical antenna of the community healthy. It also substantiates Nwanze (2005) that the *Omu* finds solutions to all natural and metaphysical problems of the *Obi*, and hence the town and the kingdom. It could therefore be deduced that the spiritual roles of the institution coupled with their motherhood agency makes peacemaking processes in the clan effective.

From the above, it is important to also mention that the *Omu* institution serves as the visor of the gods commanding great influence. This study has similarly established that the institution from inception, exercise both sacral and profane powers. Thus, *Omu* Anioma, Dr. Martha Dunkwu explained that the duties of *Ndi-Omu* are “*70% spiritual, 10% looking after the women, 10% looking after the market and 10% dedicated to other things*”. She pointed out that the institution communicates with the ancestors daily on behalf of the members of the community. She told the researcher that the peace enjoyed in the kingdom is as a result of the cordial relationships existing between them and their ancestors. In her words “*we cannot attribute the peace we enjoy in this clan to ourselves or any individual, but our ancestors and the gods of the land whom I call guardian angels*” (Interview with *Omu* Anioma, March 12, 2018).

Lending credence to the foregoing, *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo explained that the institution liaises with the ancestor to know their mind and in some cases communicate the needs of the people to them. She explained that the institution carries out ritual sacrifices to appease the gods on behalf of the people when they err. At this point, the researcher sought to know the correlation between the sacrifices carried by the institution and their influence on peacemaking. The respondent explained that the ritual sacrifices carried by the institution are to build, and promote peaceful coexistence between the ancestral world and their progeny. She further explained that if they are not able to

build this relationship, there will be confusion everywhere and the ancestors may visit them with different types of evil. In her words: “*it is when we make peace with our ancestors that we will enjoy the same peace*” (Interview with *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo* 26/3/2018). Consequently, for a society to sustain the peace, it must maintain unbroken relationship with the ancestors. The explanation of *Omu Anioma* substantiates Nwanze (2005) that the *Omu* institution protects the town against all evil and manners of abominations that defiles relationships with the ancestors.

Furthermore, Acting *Omu* Ibusa, explained that it is this spiritual role of the institution that necessitated the annual purification of the monarch and his subject. She adds that “*when we talk of purification, it could be physical or spiritual*”. She submits that the purification of the monarch in Anioma clan is a spiritual exercise that can only be carried out by the *Omu* institution with the assistant of *ndi-dibia* or *Otu-Ihaza* in the case of Asaba. According to her:

The purification am talking about, is not an issue of discussion, because, it takes those that are involved to have a deep understanding of the concept of purification of the monarch (Interview with Acting *Omu* Ibusa, March 23, 2018).

All the *Omu* interviewed agreed that the cleansing and purification of the monarch and his subject is largely the responsibility of the *Omu* institution. The FGD conducted for women across the communities studied also indicated that the purification of the monarch and his subject were done annually and it was done by the *Omu* institution. This affirms the opinion of Ndili (2010), Oseghale and Osiki (2010) that *Omu* is responsible for the ritual purification of the *Obi* and the entire people ... at the annual rededication of the *Obi* during the annual *Ofala* festival and it upholds the views of Boise (2014) that, *Omu* society performs spiritual functions of cleansing and sanctification of the kingdom and therefore functions as a major intercessor institution of the community

Another respondent who is an *Olinzele* in Ibusa, explained that the annual purification of the monarch and his subject is important because, it prepares the monarch spiritually for the New Year as well as opens new doors for the progress and wellbeing of the people. In his words:

The annual purification of the monarch is a kind of spiritual exercise that does not only prepare the king for the New Year, but also a cord that brings the relevance of all the

*Olinzele*. It promotes oneness and unity among the *Olinzele* (KII conducted in Ibusa, March 16, 2018).

The overriding response from all the respondents indicated that the annual purification of the monarch and his subject is a task exclusive of *Omu* institution and the performance of this role shows that no arm of governance in Anioma clan can work in isolation. It also serves as a peacemaking strategy. This is because it creates a form of cordiality among the various institutions. This finding validates the *Ubuntu* concept propounded by Tutu (1995) that “I am because you are.”

Furthermore, a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa explained that *Omu* institution is influential in peacemaking because of the cordial relationship that exists between them and other traditional institutions in Anioma Kingdom (Interview with a respondent in Ibusa, March 16, 2018). Meanwhile, the FGD conducted for women across the communities indicated that there is cordial relationship between the *Omu* institution and other traditional institutions in the clan.

*Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo further gave an insight into how this relationship has helped the institution sustained peaceful co-existence in the Kingdom. According to her, it is as a result of this relationship the *Omu* institution has been able to gain the support of the monarch and other chiefs in the clan. This relationship has to a large extent helped them to gain the respect of members of the community. She admitted that:

This is not to say that we do not have misunderstanding among ourselves, we do; but we try as much as possible to settle them, because we are one. If not the *Obi* has the right to overrule the decision of the *Omu* institution where there is no accord, but it is because there is oneness when *Omu* gives verdicts on an issue it becomes binding on the party or parties concerned (Interview with *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo, March 26, 2018)

Meanwhile, most of the respondents identified trust as basic ingredient of peacemaking. This was also corroborated by FGD conducted for youths in March 26, 2018 in Akwukwu-Igbo. Therefore, for an institution to play effective role of peacemaking, membership of such an institution must be trustworthy. Ajayi and Buhari (2014) opine that a mediator must be trust worthy in order to gain the confidence of parties in conflict. Consequently, it may be safe to say at this point, that the peacemaking role of the institution is that of a third party intervention.



Engaging the foregoing phenomenon from another point of view, a member of *Otu-Omu* who represents the *Otu-Owolo* ruling house in Ibusa disclosed that the members of the institution are influential in peacemaking because of their vast knowledge in the traditions and customs of Anioma people. She explained further that this has helped them to quickly grasp situations, understand its complexity, dynamics and proffer workable solutions.

Furthermore, the influence of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking, a respondent in Ibusa who is not a member of *Otu-Omu* but had lived in Ibusa for a very long time confirmed that the members of the institution could influence peace in the community because they are always available and approachable. This was supported by Acting *Omu* Ibusa in an IDI conducted in March 23, 2018 that the members of the institution are always available to attend to both physical and spiritual needs of their people. In her words “*Omu does not go too far from the community, but if she does, she must detail members who will be there to attend to the people*” Thus, her response corresponds with Akpuh (2013) that the *Omu* is divinely selected to attend to the welfare of people in the community.

Equally, the overwhelming response of women FGD conducted in Okpanam and Asaba admitted that the *Omu* institution represents the womenfolk in *Izuani*. They pointed out that because the *Omu* is a woman, she understands full well the plights of the women and youths (male and female) in the various communities. They submit that without this institution in Anioma communities, women would have continued to suffer from some cultural practices that are humiliating. The researcher wanted to know some of the practices they referred to as humiliating. One of the participants at the FGD conducted for women in Okpanam pointed out that some of those practices include: denial of right of inheritance by a female child, widowhood practices and adultery. She further explains that it was the *Omu* Okpanam/Anioma that helped them to speak with the elders in their community with regards to certain traditions in existence and today instead of a woman mourning for one year; the duration has been reduced to three months. Again, women are no longer subjected to wearing black dresses as mourning cloth.

Likewise, another participant from a different point of view explained that the position of members of *Omu* institution in Anioma communities, has to a large extent promoted cooperation and social cohesion among women. Where women in the past lack

consensus, *Omu* will bring them together and help them channel their concerns to the council of elders. This is consistent with Oseghale and Osiki (2010), Esogbue (2016a) that *Omu* has the duty of training women in moral and civic responsibilities.

Still probing on the influence of the institution in peacemaking, Acting *Omu* Ibusa, disclosed that marriage is a sacred union between adult men and woman/women. It is a covenant that must be kept. She submits that Anioma people believe that a healthy society is a determinant of the individual families that make up the society. In this wise, it is the duty of everybody to ensure that others living within his/her neighbourhood is fine. She further explained that, the *Omu* institution is interested in what goes on in families and that they try as much as possible to wade into connubial conflicts and settles it immediately before it becomes widespread. The explanation of acting *Omu* corresponds with Esogbue (2016a) that *Omu* institution ensures domestic peace in homes by ensuring that disciplinary measures are taken against any erring member of the community.

Participants in the FGD conducted for women, strongly maintained that *Omu* institution does not joke with sanctity in marriage. Thus, it is their duties to train women on how to keep their homes. This is because infidelity in marriage is a taboo in Anioma social cultural setting. Ikenwe (2012) notes that in Anioma culture, infidelity and flirtation by married women is about the most serious in marital offences. It is essential to understand that infidelity in marriage can create and perpetuate serious tension and conflict within social cultural groups. Thus, making fanatic effort to reduce or avert it promotes healthy and peaceful environment and helps build social cohesion in families.

Therefore, from the deductive point of view, it can be contingent that the connubial role of the institution foster tolerance and lay ground work for voluntary behaviour consistent with social norms, that constitutes a pervasive commitment to voluntary compliance to broadly constituted social norms and active tolerance for differences among social groups. It further reinforces the *Omoluabi* concept in the sense that the fear of losing one's *Omoluabi* can, to some extent, ensure that one sticks to the right attitudes that unite the entire system.

*Aka-Omu* Okpanam, members of *Otu-Omu* representing *Otu-Owolo*, *Otu-Odogwu* and *Otu-Iyase* in Ibusa identified market supervision and regulation as one of the major

influences of the institution. This was also corroborated with the interview conducted in March 29, 2018 in Asaba. Therefore, beyond the spiritual influence wade by this institution, Olasupo and Afolabi (2010) has observed that women traditional chiefs performed the role of overseeing the activities at the market site; it also upholds Esogbue (2016a) that *Omu* enacts rules and regulations for the smooth running of the market. It also presupposes that beyond the spiritual influence of the institution, market supervision is a reality in *Omu* Institution.

### **4.3 The peacemaking mechanism adopted by the institution**

#### **4.3.1 *Ije-alilio mgbayali* (plea for forgiveness)**

The general consensus from the field is that wherever there are people in the society, conflict will always arise, most of which could lead to offences among the people. We realised also that people react differently to offences: some trivialise them, some forgive even without being asked to (in other words, these people do not wait for the offender to come asking for forgiveness before they forgive them), while yet others hold on tightly to the offence, grieving and seeking avenues to revenge. Consequently, *be mmefie adina, mgbayali a ya dia* which is translated as where there is no offence, there can be no forgiveness.

According to *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo*, *Ije-alilio mgbayali* is as old as man. She explained that she grew up to hear the elders say *onye alilio a bu hu onye ule* meaning he who apologises or asks for forgiveness when he/she observes that he has offended the other person is not a coward. She argued that *Ije-alilio mgbayali* means going to ask for forgiveness. She explains that *Ije-alilio mgbayali* indicates acknowledging one's fault and taken a step to apologise. Consequently, in most tribes it is acceptable and it could be done directly by the person who committed the offence or on his/her behalf by the elders or members of the immediate/extended families depending on the type of crime committed.

An *Olinzele* in Asaba threw more light on, *Ije-alilio mgbayali*. According to him, the concept of *Ije-alilio mgbayali* could also be traced to the biblical days. Citing the Old Testament book of First Samuel Chapter 25 verses 23-35, he argued that when Nabal offended King David by denying his servants the request to graze the king's flock of sheep with his, his wife Abigail was informed of the imminent danger. She saddled her horse and went to meet King David and pleaded for forgiveness on behalf of her

husband. He further added that their ancestors also employed *Ije- alilio mgbayali* whenever they are at conflict with their neighbouring communities. He concluded that in the time past, *Ije-alilio mgbayali* had helped to build lasting relationships between individuals as well as communities (IDI at Asaba, March 19, 2018).

Corroborating the forgoing, findings from the field revealed that the most prominent peacemaking mechanism of the *Omu* institution is *Ije-alilio mgbayali*. According to an *Olinzele* in Asaba, Anioma people believe much that when you err, you should acknowledge your errors and apologise. This could be done directly by the offender or indirectly by the members of his family or elders in his *Idumu or Ebo* (quarters) depending on the offence committed (Interview Asaba, March 20th, 2018).

A member of the *Otu-Omu* in Okpanam also lends her voice to the foregoing. According to her, “there is nobody that is above saying sorry for wrong doings and as an institution when certain cases are brought to us for the sake of peace, we always ask the culprit to toe the path of begging the person he/she has wronged” (Interview at Okpanam, March 12,2018). This submission upholds the principle of *Ubuntu* that parties need to come together in order to re-build and maintain social trust and social cohesion with a view to preventing a culture of vendetta from developing and escalating between individuals, families and societies as a whole (Murithi, 2006 :26).

Furthermore, *Omu* Anioma gave an instance where the *Otu-Omu* had to plead on behalf of the youths. According to her, as a fall out of the creation of Delta State, some communities around the state capital were included as part of the state capital territory and one of such communities is Okpanam. The implication of this development was the indiscriminate selling of family lands by the youths without due consideration for their future. She explained that based on that, she invited the youths for a meeting telling them the implications of their actions, but they continued. The *Otu-Omu* continued enlightening them on the consequences of their action in the future. After that, the youth understood that what the *Omu* was telling them is for their benefits and finally asked for forgiveness and pledged to work with the *Omu* in that respect. (Interview at Oshimili North LGA, March 12, 2018).

Deepening the process of land sales in Anioma clan and in consummating the peaceful resolution of the seemingly impasse in towns and villages in the Kingdom, the youths were further charged to follow due process in land deals. This process essentially

involves the notification of the head of the immediate family the diokpa, who in turn will gather his kindred in a meeting to decide whether to sell their family's land or not. Where consensus was reached as to sell, a proper agreement is drawn with all legitimate parties in consent, even as far as involving the overall highness of the community (*Obi*).

Probing further into the concept of *Ije-alilio mgbayali*, a respondent agreed that it is as old as man and it can be applied in all situations of life. He contended that, *Ije-alilio mgbayali* does not portray cowardice as some people may think; rather it is a very potent peaceful way of building lasting relationships. This aligns with Boutros-Ghali's (1992) description of peacemaking as action to bring hostile parties to agreement especially through peaceful means. It also substantiates Noll (nd) that peacemaking implies the use of cooperative, constructive process to resolve conflicts while restoring relationships. Likewise, a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa avers that there were several instances; *Ije- alilio mgbayali* had healed ancient acrimonies (Interview with a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa, March 30, 2018). It could be deduced that once the fear of vulnerability is neutralised, people can aspire to their high and find solution to their problems.

It could be inferred from the aforementioned that *Ije-alilio mgbayali* as a peacemaking approach is fundamental to building a lasting relationship. It promotes confidence and consensus building in a society. It concerns a deeper way of looking at conflicts than just winning or losing, but rather as opportunity for people to grow, to accept responsibility for relationships they are into and for potential apology and forgiveness. The general consensus is that *Ije-alilio mgbayali* is not targeted at the individual peace, but rather the general peace of the community. This upholds the principle of *Omoluabi* propounded by Abimbola (2008).

#### **4.3.2 *Ido- akanti* (warning)**

Findings from the field show that the origin of *Ido-akanti* can be traced to pre-colonial Anioma era. It was observed from history that in Anioma culture, elders engaged the *ido-akanti* approach in two different but related scenarios. Firstly, *ido-akanti* was used to draw the attention of people to issues or circumstances that have the potential to inflict injuries or pains to them and ultimately the community. In this wise, it serves as a note of caution, in order to avert calamity, as the saying goes 'to be forewarned is to

be forearmed'. On the second stance, *ido-akanti* serves as a warning to a first offender or less offender, for the offence committed for which outright punishment is waived or deferred. In other words, although an acknowledgment of the offence is made, it is assumed that its weight does not yet warrant the meting out of the full sanction.

Accordingly, *Ido-akanti* portrays notice before the consequences that will probably follow continuance in some particular course. Basically, in Anioma cosmology, *Ido* means to pull or to draw, *aka* means hand, and *nti* means ear or the ear. Literarily therefore, *Ido-akanti* means the drawing of an un-listening ear to the impending danger of his or her stubbornness or disobedience to constituted norms and values of the community which have grave consequences.

*Ido-akanti* therefore is another mechanism for peacemaking in *Omu* institution. It is a kind of signal that will enable an offender to sit up. According to respondents, when a woman feels that she is being maltreated by her husband, for example, she has the right to pack to the *Omu*'s house to seek temporary refuge. It is the general belief that the *Omu* is the mother of the community and as such has the right to protect any member of the community that come to her. According to a member of *Otu-Omu*, no man has the right to bully or batter his wife in the presence of an *Omu*. She avers that once a man notices that his wife has packed to *Ogwa Omu*, he will run down to the *Ogwa Omu*. Accordingly, when he gets there, his wife will be hidden for a number of days while he comes each passing day pleading and assuring the *Omu* that he will never maltreat his wife again. According to her, once the remorse is seen in him, his wife will be released. At this point he will be asked not to sleep in a separate room or bed. This is to enable them form a closer bonding relationship. She contended that as a matter of fact, the man will be instructed not to eat separately for a given period of time and even if he is hungry, he has to wait until his wife returns from wherever she has gone to. The researcher wanted to know the implication of the instruction. She was told that it will make the man to appreciate the worth of the woman (Interview with a member of *Otu-Omu* in Okpanam, March 13, 2018).

#### Case Study: *Ido-akanti*

A participant from the FGD organised for youths at Akwukwu-Igbo, March 30, 2018, told the researcher a story of an event that happened which she regarded as *Ido-akanti*. According to her, there was a woman that was fond of cooking late at night. In the

evening when other women were busy preparing meals for their families, she will be visiting other people's houses. It happened one day, that in her usual way, she wanted to commence her late cooking, she found out that she needed firewood to make fire but unfortunately there was none. The only option for her was to break the log of wood behind her kitchen into pieces. So she picked up the axe and started the process of breaking the wood. She said that in course of doing that, a member of *Otu-Omu* came and ceased the axe the woman was using.

According to the respondent, at this point, she started accusing her neighbours of secretly inviting *Ndi-Omu* to her home. However, when she got to *Ogwa-Omu* she was told that it was the noise of the axe that attracted *Ndi-Omu* to her house. *Omu* warned her to desist from such act as it was a serious taboo to break firewood at night. She was also asked to apologise to her neighbours for accusing them wrongly which she did. The role played by the institution is consistent with Moore (1996:15) cited in Godong (2009) that mediation is "intervention in a negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision-making power but who assists the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute.

#### *Ida-nha.*

Findings from the field also revealed that most of the peacemaking mechanism of the institute have being in existence before the advent of the colonial masters. Gleaning from the respondents, the concept of *Ida-nha* is as old as the Anioma culture. An *Olinzele* who has written extensively on the culture of Anioma people, averred that *Ida-nha* in Anioma culture entails drawing one's attention to his/her wrong doings and trying to correct such a person with the intent that such a one will desist from continuing in the wrong doings.

He added that *Ida-nha* can be traced to pre-colonial Anioma setting where legend has it that fines were imposed on violators of certain customary laws of the land. He stated that such fine varies depending on the offence committed. He stated further that it could be in form of picking up any goat or fowl from the street for a person who did not show up in clearing the community surroundings or roads leading to the farms or any other communal based assignments. In this case, he avowed, that when such incidence occurs, the offender will look for the owner of the animal picked from the

street be it fowl or goat and settle the bill. He concluded that this was done to serve as deterrent to others, who may want to toe the path of disobedient (IDI at Asaba, March 19, 2018).

*Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo lend her voice to the foregoing, according to her *Ida-nha* may be applied to heavy or light offences and it is expected to be fulfilled by the offender or where the offender absconds or is not capable his kinsmen will pay such fine on his behalf. She added that a situation where *nha* is not fulfilled by the offender, the kindred or the entire town may on their own take further action on the offender. She further explained that the people may allow such a person carry over the *nha* or excommunicate him or otherwise, the people may also decide not to participate in any traditional ceremony involving the person such as naming, burial or marriage until the fine is redeemed.

Respondents, agreed that *Ida-nha* means imposing fine on culprits and violators of the domestic rules of the institution. According to them these rules include late cooking (*Esiniuchichi*), breaking firewood after the chicken would have roasted, and pounding food at night. *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo explained that when a woman is found or reported to cook late, the *Otu-Omu* has the right to carry her pot to *Ogwa Omu* while she will be expected to come to *Otu-Omu* to explain while she is cooking late and for her to carry her pot back, she will be asked to pay certain amount of money to redeem whatever would have been ceased by *Otu-Omu* as well as vows never do that again. Another respondent also argued that if a woman is caught breaking fire wood after the chicken has roasted and other animals such as goat or sheep has gone into their pen, her axe will be taken and ceased until she explained while she is breaking wood at odd time and if found pounding food, the pestle will be taken away.

When the researcher wanted to know why such actions were taken, a member of *Otu-Omu* averred that a woman cooking late at night especially in a peri-urban community like ours, is exposing her family to spiritual attacks. She explained further, that most kitchens are built outside the main house unlike the modern buildings, so spirits are bound to move freely once it is late. Again, there were cases when the husbands of such women will come to report them to us. You can imagine a situation where the



man would have worked assiduously through the day only to come back home without his food made ready. It can trigger conflict.

Deeping the concept of *Ida-nha* Another member of *Otu-Omu* in that community also states that as a matter of law, no trader is expected to be inside the market once it is 6.00pm. She gave reasons for the assertion. According to her, closing the market early is a way of ensuring that women return to their various homes on time to prepare meals for their family members. The respondent also explained that the *Omu* institution is very much interested in what happens at the family level this is because the larger society is a compendium of the small family structure. (Interview with *Onu-Omu* at Akwukwu-Igbo March 30, 2018).

## C2. Case Study: *Ida-nha*

A participant of the FGD conducted for women at Okpanam narrated an incident that happened in 2017 when they re-located to Okpanam. According to her:

She is not a native of Okpanam, she got married in husband 2008 and since then they have been living in Lagos. In 2017, her husband's job with one of the banks stopped and they re-located back to the village. According to her, she has never heard about the *Omu* institution let alone what they do. So on that faithful day, she went to the market to buy food stuff and among the things she bought was a tuber of yam which she held on her right hand and the *bako* bag where she put other things on my left hand. All of a sudden, someone just came from nowhere and collected the tuber of yam and the bag from her. To her, it was embarrassing. At that point, she started dragging the bag with her, asking, what did she do Please, leave my bag! leave my bag! But the woman did not relent; she took my bag and the tuber of yam away while she followed her.

The reason participants from the FGD (March 29, 2018) advanced for the action taken by the member of *Otu-Omu* is that a single tuber of yam must not be held inside the market without tying a robe round it. This is because tying the rope round it is a means of honouring the gods of the land. It was also agreed that the gods do not return a seed yam planted in a single tuber. This is because after harvest, the yam will still reproduce the seed yam with which farmers will plant next season and so yam comes in multiples and must be tied together even as a single tuber anytime it was purchased. Another participant also pointed out that yam in Anioma cultural scene is regarded as the king of all crops and it must be honoured. Continuing in her narration,

She explained that at the point of struggling with the woman (a member of the institution) that people told her that the woman was

a member of *Otu-Omu*. She was actually taken to the shrine inside the market. She was told that those things have been ceased because she violated the laws of the institution. She pleaded and explained to them that she did not know that she was not supposed to carry things on two hands and that a single yam bought from the market must be tied round with a rope.

Furthermore, she explained that after much pleading and conviction from other market women, that she was a newcomer, she was asked to pay some fine instead of outright seizure of the things she bought. So she paid and her things were released to her.

Another participant also narrated her experience, this time with her baby strapped at her back.

One faithful day, she went to the market to buy things with her baby strapped at the back. According to her, the baby started crying and instead of her to stop and look for a convenient place to sit inside the market and breast feed the baby; she decided to pick the last item on her list before returning home. At that point, she was caught and taken to *Ogwa Omu* for violating the rule of the institution. Although she claimed ignorance, she was made to pay some fine for not attending to a crying child inside the market.

The foregoing is consistent with Esogbue (2016b) that the *Omu* institution has the responsibilities of regulating the activities at the market sites as well as placing fine on violator and defaulters of the rules of the institution.

#### *Nni Nligbama*

According to respondents in the FGD organised for women in Okpanam, March 12, 2018, *Nni Nligbama* in Anioma cosmology means eating together. According to them *Nni Nligbama* is indigenous to the people and has been an old way of reconciling conflicting parties. They explained that *Nni* means food while *gbama* means together when combined literarily, *Nni Nligbama* translates as food eaten together. In their explanation, *Nni Nligbama* takes its origin from the mere belief that there must be a symbolic display by conflicting parties to show that they have forgiven each other. Accordingly, they pointed out that one of the ways is through eating together from the same bowl of food. This agrees with Nabudere (nd) that the act of accompanying reconciliation with the consumption of food and drink is aimed at demonstrating the symbolic importance of reproduction of the human body as well as an expression of same shared humanity which is implied in reconciliation (p.11).

Furthermore, the respondents added that *Nni Nligbama* creates a sense of affinity or closeness as it is a proven evidence that no matter our differences we are still one. The

above explanation is consistent with the thesis of *Ubuntu* that life lived in a community should be a life lived with others as no one is an island in a communal setting Masango, (2006) cited in Breed and Semanya, (2015).

When the *Otu-Omu* settles conflicts between two parties, in order to ascertain if actually they have forgiven one another from the heart they were made to eat from the same plate of food. *Aka-Omu* Okpanam contends that usually, the *Omu* will present a plate of food before them, serve them water to wash their hands and thereafter they will cut the food and dip together from the same plate of soup. She added that while they eat together they are allowed to talk to each other and in some cases apologise and this is expressed in Anioma proverb that *nwanne bu ike oyi* (kinship strengthens friendship) (Interview with *Aka-Omu* at Okpanam, 12 March, 2018)

*Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo agrees with the foregoing when she explained that *Nni Nligbama* is built on the Anioma adage that *madu na nwnne a di a lini amupa* meaning one who is eating with his relative should not be suspicious. Situating *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo's view point, it could be deduced that for conflicting parties to eat together, they would have attained the stage of accepting blames from each other thereby amounting to win-win disposition. It also aligns with Boege (2006) that reconciliation is necessary for reestablishment of relationships between parties.

#### *Manya Nlagbma*

Unequivocally, that people derive their system of living from their culture is a truism. This system in turn determines how they interact with each other. Therefore, cultural attitudes provide the foundation for social norms by which people live, by internalising and sharing these cultural attitudes and values with their fellow community members, and handing them down to future generations.

Meanwhile, findings from the field reveals that *Manya Nlagbma* is another peacemaking approach adopted by the *Omu* institution among the Anioma people. What was gleaned from the communities visited is that most of these practices could be traced to the pre-colonial Anioma customs and that they are as old as the people themselves. From the findings, *Manya Nlagbma* is closely related to *Nni Nligbama*, however, while *Manya Nlagbma* involves the use of the locally brewed acholic drink

known as *kiki* or *ogogoro*, or the palm wine known as *manya ozu*; *Nni Nligbama* as discussed above involves eating together and preferably swallow.

The researcher was made to understand that in *Manya Nlagbma* either of those drinks mentioned above will be poured into *nkpa ozu* and shared among the conflicting parties. According to *Omu Anioma*, the conflicting parties will be made to drink from the same cup and thereafter the drink will be passed round to their relatives who have come to witness the process. The *Omu* stated further that *Manya Nlagbma* serves dual purposes; first, it will aid the removal of any form of suspicion that the parties may tend to have towards each other and secondly, involving family members will block any further a re-occurrence of such conflict by shadow parties within their family lineage whom was not identified as party to the conflict. The explanation of *Omu Anioma* is unswerving with Boege (2006) that in conflict situation, traditional social entities such as extended family's lineages, tribes, clans, religious brotherhoods and ethno linguistics groups become parties to violent conflicts introducing their own agenda into overall settings. This implies that people will begin to seek honour, profit and livelihood of life at the expense of community peace.

In furtherance, *Onu-diokpa* Okpanma in his view explained that *Manya Nlagbma* as a peacemaking approach is not restricted to the men folk, as people may think; it is also applicable to the women by the *Omu* institution. He explained further that it does not necessarily involve drinking to stupor; rather, one *nkpu-ozu* (calabash cup) is enough for more than five persons. He argued that what is important is for everyone involved to sip from the same wine poured into the same *nkpu-ozu* (Interview at Okpanam, March 13, 2018). Furthermore, he pointed out that *Manya Nlagbma* could also be regarded as a subtle way of building confidence among conflicting parties. The narration of respondent is consistent with Murithi (2009) that *Ubuntu* societies have put in place mechanisms for resolving disputes and promoting reconciliation among disputants with a view to healing past wrongs and maintaining social cohesion and harmony. This implies that *Manya Nlagbma* had been with the Anioma people and has continued to be passed from one generation to the other.

#### *Oji-ntagbama*

According to respondents at the FGD conducted in Asaba, March 29, 2018, *Oji-ntagbama* literarily means eating kolanut together. They made the researcher to

understand that *Oji* (kolanut) is symbolic in Anioma culture and that is why there is no cultural event in the clan where you will not find kolanut. They also told the researcher that kolanut must be part of the basic items that must be presented in any traditional outings such as festivals, marriages, burial, and naming ceremonies. They argued that it is also used for ancestral, gods and deities' worships. They submitted that just like the Igbos in the South Eastern Nigeria, kolanut is also celebrated in Anioma culture.

A member of *Otu-Omu* representing *Otu-Iyase* in Ibusa who was interviewed lends credence to this matter, she asserts that *Oji-ntagbama* is very symbolic in conflict resolution and peacemaking in Anioma culture as it does not only build confidence in the parties to conflict; it creates an assurance of total forgiveness. In her words:

*Oji-ntagbama* is like *Ibandu* (entering into a covenant or oath taking) and in breaking kolanut, the ancestors must be invited through prayers, so it is not a child's play and for people to accept *Oji-ntagbama* means the demise of such an issue that have brought them to *Otu-Omu*. In addition, it is not all species of kolanut that is acceptable for *Oji-ntagbama*. Preferably, the seven pieces kolanut is usually requested for that purpose (Interview at Ibusa, March 16, 2018).

The foregoing aligns with Nwoye (2011) that kolanut in Igbo cosmology symbolises appreciation and acceptance and it also justifies Cohen (1974) that symbol are objects, acts, concepts or linguistics formations that evokes sentiment, emotions and impel man to action and where they occur namely in stylised patterns of activities like, ceremonies, ritual gifts, exchanges presented in form of joking, taking oath, eating and drinking together (p.9).

Further probe into *Oji-ntagbama* shows that the seven pieces kolanut known as *oji Ibe asa* was preferable because in Anioma culture seven is seen as a perfect number and in conflict resolution, conflict parties' acceptance to *Oji-ntagbama* depicts acceptance of the verdicts of the mediators as well as a win-win outcome. Findings from the field also confirmed that *Oji-ntagbama* will further strengthen the newly restored relationship.

*Ndede* (Embrace)

According to *Ogbueshi* Ndili, the concept of *Ndede* is not new in Anioma culture and it could be traced to the pre-colonial era. He explained that it is rooted in the orientation Anioma people placed on the principle of reciprocity. He stated that this

principle is built on the folklore that is synonymous with the spirit of *Iwaji*. According to him, *Ndede* is replicated in the relationship between the farmer and *ani* (earth or soil) that is grounded on the seed yam notion. He avers that, *Iwaji* is a principle of regenerative relationship that is sanctioned by nature. According to him, the idea originates from the fact that *ani* does not exercise in her dealings with man the law of winner takes it all or revenge by given back to the farmer the old rotten yam planted. He posited that when land receives a gift of old yam from the farmer, she gives back to the farmer a brand new yam in appreciation for the old yam received.

He further stated that it is based on this ideology, the elders' demand that in dealing with their fellow human beings the principle of reciprocity should be observed. This is why an individual, who is offended, is always encouraged to forgive. He pointed out that the offended and the offenders were usually admonished to embrace (*Ndede*) themselves. This presupposes that the concept of *Ndede* agrees with *Ifiejoku* principle of reciprocity between the farmer and *ani* mediated by exchange of yam. This is because the offended is expected to accept apologies in the place of offence committed against him. Therefore, it is safe to say that it is this principle *Omu* institution employs in peacemaking in order to establish peaceful coexistence within the communities.

Meanwhile, to respondents at Ogbeogonogo in Asaba, *Ndede* means embrace. They agreed that *Ndede* is usually applied at the end of a conflict. According to them, *Ndede* is not alien to the people, it has been with us and it is non-violent approach of settling conflicts at family levels. They averred that *Ndede* is a household way of settling fights among siblings whenever they fight, a parent will usually ask them to embrace each other and ask for his/her forgiveness; and in some cases the elderly is asked to embrace the younger and pet such one to stop crying if such child is still crying. All these were considered as having positive influences on communal relationship (FGD conducted for women at Asaba, March 24, 2018).

According to Acting *Omu* Ibusa, *Ndede* is a non-coercive approach to peacemaking. It is voluntary, however, it is built on the saying that *Iwe nwanne a di elu na opopo* meaning the anger directed at your brother does not get to the bone marrow. Going by the explanation of the respondent, it is consistent with the saying that words of elders

are words of wisdom, which by virtue of age and experience ought to be adhered to. It also shows that the decisions of the elders are binding.

Similarly, in an in-depth interview with a respondent, a member of *Otu-Omu* in Asaba (March 21, 2018), she opines that in settling conflicts the *Omu* institution make use of *Ndede* and it is very common especially in the market site. This is because as traders they see themselves every time and if allowed to go home with animosity any time they quarrel, a time will come they will not have the joy in them to come to their stall whenever they remember they have someone they are keeping malice with, in the market; so any time they fight, we settle them by asking them to embrace each other as a sign of forgiveness. Corroborating the foregoing, respondents agreed that *Ndede* has helped to build cohesion and unity among traders and it is usually accomplished with the saying *gidigidi bu ugwu eze* meaning unity is our strength.

*Iha-aka* (hand shake)

The researcher was wondering how hand shake could be regarded as a peacemaking mechanism. According to *Omu Anioma*:

*Both in modern societies and ancient you cannot tell me that you have seen somebody shaking hands with a known enemy, it is not possible (Interview at Okpanam, March 12, 2018).*

Furthermore, a respondent an *Olinzele* in Okpanam pointed out that:

Most things that were used to settle fights and quarrels in the past by our ancestors looked foolish to us, just like the biblical instructions of a prophet asking someone who is a leper to go and dip himself into the river (Interview with *Olinzele* in Okpanam, 13 March, 2018).

Further findings show that *Iha-aka* transcends the superficial meaning of normal exchange of pleasantries such as “how” are you, “what’s up” and so on. In the deeper sense, *Iha-aka* is a therapy for healing ancient animosity was the response of a participant at the FGD at Okpanam. Therefore, beyond exchange of hands as a therapy for healing animosity, Njoki Kihui (2019), submits that it is also recommended in the business world as a way to make a good first impression, and the greetings is thought to date to ancient times as a way of showing a stranger you have no weapon (Beckman Institute for Advance Science and Technology (2012); *Iha-aka* enhanced the positive impact of avoidance behaviour on the evaluation of social interaction (Dolcos *et al.*, 2012).

Likewise, a member of *Otu-Omu* in Akwukwu-Igbo narrated that *Iha-aka* is an open declaration by conflicting parties that they have forgiven each other. According to her, they go beyond just *Iha-aka* to embracing themselves, while witnesses to the resolution will support them through clapping in affirmation that they have toed the right path of genuine reconciliation. She also pointed out that in some cases they can also hold themselves for minutes muttering words that could only be heard by them which may be assumed to be words of apologies for wrong doing and promises for future cordial relationship.

#### *Case Study: Iha-aka*

A participant at the FGD conducted for youth at Akwukwu-Igbo narrated how *Iha-aka* was used to settle a conflict between his father's wives. According to him, his father married two wives and his mother happens to be the second wife. His mother and her mate have been living very peacefully since they were married to his father. Meanwhile, his father is a farmer, at the same time he hunts for games around his farm and as a result any animal killed was brought home and shared between the two wives. It happened that his step mother was not around and his father returned from the farm with an antelope. His father dressed the animal and as usual shared it into two. But for the fact that it was getting late, his step mother was not back, his mother took one of the shares and made soup with it. He stated further that when his step mother came back she was annoyed why her mate took her share of the meat in her absence. At this point, conflict ensued and all efforts to settle it by his father failed. The case was reported to the *Omu* who settled them through *Iha-aka*.

The narration of this respondent upholds the principle of *Omoluabi* that dispute settlement can only be achieved by appealing to the *Omoluabi* of both parties which is believed to lie in the conscience/mind of everybody (Albert, 1995). This presupposes that for the parties to have allowed a handshake, their inner persons would have been intricately interwoven with the concept of the family to which they belong and to God the higher being to whom every person gives account. It also upholds Tutu (1999) description of *Ubuntu* as a notion that provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness, as well as a rationale for sacrificing or relinquishing the desire to exert revenge for past wrongs.

#### *Itegbama-Egwu* (Dancing together)



The general consensus from the FGD conducted is that *Itegbama-egwu* pre-dates the arrival of the colonialist and has continued to exist and function in Anioma societies. According to them, Anioma people place high value on communal life and that in maintaining positive relationship within the societies is a task in which every member of community is involved. They agreed that dispute between members is perceived not merely as a matter of curiosity with regards to the affair of one's neighbour, but in a very real sense an emerging conflict that belongs to the entire community; hence finding ways of nipping them in the bud becomes necessary.

The respondents at the FGD organised for women at Okpanam agreed that *itegbama-egwu* has remained one of the peacemaking mechanisms of the *Omu* Institution. According to them, *Ite* means to steps, *gbama* means together, *egwu* means dance. When put together it is interpreted as to dance together. Accordingly, *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo* agreed that *Itegbama-egwu* is one of the peacemaking approaches of the *Omu* Institution. She explained that *Itegbama-Egwu* could be traced to a story in tales by moonlight. According to her, story has it that tortoise and his friends visited his father-in-law in a far country and that when they got there, they were actually warned that in that land people do not snore while sleeping and if anyone is found snoring, such a person will be used as a sacrifice to the gods of the land. After feeding tortoise and his friends, they went to bed, few minutes later, the tortoise started snoring and all efforts to make him stop proved abortive and at that point; the entire community gathered and was to carry the tortoise to the shrine for sacrifice. She stated that when tortoise got up and was told that he was snoring and will be sacrificed to the gods of their land. The story has it that when they got to the shrine where the tortoise will be sacrificed, one of his friends told the people that when you offend people in their culture, that there is always something that is usually done for both the offender and offended and they should permit him to do that before the sacrifice will take place and immediately he brought out his flute and started blowing it while the rest people in his company started singing and everybody joined and they all started dancing and that was how tortoise was rescued.

The narration of *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo* shows that music accompanied with dance can stop imminent danger. She concluded that the idea of parties in conflict engaging in *itegbama-egwu* was borrowed from the story earlier told. Furthermore, the fact that their forefathers copied the idea from folklore presupposes that their worldview and

approaches must have been influenced by the antecedent of their culture and social milieus. Thus, it is the submission of this study that *itegbama-egwu* promotes genuine reconciliation, remorse and repentance.

A member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa expounded that she grew up to know that as path to ensuring lasting peace among quarrelling parties, the *Otu-Omu* will always through persuasion encourage such people to stop their fight and as a proof that they have surrendered their crux, they will be asked to dance to a melodious music that preaches forgiveness and love. According to her, such music ministers to the inner minds of the parties who will begin to see where they would have hurt each other and as well as making inner or outer pronouncement never to offend each other again. In her words “*itegbama-egwu* brings so much to one’s life, in fact it can reduce stress, depression and enhances social life and self-confidence, maybe these are the things our forefathers saw and introduced when settling conflicts” (Interview at Ibusa, March 23, 2018). This affirms Holt (2017) that dancing burns calories and can positively affect weight loss as well as offers psychological benefits of socialising with others.

#### **D. Objective 4:**

#### **What are the challenges facing the *Omu* Institution and how can it perform its role effectively?**

##### *“Coronation” Process (Ili Nzele or Ichi Nzele Omu)*

According to *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo*, “*ili*” means eating or taking, while *Nzele* means chieftaincy title. In its literary terms it means taking up a chieftaincy title. The consensus from the field is that the process of *ili nzele Omu* in Anioma culture is expensive and financial demanding. It was also revealed that aside the spiritual and ritual exercises the would-be-*Omu* will go through, the financial involvement in taking up the title is too much. *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo* explained further:

*Ili Omu is like Ili Obi* in Anioma culture, a lot of money is involved and once you cannot afford all that it takes to take up the position, such a person may want to decline because once she accepts the offer there is no going back you must complete it. The money involve has also made it impossible for some communities not to have a sitting *Omu* and a community without a mother will suffer both spiritually and physically (Interview at Akwukwu-Igbo, March 26, 2018)

Findings from the field establishes that in some cases, women from *Umu-Omu* lineage from which *Omu* is selected often cases decline acceptance of the offer of *Omu* stool

on financial grounds. The implication is vacant stools seen in some communities in Anioma. Esogbue (2017) rightly observed that the eating process of the *Omu* title is heavily burdened with huge amount of money. Akpuh (2013) acknowledges Esogbue (2019) that the position is not open to any woman because it takes so much to occupy the office and the responsibilities attached to it are enormous and demanding. When an *Omu* is selected, ritual sacrifices commence with the slaughtering of goats and chicken from that day. According to *Aka-Omu* Okpanam:

Rather than accepting the occupation of a chieftaincy stool which you cannot afford to perform the rites and rituals that go with it, the best thing is to stay aside (Interview with *Aka-Omu* Okpanam, March 12, 2018).

In a similar vein, *Omu* Anioma states as follows:

Not all women may have the money to eat the *Omu Nzele* and as such if declared by the oracle as an *Omu* so many women decline on financial basis and it is a taboo for anyone to reject the appointment of the gods to avoid being inflicted with unknown ailment or being ostracised. The only thing I see is that, some communities may promise to assist but at the middle of event people will begin to withdraw and you will find out that you are alone but because it is an appointment you have accepted you cannot stop half way, it has to be completed (Interview with *Omu* Anioma, March 13, 2018).

The foregoing synchronises with the observations of Archbishop Johnson cited in Mba (1982) in 1884, that the acceptance of the *Omu* title in Onitsha requires expenses because there were gifts to the king, chiefs, women, common people and strangers in the city, dinner were given for many days at the queen's expense and cowries were distributed with profuse hand. The observation of Johnson is clear evidence that the finances involved in taking the *Omu* title is enormous. The respondent pointed out that it is also binding on the community to take care of the *Omu* after coronation. It is also the duty of the community to maintain the *Ogwa Omu* from which the spiritual survival of the community lies. As put forward by Ndili (2010) the *Omu* institution is the spiritual eye of the communities in Anioma Clan. Akpuh (2005) has emphasised that after the coronation exercise of the *Omu* the *Omu* transforms from an ordinary person to a spirit being as she can now interact with the ancestors on behalf of the community. The implication is that where there is no *Omu* as a result of the financial

burden in taking up the position, it portends evil for the entire community thereby truncating social cohesion and progress in the community.

Likewise, the financial involvement in *Ili-Nzele Omu* made the institution scary for qualified women. Equally, a situation in which a woman selected through the oracle cannot take the title, and gives it to another woman with better financial standing; it becomes a violation of legitimacy to the throne. This portends future conflict in the community.

#### *Assumed Harsh Traditions*

Findings from the field have bared the fact that apart from the financial involvement in taking up the *Nzele Omu*, another challenge facing the institution is the assumed harsh traditions. According to respondents, these traditions include; return to paternity and stoppage from performing any form of connubial relationship with the husband if married. Accordingly, a situation where a married woman is selected to occupy the *Omu* stool, she is expected by tradition to return to her paternal home from where she is likely to perform her duties as an *Omu*. In this stance, the implication is that she is compelled by tradition to return to her paternity leaving her husband and children. The question that comes to mind is this. If one of the primary roles of the *Omu* institution is to ensure that women do not break their marital vows, why should a would-be *Omu* return to her paternity at the expense of her immediate family? The researcher was made to understand that the position of an *Omu* translates her from being a woman to becoming a man. She was also made to understand that two men cannot live together under one roof.

Furthermore, a participant in the FGD conducted for women in Okpanam March 12, 2018 pointed out that, it is because of some of these traditions surrounding the institution that most qualified women are afraid to assume the stool. The implication she explained could be found in some communities in Anioma clan where the *Omu* stool is vacant. A case in point she explained is Ubulu-Ukwu in Aniocha South Local Government Area. The consensus from the field is that where there is no *Omu*, the interests of women in the community cannot be adequately met. The reason being that the *Omu* is the only woman allowed by tradition to represent the women in the council-of-chiefs/elders, a situation where the *Omu* is absence the needs of the women may not be adequately factored in the decision making processes of the people.

Equally, findings from the field indicated that the spiritual nature of the institution confines an *Omu* to solitary life. According to a member of *Otu-Omu* in Ibusa, living a solitary life was not a choice of the *Omu* rather; it is the tradition that bequeaths her with some ritual performances and worships of certain deities. These practices keep her away from people as she works closely with the *ndi dibia* or *ogbebunu*. This position has been well captured in literature by Esogbue (2016a), Sofola cited in Egodi (2006) as well as Ndili (2009) that the spiritual requirements of the *Omu* institution brings them in close link with *ndi dibia*. As indicated by these literatures, the spiritual stance of the institution which exposes occupants to carrying out rituals and sacrifices become direr for women to accept such chieftaincy title.

The argument of Esogbue (2017) that there were some women who would want to be part of the *Omu* institution but for the assumed complexities attached to the institution which is causing a lot of restrains. This is in line with the thoughts of the respondents. Esogbue (2017) added that these complexities created negative impression that the institution is synonymous with witchcraft. Nwanze (2005) corroborates this assertion when he described the *Otu-Omu* as a cult-like organisation of matured women with few men whom the *Omu* conferred with titles peculiar to the institution. Esogbue (2017), from the foregoing, draws a conclusion that the close collaboration between the *Ndi-Dibia* and the *Omu* in Anioma communities further gives credence to the negative insinuations about the institution. He however, argued that the roles of the institution have remained vital in Anioma political space. However, these traditions have remained the biggest challenges confronting the institution; many of which are difficult to live within our contemporary society. These laws make the ordinary person perceive members of the institution as witches that must be avoided.

Respondents at Asaba on the 29th March, 2018 observed that assumed masculinity at the point of coronation is another issue facing the institution. They explained that at the point of coronation, the woman gives up femininity for masculine status. They identified that the transformation is a clear evidence of subtle gender inequality in a patriarchal society. In their views, becoming a chief and still maintaining your gender should not affect the position. Rather, attaining a position that will make you possess a dual sex status, means neglecting your core motherhood role (cooking and caring for the children) as a woman.

Furthermore, a participant at the FGD organised for men in Ibusa pointed out that the assumed masculinity gives an *Omu* the impetus to marry other women just like a man. According to him, the *Omu* pays their bride prices and other bids involved for a marriage to become legal. He explained further that the child/children born by the *Omu*'s wife or wives have equal rights with the biological children the *Omu* had before her installation (FGD at Ibusa March 16, 2018). Furthermore, the consensus is that no one by tradition lays claims on such children born for the *Omu*. The implication as pointed out is the denial of paternity and corresponding affections that exist between a father and a child. This is because the *Omu* is limited naturally by certain masculine features.

#### *Refusal to pay Fines*

Findings from the field show that sanction is an important part of correcting wrong doings. It also shows that people's refusal to pay fines levied on them is one of the challenges facing the *Omu* institution in the context of peacemaking. In the same vein, *Omu* Anioma admits that the refusal of people to pay fines when they default is another major challenge of the institution.

Substantiating the above, Obi Adimabuah believed that there are members of the communities, who deliberately refuse to pay fines, even when they have the financial strength to pay such fines. He further pointed out that if the person refuses, the tendencies are there for the culprit to attract the wrath of the gods to himself/herself even if the *Omu* does not make outright pronouncement of curses on such a person. The argument of Ikenwe (2012:119) captures the thought of the respondent that maintained that *Omu* performs the spiritual functions of regularly blessing and purifying the market, in addition to cursing miscreants

Ndili (2010), Esogbue (2016) agreed that the primary source of financing the *Omu* institution is through fines collected from defaulters of the customary laws of the institution. Thus it will be safe to say that aversion or not paying fine levied on people who disobeys the laws of the institution poses huge challenges to members as they will not be able to procure necessary items for performing sacrifices as well as appeasement of the gods.

#### *Lack of Government Recognition of the Omu Institution*

According to respondents, lack of government recognition of the *Omu* institution as a formal chieftaincy institution and its enormous roles in peacemaking has been a major challenge to the peacemaking roles of the institution. In the words of *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo*:

The *Omu* institution has not been adequately recognised by the State and the few Local Governments Areas where this institution exists in Delta State. This lack of government recognition has grossly affected the institution in the performance of their duties in the clan (IDI at Akwukwu-Igbo, 26 March, 2018).

In the same view, *Omu Anioma* lend credence to the foregoing, when she pointed out that, even when the institution has been lied upon by various government agents in the state, they are not being regarded as government agents and therefore are not paid salaries or stipends. The explanation of the *Omu Anioma* is implicative of the fact that the peacemaking roles of the institution was not backed up by any form of monetary reward by any level of Government in the State. This is corroborated by *Omu Akwukwu-Igbo* who agrees that non-inclusion of the occupiers of the institution in the Government payroll has compromised their peacemaking efforts.

This existing state non-recognition of the *Omu* institution was further surmised by *Omu Anioma*:

While the government and the politicians use us to mobilise the womenfolk in our clan, they have failed to remunerate us, we are not considered alongside our men counterpart but when there are issues in the community we are looked out for (Interview at Okpanam, March 13, 2018)

All the respondents agreed that the *Omu* institution has been constantly relied on by government and its agents in gathering the womenfolk as well as in mobilising them during political rallies, state celebrations such as Independence Day celebrations, democracy days and world women day. Its members are not regarded as government agents or as members of the state council of traditional rulers and therefore are not paid salaries or stipends. Thus, a member of the institution explained:

We are faced with huge financial challenges. The government or any of its agents has not been able to consider us for any form of payment.

The interview with the three *Omu* in Anioma communities confirmed that lack of financial supports from both the state and the Local Governments in Anioma clan constitute major challenges as they seek to uphold the welfare of their people and ensure there is peace in the clan. In the words of *Omu* Anioma:

None of the *Omu* in these communities is remunerated. Looking at the enormous work we do, we are supposed to be paid like our male counterpart no matter how little, yet nothing is forthcoming. She added “I as the leader of this institution have visited the local government Chairmen in the four Local Government Areas where the *Omu* chieftaincy is practiced, but we have not got any positive response” (IDI at Okpanam, March 13, 2018).

Following the same line of argument with *Omu* Anioma, a respondent who is also an Administrative Officer in the Oshimili North LGA, confirmed that *Omu* Anioma and her entourage had paid visits to some of the Chairmen in the four Local Government Areas including Oshimili North. According to him, the Chairman told members that the payment of the *Omu* institution has to take certain constitutional procedures. On the whole, lack of remunerations as a challenge articulates with the position of Akanji (2018) that remunerations are a tool for effective discharge of an employee’s responsibilities. This implies that when one is not paid or compensated for work done the possibility to relent becomes foreseeable.

The general consensus heightens that a feeling of indifference is noticeable as members of the institution are consistently being exploited by the government and its agents, who take glory of the peacemaking efforts of the institution. It is imperative at this juncture to say that the *Omu* institution is often women of humble composition and substance who commit themselves to ensure and sustain peace in Anioma kingdom. Although, the non-remuneration of the institution by Government has not so far eliminated the functions of the *Omu* institution which is the dominant narrative of all respondent including the four FGD. Thus, while the institution finds adaptive roles of sustaining the peace it is necessary to formally remunerate the institution for its efforts.

#### *Perception of the Omu Institution*

In the words of *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo:

Neglecting our culture and embracing the totality of another man’s culture in the name of civilisation has been quite challenging. It really requires a lot of efforts and



perseverance (Interview at Akwukwu-Igbo, March 31, 2018).

Buttressing the point of *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo, *Omu* Anioma kingdom explained that many people do not want to associate with the institution because of the wrong perception they have about the institution. She retorted that there is much insinuation from some quarters that the institution is basically for illiterate, old post menstrual and unmarried women, who were tagged witches, native doctors, sorcerers and so on.

According to her, people have also queried the position of the institution in their communities. Likewise, members of this institution have been faulted for worshipping and carrying out ritual sacrifices in their communities, market sites and some have seen it as jobs for the uneducated. She pointed out that the process of becoming an *Omu* in Anioma culture is established in the worship and performance of several initiation rites that commit the title holder to the service of the dead elders (ancestors and spirit) and their living progeny. These rites of passage are traditional checks that prohibit the occupants from deliberately altering the course of justices for personal gain. She also mentioned that they have been accused of abandoning their conjugal relationship for the ancestral worship.

Furthermore, she explained that the institution is committed to making peace in their communities through the ancestral worship because that is what the institution is called out for. In her assessment, accepting to be installed as an *Omu* in any community is a response to a call to service and refusing to answer such call is tantamount to disobedient to divinity and mankind. It could be deduced from the foregoing that the worship of the ancestral spirit has generated biased perception from some people within the community who lack understanding of the tradition.

Situating the foregoing in the context of negative perception, the implication according to *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo is that some feel reluctant to answer the call of the institution. They assess the institution based on its weakness neglecting its strength in building societal cohesion. This scenario of judgement has affected the roles of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking. This conforms with the thesis of Chiao *et al* (2010) that the words we use limit our cognition and thought and Beer and Watson (2008) that cultural identities and personalities affect our perception. Therefore, the refusal of some people to honour summons by the *Omu* institution was reported to be one of the

major problems leading to police intervention. The obvious fact is that the intrusion of police has eroded some of the authorities of members of the *Omu* institutions.

#### *Government Agencies and Omu institution*

The response from the field shows that the *Omu* is the head of the market in Anioma clan. According to them, it is dialectically expressed as *Omu bu eze ashia* meaning *Omu* is the king of the market. Mrs Oraegbu explained that in the olden days, the first thing *Omu* does was to send her *Ugba* (local calabash) to the market site. She pointed out that this calabash represents the presence of the *Omu* in the market even when the *Omu* has not arrived in person. She also explained that the presence of the *Ugba* serves as a peacemaking mechanism as traders will not want to violate the rules in order not to attract sanctions and payment of fines.

*Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo identified that with the presence of the local government officials in the market site, most of the roles of the institution changed. She pointed out that the market tolls are now being collected by the officials instead of the institution who in early days could determine the prices of articles for sale and at the same time collect tolls from traders. This was also corroborated by the FGD organised for youths in Akwukwu-Igbo. Therefore, beyond non remuneration of the institution by the state the presence of the local government council officials in the market poses huge challenges on the economic well being of the *Omu* institution.

Egodi (2006) noted that between 1950 and 1960, the people witnessed the usurpation and passage of the market activities to the warrant chiefs and thereafter to the local government officials. The implication is that the *Omu* institution that was traditionally in charge of the market gradually lost her market role.

Situating the foregoing phenomenon, a respondent who is a member of *Otu-Omu* posited that the *Omu* institution was deprived of being the head of the market and secondly became economically disempowered as the market tolls are being collected by the local government officials and paid into the government coffers. She argued that the institution was not only destabilised economically, their roles in peacemaking was also affected as some of the members can no longer take care of their financial needs talk less of assisting some members of the community.

## **D.2 How can the *Omu* Institution play more Effective Role in Community peacemaking?**

The general consensus is that culture is dynamic and the only way the *Omu* institution can play more effective role in community peacemaking is for it to be restructured in line with modern trends. In this wise, everyone in the community will be proud to associate with the occupants of the institution. They contended that the tradition of the people should not be abandoned completely rather it should be restructured in such a way that the occupants of the *Omu* institution would be allowed to practise the activities of the institution while they are still in their matrimonial homes.

Again, they agreed that those traditions and customs that surround the institution debarring women from accepting the title should be jettisoned. For instance, the ritual aspect of the institution should be given out completely to the *ndi-dibia* in the community. An *Olinzele* pointed out that *ndi-dibia* are mostly men and are known for the performance of rituals, they should be able to carry out effectively the performance of rituals in the community without the involvement of *Omu* institution (Interview at Ibusa, March 17, 2018).

The economic requirements of becoming an *Omu* should be made moderate. This will also make it much easier for candidates to willingly accept the position. This was corroborated by a respondent who argued that since the *Omu* institution is traditional and a divine calling, it is therefore inappropriate to subject a candidate to rigorous financial undertakings before ascending the stool. It is reasonable to understand that selection is by divination, not necessarily wealthy nominees are required, but anyone divinely favoured. So when one chosen by the oracle is presented with long list of requirements, the possibility of stepping down for a wealthy personality is imminent. This implies that the peacemaking efforts of the institution will be compromised as the wealthy personality may lack the basic traditional knowledge needed by the institution to carry out their responsibilities.

In all the communities engaged in fieldwork there is also a compelling yearning for government to find a way round the remuneration of the members of the *Omu* institution. This is due to the fact that the institution is doing a good job and needs to be rewarded by the Government. In fact, the non-remuneration of the institution by the State is perceived by respondents as an outright neglect of the mediatory roles of the institution. The *Omu* institution should be recognised and accord the same respect like

their men counterparts. This will assist members of the institution play more functional roles in peacemaking.

The *Omu* institution should be recognised as a constituted authority for village administration by the legislation of the State House of Assembly. This legislative recognition would confer on the *Omu* institution rights and functions to effectively carry out their peacemaking roles as agents of government for civil administration with specified rights and privileges. In this regards, people will no longer undermine the authority of the institution, by reporting civil cases to the law enforcement agents which has affected the peacemaking efforts of the institution.

Furthermore, the Local Government Council Officials should be restrained from intervening in market affairs in the Local Government Areas where the *Omu* institution is in practice in Delta State. This is because the Local Government officials are not members of the *Omu* institution as they represent an extreme form of British indirect system in Anioma communities which is a maladjustment and travesty of Anioma traditional practices that is mismatched with the culture of the people. The people repose no confidence in them as many of them are perceived as accomplices in malpractices. This attitude stems from the fact that some of these officials do not remit fines and tolls collected from markets into the government coffers.

Extant in Anioma culture is that the *Omu* institution is expected to collect tolls from the market which serves as a means of livelihood. In addition, local government officials in the market place are a grave abuse to tradition, no alternative body should meddle in the market affairs outside the *Omu* institution. The *Omu* institution should be given enabling power over traditional matters with emphasis on market regulation. The *Omu* institution should be given recognised right to collect tolls from the markets as well as mediate in cases emanating from trading. This would afford them the authority to coordinate the market activities, enforce cleanliness of the surroundings and impose fines on defaulters or violators of market rules and regulations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary and conclusion of this study. The rationale and objectives as well as the inferences drawn from the findings of the study are included in this chapter. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies are also presented.

#### 5.1 Summary

The study investigated the *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma clan of Delta State, Nigeria. It examined the historical origin of the institution and how it has influenced peacemaking in Anioma Clan. The study locates the origin of the institution in the context of historical antecedence. This research posits that the *Omu* institution evolved as a need to involve women in the body politics of the Anioma people. Also, the role of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking was examined and this research posits that the roles of the institution go beyond market regulations. In line with the findings of this study, the roles of the *Omu* institution of peacemaking stems from the ideological conviction that the institution has the sacred responsibility to protect the monarch and entire community. So, the rules and regulations of the institution flow from a well ordered approach which makes compliant systematic. On the other hand, the roles of the *Omu* institution are based on cultural philosophy which explain why certain things must or must not be.

The study further examined the peacemaking mechanisms adopted by the institution. The views of respondents were analysed. As in many instances across the country, every clan, tribe and culture has a way of making peace that is peculiar to them. This is because what may be acceptable in one culture may defile the rules of engagement in another. The only area of convergence is cultural importation.

The research also looked at the challenges facing the institution and how it could be helped to play more effective role in future. It was found out that though government

recognised the roles of the institution, but have failed to remunerate them. The study also discovered that the roles of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking portend hope for a vibrant and peaceful society. It is based on the foregoing that this research identified the need to recognise the institution while borrowing from the various peacemaking mechanisms of the institution and improving on some that are not in conformity with contemporary approaches and practices.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

A lot has been said on the *Omu* female institution by scholars such as Talbot, 1926, Frank and Basden 1921, Ekejuba, (1967), Okonjo, 1976, Mba, 1982, Ohadike, 1994 thereafter scholars like Egodi (2006); Esogbue, 2015, Esogbue, 2016a, 2016b, Nwanze, 2005, Afolabi and Olasupo, 2008, Olasupo, 2015, Oseghale and Osiki, 2010, Olasupo and Afolabi, 2010, Emordi, 2004, Akpuh, 2005, 2018 to mention few. There are also in existence numerous scholarly writings and commentaries in the areas of the institution as dual-sex chieftaincy institution as well as female traditional kinship institution. However, there is hardly any, if not, none in connection with peacemaking aspect of the institution. Arguably, the reasons for this sparse input could be viewed from the backdrop of patriarchy and de-emphasise participation and involvement of women in promotion and maintenance of peace.

Moreover, the study has brought to the fore the *Omu* women institution and their peacemaking mechanisms in Anioma clan of Delta state, Nigeria. The institution has remained one of the oldest female traditional institutions in the clan. The study has used the *Omu* institution to establish the workability of the *Omoluabi* concept as foundations for traditional peacemaking processes. Furthermore, the study advances the concept of *Omoluabi* which is synonymous to the Anioma moral concept of *Ezinwa* or *Ezinwata* (meaning a good child or a good person) as a panacea to the principle of harmonious and peaceful leadership and followership. This further establishes that within African socio-political milieu, women peace agency should no longer be eclipsed in the cloud of cultural idiosyncrasy but exposed. It further establishes the notion that women institutions within Africa cultural setting should not be seen as appendages, but partners in progress. Comparatively, the peacemaking agency of the *Omu* institution fits into the United Nations Council Resolution

(UNSCR) 1324. Therefore, it transcends the dominant African psyche that women are to be seen and not heard.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In line with the findings of this study through the diverse methods applied, that is, various responses from key informants, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the following recommendations are hereby made. This is in an attempt to enhance the contribution of the *Omu* Institution in peacemaking in Anioma Kingdom.

1. It is recommended that the peacemaking mechanism of the *Omu* institution be introduced into other cultures. If this is done it will serve as an alternative to the dominant western peacemaking methodologies. It is also recommended that the roles of women in the traditional administration of the people be recognised and strengthened. This is driven by the contemporary clamour for all inclusive gender involvement notably on issues of conflict, security and peace.

2. Further studies can be carried out on how the operations of the local government administration have affected the traditional market roles of the *Omu* institution in Anioma communities. The *Omu* institution has been affected by modernity and social change.

3 Also there is general negative perception about the *Omu* institution. It is suggested that the way of managing these negative perceptions be explored.

4. Again, government should also find a way of involving the *Omu* institution as part of their administration at the local government levels. Equally, the occupants of the institution should be compensated for their peacemaking roles in the clan.

5. The study has identified that young and educated women are becoming interested in the institution. It is therefore the recommendation of this study that those assumed harsh and mundane aspects of the traditions should be abolished to encourage more women access into the institution.

### **5.4 Contributions to Knowledge**

While several studies have been carried out on *Omu* institution, there is paucity of work on the institution and peacemaking. Where peacemaking is mentioned, it is usually generalised. It is in this wise, that this present study examines the *Omu* institution in the context of peacemaking, their influence in peacemaking and the

approaches adopted in ensuring sustainable peace in their domain. The study also emphasises that the *Omu* institution is endowed with certain cultural practices which could serve as alternative to the dominant western approach to peacemaking.

Furthermore, this study has added to body of literature by documenting in detail the *Omu* institution and peacemaking in Anioma clan with valuable approaches or mechanism that can be applied to sustain the peace in our contemporary society ridden with conflicts.



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**APPENDIX 1**  
**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES,**  
**PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAMME,**  
**UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN**

The researcher is a doctoral student of the above-named institution. The exercise is designed to carry out a research on “The *Omu* Institution and Peacemaking among Anioma people of Delta State, Nigeria. You are required to answer the question that will be asked. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will be treated with high degree of confidentiality. Thanks for your cooperation.

**Research Instrument for KII/In-depth Interview Guide (IDIs)**

**SECTION A**

Discussions on the Origin of the *Omu* institution of peacemaking, probe for:

1. What do you understand by *Omu*?
2. How long has the institution been in existence in this community?
3. Can you please tell us some of the histories of the institution?
4. Who is the formation of the institution?
5. What are the methods of selecting members of the institution?
6. What is the role of the institution with regards to peacemaking?
7. What has been the historical evolution of the institution?
8. What type of conflicts do they intervene? Please state.....
9. Do you know the mechanism they employ? If yes, what are the strategies?

**SECTION B**

Peacemaking roles played by the institution, probe for:

1. From reports do you think such mechanism have been effective?
2. If yes, kindly give instances of situations where such approaches have worked effectively?
3. Do you think such approaches can be effective in other communities in Anioma clan?
5. Do you think the *Omu* institution can be complemented with other institutions?
6. Do you think the *Omu* institution has always met the needs of parties to conflicts?
7. How do they address unmet cases?

### **SECTION C**

Assessing the mechanisms adopted by the *Omu* Institution in Peacemaking, probe for:

1. How do they carry out their peacemaking role?
2. Do their roles affect other institutions?
3. How can you describe their influence in peacemaking in the midst of other institutions in this community?
4. Do certain institutions contribute to or promote peacemaking in the community?

Please state.....

5. Are their mechanisms similar or different to that of the *Omu* institution?
6. Describe their peacemaking mechanism?
7. Do their strategies affect those of the *Omu* Institution?
8. Are they fair to all?

### **SECTION D**

Challenges confronting the strategies adopted, probe for:

1. Describe some of the factors that may be affecting their internal peacemaking roles?
2. What is the government perception about the *Omu* institution?
3. Do you think it affects the mechanism adopted by the *Omu* institution?
4. Does the relationship between the institution and other patriarchal institutions affects mechanisms adopted?
5. What do you think will be the effect of tradition/customs on the mechanism?
6. How do you think these challenges will be overcome?

## APPENDIX II

### INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES, PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAMME, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN

The researcher is a doctoral student of the above-named institution. The exercise is designed to carry out a research on “The *Omu* Institution and Peacemaking in Anioma Clan Delta State, Nigeria. You are required to answer the question that will be asked. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will be treated with high degree of confidentiality. Thanks for your cooperation.

#### **Research Instrument for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

**SECTION A:** Discuss the various conflict management and peacemaking strategies of the *Omu* institution.

1. Can you please explain what you understand by conflict?
2. What are the causes of conflicts in your community?
3. Can you please state various types of conflicts that have been experienced in this community?
3. Are there persons or institutions that are responsible for handling conflict issues in this community? If yes, please mention them.
4. How is the *Omu* institution contributing to or promoting peaceful co-existence in your community?

Please state.....

**SECTION B:** Examine the roles of the *Omu* institution in peacemaking.

1. How has the *Omu* institution contributed to peaceful co-existence in your community?
2. What do you think makes their roles effective?
3. Can you give instances of situations where they have recorded great feat in peacemaking in this community?

**SECTION C:** Investigate the peacemaking mechanism of the institution, probe for:

1. Are there other institutions in this community that are engaged in peacemaking?

Please state.....

2. Are there ways their activities affect that of the *Omu* institution?

3. Describe such ways

**SECTION D:** Challenges confronting the peacemaking roles of the institution, probe for:

1. The factors that may be affecting the mechanism adopted

2. What is the government perception about the *Omu* institution?

3. Do you think it affects the mechanism adopted by the *Omu* Institution?

4. Identify the relationship between the *Omu* institution and other patriarchal institutions?

5. What roles do you think tradition/customs play on the mechanism adopted?

6. How do you think these challenges will be overcome?

## APPENDIX III

### List of Interviewees

S/N	Name	Position/Occupation	Age	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
1.	HRM, (Dr ) Obi Martha Dunkwu	<i>Omu</i> Anioma/Okpanam	64	Ogwa Omu	March 13, 2018
2.	<i>Omu</i> Osibe Grace Ekwutoziem	<i>Omu</i> Akwukwu-Igbo	66	Her Ogwa	March 26, 2018
3.	Obi Chief (Dr) Ada Nwanneamaka Biosah	<i>Omu</i> Ahaba	68	Her Ogwa	March 20, 2018
4.	Chief Madam Nkechi Kentua	Acting <i>Omu</i> and Oldest woman in Ibusa	78	Her house	March 23 , 2018
5.	Mrs Cicilia Ofuani	<i>Aka-Omu</i> Okpanam	62	Market Site	March 12, 2018
6.	Mrs Oraegbu Rosemary Ndubisi	Member of <i>Otu-Omu</i> representing the <i>Otu-Iyase</i> Ruling House in Ibusa	77	Her house	March 16, 2018
7.	Ms Chiadika Asibuogu	Member of the <i>Otu-Omu</i> representing the <i>Otu-Odogwu</i> ruling House	69	Her house	March 23, 2018
8.	Mrs Amaka Nwaezeigwe	Member of <i>Otu-Omu</i> representing <i>Otu-Owolo</i> ruling house	84	Her house	March 23, 2018
9.	Mrs Osaji, M.N	<i>Aka-Omu</i> , Asaba	65	Telephone conversation	March 21, 2018
10.	Mrs Ijeh Patience	<i>Ukwu-Omu</i> Akwukwu-Igbo	74	His house	March 30 2018
11.	<i>Ogbueshi</i> Ndili .N. Augustine	<i>A member of-Asagba-in-council</i> who spoke on behalf of the Asagba	66	His house	March 19, 2018
12.	<i>Ogbueshi</i> John Eshianya	<i>Olinzele</i> in Asaba	72	His house	March 20, 2018
13	HRH <i>Obi</i> (Dr)Azuka	The <i>Obi</i> of Akwukwu-	57	His Palace	March 26,

	David (JP)	Igbo			2018
14	Chief Azubike Ebuniwe	Iyase of Akwukwu-Igbo		His House	March 27, 2018
15	Obi Adimabuah Ozili	Oza Kita of Okpanam	77	His house	March 12, 2018
16	Obi Nwakpoizu	The eldest man and head of Obi in Okpanam	102	His House	April 3, 2018
17.	Mr. Olisekwu Iloba	dibia Akwukwu-Igbo	54	His house	April 2, 2018
18	Ojiso Osonwanneamaka Oreagbu	member- <i>Obuzor</i> -in- council	74	His House	March 16, 2018
19	Okwuluogbe Nwokolo E.E	member of <i>Obuzor</i> - in- council	72	His house	March 17, 2018
20.	Mr Godspower Osamuo	Principal Administrative Officer CDU Oshimili South LGA	48	Oshimili South LGA	March 22, 2018
21.	Egwuatu Chiyere	Chief Admin Officer CDU Oshimili North	50	Oshimili North LGA	March 28,2018
22.	Sir Anthony Oraegbu	Vice president Igbuzor Progressive Union	48	His Father's House at Ibusa	March 16 2018
23.	Sir Rapu Stanley	Deputy Director women affairs, community & Social Development Delta State Asaba	58	His office	March 22, 2018
24.	Akpuh Alex	Staff Delta State Ministry of Tourism	43	His office State Ministry of Tourism	March 22, 2018
25	Hon Loius Ndukwe	Chairman Oshimili North LGA	56	Oshimili North LGA	March 28,2018
26	Ms Irene Okolie	Deputy Director Delta State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs	76	Her Office State Ministry of Chieftaincy Affairs	March 19, 2018
27	Ohiremen Omage	Divisional Police Officer,Akwukwu-Igbo	67	His Office	March 29, 2018
28	Agbanmuche	Trader	48	<i>Olie</i> Okpanam	March 12,



	Onyeisi				2018
29	Mrs Mordi Obageli	Farmer	80	Akwukwu-Igbo	March 30, 2018
30	Mr.Omenagor Maria	Trader in Akwuukwu-Igbo	66	Her shop in front of her house	April 2, 2018
31	Mr. Okonji Emmanuel	Farmer Okpanam	72	His house	April 3, 2018
32	MrsOkonta Beatrice	Farmer in Akwukwu-Igbo	62	Her house	April 2, 2018
33	Mrs Aninye, J	Retired teacher in Asaba	68	Ogbeognogo Market	March 29, 2018
34	Mr. M Monyei Ndubuisi	Retired Police officer	70	A famer in Okpanam	March 13, 2018

## APPENDIX V

### ITEMS OF THE *OMU* INSTITUTION

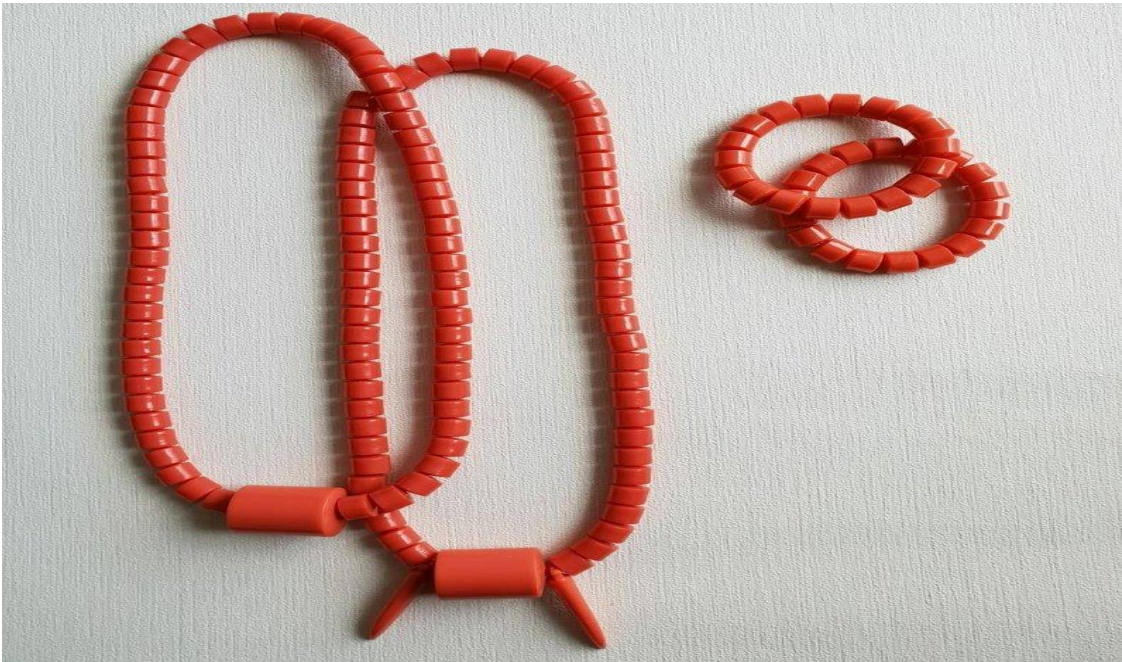


Figure 3: *Ahulu-Ndi-Omu*



Figure 4: *Okpu- ododo Ndi-Omu* (Source: Field Data 2018)



**Figure 5: Gong (Agogo)**



**Figure 6: *Egade-Ndi Omu* (War Drum)**



**Figure 7:** *Otuluaka-Ndi-Omu* (Ivory or elephant tusk)



**Figure 8:** *Akwaocha*





Figure 9: *Nzu* (White Chalk) (Source: Field Data 2018)



Figure 10: *Ugba nakata Omu* (Calabash) (Source: Field Data 2018)



PlateOne: *Omu* Anioma/Okpanam HRM (Dr). *Omu* Martha Dunkwu with the Researcher







Plate:2 Picture showing *Omu Anioma* breaking kola-nut during one of the visits by the researcher.



Plate: 4 The researcher and *Omu* Akwukwu-Igbo (Chief) Osibe Grace Ekwutoziem



Plate 5: The Researcher with *Ogbueshi Augustine Ndili* in Asaba in an KII





Plate 6: Researcher and Asst Director Delta State Ministry of women Affairs





Plate: Six The Researcher with the Staff of Community Development Unit Oshimili South Local Government Area, Asaba.

