

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Ozo title-taking is an interesting cultural practice in Igbo-land. This title-taking was the brainchild of the traditionalists. But with time there was a serious transformation in it to accommodate the Christians. Thus, this work focuses more on the transformed *Ozo* title-taking which began from the mid 80s till date. The *Ozo* titled members are seen as people with integrity and high moral character within the town. They are selected for leadership purposes to assist the king in the rules and regulations of the community. As people take the *Ozo* title they assume the leadership positions in the community. This is so because apart from the leadership position earned by age as the eldest of the family or village, the traditional titles in Igbo land give the members the opportunity of becoming leaders in their various communities. Indeed *Ozo* title-taking and leadership are inter-twined. To be a titled man is to assume a leadership position in Igbo land. This could be one of the reasons why many want to join the *Ozo* society. These *Ozo* titled men, however, are selected on the basis of their integrity and high moral standard, not necessarily on the basis of their wealth.

Ozo title-taking is considered as one of the best things that could happen in the life of any male adult in Igbo land. This is because of the honour and prestige it accords the members. *Ozo* title-taking brings about change in social status to the members. It gives the young ones the opportunity of being numbered among the elders of the community. This could be the reason why some wealthy young men desire to take *Ozo* title. As the person takes the title, he picks up a new titular name to answer. The members of *Ozo* society are regarded as elders because of the

title they have taken. They are placed in-charge of their village community. They look after the people in their community and strive to maintain peace and harmony within and outside the community. Thus, they help in the settlement of cases, boundary disputes, and minor misunderstanding within the community.

Ozo institution has its moral code which serves as a guide both in words and actions, to the members. It serves to deter people from the use of actions and words that could be considered inappropriate either to a colleague in the title society or to anyone other person.

The *Ozo* title society transforms men to be truthful at all time. This is one of the basic tenets of this title society. The members are trustworthy by virtue of their oath of office to discharge their duties well. They always stand by the truth to avoid incurring the wrath of the gods. They take the vow to say only but the truth which they know through the ritual of *Isa Ire* (cleaning of the tongue).

People all over the world take different titles according to their cultural background. Even in Nigeria for instance, the Hausa and the Yoruba and other minority tribes take different titles according to their tribes. But that of *Ozo* is quite exceptional and different because of their system of leadership as well as their moral conduct. It is believed that the leadership system in *Ozo* title institution should go a long way to bring about a reform in the leadership of our country Nigeria. It will help to curb corruption in the leadership of the country and also plan a way forward for national growth and peaceful co-existence in the country.

In spite of the increasing number of those who take *Ozo* title, the institution has been so commercialized that it engulfs a lot of money thereby, posing a big huddle for people who desire to take it. The well-to-do members of the *Ozo* title institution see the society as a means of

making money as well as maximizing their profits. Thus, they are not ready to entertain any excuse of cutting down on the expenditure thereof, for the new intakes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem which this work addresses is to correct the wrong impression brought by the advent of western civilization and Christianity that *Ozo* title institution is a negative cult while its members are regarded as cultists. This wrong impression has been there for more than three decades. It has done a lot of harm to *Ozo* institution and as a result, has drastically reduced its popularity.

Besides that, the members of this title institution are being stigmatized as cultists because of this wrong impression from the non initiates. They are ridiculed in the community and regarded as secret cult members when they are genuine citizens trying to promote Igbo culture by taking *Ozo* title. The members as it were, join hands with the king in running the affairs of their towns. But with the wrong impression people have about their membership, many people do not fancy joining them. Meanwhile those who have joined them are tempted to abandon their titular positions of honour due to the stigma thereof.

The leadership of *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu community will also be a priority to this work vis-à-vis the leadership in Nigeria. Due to corruption and poor leadership in Nigeria, this work focuses on *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu as an application for curbing the problem of bad governance and leadership in Nigeria. This work will seek a way of curbing corruption in the leadership of Nigeria through the prism of *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The specific objectives of *Ozo* title-taking and leadership in Ozubulu include the following:

i. To investigate *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu. Due to the wrong impressions which the people have about *Ozo* title-taking, there arises the need to address the misconception about *Ozo* institution. This will give a face lift to this noble institution whose image has been battered. This goes a long way to boost its prestige. Thus, people will now begin to appreciate this title institution as it really is and not as they perceive it. This will restore the honour and prestige of *Ozo* titled members and as well boost the number of those willing to join the noble institution in Ozubulu.

ii. To explore the *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu in order to find out what makes it a formidable one for these decades of *Ozo* institution in Ozubulu. The leadership of *Ozo* in Ozubulu rests in the hands of the *Ozo* titled men who work harmoniously with the king for the maintenance of the rules and regulations of the town.

iii. To examine the system of leadership in Nigeria in order to find out the problem with the leadership of our country and chart a way forward through the application of the leadership scheme of *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu for better leadership in future. Leadership in our country seems to have lost its sense of direction due to bad governance, greed, selfish interest, and what have you. The political leaders do not mind the people they go to serve rather they concern themselves with what they gain from the system. This has brought about untold corruption in the land. This research examines the situation in order to proffer possible solutions as a way forward.

iv. To assess the impact of *Ozo* title taking and leadership in Ozubulu and beyond. To find out how *Ozo* title institution as part of our culture has influenced the way of life of the people of Ozubulu and the Igbo-land by extension. The impact of *Ozo* institution spans beyond Ozubulu, and Igbo land. It has a far reaching influence on the people elsewhere since man is a social being. As the people of Ozubulu mingle with people in Igbo-land, in Nigeria and the world over, they influence them from what they have learnt from these *Ozo* titled leaders at the local communities in Ozubulu.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The research is significant in the following ways:

The study will help to beef up in a little way the library of works on *Ozo* title-taking both in Ozubulu and Igbo land in general. A lot of works have been written on *Ozo* title-taking. This research becomes an addition to the already existing works on the subject matter.

With the research, *Ozo* institution will be cleared of the doubts of being a secret cult. Even the members seen as cultists will be vindicated too. With this research therefore, the wrong impression about *Ozo* title institution will be dropped. Thus, the people then begin to see *Ozo* institution as part of our cultural heritage that is open to everybody: young and old, even the women folk has their own roles to play as wives of the *Ozo* titled men. It will no longer be seen as a secret cult as formerly misconstrued.

The research sheds light on *Ozo* leadership whose title holders are selected men of integrity who assume their leadership as close allies with the king in administering the rules and regulations in the town. The study on *Ozo* leadership in Ozubulu will demonstrate how it will bring by way of extension the desired change in the leadership of our country. This is because the leadership of

Ozo title in Ozubulu will be used as a prototype for the leadership of our country Nigeria. Since the leadership of *Ozo* in Ozubulu is well organized with every good agenda for maintenance of peace and progress in the town, it will by way of extension help to reorganize the leadership system of our country when its principles are applied in the leadership of the nation.

The study show-cases the great impact of *Ozo* title institution on the titled men in Ozubulu, the people of Ozubulu, and by extension, the Nigerian society and world at large. This will make us to appreciate more what we have in our Igbo culture and be original than trying to do a blind imitation of other foreign cultures.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

The research focuses on *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu community. However, the result of the research could be applied by extension to other places and peoples. The range of the research spans from the mid 80s till the present time. This is about three decades.

1.6 Methodology

In the research, the primary and the secondary methods of data collection were used. Thus, the primary method of data collection includes oral interviews and personal observations. Thus, the oral interviews and observations made dwell much on oral history told amidst personal interactive sessions. This is the primary source of data collection. Similarly, the secondary method of data collection is based on the information gathered from the books consulted.

Moreover, the analysis of the data collected was done in a double barreled manner. They include: the historical method and the culture area approach. The historical method according to Madu (1997), “looks at the present ... situation, compares it with the past and then makes a future

projection. It is a truism that a society is always being pushed by its past and lured by its future”(p.36). Madu gives a clear idea of what the historical approach is all about in his work. Thus, since *Ozo* title-taking is a time honoured institution, the historical method became a very important tool of analysis to help the researcher interpret the title institution in its immediate phenomenological array. This was not done in isolation rather recourse was made to the past of this title institution in order to see what have transpired in the past for a credible projection to the future on the subject matter. The historical method helps to bring out the gradual transformation which has taken place in *Ozo* title institution within the past three decades. The advent of Christianity exerted a lot of influence on some of the Igbo cultural heritage. For instance, *Ozo* title institution was already flourishing when all of a sudden the Christian tradition came in only to tag some of the practices in *Ozo* title-taking as fetish and obnoxious. The researcher was able to trace the procedure of doing things in *Ozo* institution in relation to what has been in practice prior to the advent of the Christian culture. It was indeed gathered that *Ozo* title institution promises a brighter future to the modern youths owing to the fact that it evolves from the past and has jettisoned as it were some of the archaic practices like some unintelligible incantations that had made it to appear to be a cult over the years. The result is that it is ever being appreciated by the modern generation of youths because some of the practices that appear unintelligible are made well intelligible and better understandable to the new generation of youths.

Another method deployed in this work is the culture area approach. According to Madu (2008), the culture area approach rests on the basic principle that every community is a composite of both macro and micro cultures. It all means that every society has as it were, many sub-cultures and their corresponding sub-cultural differences that make each sub-culture unique in itself

within that society. Thus, the study of any of these sub-cultures would be well carried out if the researcher understands and also appreciates the sub-cultural matrix in which that particular practice exists. This will help the person to make a better interpretation of that particular practice that thrives in that area. For instance, *Ozo* title-taking is a well known phenomenon in most of the communities in Igbo land but the procedure for arriving at the final *Ozo* varies from one community to another. Some communities have only three steps to the final *Ozo* whereas, others like Ozubulu have four. Awka has up to seven steps and so on. Thus, using the culture area approach to analyze the work, it is gathered that *Ozo* institution and its leadership in Ozubulu vary from one village to another. Each micro village has its way of handling both the initiation of new candidates into *Ozo* institution and other issues that border on leadership within the community. At the macro/general level, the *Ozo* institution is one and the same thing throughout the town with formidable leadership to pilot the affairs of the institution. There is much uniformity as regards the *Ozo* institution and its leadership. The procedure for the initiation of new candidates is the same thing everywhere in Ozubulu. At the micro level, however, the villages operate as independent units. In these units, they have rules and regulations guiding the *Ozo* title-taking and its leadership. These rules and regulations are derived from the general norms with minor changes to suit each of the units. In these smaller units, one finds a lot of differences as regards the amount of money which the new candidates have to pay before they are fully inducted into *Ozo*. The leaders at these units decide on the quantity and quality of the material gifts which the new candidates will present to the members on the day of ceremony and so on. In other words, they have the freedom to make decisions guiding the members of their units without deviating from the general principles that guide the *Ozo* institution and its leadership at the macro (town) level.

Thus, these methods were used to explore *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu as a prototype for leadership in Nigeria. They helped the researches to access *Ozo* leadership institution in Ozubulu as well as assess the possibility of transposing it into the leadership of the country for better results in future.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Definition of terms is very necessary at this point for the reader to understand better the theme under discussion. In effect, the following terms will be defined: *Ozo*, title, Christian *Ozo*, and leadership.

Ozo

Ozo is a traditional title. This traditional title is taken only by men. Women do not take *Ozo* title. *Ozo* is one of the leadership institutions in Igbo land. *Ozo* is conferred only on the people with integrity. However, *Ozo* confers on the individual members the status of traditional elders. This is so because sometimes the *Ozo* title holder might be a young man, but by virtue of his status as *Ozo* title holder, he takes his position among the elders of the community. According to Ozigbo (1988), *Ozo* was essentially a mutual insurance society which enables the socially ambitious to invest the savings he accumulated in his youth while guaranteeing him continued economic support and prestige during his old age. *Ozo* is the title institution that helped young men in the olden days to invest their hard earned money wisely. According to Ogbukagu (1997), *Ozo* is an integral component of the social life of Igbo community. *Ozo* is a cultural institution in Igbo land. *Ozo* title is a prestigious title institution in Igbo land. It marks the members as elders and leaders of the community. Ogbalu (nd), says that *Ozo* with its rather attractive and pompous title names, promises a bright future if and only if it is transformed into a Christian institution. *Ozo* is a

cultural title that is taken to promote the Igbo culture. It is a title-taking that has prestige and honour in our Igbo society.

Title

The term “title” refers to the name used to designate its holder. One’s title is another name for the title holder. It can be called a second name. Title bestows on the holder the power and authority due to that particular title and therefore marks a change in social status for the title holder.

According to Ezeana (2008), title-taking can be seen as a human activity in a human society by which human beings form themselves together to undertake activities for the benefit of the society at large. For Adibe (1992), all title-taking in Igbo land is motivated by the faith of the individual to be religiously associated with the earth goddess and the ancestors and also with the perspective of upholding the moral conduct of the Igbo society. Title and title-taking are part and parcel of life in the society where by people struggle to acquire some good and decent titles to show they really belong. Title-taking marks a change in social status which is open to every person considered by the entire community as a fellow to reckon with in terms of personal integrity and respect for the rule of law. Title-taking opens the door of leadership onto the members of the title group. It gives them the opportunity to become leaders in their various communities. Title-taking is quite a ceremonial event in Igbo land. It is destined for the desired change in social status. It is a cherished event in the life time of every Igbo man to take the traditional title of his kins men and belong to the group of the elders who are entrusted with the custodian of the customs and traditions of the community.

Christian Ozo

The Christian *Ozo* refers to the transformed *Ozo* title-taking. Christian *Ozo* is different from the main *Ozo* which is designated as *Ozo Obodo*. Christian *Ozo* is the *Ozo* that is devoid of any practices that can be regarded as traditionalistic in nature. Christian *Ozo* is taken by men who are willing to take it. As the name implies, the Christian *Ozo* is the *Ozo* type that belongs specifically to the Christian folk. The Christian *Ozo* is the product of inculturation. It is the product of time and circumstance. The Christian *Ozo* is the *Ozo* that is incarnated into Christian culture.

Leadership

Leadership is the art of guiding and directing others on what to do and what not to do. To be a leader is to be in charge of a group of people. The person seen as the leader has been given the mandate to take charge of the group either by the popular vote of the members or by another person who has power over the group. The power of incumbency resides on the person who has the mandate to lead a group of people until he or she is removed from the seat. According to Favours (2002), leadership is nothing but the maintenance, organization and overseeing of people. For Bogardus (1934), “leadership bears a vital relationship to individuality and its complementary element, sociality”(p.1).

According to Russell (1969), it is in the character of some people to give orders and some others to obey. In between these extremes lies a whole vast majority of people who like to give command in certain situations and prefer to become followers in others. According to him, men like power so long as they feel competent enough to handle such position of power. But when the self confidence is not there, they prefer to be followers. Agbaba and Daniel(2010), view leadership as the occupancy of a status and the entire performance of a role that mobilize efforts towards the attainment of a goal. For Russell (1969), leadership is all about submissiveness to

the leader which is rooted in fear. Leadership is the ability to lead other people in order to achieve a common goal.

Be that as it may, in the context of this work, the term leadership is used in a socio-political and religious sense because this research is about the *Ozo* title-taking and the leadership opportunity which it offers the young men among the elders. The *Ozo* titled holders join the rest of the elders in partnering with the king in administering the entire community.

1.8 Brief Survey of Ozubulu

Ozubulu people according to Okolo (1998), pulled away from the ancient Benin Kingdom while the Ika people of Ubulu-Ukwu were threatening them. The Ozubulu people moved towards the eastern bank of the Niger and crossed over with the aid of “*Akpu*” tree: hence, the name “*Ozubulu Ana Akpu*” – the land of Cassava. The people came to a fertile land near the stream “*Eze*” and settled down there extending towards the swampy zone of Atani. According to Udoji (1995), legend has it that the original settlers of Ozubulu town came from Benin and Ubulu-Ukwu in Delta state respectively, and settled among the other existing towns with whom they have boundaries till today. Those towns include: Atani, Okija, Ihembosi, Ukpok, Nnewi and Oraifite. The people of Ozubulu are known as good mixers and open hearted. Okolo (1998), affirms this view when he says, “Ozubulites are generally open to others and they easily get assimilated into other clans or ethnic groups where they happen to find themselves. To foreigners, as the missionaries came to appreciate, they are extremely cordial”(p.20). That was why the early missionaries according to him were able to erect a missionary station in the town in 1907 to link up Onitsha and Owerri in their holistic missionary program. According to him, the people of Ozubulu have a great sense of determination in whatever they do. The

consciousness of their identity motivates them in whatever they do. The people of Ozubulu have often been criticized for their compromising and accommodating attitudes which have been viewed sometimes as complacency. This attitude has made them unwilling to fight for what rightfully belong to them. According to Okolo (1998), they tend to take life with ease: nothing is too great a wonder, nothing is too important that it cannot wait, others can take the best and they are content with whatever is left behind. They are always satisfied with the minimum not caring to struggle for their rights and privileges. Adibe (2007), writing on the religious background of Ozubulu people says:

Before the advent of the early missionaries, traditional religion was the belief of the greater percentage of the inhabitants. They had a total belief in an Almighty and Supreme Being who they called “*Chi-Ukwu*” that is “Almighty God or Big God”. They also believe that God has other smaller gods who help him as intermediaries (p.12).

The people of Ozubulu according to him have their own cultural endowments. Among them is the Masquerade institution which represents their fore fathers in the visible form. The people also have a committee drawn from all the quarters and villages of the town which over see the up keep as well as the activities of the Masquerade in the town. This committee is usually designated as “*Oga Mmanwu*”. Ozubulu town is richly blessed with many cultural endowments to punctuate her socio-community living.

In summary, this chapter presents the situation of things that necessitates the research on the topic. It is all about the misconception of *Ozo* institution as a secret cult and its members as cultists. The research focuses on *Ozo* institution to find out how the leadership qualities of *Ozo* title-taking can be used to effect changes in the leadership of the country Nigeria. The research

focuses on the impact of *Ozo* leadership institution on the people of Ozubulu and the Nigerian society and its leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on some literary works of scholars on the issue under study. Many African scholars have made some effort to inquire into the meaning, the origin and even the impact of *Ozo* title institution as well as its leadership through the activities of *Ozo* title holders. Their literary works have been of immense help in furthering the people's understanding of *Ozo* title institution and leadership in Igbo culture area. Be that as it may, for a more schematic presentation of their views, the literature review will be discussed under the following sub-headings viz:

- i. Conceptual frame work
- ii. Theoretical framework
- iii. Empirical studies

2.1 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The task here is to x-ray the various opinions of scholars on the subject matter "*Ozo*" title-taking and leadership. According to Arazu (2005), "*Ozo* is an Igbo cultural event through which a person achieves personal dignity and attains maturity by means of ritual initiations" (p.185). For Arazu, *Ozo* title becomes a means of achieving personal dignity and maturity among the kinsmen. This is the yearning of many mature men in Igbo land. Arazu (2005), went on to say that, "for the traditional Religionist, *Ozo* represents a means of salvation" (p.190). Salvation could be either physical or spiritual. The fact that *Ozo* helps to change the life of its members leads to economic salvation. This is a verifiable phenomenon because it is a physical reality. And

in the traditional hierarchy, the *Ozo* titled men are at the helm of affairs such that, they represent the ancestors. This means spiritual salvation. According to Egboh (1971) *Ozo* title-taking has been surrounded with rites of the traditional religion, which has to be performed before the conferment of the title. He emphasizes the preliminary rites that must precede the *Ozo* title. These preliminary rites form part and parcel of the entire *Ozo* title ceremony.

According to Green (1964) all *Ozo* title holders have considerable prestige by reason of their wealth and as well as the supernatural inclination of the title itself. Such prestige is still reposed on those initiated into the society till today in spite of the impact of modernity. For instance, when there is a common gathering, the breaking of kola nut is exclusively reserved to the elders especially the *Ozo* titled men. Ukaegbu (1991), affirms that the blessing of kola- (*igo oji*) is the right of the eldest person in any socio-cultural, and religious gathering of the people. Sometimes, it may be a king or *Ozo* titled man. The normal thing is that the oldest person is regarded as the custodian of truth by virtue of his age and experiences and also by virtue of his title as a member of the *Ozo* society. He is as well taken to be closer to the ancestors. In modern times, Ukaegbu (1991), argues that the ordained minister who is around may be asked to bless the kola as a privilege. Worthy of note is that the oldest man in any community assumes the function of a priest and that is why he is the one to take the lead in prayers like the prayer for the breaking of kola nut.

Ogbukagu (1997), maintains that title and title taking are integral components of the social life of the citizens of Igbo community. The Igbo people are well known with *Ozo* titles like *ndi ichie*, *ndi agbara nze*, and so on. These titles are taken in the presence of the entire community. The community endorses them as their distinguished sons worthy of the honour. According to him, the stratification characterizing the norms of the *Nze na Ozo* society carries a lot of aura, honour,

dignity and recognition in the community which accounts for the strong desire of many able bodied men in Igbo land to become members. According to Mba (1983), *Ozo* titled men are priests in so far as they offer sacrifices and perform the ritual functions including praying to *Chukwu* and to ancestors” (p. 25).

Mba (1983), understands *Ozo* title holders as priests whose function it is, to offer sacrifices to the gods on behalf of the people thereby obtaining favour from the gods for the people. Indeed, these titled men are regarded as socio-religious leaders. Orakwue cited in Arinze (1970), seem to hold the same view when they said that the idea of *Ozo* title is rooted in the desire of the people to provide men for the priestly function in the worship of idols as well as provide a means of living for old age when the title holder can no longer do any work. Moreover, according to Okoye (1965), titles especially the more solemn ones place the titled men higher upon the rungs of the social ladder. The titled men are the nobles of the town and are treated as such, with great respect. According to him, titles of the higher order such as the *Ozo* institution in parts of Igbo land, give a man the right to appear and speak in certain circles and to hold certain high offices in the community. Apart from that, there are certain benefits which flow from the title-taking unto the holder, which include the assurance of a constant source of revenue, the leadership role, easy acceptance and cordial reception in any part of Igbo land.

During the initiation ceremony, the candidate invites all the *Ozo* title holders to witness the occasion. Of course, they have the honour of sharing the money paid by the candidate being initiated into the society as part of the benefits to them for coming. Based on this, therefore, Okoye (1965), maintains that *Ozo* title-taking has been compared to a kind of savings account in the bank or shares in the company since it benefits the initiates at the evening of their life.

Egboh (1971), is of the view that most Igbo people demonstrated their high social status by the taking of the *Ozo* title. According to him, the *Ozo* title occupies in Igbo society the same position which the peerage institution occupies in the English society. An Igbo man holding the *Ozo* title occupies the position of “lord” in the society, and the special name which the title holder assumes after his installation, depicts that. Achebe (1985), paints well the picture of *Ozo* title in that beautiful chat between Okonkwo and the rest of his colleagues from Umuofia on their way. Achebe (1985), writes thus:

Then from the distance came the faint beating of the *ekwe*. It rose and faded with the wind- a peaceful dance from a distance clan. ‘It is an *Ozo* dance’, the men said among themselves. But no one was sure where it was coming from. Some said Ezimili, others Abame or Aninta. They argued for a short while and fell into silence again, and the elusive dance rose and fell with the wind. Somewhere a man was taking one of the titles of his clan, with music and dancing and a great feast. (p.41).

According to him, when Okonkwo and his fellow elders heard the sound of *ekwe*, they guessed it would be the sound of *Ozo* dance. Probably, a man was taking one of the titles of his clan amidst the music, dancing and a great feast; to punctuate the occasion. Okeke (2006) maintains that, “*Ozo* title-taking is very common and a strong traditional institution, with very significant social consequences. In some communities, the title was tied to one idol or another”(p.56). For Ejiofor (2006), however, *Nze na Ozo* institution is an age old institution dated over five hundred years ago. He explains that when one takes *Ozo* titles, it reclassifies him from an ordinary classless indigene known as *Okoro* to a person of recognition. According to him, *Ozo* title holders are honorable men of the society by virtue of their title and as such, they are given pride of place and are saluted by their title names. They are regarded as virtuous people who are strictly guided by

the spirit of *Ofo* in Igbo ritual symbol. According to Onwubiko (1991), regarding *Ozo* title ceremony, there are pressures to reduce the monetary equivalents which are paid in cash for goats, sheep, fowls, yam tubers, and so on, as preparatory requirements for the *Ozo* title-taking. Some of these items, according to him, are used for sacrifices to the gods as prerequisites for the final *Ozo* title-taking.

Speaking on *Ozo* title, Ejizu (1986), says that “*Ofo* and *Ozo* title are inextricably linked: each is part and parcel of the other” (p.21). In Igbo socio-religious setting, all *Ozo* title holders have their *Ofo Ozo*. The *Ofo Ozo* is the insignia of office as *Ozo* titled chief. *Ofo Ozo* is strictly reserved to those who are members of the *Ozo* society. Hence, according to Umeogu (1996) “*Ofo Ozo*, a titular *Ofo*... is used by the holder to attest to the gravity, truthfulness and innocence of the title he holds and, to discharge his office in relation to it “(p.159). According to Ilogu (1974), in some Igbo communities, it is only the titled men that hold political offices and represent their families and lineages in the village groups’ councils. They preside over settlement of cases, making of covenants and the establishment of new cults. According to him, they belong to the noble men’s rank; a social status marked out by honour accorded to those who hold the position. They equally take precedence in all public entertainments and feasts irrespective of their age. He affirms that whenever the *Ozo* title holder kisses his *Ofo* while speaking, it is a sign of the most solemn protestation regarding the gravity or the truthfulness of whatever he says. *Ozo* titled man is regarded as the “banker” for his community. He holds the office of the treasurer in many different groups wherever he finds himself. He is such an honest man by virtue of his title, that many people repose some trust in him. They deposited their precious properties with him. Thus, Adibe (2008), maintains thus:

Ichi Ozo...is an initiation of the honest and wealthy person into the elders' forum for community development. It is accepting responsibility of the Igbo ruling class on behalf of the ancestors. It is a designation into Igbo noble rank (p.257).

In the same vein, Anazoba (2011), maintains, however, that *Ozo* title-taking is a process that begins with the young man making *Amanwulu* initiation at the base and ends up with the *Ozo* title at the apex of the Oka social power triangle. According to him, an Oka man who has not taken the *Amanwulu* title belongs to the class of men called *ogbodu* which means a mere man, a body moving about. Reflecting on the concept of leadership Chiegboka (2001), says:

We know that many members of the *Nze* institution have initiated their children into *Ozo* institution... irrespective of the disposition and preparedness of those children to live up to the demands and obligations of the society. Their agenda are possibly on getting shares and control of the leadership positions of the *Nze* institutions in future. (p.60).

His reflection shows that some members of *Ozo* institution get their male children initiated into *Ozo* institution at their tender age with the intention to help them reach the apex of this title institution at the early stage of their life. This will offer them the opportunity of taking up one leadership position or the other at quite an early stage. The father does it for his children even when they do not understand the need for it. But when they are of age to begin to participate fully in the ceremonies, they will come to understand such a kind gesture and thus, begin to appreciate it as one of the patrimonies from their father.

According to Idike (1998), on the other hand, "leadership is the soul of any community and the life blood of any nation" (p.139). According to him, leadership is seen as the tool for order and social control. According to him, it is the most important element of order in any human undertaking. This is a fact because any human society without a leader is bound to be chaotic,

visionless and misguided. It is like a ship without a captain or a plane without the pilot. According to Iroegbu (1996), leadership is god oriented. This is because God is the foundation of life and leadership. A leader, he says, is one whose duty is pre-eminently to ensure peace, order and harmony of the entire community. This becomes as it were the acid test of a successful leadership. According to Ewelu (1999), “leadership (when it is effective) holds the citizens of a social group or members of any other group together, energizes them and pulls them towards a definite end” (p.44). For him, leadership can be understood as the ability to gather men and women together in order to achieve a common goal. A good leadership is the soul of every social group and every nation. Any group that lacks an effective leader is as good as a soulless body, a moving corpse. It is not every person that can be a good leader. Many are better as followers than as leader. According to Keller (1993), “leadership requires more work, sacrifice and self-denial than the average person is willing to give. Leadership does not come easily. It is not something served up to one without effort. Leadership is something that must be earned”(p.53).

Thus, it is obvious that scholars are quite aware of the nexus between the *Ozo* title institution and leadership.

The conceptual frame work throws more light on the basic concepts of this topic under discussion. Those concepts are “*Ozo* title-taking” and “leadership”. Both of them are closely linked to each other by virtue of the role they jointly play in this topic. The understanding of *Ozo* title-taking brings the reader to the second variable which is leadership. *Ozo* title-taking is therefore, an effort to help in the propagation of the leadership in some Igbo communities that take *Ozo* title. This is true because, apart from the elders by natural age, *Ozo* title-taking plays the role of helping to raise leaders by virtue of their taking *Ozo* title. These titled men are vested with honour and prestige among the people and are commissioned to join hands with the king in

the leadership of the community. Such men are, by virtue of their positions as *Ozo* title holders, called to be leaders of the various villages.

2.2 THE THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The theoretical frame work takes into consideration, all the theories deployed by scholars to explain some basic issues about man and his activities in the society that he lives; and how man is influenced by his physical environment where he lives and socializes. A theory is an idea invented by someone in order to solve a particular problem or geared towards explaining some basic issues about man and the world. Hornby (1998), defines theory as “a set of properly argued ideas intended to explain facts or event”. For instance, Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Every academic research is embellished with some time honoured theories to act as a guide in one’s research. Labovitz and Hagedorn (1976), put it thus:

A scientist is not likely to carry out a meaningful research without the guideline of a relevant and clearly stated theory, and a scientist is not likely to develop a relevant and clearly stated theory without the guidance of reliable research findings (p.15).

These theories under study in this chapter will go a long way to help for easy interpretation of *Ozo* title-taking and leadership opportunity, for better understanding of this work. Such theories include among others: evolution theory, exchange theory, leadership theory, social theory and traditional world view theory.

Evolution Theory

The evolution theory was propounded by Charles Darwin. It has a long historical thrust. It takes into account, the historical data of the various transformation processes in the life of man and

other animals starting from the inorganic substances. According to Ezeani (1996), Darwin believes that “all the present and the complex things have their ultimate birth-root in the sub-atoms, the molecules, through the unicellular beings, the fishes, the reptiles, amphibians, birds, etc to man himself, through the process of complexification” (p.84). According to Darwin, the processes of forming human societies follow a unilineal path from the inorganic substances. This unilineal path is therefore, historically bound because, the modern societies contain, as it were, the vestiges of the primitive societies along that evolutionary path having evolved from the primitive age.

Thus, this evolution theory supports *Ozo* title institution especially as regards the transformation that is evident in this title institution since the past three decades. *Ozo* institution has under gone series of transformation till the present time. The institution has evolved from the past with all the changes and transformation thereof. The Christian *Ozo*, for instance, which is popularly known as *Ozo ndi Uka*, is the product of evolution from the original *Ozo* known as *Ozo Obodo*. *Ozo Obodo* as it is popularly called is the first of its kind initiated solely by the traditionalists. But as time went on when the Christians began to join *Ozo* institution, there were series of agreements as regards fine tuning some of the practices as well as the mode of operation within the institution. It went through a lot of evolution process to arrive at what is today known as *Ozo ndi Uka* –the Christian *Ozo*. This transformation abounds in everything on earth. Thus, the saying, that change is the only thing that remains constant in this material world. *Ozo* is a time honoured institution that is historically bound. The meeting of the Christian culture and the Igbo culture is evident in *Ozo* title institution whereby both of them shared mutually from each other to make *Ozo* institution evolve into what is now known as the Christian *Ozo* title-taking. Thus, this evolution theory supports *Ozo* title institution.

Traditional World View/Cosmological Explanation

It is a general belief that African world view is a religious one. This is true because of the hierarchy of spiritual beings that constantly interact to maintain the equilibrium of the universe.

According to Mbiti (1975):

It is religion, more than anything else, which colours their (the African) empirical participation in that universe, making life a profoundly religious phenomenon. To be is to be religious in a religious universe. That is the philosophical understanding behind African myths, customs, traditions, beliefs, morals, actions and social relationships. Up to a point in history, this traditional religious attitude maintained an almost absolute monopoly over African concepts and experiences of life (p.262).

Nwala (1985), reflects the same view when he says that world view refers to the complex of beliefs, habits, laws, customs, and tradition of the people. It also includes the overall idea they have about reality, the universe, and life. It also includes their attitude to life and things in general taken into consideration, what they do, how they think, and perceive life, the position of man in the scheme of things, whether man has immortal soul or not; whether life has a meaning and purpose or not, and so on. Madu (1999), reflecting on the idea of world-view says that since the world views are essentially religious because of the place they accord to the Supreme Being, minor spirits and deities, then the world views can be taken to be the moulders of the total life style of the people. According to Onwubiko (1991), the African world is made up of inanimate, animate and spiritual beings which interact as co-existent beings in the universe. And as they interact together, they influence one another in the universe.

It is also believed that the African world view is hierarchically ordered. The hierarchical structure is based on the nature of the beings in the universe starting from inanimate beings to the animate beings, and then the spiritual beings with the Supreme Being at the apex. Each of the categories of beings is aware of this hierarchy and the role they are expected to play to maintain the equilibrium within the ecosystem. Failure of any of the groups of beings to play their roles well brings dysfunction and imbalance in the ecosystem. Metuh (1985), explains Igbo world as the world full of spirits. The Igbo people understand their universe as being so. Their world is not limited to the material world of visible beings. It includes also the realm of the invisible things, the spirit world. The knowledge of a people's world view therefore, becomes the key to understanding their socio-political and psychological problems. According to him the adequate idea of a people's world view is got by a description of their whole life especially in its social context. Be that as it may, the clear understanding of a people's world view reveals that man is at the center of the entire system. Man is at the center of the world view. Being at the center of the universe, he makes effort to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. He does this by performing some ritual sacrifices to appease the gods so as to be in good relationship with them all.

The traditional world view theory therefore, maintains that it is the elders of the community (within the hierarchy of beings), that mediate between the people and the spiritual beings. These elders are also the leaders of the people both in socio-political and religious matters. Thus, from the fore going discourse, it is quite evident that the world view theory strongly supports *Ozo* title institution in its effort to take part in the propagation of the college of elders who are supposed to play a key role in the leadership structure and the maintenance of the ecosystem. As a social group and also a leadership institution, *Ozo* title-taking becomes one of the ways of propagating the college of elders among those Igbo communities who take *Ozo* title as the link group between

the entire people in the community and the ancestors. That is why the Igbo people say that “*onye huru ndi okenye, ahula ndi nna nna anyi ha*” – whoever has seen the elders, has seen the forefathers.

The Exchange Theory

This is also called social exchange theory. According to Blau (1964), social exchange theory concerns “actions contingent on rewarding reactions from others” (p.91). Exchange theory operates on a bilateral scale where by each person contributes to the welfare of the other as well as benefits from the welfare of the other in a give-and-take relationship. Exchange theory is a socio-economic theory which takes into consideration the contributions of the individual members of the group to the general welfare of that particular social group in order to benefit from the group in return. Social exchange theory according to Nwadiibia (1991), refers to those reciprocal actions which are based on rewarding reactions from other people. According to him, exchange theory is a theory that treats human behaviours as a process by which the individual persons under mutual agreement enter into supplies of valued goods and services. The parties involved in the mutual pact must value the services provided by the exchange partner in order to keep the transaction going. If the exchange partner does not value the services provided by the other party, there will be a break up. Homans (1958), explains social exchange theory thus:

Social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non material ones, such as the symbol of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them...For a person in an exchange, what he gives may be a cost to him, just as what he

gets may be a reward, and his behaviour changes less as the difference of the two, profit tends to a maximum (p.606).

Each member is ready to contribute his/her own quota for the benefit of the group in as much as he/she in return stands to gain from the group. Thibant and Kelley (1959), explain the rewards from this bilateral relationship as the pleasures, satisfactions and gratifications which a person gains from participating in such a relationship. Each of the parties involved in this exchange relationship is ready to fulfill its own obligation to the group in order to maintain the constant flow of the relationship. This is because as a socio-economic theory that dwells on the mutual exchange of goods and services between a social group and the individual members of that group.

Leadership theory

Every leadership has a purpose or goal to achieve. Quality leadership is geared towards good governance, as well as maintenance of peace and order in the society as its primary goal to achieve. To be a leader is to be at the fore front to realize the particular aim and objective of that leadership. A good leader is to show the way forward and to direct others on what to do and what not to do in order to reach the desired goal. Leadership is for service to God and humanity. Every leader should be aware of the fact that every leadership position is for service to God who offers the opportunity and to the entire humanity considered as the people of God. According to Iroegbu (1996), “the leader is one whose duty it is in a pre-eminent degree to ensure the order, peace and harmony of the community” (p.106). Ewelu (1999), views leadership thus:

To lead means to guide, to conduct, to direct, to precede etc. It is to draw along with, to go ahead of, to show the way. It is to move before, or in advance of, to take or have the

initiative, to make a beginning, to go or act first. To lead is to direct and action, thought, an ideology of opinion. It is to draw or direct by influence...Leadership (when it is effective) holds the citizens of a social group or members of any other group together, energizes them and pulls them towards a definite end. (p.44).

This is because it emphasizes the same points which *Ozo* institution is out to achieve through its members as the community leaders. This common goal is none other than good governance and the achievement of peace and harmony for the entire community. This theory is an effort to raise men of integrity to join hands with the king in the leadership of the entire community. Such men will no longer be misconstrued as cultists but rather as men of integrity to help the king in the leadership of the whole community. These theories form the basis through which the work is expounded.

2.3 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Empirical studies give room for a critical review of some texts related to the topic under discussion. Two works call to mind at this juncture: (a) *Ozubulu Arts and Cultural Heritage: Significances and Values*, and (b) *Community Development Efforts in Igbo land*.

Ozubulu Arts and Cultural Heritage: Significances and Values:

The Author began by tracing the traditional hierarchy in Ozubulu town beginning from His Royal Highness down to the group called “Ndi-Akana Obi” -the kindred chiefs and the *Ozo* society. According to him the traditional chieftaincy hierarchy in Ozubulu begins from His Royal Highness- Igwe Fidelis Nnamdi Oruche (Ezeugodinobi II); the Okeife and the Obi of Ozubulu. The four quarters that constitute the town Ozubulu have their own “Obi” respectively. The Obi

of Egbema Ozubulu is Obi Fidelis Ilona. The Obi of Eziora is Obi Ezeana. The Obi of Nza is Obi Onyeka. The Obi of Amakwa is sustained under the Office of his Royal Majesty to avoid duplicity. The next on the rank are “*Ndi Ichie*” and “*Ndi Agbaranze*”. Following right below them are “*Ndi Akana Obi*” – The kindred chiefs. The next groups are the *Ozo* title holders- “*Ndi Nze na Ozo*”. According to the author, the *Igwe*-In-Council and Obi Advisory Council are the highest constituted ruling bodies in Ozubulu town. They advise the “*Igwe*” on what should be done especially at very critical moments. They also escort him to important occasions to accord him prestige and honour.

Ejiofor (2006), ex-rays the cultural festivals of the town; starting from the “*Ofala*” of the “*Igwe*” popularly known as “*Okeife*” day in Ozubulu. This is an annual or biannual, event of the King. This festival marks the installation of the “*Igwe*” as the traditional ruler of the town. On such a day, he celebrates with his entire subjects, friends and well wishers. Another festival next in rank is the “*Mgbuli*” festival. As the name “*Mgbuli*” suggests, it is a feast that occurs once in twenty years; during this feast each kindred will contribute a cow which they will bring to the civic centre for this bounteous feast. The festival marks the peace and unity that characterize the town as one. Other festivals include the New Yam Festival, *Ifejioku*, *Ite ofite*, *Alulo mmuo*, *Ozuko mmanwu* and so on.

He delved into the symbolic signs and arts used to know Ozubulu and her people. According to Ejiofor(2006), an art is “a creative expression such as music, drama, painting, sculpture, writing and architecture: ordained by God...” (p.111). Every artistic presentation in words like music, songs, speech or an image or a painting emanates from the wisdom and understanding from above as found in (Exodus 31:3-7).

According to Ejiofor (2006), art is a free gift of God for man and Ozubulu people are well off in very many artistic presentations. For him, a sign refers to an event, an art, an action, a feeling, etc that shows that something exists or is happening, or may happen in the future; that is an indication for something. In the belief system of the Ozubulu people and Igbo people in general, Ejiofor believes that the religious signs and symbols as well as the artifacts there off are mediums of interaction with the ultimate reality- God Almighty who they could not but reach out to through the intermediary beings whom they represent and venerate with those signs, symbols and artifacts. The *Ozo* titled elders are always available to play the role of spiritual leaders during such ritual worship to God.

***Ozo* Moral Code and its Interpretation:**

The members of *Ozo* title society were regarded as sacred people consecrated to become leaders by words of mouth and by actions. The system is so organized in such a way that whoever is screened and found eligible to join the prestigious institution, will become purified and consecrated to the service and the propagation of the tenets of the institution both in words and deeds. Ejiofor (2006) outlines the *Ozo* code thus:

I shall uphold the truth. I shall live by equity and fairness. I shall not steal. I shall not perpetuate injustice whenever there is need for justice to be upheld. I shall not eat in the open place. I shall show love to the mankind. I shall always preach and stand for peace in my community. After the title oath taking, "*ikpukpo*" follows (p.31).

This moral code is intended to check-mate the activities of the members of the society in order to uphold the dignity, the serenity and the aura of the society and the members. The promise to uphold the truth and live by equity and fairness enjoins on the members of *Ozo* society to be

truthful and honest. They are disciplined to control themselves while talking, in order to say only the truth they know and nothing more than that. They avoid telling lies in order not to incur the wrath of the earth goddess. They always speak only but the truth. They do not speak too much. As the (book of Sirach 19:6) says that a man of too many words makes a lot of mistakes and incurs the wraths of God. It is Sigo (2012), who once affirmed that “truth is the most powerful force on earth because it cannot be changed” (p.75). This is a correct statement because truth is but a weapon to disarm the enemies. And Jesus would say it that truth and only but the truth would set some one free. Thus, the titled chiefs do not involve themselves in any plot to cheat other people. Any of the members found guilty of telling lies must do ritual cleansing of the tongue called “Isa Ire”. Peschke (1999), once affirmed that “truth is not shaped by man, but rather man must suffer to be shaped by the truth and permit himself to be grasped by it” (p.355). Truth as we know is a virtue. It is very difficult to cultivate it. For one to culture the virtue of truth requires extra discipline. That is why Peschke insists that man must suffer to allow himself to be grasped and shaped by truth in order to become honest. It is a big challenge on the members of *Ozo* society to maintain the decorum on which the society has thrived for ages. As a matter of fact, the titled elder demonstrates the veracity of whatever he has said by striking his *Ozo*-titular staff (*Ofo*) on the ground. It is a proof that what he has said is the truth; and only but the truth, no more any less.

The promise to avoid stealing enjoins on the members to be contented with whatever each one has and avoid taking what belongs to other people without their consent. A heavy penalty awaits a member of *Ozo* title group who steals his neighbour’s belonging. The penalty however, is more severe if it involves things like yam, or ram. According to Chief Simon Okoye (personal communication Nov. 2014), stealing are of two types. If a member of the *Ozo* society steals any

items whatsoever, it is not as grievous as stealing of yam tubers or a ram. The theft of yam tubers or ram is not just bad in itself but also it is a taboo. It attracts a heavy punishment. It might lead to the expulsion of the fellow from membership of the society. According to him any prospective candidate who has done such a thing is disqualified from the on-set.

The promise not to perpetuate injustice in the community remains binding on the members as leaders. They are to do everything possible to avoid injustice and to uphold justice, equity and fairness. According to Trull and Carter (2004), “justice means refusing to make assumptions or reach conclusions before all the evidence is heard. Justice means launching a formal accountability process immediately”(p180). According to Okonkwo (2014), justice can be seen as a firm resolution to render to one another what belongs to each. Justice, according to Aquinas in Nwoko (1988), means “rendering to each one his right” (p.53). Kukah (2011), used the term “miscarriage of justice” to refer to injustice in our society today. It is the duty of the leader at helm of affairs to maintain justice and equal right of each member of the group. The burden lays heavily on the *Ozo* title members as leaders of each of the community they come from. Oath-taking helps them to remember what they stand for and the consequences of failing to meet the standard. Nzomiwu (2012), makes the observation thus:

Among the moral virtues, justice occupies a place of eminence. It is of urgent concern to all mankind. Animists, Marxists, Confucianists, humanists, Christians,... all are interested in justice and clamour against injustice. But all do not understand justice alike. This is why an investigation into the traditional African notion of justice is important to both philosophers and theologians. The focus here will be on justice as it is perceived by the Igbo of Nigeria. (p.151).

Nzomiwu (2012), is correct to say that justice occupies a pride of place in African traditional society because virtually everybody wants justice both in principle and in practice. This is the reason why Igbo people say *onye kpee kpejoo, o soro onye ahu laa na be ya*- meaning that if one is called as an elder to join the panel of judges to look into a case in the community and the person upholds injustice against the innocent, the repercussion will follow that person to his/her house. This is normally the terms of reference at the on-set of the case said in a prayerful manner before the hearing begins. This is done to deter any one of those in attendance from trying to thwart the course of justice. Okafor (2008), holds the same idea with Nzomiwu (2012), on justice when he says thus:

Every society strives to attain justice, but the degree of its attainment in any society depends invariably on the place of man in that society and the extent to which he is allowed by the prevailing circumstances in society to fulfill his material conditions. (p.101).

According to Obasi (2010), peace is not isolated from justice. Rather both of them are one and the same thing. This is because where there is no justice, there will be no peace. Nwoko (1988), affirms that Aristotle made a distinction between justice as commutative and justice as distributive. Commutative justice deals with the relationship between one individual person and another. Distributive justice refers to the relationship between the community and the individual person. Distributive justice emphasizes the equitable distribution of the common good among the contingents of that particular group. It is in this second sense of justice, -the distributive justice- that the work of the *Ozo* title holder comes to lime light. As the leader of the community where he comes from, he is to do everything possible to propagate justice and equal right of the members of the community and avoid whatever that will lead to any form of injustice and chaos.

Speaking about peace in the world, John Paul II (2004), maintains that “if justice is to prevail in all areas of life, private and public, economic and social, it needs to be sustained by subsidiarity, and solidarity, and still more, to be inspired by charity” (p.121). Based on this, Okeke (2015), maintains that “truth, justice and charity are complementary; one calls out for the other” (p.23). According to him, the three must work hand in hand; truth, justice and charity; for there to be a lasting justice in this society of ours.

The promise not to eat in an open place is taken as a way of upholding the dignity and prestige of the noble title society. Eating in the open place or in the gathering of all and sundry does not benefit a titled elder. It is quite belittling just as eating along the road especially while trekking is not quite dignifying for a gentle person. A title holder does not eat anyhow. But if the occasion warrants that he should eat, then, a special place must be organized for him. The same thing is applicable for the group when they are many. The rule not to eat in an open place disciplines the members to be more mature in character as elder they are; and avoid behaving like little children, in a gathering, who would cry to their mothers intermittently for biscuit, for sweet and then again for ice cream and so on. Apart from those on routine drugs who are placed on regular diet, such untamed eating habit could engender noisy atmosphere in the general gathering; loitering about as well as losing concentration in the proceedings of the meeting.

The rule to show love to mankind is a general virtue. It is a general virtue in the sense that it embraces all other rules. Following the biblical notion of love that it covers many a sin, the rule to love mankind holds all the members in check against committing any evil act whatsoever against neighbour. Orji (2009), once said that the greatest love lies in giving one’s life for the other without counting the costs. Most often it is easier to say “I love you”. In practice it is not so much easy to act it out. That is the reason why the members of *Ozo* society observe the tenets

of the society so judiciously as part and parcel of their religious profession. And when they accept the promise to show love to mankind, they accept it whole heartedly and strive to fulfill it as an obligation to *Ozo* society and the fellow human beings in the community. As leaders of their various communities, they make effort to show love to all and be fair in treating everybody as a brother or a sister. Masters (1994), explains brotherly love as a liking affection and uniting affection. According to him, delight is an example of a liking affection but love goes deeper than that to unite the loving heart to the object which it loves. This is the love that exists between David and Jonathan that knits both of them together. Such also should exist between these titled members and their brothers and sisters in their various communities. According to Masters (1994), “love does not merely appreciate or enjoy its object. It positively relates to it; identifies with it and stands by it” (p.7). Such brotherly love propels these traditional titled leaders in such a way that they make effort to settle cases for their brothers and sisters in their communities; they act as their spokes men in matters relating to other towns and villages and so represent them well; they protect them from external aggressions and also secure their rights out there. They unite them together as one family. They lead them by good example that is why they command the respect of the entire community because of the life style, the love and concern they show them.

The rule to preach and stand by peace lies at the centre of their work as titled leaders in Igbo traditional setting. The popular maxim among the Igbo people about peace is “*Egbe belu, Ugo belu, nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwaa ya*” - let all the birds perch together on a tree, any one which would not allow the other birds to perch, let its wings break so that it falls down to create a space for others to perch. The symbol of a hand shake depicts this brotherly love, peace and

unity among the Igbo society. Live and let's live. Hendrickx (1986), expatiates on the term peace thus:

Peace implies many different things to different people. Some may identify peace as a lack of manifest conflict. Peace-making is associated with conflict resolution without the use of violence. Contrary to the traditional definition of peace as the absence of war, the concept of peace is now broadly understood to include many situations that guarantee positively human condition. Peace prevents loss of life and builds human capacity. The Hebrew word for peace is Shalom. Its Greek equivalent is *Eirene*, which means 'to be sound', 'to be safe' and its fundamental idea is totality. (p.2).

The Igbo people value life so much. Thus, they try as much as possible to avoid anything that will terminate life. This is the reason behind the vow taken by the titled elders to uphold peace in so far as it helps to promote the course of building up the human capacity and also prevents the loss of human life as Hendrickx (1986), rightly pointed out. According to Okonkwo (2014), the term peace refers to how one feels when everything is calm and alright. Peace reigns when there is a relatively calm atmosphere, devoid of all worries, frustration and despair. It can be understood as the absence of violence or war. The *Ozo* title members are called upon during their induction ceremony to openly declare their readiness to uphold and maintain peace and tranquility in their various communities regarded as basic for moving the community forward. By so doing, they act as the Mahatma Gandhi of the modern time. Mahatma Gandhi was the apostle of peace and non violence. Gandhi, according to Fischer (1954), "tried to spread the gospel of love and peace" (p.181). According to Fischer (1954), he made every effort to spread this gospel of love and peace among his followers, his people, the Hindus, the Sikhs, and even among the Muslim minorities who would not defend themselves in the midst of the thickly

populated Hindu society of India. Gandhi would quench the boiling passion among the militant Hindus and address them with cold reason to allow the molested Muslim members to stay. As a man of peace, says Fischer (1954), he would walk through the blood thirsty mob wearing a smiling face and doing the palm touching in their traditional way of blessing. With such kind gestures and gesticulations of peace, love and non-violence, the angry mob would put down their arms and disperse in total tolerance.

According to Obasi (2010), when there is selfishness and self-centeredness in the community, they fight to destroy the peaceful atmosphere of that community thereby, engineering conflict.

A peaceful society is that in which the people can live and work harmoniously together as friends. This type of peace eliminates any artificiality or coated peace. A coated peace is quite negative and culminates in structural violence. According to Obasi (2010), peace is common word in every religion in the world. The Buddhist religion understands peace as closely related to spirituality and human actions. For them, morality means the absence of violence as well as the propagation of equity and justice, compassion, and concern for one another. In Christian religion too, the prayers, songs and the sermons harp on the necessity of the members to uphold peace and harmony in the neighbourhood. Desjardins (1997), understood this fact when he made the point that the heart of the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians in the Holy bible is a call to the propagation of peace between the Jews and the non-Jews. Obasi (2010), rightly points out thus:

There is great emphasis on justice, harmony and peace in the African Traditional Religion. Justice, harmony and peace form a unit in organizational societal relationship in Africa. Without these elements, man's nature will be chaotic in the society. How man can

transcend the chaotic life situation and live in harmony within and without, is the concern of African religion and tradition. (p.167).

Obasi (2010), has said it all about the harmonious and peaceful life which people live in African traditional setting.

There is no gain saying that our *Ozo* titled leaders live among the people of diverse cultural, socio-political and religious confessions. Therefore, they are always the flag bearers of peace and good-tidings to their various communities. They should always tread the path of Mahatma Gandhi in fostering of peace and tranquility in our communities of multi-religious professions and diverse cultural and socio-political affiliations. In some communities, they were not allowed to join in partisan politics only to remain neutral and speak up in such a way as to foster peace and tranquility in times of strife and disagreement. Of course, most Igbo traditional rulers who are de facto, *Ozo* title members in Anambra state were banned by the government from partisan politics. This is a move to reinstate them as the traditional fathers whom everybody calls upon, to intervene in times of trouble, dispute and misunderstanding in matters of politics, culture, religion and other humanitarian affairs as far as the community, in chaos, is concerned. Okeke (2009), summarizes the need for the titled elders to abide by the rules and also make frantic effort to propagate these virtues when he says, “honesty, integrity, carefulness, transparency and faithfulness should be the watchword” (p.23). Thus, according to Ifesieh (1989), *Ozo* title holders take oath of office and endeavour to keep to the oath since the breach of the oath would attract the wrath of the gods. Uchendu (1965), stresses the same fact when he says, “the associations exercise a form of social control by laying down certain rules of conduct for their members and proscribing certain forms of behaviour which are considered unworthy of a titled man” (p.82).

In conclusion, therefore, it is Davidson (1969), who once affirmed that, “legitimate power lies in the office sanctioned by ancestral norms, and the person lost his right to exact obedience once he abused that office” (p.200). From the fore going, one would understand the position of the elders in Igbo cosmological outlook as leaders of their communities. The basis and the authority of leadership in Igbo setting emanate wholly from the hierarchical structure of the Igbo worldview. In Igbo worldview, the elders are placed next to the ancestors by virtue of their biological age and by virtue of their office. Following that arrangement they are better placed to relate with the ancestors and communicate with them on behalf of the rest of the family. The elders consult with the fore fathers from time to time in order to request them to intercede for man as intermediaries between man and the gods. In time of troubles they are also consulted to seek their cogent advice. According to Madu (2004), the elders consult with them because of the “belief in the absolute impartiality of the ancestors as well as the belief in the ancestors as the final court of appeal for the Igbo” (p.55). The Igbo people believe that the wise decisions of the fore fathers are final and they go a long way to help the living members. The elders do not fail to consult with the ancestors for their advice and guideline. Some Igbo adage properly fits in thus: “*ihe okenye no ala hu, nwata rigoro elu oji, ogaghi ahu ya*” -what an elder sees while sitting down, a child cannot see even if he/she should climb an Iroko tree”. Or “*nwata erughi eru juo ihe mere nna ya; ihe mere nna ya emee ya*” –when a small boy asks of what killed his father, he will suffer the same fate as the father.

The leadership of the elders and the authority to exercise the office which is reposed on the elders emanate from their age as the eldest of the family or the kindred. They also emanate from their office as titled men. These dual opportunities give them the chance of acquiring *Ofo*-the wand of office and authority to perform as elders and leaders. From the fore going, one would

find out that *Ozo* title-taking opens the door to leadership opportunity in Igbo land. It paves the way to leadership careers. It inducts people into the system of leadership of a whole life. *Ozo* title-taking marks a change in status which transforms the eligible male folk into men who are entrusted with the leadership of their various communities. In Igbo worldview, *Ozo* title society is regarded as a leadership society. That is why it is regarded as a society for the selected few who are more privileged, both financially and other wise.

The elders preside over the affairs of their communities and with the help of their wand of authority - *Ofo*, they pontificate in that regard. According to Ejizu (1986), the eldest of the family or lineage prays with kola nut, alligator pepper and phallic chalk. And with his *Ofo* he seals his prayer to the gods for protection, long life and good health upon him and the family members. The cult priests offer ritual sacrifices as well as family heads with the use of their *Ofo*. The victim used for the sacrifice like ram, goat or fowl, is killed and its blood is spilled on the *Ofo* stick. The elders use the *Ofo* to settle cases and seal up decisions of the elders as binding on all the members of the community. The *Ozo* titled men are always there as leaders of their various communities by virtue of their titular office. In Igbo cosmology, *Ozo* title-taking and leadership is one and the same thing. They are two sides of the same coin. Thus, both of them are quite inseparable. *Ozo* title paves the way onto leadership forum as far as Igbo people are concerned. During oath taking, it is the same elders who preside over the ceremony. According to Ejizu (1986), the elders gather with their different grades of *Ofo* which they have to pull together and ask the accused person to carry after the necessary incantations have been taken. The survival of the accused fellow is an indication that he or she is not guilty. But if the fellow dies, it means that he/she is guilty. Above all, the elders also have the reserved right of promulgating and enforcing laws in their communities. According to Aquinas law is “an

ordinance of reason for the common good, made by the ruler who has care of the community, and promulgated” (p.181). Aquinas made it clear that it is only he or she who is entrusted with the care of any given community has the right to promulgate a law and enforce it. The law promulgated must be in accordance with the right reason. This means that that particular law or laws must be rational, reasonable and appealing to common sense. It must not be an irrational or selfish enactment for the interest of a selected few or worse still for the ulterior motive of the person at the helm of affairs. Aquinas calls it “an ordinance of reason, for common good”- *ordinantio rationis, pro bonum commune*. The rule or the particular law in question must be promulgated for the good of the entire community. Aquinas believed that everybody must not make a law or a rule. But it is a special reserve of the leader of any particular group or community. In Igbo setting, the titled men are our elders who have the care of entire community where they come from. They pilot the affairs of their various communities in those respects enunciated above. This is what they promise to do during their induction ceremonies; that they will help to promote peace and love in their various communities; and also see that equity and fairness are upheld, for a peaceful co-existence among the people. Thus, the induction ceremony into the prestigious *Ozo* title institution marks a change in social status for the candidate who is now introduced to the college of elders who pilot the affairs of the people in different communities

Ejiofor (2006), discussed a lot of things like *Oji na igo oji, Nzu na ika nzu*, and the ritual use of *Omu Nkwu*, and so on. But it is good to observe that no particular work is so exhaustive as to have it all on a particular topic. Thus, it is this gap in literature that this dissertation wants to fill. The author wrote on *Ozo* institution in Ozubulu whereas this dissertation dwells on the leadership of *Ozo* titled men in Ozubulu as a paradigm for leadership in Nigeria.

Leadership and African Values

Ewelu (1999), delves into African values and the role of the African leaders as one of the custodians of these African values to see how far they promote them or demote them.

African Values

According to him, values are those things that are given primary importance in our life. They are those ideas that help to guide and as well determine people's daily efforts. It is value that determines whether to praise an action or to blame it. It is value that determines whether to honour someone or to discredit his personality. Thus, African values are those things that serve as the standards or yardstick for measuring success among the Africans.

Such African values include the sacredness of human life, extended family system, fidelity in marriage, honesty, respect for elders, good name, brotherliness, friendship, and so on. According to him, when an Igbo man wants to declare his innocence he would say, I did not kill, I did not steal; neither did I reveal a secret to implicate my brother, and so on. The violation of human life is so fundamental not just in Igbo-land but Africa in general. Stealing is also a grave offence. For someone who stole yam or ram, he will be taken to a shrine for ritual cleansing through the complete shaving of his or her hair. The brotherhood among Africans is still strong. This is evident in the inter-family closeness and mutual support among the relatives.

Leadership

According to Ewelu (1999), leadership is easily understood when we know that good leadership is the soul of every social group. Any group that lacks a good leader is like a body without a soul. Leadership is therefore, the ability and will to rally men and women together for a common purpose. It is the ability to induce the subordinates to work with zeal. Some see it as the ability to

influence people to co-operate towards achieving a desired goal or value. For him, to lead is to direct an action, or thought. It is to direct by influence.

Qualities of a Good Leader

According to Ewelu, it is not every one with goodwill that can be a good leader. Many are good only as followers and others are good at taking the lead. Others are good as advisers to the leader and would not be able to lead well if given the opportunity to do so. The following are the qualities of a good leader: the person should have both the physical and nervous energy to work; he/she should have a sense of purpose; there should be enthusiasm in him/her; the person should have the technical know-how and mastery of the office; the fellow should be friendly to every person and always show love and compassion; he should be man of integrity, man of authority and also man of reason than emotion.

A good leader should try as much as possible to carry every person along. A weakling cannot be able to do it. A good leader should have sense of purpose. When the person knows the end in view, he/she will now plan and as well make policies that will lead him and the group to the end. This means that he/she should be a good decision maker and a man of his words. The love and unity that exists within the group should be his/her ultimate concern.

African Leaders as the Custodians of African Values:

The African leaders suppose to be at the fore front to propagate the African values. According to Ewelu, the African leaders should possess the qualities outlined above for them to be able to lead well. They should have a clear understanding of the African values, be convinced of them and as well lure the rest of the Africans towards the realization of these values. According to him, the African leaders will become good stewards of African destiny only if they prove themselves

guardians of these African values. The first batch of African leaders immediately after the colonial era seemed to be more convinced about these African values and more resolute in upholding them than the later breed of African leaders. Such African leaders include Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dr Kwame Nkrumah in their Pan-Africanism; Dr Leopold Sedar Senghor in his *Negritude*; Dr Julius Nyerere in his *Ujamaa* ideology which is a Swahili word for living and working together in the spirit of brotherliness. Nyerere seems the most authentic of them all because he expressed the African value in an African language.

The leadership in Africa today is quite different. Our African leaders today seem not to be aware of the African values. This tells much about the alarming level of loss of sense of values among Africans. African leaders suppose to be custodians of African values like the sacredness of human life, honesty and accountability, and so on. Many of them have mutilated these values and turned demi-gods. They kill with impunity and hire those to kill on their behalf. They dry up the public treasury without qualms of conscience. Many African leaders bribe themselves into office thereby, selling off honesty and integrity. They become rich overnight and take many titles. In a situation like that what type of value are their subordinates going to attach to the value of honesty and integrity? In a continent where the leaders embezzle workers' salary, how would one blame the poor worker if he/she indulges in bribery to keep life going? In continent where the leaders kill at will to protect their businesses and selfish political interests, there is nothing strange about the citizens killing at every nook and cranny also to protect their own selfish interests. In a continent where most leaders sit on power and close their eyes and ears to the strife, genocide, starvation and suffering of all kind originating from their refusal to hands off power. In such a continent, what type of value does life have? According to him, many African leaders today have contributed a lot to the total loss of sense of value in Africa.

In summary, Ewelu (1999), dwelt much on leadership in Africa. He defined leadership and outlined the qualities of a good leader. He also emphasized that African leaders are the main custodians of the African values but they seem to fall short of expectation in perpetuating these values.

Community Development Efforts in Igbo Land:

Egboh (1987), began with the all important debate on the veracity of the claim that the Igbo people had no kings before the coming of the white men into the Igbo heart land.

The Igbo *Enwe Eze Maxim*

According to Egboh (1987), the Igbo people traditionally, had kings long before the advent of the colonial masters who only came in the seventeenth century to colonize them. The Igbo people had kingdom and kinship traditions. The kings acted as the leaders of the people in the various village communities. This has been the stand of scholars like Ejiofor (1982), who is of the view that the idea of kings and chiefs arose out of the need for people who should act as the coordinators of the various communities. Such people would be in-charge of the people as their father and leader. They should lead the people and protect them. They should take charge of resolving conflicts in the communities and also protect the community from undue external influence.

According to Egboh (1987), when the British government conquered Igbo land, they thought that the Igbo people had no kings or chiefs as their leaders. What they did was to impose the chiefs upon the people. The colonial administrators made use of those warrant chiefs as the agents of

socio-political power and control over the people. What could the people do? They accepted the ugly situation as it unfolded.

Meanwhile scholars like Ozigbo (1999), argue on the contrary that the Igbo people had nothing like kings or chiefs, and that was why the British people thought it wise to create it for the people. This is another position that is opposed to the previous one and therefore subject to debate. The British people knew quite well that the Igbo people had kings and gallant ones at that. They rather considered these kings as obstacles in their colonial agenda. What they did was to push them out of the way in order to go on with their mission. They fought vigorously to dethrone them. Thus, what happened was that they used their superior guns to over-power the kings and their soldiers. Onwubiko (1985), is quite eloquent on this when he says thus:

The superiority of Europeans' weapons of warfare such as the Maxim gun inspired Africans with profound respect for the European and all he stood for. The result was that Africans developed an inferiority complex and began to copy blindly European culture and ways of life, and to despise African tradition and customs. Thus a great deal of what was good in African culture such as respect for truth and honesty, and respect for tribal laws and customs were superseded by the bad aspects of European character. (p. 245).

This is one of the evil effects of colonialism. It is always an occasion of hostility, cheer wickedness and hatred upon the community being colonized. The colonial masters are not even ready to negotiate with the host community. On the contrary, they are hell bent on dishing out commands to promote their colonial agenda. In furtherance of the reflection, Onwubiko (1985), comments thus:

In many parts of West Africa, the colonial armies carried out a systematic destruction of chiefs' palaces and whole villages and towns. A lot of very valuable property was destroyed and Africans were impoverished. But the worst economic injustice was the looting of invaluable African works of art. For instance, when the British army captured Benin in 1897, they looted about 2,500 bronze plaques and ornaments from the *Oba's* palace. Many of these famous treasures are now scattered throughout the museums of the world. When it is remembered that five of these Benin art works fetched \$2,899 in a sale of African art work in London (1957-59) and that an ivory mask was sold to Nelson A. Rockefeller in 1958 for \$20,000, then the enormous wealth thus lost to Africa can be assessed. (p.246).

Onwubiko (1985), also thinks aloud too when he articulates thus:

The social evils resulting from the partitioning were no less serious. Atrocities committed upon the African population during the period of conquest definitely disorganized African social life and led to depopulation in many areas. This was particularly the case in French territories where resistance was stiff and long and the French colonial army ruthless on African peoples. Already we have noted how several villages were wiped out in the Ivory Coast. In the Congo... the cruelty and bad government of Leopold reduced the population from 20 million to 10 million in just over twenty years.(p.245).

That was how the Igbo people were robbed of their rich cultural heritage including the kingship tradition and their kingdoms. The kings we have today are subjugated under the leadership of the government. They take orders from the government. In the United Kingdom, it is the queen that has the final say in any official matter concerning the United Kingdom. Even in Spain and Saudi

Arabia, their own kings are highly placed with all the powers vested on them. But in Nigeria, the Igbo kings were forced to remain under the state government. Even the Emirs in the northern states and the *Oba* in the south west have better recognition than the Kings in the south east.

Conflicts in the Selection of *Ozo* titled Members

According to Egboh (1987), the screening for the selection of *Ozo* members is not always easy to handle. This is because of the fact that there are many contestants always. And the higher the number of contestants, the higher the possibility of conflicts in the screening and selection of the right candidate for the particular title. The reason for the scramble for a particular chieftaincy position is not far-fetched. One of the reasons according to him is because of the dividend which they gain from the government due to the particular title status. For instance, every traditional ruler has some financial entitlement due to his office as the traditional ruler of a town. The fund is for the maintenance of the office as an agent at the grass root for holistic governance. Egboh (1987), says, “The tussles and scrambles for chieftaincy stools...were created by government’s declared intention to pay remuneration by way of allowance to recognized chiefs” (p. 127). The move by the government is a welcomed development. The committee or the Council of Elders who organize the screening of the candidates for such posts in the villages should be men of integrity who would not be thrilled with bribe. They should also have a set down criteria for better assessment of candidates to avoid undue favouritism.

Respect and Dignity of a Titled Person

Another reason for the scramble for title position is because of the honour and prestige of the office which is automatically transferred to the person occupying the position. Some people who are politically minded go extra miles to secure a particular position of honour. They throw their

weight right and left to make sure that they are not elbowed out of the race. They do that by bribing their way through or by being connected to who is who in the government to give them the desired patronage. Man naturally craves for power as well as the positions of honour and prestige. This is the why some people see it as a do or die affair to secure such opportunities when they crop up. Thus, as Egboh (1987), dully observes, “One way through which most Igbo demonstrated their high social status was through the taking of the title, and belonging to the respected *Ozo* title society” (p.128).

The Meeting point of African Traditional Religion and Christianity:

According to Egboh (1987), the advent of Christianity to Igbo land was not a welcomed development ab initio. There were so many difficulties encountered by the early missionaries in trying to penetrate the Igbo hinter land. This is because of the strong adherence of the native people to African Traditional Religion. The Igbo people expressed their religious belief in so many ways. One of them is the taking of *Ozo* title. According to him, the early missionaries made a fundamental mistake in their missionary evangelism as regards *Ozo* title institution in Igbo land. According to Egboh (1987), the early missionaries, instead of making effort to Christianize *Ozo* title-taking by removing from it the unchristian practices, they rejected it hook, line and sinker and forbade the Christians to have anything to do with it. Anyone who disobeyed the order was disciplined by the Church authorities. Many devout Christians withdrew and refused to join the *Ozo* title society any more. (p.128).

The meeting point of Christianity and African Traditional Religion saw a lot of tensions due to the fact that none of the two religions was ready at that time to give up on its own tenets in order to accommodate the other. The tension has lingered on for many decades up to a century. The

approach of the early missionaries in the treatment of *Ozo* title society and the Christians who were members showed the magnitude of the tension. With the passage of time following the shift in administration from the white missionaries to the indigenous Igbo Church administrators, the relaxation of the tension was put on course. Before too long it was very much minimized.

According to Egboh (1987), the statement issued by the then Roman Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha in 1970, was a welcomed development. The ban on *Ozo* title-taking and gave room for those willing to join the society to do so provided that they do not join in any practice that is contrary to the Christian faith. According to Egboh (1987), “ the arrangement was preferable to banning Christians from taking the *Ozo* title which if short of its traditional religious attachments could be regarded as a purely social institution which had nothing to do with religion” (p.129). It is worthy of note that the outright rejection of this all important socio-religious title institution in Igbo land is very much in line with the overall agenda of the colonial masters- to come and plunder Africa. That was the political agenda behind the overthrow of all the kingdoms and the kingship traditions in Africa and the onward appointment of the warrant chiefs to perpetrate their devilish political agenda on the African soil. They did this in the full awareness of the fact that even in their own countries and regions they still have kingship and queen-ship traditions thriving till date.

The outright rejection of the *Ozo* title institution by the early missionaries is a pit-fall in their missionary mandate because they failed to realize that it is the fulcrum of their missionary mandate and as such the minute spot of culture contact between the Christian religious culture and the African Traditional Religious culture. They failed to realize that in the process of evangelization, the religious anthropologist should not regard any particular culture as being superior to another one. Such a bias will only blockade meaningful culture contact from taking

place. On the contrary therefore, the obvious agenda has been to substitute the African Traditional Religion with their so called superior religion. That was why they could not see anything good in such socio-religious and political institutions on arrival. The thing to do should be to wipe them out completely.

Egboh (1987), has made a tremendous effort to x-ray some of the challenges facing *Ozo* title institution both during the period of the early missionaries and later on between the members who were traditionalists and the Christians who desired to join the society. His write-up gives light to the readers as regards what has transpired in the *Ozo* society ever since the time of the early missionaries.

Egboh (1987), wrote extensively on chieftaincy/*Ozo* institutions in Igbo-land. This dissertation however, dwells much on the leadership aspect of *Ozo* title-taking. Besides that, he wrote in Onitsha while this dissertation research was carried out among the people of Ozubulu.

2.4 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review gives an over view of the authors' opinions on the theme of the work. The research, takes into account, the conceptual frame work, the theoretical frame-work and the empirical studies. The theoretical frame work gave room for the deployment of certain theories to embellish the work. These theories stand as the foundation on which the theme develops. They give meaning to the theme under study. A theory refers to a group of well argued ideas used to explain new facts. Such theories are assumptions which are made based on hypothesis. They include: evolution theory, world view theory, leadership theory and exchange theory. They provided the frame work for the explanation of the variables *Ozo* institution and leadership.

The empirical studies gave room for a review of works which dwelt much on the concepts- *Ozo* title-taking and leadership. They include: Ozubulu Arts and Cultural Heritage: Significances and Values, Leadership and African Values and Community Development Efforts in Igbo Land.

The authors of the works made efforts to do justice to their works. However, it is believed that there is no particular work that is so exhaustive on an issue that it leaves no room for further research on the issue, thus, the gap in literature which this dissertation is there to fill. They have all written from their different perspectives whereas the researcher of this dissertation writes from his own different perspective also. The authors Ejiofor and Egboh wrote on *Ozo* institution without explicit reference to leadership. This dissertation however, fills the gap by dwelling at length on *Ozo* leadership in Ozubulu. This research discovered an inseparable bond between *Ozo* institution and leadership among those communities in Igbo-land that take *Ozo* title. Similarly, the author Ewelu wrote on leadership in Nigeria without reference to the leadership of *Ozo* institution. Thus, this dissertation tries to fill the gap by tracing the missing link. It was therefore, gathered that *Ozo* title-taking gives some young men of integrity, the opportunity of joining the elders in order to assist the king in the leadership of the villages in the town.

CHAPTER THREE

CHRISTIAN *OZO* TITLE-TAKING IN OZUBULU

Ozo title society was not uncommon among the people of Ozubulu. This was because of the enthusiasm of the people to join the society. Hence, it became the next in preference to the adult men to save their earnings in order to join the society due to the prestige it accords the members. Hence the popular maxim in Ozubulu about the *Ozo* titled men is “Ahu nze, ebie okwu”- meaning that whenever people are talking and a titled man joins the group, they keep quiet and listen to him as a leader. *Ozo* title society is very influential in Ozubulu that it has engendered another time honoured maxim-“ala adighi mma bu uru ndi nze” meaning that the *Ozo* titled men make a lot of gains when there are crisis in the land. The reason is that they were the people who presided over cases as the elders of the community. What they do is to ask the parties to bring case settlement fees, cola nuts, kegs of palm wine, cartons of beer, et cetera. When the case is finally settled, the one who loses will be mandated to reimburse the opponent of all he/she has spent in pursuing the case. *Ozo* title in Ozubulu is a very influential society and very lucrative too. It is a very prestigious society to associate with.

3.1 *Ozo* Title-Taking as an Institution

Forde and Jones (1967), once made the assertion that “*Ozo* was indeed, the principal unifying agency operating on a large scale in Igbo society” (p.20). This means that *Ozo* institution plays the role of uniting the Igbo people who take the title together as one. It is a good compliment on the noble institution. *Ozo* title-taking is one of the traditional institutions in Igbo traditional society. It is a time honoured institution that plays a vital role in shaping the life of the Igbo people especially in those parts of Igbo-land where it is in practice. It gives meaning to people’s

life. And by way of social interpretation, it paves way for people to join the council of elders through title-taking apart from the conventional aging system. As an age long institution, *Ozo* society has evolved a body of rules and regulations to serve as a guide in the screening and recruitment of new members; and for maintenance of order among the members. The society, over time has stabilized in such a way that it has many stages they go through as new candidates before they reach the final *Ozo*. The stages vary from one community to another and from one town to another. The preliminary stages are meant to keep the candidate in check during the period of screening in order to verify his suitability for the office in view. It equally keeps the candidate in suspense so as to make him appreciate, as well as value the title-taking when eventually he takes the final *Ozo* and becomes a full member. *Ozo* title-taking marks a change in social status which is the ambition of many Igbo men. *Ozo* title-taking transforms the candidate from ordinary person to a titled man, from “*okolo*”-young man to “*nze*”-chief and elder.

3.2 The Origin of *Ozo* Title

Nri Origin: The people of *Nri* claim to be the originators as well as the giver of *Ozo* title to the people of Igbo-land. According to Ezenwafor Nwizu, (personal communication, May 20th, 2017), the people of *Nri* perform certain ritual sacrifices when they are called to do so but as to the claim that *Ozo* owes its origin to them is contestible. According to Dim Ohachi Ilona, (personal communication, May 20th, 2017), *Nri* people have their own *Ozo*. The same thing is applicable to other communities in Igbo-land where *Ozo* title-taking is practised. Although it might appear as if *Nri* people began to take *Ozo* title before others that does not mean that all other Igbo communities borrowed *Ozo* title institution from them.

However, regarding the *Nri* origin of *Ozo*, certain scholars seem to share the same view with the *Nri* people. Scholars like Arinze (1970), uphold *Nri* to be the place of origin for *Ozo* society.

According to him, *Nri* is regarded as “the centre of Igbo priesthood”. A priest in Igbo cosmology is a leader. He serves the village deity and mediates between the people and the forefathers. Most often he is a titled man with one of the highest ranks in *Ozo* title. Ilogu (1974), believes that *Ozo* title-taking “grew out of the need for priests who would preside at extended family and lineage worship and supervise the cult of the ancestors and keep the family *Ofo* stick”(p.31). Judging from the assertions of Arinze (1970), and Ilogu (1974), above, it is deducible by way of syllogism that *Nri* is believed to be the cradle of *Ozo* institution in Igbo land. According to Isichei (1976):

The traditions of *Nri*, in the northern part of the high-density belt, preserve a memory of the original migration to the south. ‘At the time of *Nri*’s arrival in this part of the world, there were no other towns in the immediate vicinity, nothing but open country, and so the settlement was called *Agukwu*, meaning, the great field (p.4).

Isichei traces the origin of *Nri* clan as is recorded by the *Nri* elites as well as the early missionaries as the cultural/ritual headquarters of the Igbo people. This particular history of *Nri* as the ritual centre for the Igbo people has also been accepted by some scholars to be the case. It is believed that *Nri* is the centre for all the religious, social, economic and political life of the Igbo people from time immemorial. And by the virtue of that they carry out ritual cleansing in all Igbo communities and confer political as well as ritual titles in return for a fixed amount of money. *Nri* people also claim to have been commissioned by *Chukwu* to act as the ritual head of the Igbo people, because of that they are in charge of sacred functions like *Ikpu aru*, *Igbuju ala* (ritual cleansing) and other socio-religious functions like the coronation and crowning of kings, bestowal of traditional titles and mantles of leadership at various levels. According to Ilogu (1974), *Nri Agukwu* was well known in the olden days for all forms of religious and economic

activities like removing of *aru-* abominations, tattooing and doing of facial marks called *Igbu ichi* in Igbo language. They are also in-charge of making *Ofo* sticks which they hand over to titled chiefs. According to him, the origin of *Ozo* is difficult to trace. Ilogu (1974), maintains that:

It is safe to say that it grew out of the need for priests who would preside at extended family and lineage worship and supervise the cult of the ancestors and keep the family *Ofo* stick. Secondly, it grew out of the economic needs of the peasant society and economy wherein young men could invest their agricultural wealth in the form of crops and livestock into the taking of the title from which they derive much dividend from the new entrants.(p.31).

It remains a matter for debate, the assertion that *Ozo* institution could have originated from the *Nri* cultural centre.

Onwubiko (1991), remarks that “those who hold to the *Nri* origin of the Igbo, often support their claim by stating that *Nri* priests went through the whole of Igbo land giving people *Ofo* to enable them to take *Ozo* title” (p.10).

The Origin of *Ozo* in Ozubulu

Ozo title-taking is a time honoured institution in Ozubulu. It has enjoyed a long standing tradition from the remote past. According to J. Okolo (personal communication 15th January, 2017), when we were small, the elders at that time were already taking *Ozo* title. It started before we were born. This man is second to the eldest man in Ozubulu. He is 94 years now but according to him, the elders at the time they were small have started taking *Ozo* title. This shows that it has gone above century or even centuries when the practice of taking *Ozo* title began even in Ozubulu. According to Ichie Dimohachi, (personal communication January 15th, 2017), who is

the head of *Ozo* in one of the four quarters in Ozubulu, the beginning of *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu has no clear record as to when it started. According to him, both his father and his grand father took *Ozo* title. This is a pointer to the fact that the origin of *Ozo* institution in Ozubulu may have gone into centuries. According to Ejiofor (2006), “*Nze na Ozo* institution in Ozubulu is an old aged institution dated above five hundred years ago. Just like some other cultural institutions in Ozubulu, it has undergone series of improvement and changes with time”(p.30). Ejiofor’s comment goes to testify to the fact that *Ozo* institution in Ozubulu as affirmed by J. Okolo and Ichie Dimohachi dates back to many centuries. Since the Igbo people were not lettered until the recent time, it was not easy for our fore fathers at that time to keep documentary of its inception. They were only conveying some of the vital information orally. Some of the elders then might not have been able to disclose some of the vital information to the younger generation before they died. And so the information got truncated and lost. It is good that today some of these cultural practices are being documented to have something to bequeath to the on-coming generations. At least it would not be a total loss.

3.3 Types of *Ozo* in Ozubulu

According to A. Chukwuneta (personal communication, July 11, 2013), *Ozo* society is of two types viz: “*Ozo Alor*” and “*Ozo Udu*”. They are to be treated differently one after another.

Ozo Alor: *Ozo Alor* is one of the types of traditional *Ozo* titles taken by the men folk in Ozubulu town. *Ozo Alor* is in fact more common than the other one. It is more common because of the nature of the other type -*Ozo Udu* which is specifically reserved for those who have special call from a deity.

The Initial Preparations for *Ozo Alor*:

Ozo title-taking in Ozubulu has its own laid down protocols and/or procedures for preparations which the candidates must have to meet up with before ever they are admitted. First and foremost, the candidate in question should make his intention to join the society known to the society leader where he belongs in the village. The society leader will receive the person and ask the leader of the committee in charge of screening to start investigation on the candidate's personality and family background. The screening is always a thorough one. It involves interrogating the candidate himself, the family members and even the villagers who know the man very well. According to C. Okafor (personal communication, November 12, 2013) any candidate who is known to have committed any abominable act in the past like theft of yam seedlings in the farm or at the home of the owner is disqualified. The theft of fowl or ram disqualifies a person. Any fellow who is notorious in misdemeanours and therefore, known for gross misconduct is disqualified. According to Chief Martin Ilona (personal communication, 10th Nov., 2015), in his own similar explanation, maintains that any person who wishes to join the *Ozo* will meet the chairman of the group in his village community, who will in turn refer him to the secretary of the committee in charge of screening the new candidates. According to him, each community has its own *Ozo* society with its governing body. The secretary of the committee will give the fellow the list of requirements for the initiation together with the application form. The committee will then open up a formal inquiry on the background of the applicant.

The Application Form for Umu Mkpidiike Nkemehi *Ozo* Society in Egbema, Ozubulu

Applicant's Particulars:

1. Name of Applicant.....
2. Applicant's Kindred.....
3. Address.....
4. Age.....
5. Married or Single.....
6. Profession.....
7. Name and Signature/Thumb Print of Proposer.....

(Nze from the Applicant's Kindred)
8. Name and Signature/Thumb Print of Seconder.....

(Nze from another kindred)
9. Signature/Thumb Print of the Applicant.....

The Committee's Report:

1. Is the applicant of sound mind?
2. Is the applicant of sober character?
3. If married, has he a stable family?
4. If of age and not yet married, any reasons?
5. Is he financially stable?
6. Has he any criminal record?
7. Do you think that he will live up to the high ideals of an Nze?

RECOMMENDED/NOT RECOMMENDED

Signature of Committee members

(1)..... (iv).....

(ii)..... (v).....

(iii)..... (vi).....

Signature of Committee's Chairman..... Date.....

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED..... Date.....

(Head of *Ozo* society)

According to M. Anichebe, (personal communication, 10th January, 2015), the items on the list include all the things the candidate has to purchase like the uniforms- *akwa isi agu na abada*- the top is usually a wool material with tiger head design on it and a wrapper; then the red cap-*Okpu Oku/Mmee* with the red feathers of the bird called Parrot-Icheoku and the white feather of the bird called Eagle-*Ugo* attached on it. On the list also are items like the *Ofo Ozo* which the head of *Ozo* (*onye isi Ozo*) will hand over to him. He noted that the candidate will begin to buy the items only when he has been declared eligible to go on with the preparations because sometimes the screening may see some candidates out of the race and bring all the preparations to a halt.

The Screening of Candidates:

The candidates are thoroughly screened to certify their suitability for the *Ozo* title-taking. According to Adibe (1992), “to be initiated, one’s life will be properly scrutinized...” (p.23). The panel of inquiry set up by the society will open up inquiry on the candidates about to join the society to certify if they are eligible or not. Someone from the committee has to be sent to make investigation within the vicinity of the candidate to know if he is eligible or not. According to E. Okwuosa, (personal communication, 10th January, 2015), the eldest person of the kindred has to be consulted as well as few other persons from the place who know the candidate well. According to him, the inquiry will focus on a number of issues like: the life style of the person, his personal relationship with other people, whether he has a good public image or not. The inquiry will investigate if the person has in one way or the other indulged in theft, especially the theft of a ram or yam tubers. The inquirer will investigate if he has committed any abominable offence before. For instance, the theft of yam or ram used to be an abominable offence. Other issues to inquire about include whether the candidate is a free born or not; whether he is buoyant enough to cater for the expenses for the *Ozo* ceremonies; whether he is actually a good

ambassador of his community that is, a person good enough to rely upon; whether he is actually a man of his word and a man of peace. Some of these issues could terminate someone's preparation.

During the screening exercise, some of the candidates do a lot of funny things in order to get the form. Some use the opportunity to lobby for a favourable report from the committee in charge of the screening. They indulge in bribery to pull their way through. The screening exercise sometimes generates a lot of heat and tension at some quarters. Some people make use of force, and threats to make sure they get what they want. According to Ifesieh (1989), "evidence abounds of conflicts...or bitter struggles with respect to *Ozo* title and who holds the *Ofo* and its accruing benefits..." (p. 76). According to him, such dangerous conflicts sometimes brought about disorder and disunity among the people; and led to untold hardship on the entire community. In some communities the tussle for title has torn them apart so much that they do not associate again as one. Some have refused to fetch water from the other side of the community because of enmity brought about by title tussle. In some communities they are at each other's throat for chieftaincy issues. In some places, it remains at the level of cold war whereas, in others it turns into a full blow squabbles. Such community unrest breeds all sorts of evil deeds within the vicinity. In Ozubulu, there are different *Ozo* societies with rules guiding the screening of candidates. This helps to prevent unnecessary squabbles during screening. According to Dim Ohachi, (personal communication, May 20th, 2017), the experience of squabbles during screening is rare in Ozubulu because of the caliber of people who are appointed to take charge of it. Egboh (1987), thus, says that the duty of selecting chiefs in some Igbo communities was never an easy thing because of too many contestants who would want to be selected each one before the others. According to him, the main reason why people scramble to grab a ticket as an eligible

candidate for *Ozo* title-taking is because of the government's initiative to pay some remuneration as allowance to the recognized chiefs. Helder (1970), maintains that the reason why people tend to resort to violence is due to the restrictions and humiliations involved in the selection of eligible candidates. Those who are not selected may be hurt and occasionally the reaction then would be to go violent because he has been left behind.

Brown (1996), maintains that some people bear grudges against others due to crimes they might have committed against them in the past. When the opportunity calls for them to decide the fate of such "enemies" like during screening for *Ozo* title-taking, they see it as a golden chance to malign them. Some people also glory in trying to run others down for no just cause only to present themselves as those better off. Such egoism causes violence and squabbles especially during screening for *Ozo* title-taking. According to Oyeshola (2005), class division, ethnicity and other socio-economic inequalities, which could be a source of handicap for some people, could also be an insurmountable hurdle for those going for *Ozo* title screening. Such people suffer undue humiliation and trauma due to social inequality. The situation may escalate to social violence and squabbles. According to Oyeshola (2005), "economic problems, discriminatory economic systems and economic difficulties as a result of economic development and modernization are the major...source of internal conflict" (p.123). The screening exercise keeps some candidates going while some are asked to step aside based on the information gathered about them. A lot concerns the public image of the candidate being screened. When the person has a good relationship with the people, he may likely scale through unlike the one who has a bad image due to his *modus vivendi*-mode of living.

3.4 The Stages of *Ozo* Title-Taking in Ozubulu:

Ozo title-taking in Ozubulu has several stages which the candidates have to pass through to the full *Ozo*. These stages vary from town to town and from one locality to another. According to D. Arinze,(personal communication, May 15, 2013), Ozubulu people have four stages which the new candidates must have to pass through before they are regarded as title men. They are as follows:

- a. *Ido Ndichi Ani*
- b. *Omele Ibi Uno*
- c. *Ozo Alor*
- d. *Itu Ugo*

Each of these steps has a fixed amount of money attached to it to ease the load of financing the *Ozo* title-taking by many who are not buoyant enough to do it once. In Ozubulu town, the new candidate has to begin with “*Ido ndichi ani*”. This is the first stage. The second stage is the “*Omele ibi uno*”. The third stage is “*Ozo Alor*” while the last stage is “*Itu Ugo*”.

Ido Ndichi Ani: This is the first ceremony carried out by the candidate preparing to take *Ozo* title. *Ndi Ichie Ani*, according to Chief M.Ilon (personal communication 15th January, 2017), refers to the fore fathers symbolized by a carved image. The image used to have its own altar but this was abolished in the early 80s in order to accommodate the Christians. In *Ozo Obodo*, this first stage used to be a ceremony dedicated to the fore fathers-*ndi ichie*.

Items to Provide to the Members Include:

i. *Nkwu Iku Afuru* -Wine to clear the heat. The wine serves as kola to the titled members in attendance. They include 4 Kegs of palm wine (*Awaliba ngwo ano*).

ii. Feeding for the whole *Ozo* titled men. They must eat to their satisfaction. The food must be up to the certified standard. The inspection team will certify it before it is served.

iii. *Nkwu Ogbo*. This is another set of wine to serve the guests. They are 12 Kegs of palm wine (*Awaliba ngwo ano*) and 1 gallon of Up wine.

iv. *Ikpukpo*-(a)Kola nut (*Asato Oji nabo* i.e 8 by 2 =16 kola nuts). This number of kola is presented by the candidate to the members. Then another (*Asato Oji nabo* i.e =16 kola nuts) is presented by the wife or the first wife for a man with more than one wife.

(b) One Hen, *Asato Ego nabo*, *Asato Ji nabo*(16 tubers of yam), *Otu Ite Ngwo*(One pot of Palm Wine) for the Head of *Ozo* society and his second-in command. Then he brings also *Asato Ego* for Kola nut, Heap of big yams (the number of yams is not definite but the team of inspectors must okay it before it is accepted).

The sharing of the yams is as follows:

-34 tubers for the head of *Ozo*

-32 for the second-in-command

-30 for the third-in-command

-16 for every member of *Ozo* present.

OHU: 12 Afias for all the Nze present. This is the money shared to all the members in attendance. According to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, Nov.,2015), the money is N3,000 presently. And when one calculates it by the number of the members in attendance, it will run in hundreds of thousands.

Omere Ibi Uno: This is the second stage of *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu. According to Chief M. Ilona, (personal communication, 15th January, 2017), this is the stage when the candidate for *Ozo* title-taking takes the title elders to his family palace called *obi*. It is one of the criteria for taking *Ozo* title. The candidate should have *Obi* where he receives his fellow titled elders. This *Obi* should be separate from the residential house where his wife and children live.

The following are the items which the candidate has to provide for the chairman of the occasion and the members in attendance:

i. *Nkwu Iku Afulu*- 4 Kegs of Palm Wine (*Awaliba Ngwo Ano*). NB: these are already explained in the first stage.

ii. Feeding for all the members in attendance.

iii. *Nkwu Ogbo*: 12 Kegs of Palm Wine (*Awaliba Ngwo Iri na Abuo*) and 1 Gallon of Up Wine.

iv. *Ikpukpo*: (a) Yams: The size of the yams involved here is called “*Awa Ji*”- medium sized yams. The sharing goes as follows:

- 40 tubers for the head of *Ozo*
- 34 ” for the second-in-command
- 32 ” for each *Nze* in attendance

(b) N500 for kola nuts

(c) *IKPO MKPURU*- this is a heap of a small sized yams for cultivation. They are kept in four heaps. Each heap is 252 seed yams (i.e 12 *Ogus* and 12 yams). The total is 1008 tubers of yams.

(d) *OMUMU*: these are also small sized yams kept in four heaps each numbering 252 seedlings for cultivation. This is (12 *Ogus* and 12 yams) totaling 1008 tubers. Each of these heaps of yam is shared out according to the yard stick for sharing as follows:

-One and half heaps for the head of *Ozo*

-One heap for the second-in-command

-half a heap is given to the third-in-command

(e) *OHU*: This is the money given to the titled elders in attendance. Presently it is N3,000 for each of them in attendance.

There are two other ceremonies that follow the *Omere Ibi Uno*. They are:

(a) *IGBAYI ABOSI*- this is performed by the head of *Ozo* and his second man. It is a ritual cleansing. It involves the ritual ceremony of cleaning the lips and the tongue of the candidate with the leaves of the tree called *Abosi*. It is believed that from then on, the individual involved does not speak any how whether in public or in private. He does not utter lies with his tongue else the gods will kill him. The leader will take the *abosi* leaves kept ready for the ritual cleansing and invite the candidate to open his mouth for the ritual ceremony. While he does the ritual, he addresses the candidate as follows: *Ana m asa gi ire taa, ka iwere na-ata okwu eze tupu ikwuo ya, ma gharazie idi na ekwu ihe I na amaghi ma obu ezi okwu ma obu asi*-I wash your tongue today to be thinking before you speak and avoid saying things that you are not sure of

them as true or false. After the ceremony they are given 1 hen, 1 cock, *Asato Oji Ano*, for kola nuts, *Asato Ego Ano*, 4 *Afias*-money to share, 1 pot of Palm Wine, and a plate of food each.

(b)**IKU MMUO**: this ceremony signifies that the candidate is deeply committed to the title-taking. It requires one she goat, *Asato Oji Ano*, and *Asato Ego Ano*, and *Asato Ji Ano*. This marks the end of the second stage of *Ozo* in Ozubulu.

OZO ALOR: This is the third and the penultimate stage to the final ceremony for *Ozo* in Ozubulu. It has its own heavy financial burden on the candidate in question.

The items demanded of the candidate to make available to the members in attendance for the ceremony include:

i. **NKWU IKU AFULU**- Drinks to clear off the heat: 4 Kegs of Palm Wine (*Awaliba Ngwo Ano*).

ii. Feeding for all the titled members present

iii. **NKWU OGBO**: 12 Kegs of Palm Wine (*Awaliba Ngwo Iri na Abuo*) and 1 Gallon of Up-wine.

iv. **IKPUKPO**: (this is money for kola nuts), *Awa ji* (the same thing as in “*OMERE IBI UNO*”, 80 *Awa ji* for the youngest *Nze* (popularly known as *Nwata Nze*). *Ikpo Nkpulu* is also the same as in the previous stage. *Omumu* is also the same as in the previous stage.

v. **OHU**: 12 *afia*.

MKPURU JI (JI OKU):

-*Nkwu Iku Afulu*: 4 kegs of Palm wine (*Awaliba Ngwo Ano*),

-Feeding for all the titled men present

-*Nkwu Ogbo*: 12 Kegs of Palm Wine (*Awaliba Ngwo Iri na Abuo*) and 1 pot of Up-wine.

IKPUKPO: Yams used here are of the biggest size and are usually kept in three heaps of about 4ft high.

-The sharing is as follows:

i. 1 heap to head of the *Ozo*

ii. 1 heap to *Nwata Nze*-newest of the members

iii. 1 heap to the rest

-1 hen for *Iju Onu*- this is shared between the head of the Society and his deputy.

-1 hen for *Ido Ngwuru*- this is also shared between the head of the Society and his deputy. This one is usually presented by the wife.

-1 she goat (*Ewu Akpa*).

-*Ikpa Ofo*- the person is given his *Ofo* which is his wand of office. The *Ofo* is produced by the person proclaimed by the oracle to do it. The handing over of the *Ofo Ozo* is usually done by the *Onye Isi Nze* who has the exclusive right to do so. While handing over the *Ofo* he says “*Nara m Ofo Ozo nkea bu ikikere iga-eji we na-aruru di ka Onye Nze echiri echichi bido kitaa we gabazie*”- receive from me your wand of office with which you will continue to work as a titled elder from now on”.

-*OHU*: this is money for *Ike Ji Ome*. This is a huge amount of money they share before they end the ceremony.

ITU UGO: According to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, 10th Nov.,2015), this is the last stage of the *Ozo* title-taking. It is the most interesting and also the most impressive of all. It involves the naming and the coronation ceremonies. Other things are normal with the previous stages especially the items to provide for the members including the food and drinks.

The Final Stage of *Ozo* Title-Taking:

The naming and the coronation of the candidate constitute the final initiation ceremonies. These ceremonies formally take place at night in the *Obi* of the *Ozo* head-*Onye Isi Ozo*. But according to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, 10th Nov., 2015), the time and venue have all been changed for good. Nowadays, the ceremonies take place at the house of the candidate in question and it is no longer a night affair. It takes place in the day light, in the full view of all the people present. These two ceremonies are the thing that matter most in the final initiation. They are the ceremonies that certify that the candidate in question has been fully inducted into the *Ozo* title society.

The Naming Ceremony:

Name is used for identification. It is used to identify people, or things like objects, animals, places, days of the week and months of the year, et cetera. Name serves as a tool for individuation and particularity. It is used to differentiate one item from the other. Thus, it serves for *individuation et specifica differentiam*- it is used to specify things in their digits and/or to mark the specific difference in things. Naming ceremony abounds in many cultures of the world today. In African context, naming ceremony is a big event that calls for celebration especially when a

child is born. In some places, it is the eldest son of the family that gives a name to a new born child of the family. In some other places, it is the father or the mother of the child that gives a name to his/her child. In the olden days in Igbo land, names are given based on the experiences of the child's parents in life. For instance, some parents who experienced hardship in life may decide to name the child born during or after the hard times *Chibike*, *Chizoba* or *Chiemerie* meaning that God is our strength, He saves us and makes us victorious even in hardship, et cetera. Those born during the Biafran war were given names like: *Agha di n'ulo*, *Oguebie*, *Ogbogu*, and so on.

Apart from the naming ceremony of a new born baby, there are other occasions of naming ceremony in Igbo-land which is also highly celebrated. It includes among others, the titular naming ceremony in Igbo society for instance, the naming ceremony in *Ozo* title-taking. According to M. Ilona, (personal communication, 4th January, 2016), during the occasion, the candidate lies down with his face upwards before the *Ndi Chi Ani* and answers four names. The last of the names becomes the titular name. The names are so arranged in such a way that the titular name comes last on the row. Probably the only new name is the titular name he chooses for the title-taking. The order is this: his English name, followed by his Native name, and then the father's name, before the last name which is then the titular name.

The Final Day:

Immediately the naming ceremony is over, the red-capping follows at once. The ceremony involves the putting on of the Red Cap-*Okpu Oku* adorned with the feathers of both Eagle and Parrot (*Ugo na Icheoku*) neatly stocked together into the cap, on the head of the candidate by *Onye isi Ozo*. With the putting on of the cap on the head of the candidate, the process of

initiation is consummated. At this point, the person in question is fully initiated into the *Ozo* society. From that moment, he is entitled to all the rights and privileges of the society. The coronation is accompanied by certain spoken words by the person presiding over the coronation ceremony. It is as follows: *N'ubochi taa bu ahia Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke, ana m ekpunye gi Okpu Ozo "Eze Nnamuzie"* (titular name) *di ka onye otu Ozo anyi-* today being *Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke* market, I put this Red Cap on you "*Eze Nnamuzie*" as our *Ozo* society member.

The final initiation ceremony into the *Ozo* title-taking takes place when the red cap is being placed on the head of the candidate with the words of the initiation pronounced by the person who presides over the ceremony. These actions and the corresponding words which compliment them constitute the matter and the form of the initiation ceremony.

The Matter and Form of *Ozo Alor*:

Stumpf (2003), comments on Aristotle, thus:

Although Aristotle distinguished between matter and form, he nevertheless said that, in nature, we never find matter without form or form without matter. Everything that exists is some concrete individual thing, and everything is a unity of matter and form. Substance, therefore, is always a composite of form and matter. (p.83).

Aristotle, according to Stumpf (2003), is of the view that matter and form are somewhat, inseparable. There is no way one could talk about one without reference to the other as well. To talk about the matter is to talk about the form also. Existents are only but substances. And every substance is a composite of both matter and form. There is no substance that exists only with either of the two. Rather both of them must always be present.

The Matter of Ozo Alor: Matter could refer to any material thing that can be felt or touched. It could also refer to something that is visible to the sight. A physical object, for instance, is a matter. Thus, the matter of *Ozo Alor* refers to the coronation of the new *Ozo* candidate with the Red Cap-*Okpu Oku* that is adorned with the feathers of Eagle and Parrot-*Ugbene Ugo na Icheoku*.

The Form of Ozo Alor: the form refers to the spoken words that usually accompany the matter in every ritual ceremony. The form of *Ozo Alor* refers to the words uttered by *Onye Isi Ozo* while putting the Red Cap on the candidate. It is as follows: “*N’ubochi taa bu ahia Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke, ana m ekpunye gi Okpu Mmee “Eze Ugo Mba” (titular name) di ka onye otu Ozo anyi-* today being *Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke*, I put this Red Cap on you Chief “*Ugo Mba*” as our *Ozo* society member”.

The form authenticates and empowers the matter. The Igbo adage says “*ike di n’okwu onu*”- there is power in the spoken word. For instance, in the Catholic Church, it is believed that the spoken words of our Lord Jesus Christ, repeated over the matter- bread, makes it consecrated. The same thing is applicable to all the sacraments of the Church when they are being administered. The spoken word empowers the matter of each of the sacraments to make it effective and therefore impacts the grace on the recipient. This is the idea behind the incantations done by the native doctors when ministering in any form.

Merriments:

The coronation day is all about eating and drinking of assorted dishes, drinks and wines. The feasting begins immediately after the coronation ceremony is over. The dishes are well prepared and inspected by the newest titled member other than the person taking his own title that day

called “*Nwata Nze*”. According to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, 10th Nov., 2015), when the inspection is wrongly done and the food is not up to the normal standard, the candidate pays each of the members in attendance a fine of N1,000 in lieu of feeding. Similarly, the inspectors especially *Nwata Nze* will equally have a fine for misleading the rest of the *Nze* present. The inspection is done without fear or favour else it boomerangs on those involved. According to him, it is good to note that the old system of collecting items involved at each stage is reviewed and rehearsed to suite the modern time. Certain prizes are attached to certain items to help the candidate monetize everything if he so desires it and reduce stress of running about to provide the items as prescribed.

The titled members plunge into feasting, wining and dining, and meeting with old good friends and invitees from all over the place. There is no limit as to the extent of the feasting and therefore no regulations on that. Everything depends entirely on the man taking the title who is supposed to be the financier of the occasion. He knows what he could take and then cuts his coat according to his cloth. Apart from the stipulated amount of money to be given to each titled *Nze* who is there present, all other things depend on the prerogative of the financier who is supposed to be the person taking the title. He is the one who takes the initiative concerning the quantum et qualitas- quantity and quality of the menu he prepares for his guests and makes provision up front in that regard to avoid falling below the official standard. What the stewards do on that day is only to act on the instructions they have received from the master who is throwing the party. Thus, according to Arazu (2005), “every title-taking in Igbo land involves the paying of fees and a feast which is at times quite elaborate”(p.185). The *Ozo* title feast is always the talk of the town in Ozubulu due to the quality and the quantity of different types of menu provided for the entertainment of the guests. Among the things provided for the guests are: a bowl containing

phallic chalk, a basket of kola nut and enough of the lower denominations of naira note to give the titled chiefs from far and near who have been invited to the occasion. Accordingly, when they begin to come, each person is offered the *nzu*-phallic chalk to draw lines on the ground and the person doing his title ceremony will offer him about N20 or N30 or N50 as the case may be. He will do the same to all the titled chiefs from different places that have come to celebrate with him. This could take a good sum of money depending on the number of the titled chiefs in attendance and also the value of the denomination dished out.

During the ceremony, however, there are a lot of things which the celebrant should provide for the titled group. They include a big ram or a cow, big tubers of yam from his barn or bought at the market. According to J. Ofomata, (personal communication, April 10th 2015), in the past when some of these items like yam tubers, a ram or a cow are brought live and handed over to the titled guests, they must reach the normal size and number given to the candidate during inquiry. If they are not accepted by the item inspector, the person will be fined. Nowadays, according to him, these items could also be valued in monetary terms and presented as a purse to the group. Other item includes the purse of N3,000 given to each of the titled elders in attendance as purse coupled with the assorted drinks and wines, jars of palm wine- *nkwu enu na ngwo*, coolers of pounded yam with befitting soups, a well prepared *Abacha na Ugba*, bush meat -*ngwo ngwo*, white rice with *Ofe Akwu*, Sauce, fried rice, et cetera. There is no limit as to the kinds of dishes to present to these guests. The only thing is that, these menus should be well prepared to suit the occasion. Another thing peculiar with the ceremony is that the titled chiefs used to carry empty bottles in their special *Ozo* bags to exchange the drinks they shared during the occasion. Nowadays, the cartons of beer involved are presented in monetary equivalent and shared out. The wives carry some menu home to continue the celebration at home with their

children. In Ozubulu, it used to be a very sumptuous feast day for the entire village. In fact everybody longs for such occasions.

Moreover, one interesting thing about each of the stages is that at each stage, there is something each of the candidates will hold unto. This makes one feel that he has something different from others; something which the non-initiates out there do not have. First of all, there is a sense of belongingness in the minds of those who take the stages piece-meal. They join in the activities and the outing ceremonies of the title group. They are happy that people see that they are members of the group. They do not dress like the rest who have taken up their offices and their duties. Rather they put on wrapper and white polo on top. They will continue to dress like that until they reach the final *Ozo* when they would now clad in the correct uniform made of wool with tiger head design. It is popularly known as *Akwa Isi Agu*. Apart from the freedom of associating with the old members, the new ones are allowed to share in the money which the person being installed is obliged to give the group. None of the new members, who take the stages piece-meal, is allowed to share in the money meant for a higher stage not yet attained.

Izu Ahia Ozo-The Outing Ceremony (at the Market):

Immediately the initiation ceremonies are over, the celebrant stays indoors for 28 market days called "*Izu na Asaa*". At the completion of the 28 market days, he goes to market for a special outing among the people. It was a general belief that if he had died within the 28 market days, it will be understood as a bad omen. It might be that the gods have not sanctioned him for the title-taking. This 28 market days is called the liminal stage in the process of initiation ceremony. The idea of staying indoors for 28 market days after the final initiation into *Ozo* society is what Arnold van Gennep (1960), calls "rite de passage"- rites of passage. According to him, rites of

passage refer to the groups of rituals which celebrate transitions from one phase in the life of an individual or a community to another. He equally identifies another ritual which he calls “life crises rituals” which according to him refers to the rituals that mark the major turning points in the life of an individual in the community. They include birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Arnold van Gennep (1960), distinguishes three major phases as far as these ceremonies are concerned. They are the phases of separation, transition and incorporation.

He has given the paradigm for understanding the various rituals in the life of the individual or the community. His idea throws light on the various ritual celebrations in our traditional societies.

The Phase of Separation:

This begins at the moment when the newly initiated into *Ozo* society begins to stay indoors in wait of the 28 market days. He has been separated from the group only for a moment in order to be with them all the moments. The person stays away from his friends and well wishers, business associates, peers, and even his family members. The separation is only for a short period of time and it is for good. It gives the person the opportunity to think and reflect upon the new life style he has embraced. It is a moment of *fuga mundi*- flight from the world of activity to the personal world of passivity, in order to talk to oneself and also listen to oneself. It is always a world apart from the world in order to be alone with the gods. The Igbo people use to say that “*onye too nti na ala, onu uya Danda*”- if one stays quiet, one would hear the cry of tiny ants. It is a good moment of prayer to the gods for the new status acquired.

A critical look at the three phases according to Arnold van Gennep (1960), one would be able to identify the following stages in the life of the newly initiated into *Ozo* title society. First of all, the phase of separation is realized in the life of the candidate when he is about to begin the 28

market days of seclusion. He is separated from friends, peers, and family members. Nowadays, he may be required to switch off his cell phone so as to distance himself from the distractions of the external world. This is a very lonely period because the fellow is cut off from the rest of the world. He feels the pain of separation weighing heavily upon him. This is the phase of separation according to Arnold van Gennep (1960).

According to Metuh (1987), the rite of separation expresses that one has left the former state and does not belong to that particular group or state any longer. According to him, there are several ways of demonstrating this period. They include, the shaving of hair, going into exclusion, stripping of clothes associated with the former state where the fellow belonged, passing between the halves of an object cut into two; passing between two branches or passing under something. These activities show that the person has left the group and is about to join another group.

The Phase of Transition:

The phase of transition is the most important of the three places. This is because it is the phase when the real passage takes place. According to Metuh (1987), “Arnold van Gennep calls it the ‘Liminal stage’, because the candidate has left one stage and is at the threshold of another state”. (p.198). This is the phase during which the long desired change in status occurs. During this period, the individual, according to Arnold van Gennep (1960), is in a state of ‘Betwixt and Between’. This means that although, he no longer belongs to the former group, he is yet to be incorporated into the prospective group. According to Metuh (1987), “they are at once no longer classified, and not yet classified” (p.198). Indeed the individual is in state of Limbo in scriptural term. This is a moment of serious decision either to be incorporated as such or pushed back to the former stage.

The Phase of Incorporation:

This is the period of integration into the new stage. The person who is “not yet classified”, according to Metuh (1987), is now, classified among the new group that was in view. This calls for celebration. During the celebration, he is officially vested as a full member of the new group. With reference to *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu, the candidate is given the insignia of office. Such insignia include things like: *Ofo Ozo*-titular *Ofo*, red cap with white and red feathers, and so on. According to Metuh (1987), the rites of incorporation can be expressed in a ceremonial way by handing over of tools or paraphernalia associated with the new status which the recipients of the tools are about to join. According to Arnold van Gennep (1960):

Seclusion signifies the death from which the initiates will be delivered only by integration into the community after the initiation process. This period is marked by long period of instructions on the duties, responsibilities and rights entailed in belonging to a community. (p.94).

Arnold van Gennep (1960), refers to this period of seclusion as a period of death. He used the words “Betwixt and Between”, to signify this kind of existence when one is in a state of inactivity. He does not join in the ordinariness of the daily life. Neither does he communicate with the people in active pursuit of the daily life. He communes with the gods alone. The fellow is supposed to be at prayer. During this period, the person reflects on the heavy involvement of the new status in view. In some places, the person in seclusion has a spiritual director who helps to facilitate the period for a more fruitful stay. The facilitator’s work is to give the fellow a guide line, on how to make the moment pass through him in order to really have the desired religious experience. If the fellow under seclusion is not so well guided, he may pass through the session untouched because the moment may not have really passed through him. In such a situation, the

person may not have been transformed as expected. The director has also the duty of instructing the person in seclusion about the requirements of the new life in view. According to Arnold van Gennep (1960), this period of seclusion is marked by long period of instruction on the duties, and rights of the new status in view. Indeed it is a moment of right decision either to belong to the new group or not. The instruction is meant to help the candidate make the right decision fully aware of what the new life entails.

The period of seclusion is a state of Limbo in a religious term. According to Christian tradition, Limbo was a "*locus transitoria*"- a transitory place for all the holy souls who were dead before the advent of Jesus Christ, he went to the land of the spirits to preach the Good News of salvation and redemption to them (cf 1 Peter 3:18-19; Luke 4:18; Isaiah 9:1-3). According to the Christian tradition, all those holy souls who died before the birth of Jesus were neither in heaven nor on earth. They were in a state of Limbo; what Arnold van Gennep (1960), calls the "Liminal" stage. This is a stage according to Arnold van Gennep (1960), when one has no membership. And according to him, the person is as good as dead because he does not participate in the daily activities of the community any more. According to Metuh (1987) "a being that does not act is a non-being. It does not exist"(p.75). This is why Arnold van Gennep (1960), refers to the person under seclusion as one who is dead because he is not in active interaction with the entire community. The person is in a state of "*Dasein*" according to Heidegger (1984).

The rites of incorporation culminate in going to market by the newly vested *Ozo* titled Chief after 28 market days –"*Izu na asaa*". The newly titled chief is fully vested in his regalia for the ultimate appearance at the market square. Everybody who sees him knows that he has been newly vested with the *Ozo* title honour. He moves majestically round the market in the company of his fellow titled men who are either his relatives or his friends and well wishers. As *Ozo*

tradition in Ozubulu demands, he will buy only few things at some strategic places in the market. The main aim of the appearance at the market square after *Izu na asaa* – 28 market days of hibernation is to make his public appearance to let the people know of his change in social status. The fellow titled elders salute him by his new title name while they walk majestically to the rhythm of the drummers who move in front of them.

Both the passers-by and the titled elders salute him by his new title name and offer him some kola nut or little tokens in place of kola. *Izu ahia Ozo* used to be a very big ceremonial but interesting outing in Ozubulu especially for the newly titled man. It was an occasion of jubilation. It was an occasion of re-integration into the large society from which he has been separated for close to a month. It used to be a time of thanksgiving to the gods for favours received. It used to be an opportunity of letting the entire community be aware of this change in social status. From then on, the people will begin to address him by his new title name since they have been informed of his new social status at the market square. The titular name as is often the case, over shadows the real name of the titled man because he is known and addressed by the titular name all the time.

Ozo Udu:

Another type of *Ozo* title-taking that is practiced in Ozubulu town is called *Ozo Iwu Udu* or “*Ozo Udu*”. This type of *Ozo* is rare. It is rare because it is not everybody that takes it. It is rather taken by the few men who are specially called to take it. In that case the person involved will be experiencing strange things in his life. And when he inquires from the diviner, he will be informed actually that he has a special mission for the particular deity in question. That is why Ozubulu people call it “*Ozo Okechi*”-someone who has misfortune. It is the highest *Ozo* in the

town but those who are into it have to be very careful to serve the deity with caution to avoid incurring its wrath. This is of extra-ordinary but personal arrangement. *Ozo Udu* is strictly taken by the person who experiences series of calamities in his life as a person or in the family. Whenever a person or a family begins to experience abnormal illness or feels that strange things are happening in the family, a diviner is consulted to immediately to diagnose the cause of the sudden illness or the cause of the calamity that befalls the family. The diviner is always involved at the on-set of this type of *Ozo* title-taking to decipher the cause of the illness or the calamity. In the case where a family or an extended family is involved or even a kindred, he will also find out the person designated among the family group to take the title. In the case where it is only a person that is infested with a particular illness, he is automatically chosen to take this special type of *Ozo*. In that case, the divination will only be made to confirm the person as really chosen by the deity. When the diagnosis is done, the candidate quickly goes on to prepare oneself morally, spiritually and psychologically for the title-taking.

According to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, Nov.,10th 2015), the taking of *Ozo Udu* in Ozubulu is a way of averting the wrath of the deity in question which inflicts the calamity on the person or family involved. It is believed that as soon as the person takes the title and puts on his *Njata*-ankle chord, on his legs, he is then in communion with the deity. He begins to serve the deity as its priest. According to him, the candidate has to remain at the service of the deity in question all through his life. If at some point in time, he chooses to abandon the office on his own accord and resigns; the deity will revisit him or the family with a more serious chastisement. This time it may involve taking a human life. In fact, the person does not dare to do so, because he knows the consequences. After all, the *Ozo Udu* is taken, ab initio, as a remedy to appease the deity that is angry with the person or their family. As long as the person remains at the service of

the deity, he has no problem at all, with the deity. They will be at peace. This is in line with the maintenance of equilibrium within the eco-system. Man as a space-traveler, is at the centre of the world. Thus, he is strategically positioned to co-ordinate the activities within the eco-system. By so doing, he maintains a cordial relationship with the spiritual beings. This means that everything lies in the hands of the person involved, to play his card very well knowing that as soon as he messes up, the deity he is serving will retaliate in a more terrible and shocking manner.

When the person eventually dies, he is divested of the office and his ankle chords removed to let him travel light to the land of the spirits. This must be done before he is buried. The ceremony forms part and parcel of the burial rites. It is believed that if the ankle chord is not cut off, the deceased person is tied with the burden of the covenant with the deity reserved only to the living human beings.

The ankle cord-*Njata*, worn on the two legs by the candidate for *Ozo Udu*, according to Onwubiko (1991), “establishes a special union between him and the deity” (p.77). Not only that, he will in addition have some art work drawings and carvings round his wall to tell people that he have taken the “*Ozo Udu*”. According to Onwubiko (1991), “the festive African village atmosphere cannot be complete without mention of traditional artists-the carvers- who are more than ever busy at this period” (p.54). This is a powerful means of communicating to people especially visitors as well as communicating to the spirits about what is happening or what has happened. The *Ozo udu* title-taking could be dedicated either to “*Ulasi*” or “*Akpu*” deity, or any other deity. Another way to indicate the type or level of *Ozo* which a person has attained is through the use of phallic chalk.

The Initial Preparations for *Ozo Udu*:

According to Chief Martin Ilona (personal communication, 10th Nov., 2015), the initial preparation for *Ozo Udu* title-taking in Ozubulu begins with the consultation of a diviner who will diagnose the case in question to find out the reason why the person is in trouble and possibly the deity that is involved in bringing the calamity on the fellow. According to him, the normal screening for *Ozo* title-taking done by the committee in-charge of screening is canceled in the case of *Ozo Udu* because we humans cannot advise the gods on whom to choose. The presence of the diviner in the whole initial preparations makes things easier as regards the choice of the right candidate. Once the oracle reveals the person, there is no going back and he is always the right person that is chosen by the gods. This also nullifies the application form that is given to the new candidate for *Ozo Alor* to fill.

The Stages of *Ozo Udu* Title-Taking in Ozubulu:

Ozo title-taking in Ozubulu as already said, consists of several stages which the candidate have to pass through en route to the final *Ozo Itu Ugo*. These stages vary from one place to another. Accordingly, they are as follows:

- a. *Ido Ndichi Ani*
- b. *Omele Ibi Uno*
- c. *Ozo Alor*
- d. *Itu Ugo*

These four stages have been discussed above as they are the same thing with *Ozo Alor*. The only difference lies in the final ceremony for the *Ozo Udu* which comes up when the deity specifies.

The Naming and Capping Ceremonies:

The naming ceremony is one of the final initiation ceremonies. According to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, 10th Nov., 2015), the venue for the *Ozo Udu* is the Shrine of the deity to serve. The name to take must be given by the deity. This is sought through divination.

The Naming Ceremony: As already said above, the candidate lies down with his face upwards before the *Ndi Chi Ani* and answers four names. The last of the names becomes the titular name. The names are so arranged in such a way that the titular name comes last on the row. Probably the only new name is the titular name he chooses for the title-taking. The order is this: his English name, followed by his Native name, and then the *Ozo Alor* title name, before the last name which is the *Ozo Udu* titular name.

The Capping Ceremony: Immediately the naming ceremony is over, the putting on of the titular cap follows suite. The coronation involves the putting on of the Red Cap-*Okpu Oku* adorned with the feathers of both Eagle and Parrot (*Ugo na Icheoku*) neatly stocked together into the cap, on the head of the candidate by *Onye isi Ozo* or whoever the deity chooses to do it. With the putting on of the cap on the head of the candidate, the process of initiation is consummated. The cap for the *Ozo Udu* title is the same with the rest. The only significant difference is that he has more feathers stocked into his cap coupled with the chords he wears at his ankles as a sign of his covenant with the deity in question.

The putting on of the red cap is accompanied by certain spoken words by the person presiding over the ceremony. It is as follows: *N'ubochi taa bu ahia Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke, ana m ekpunye gi Okpu Ozo "Eze Udu Akpu Eze Nnamuzie"* (titular name) *di ka onye otu Ozo anyi-* Today being *Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke* market, I put this red cap on you "*Eze Udu Akpu Eze Nnamuzie*" as the servant of ...N...deity.

The Matter and Form of *Ozo Udu*:

The Matter of *Ozo Udu*: Matter could refer to any material thing that can be felt or touched. It could also refer to something that is visible to the sight. A physical object, for instance, is a matter. Thus, the matter of *Ozo Udu* refers to the coronation of the new *Ozo* candidate with the Red Cap-*Okpu Oku* that is adorned with the feathers of Eagle and Parrot-*Ugbene Ugo na Icheoku*. It involves also the tying of *Njata*-ankle cords on his two legs of the candidate by the diviner prescribed by the oracle to carry out the function.

The Form of *Ozo Udu*: the form refers to the spoken words that usually accompany the matter in every ritual ceremony. The form of *Ozo Udu* refers to the words uttered by *Onye Isi Ozo* while putting the Red Cap on the candidate. It is as follows: “*N’ubochi taa bu ahia Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke, ana m ekpunye gi Okpu Ozo “Eze Udu Akpu Eze Nnamuzie”* (titular name) *di ka onye otu Ozo anyi-* today being *Oye/Afor/Nkwo/Eke*, I put this Red Cap on you “*Eze Udu Akpu Eze Nnamuzie*” as our *Ozo* society member”. The form authenticates and empowers the matter. The Igbo adage says “*ike di n’okwu onu*”- there is power in the spoken word. For instance, in the Catholic Church, it is believed that the spoken words of our Lord Jesus Christ, repeated over the matter- bread, makes it consecrated. The same thing is applicable to all the sacraments of the Church when they are being administered. The spoken word empowers the matter of each of the sacraments to make it effective and therefore impacts the grace on the recipient. This is the idea behind the incantations done by the native doctors when ministering in any form.

Merriments: The entertainment is the same as already discussed above. The only difference is that the candidate for *Ozo Udu* does not really take the ceremony funny because of fear of the

deity whom he is to serve. Thus the entertainment for his is even to fulfill all righteousness. He does not really fancy it.

Izu Ahia Ozo Eze Udu Akpu-The Outing Ceremony (at the Market):

Immediately the initiation ceremonies are over, the celebrant stays indoors for 28 market days called “*Izu na Asaa*”. At the completion of the 28 market days, he will go to market for a special outing among the people. This 28 market days is the liminal stage in the process of initiation ceremony. The idea of staying indoors for 28 market days after the final initiation into *Ozo* society is what Arnold van Gennep (1960), calls “rite de passage”- rites of passage.

The Christians in Ozubulu do not participate in taking *Ozo Udu* title at the moment due to its nature that is still being debated as to whether it is against the Christian faith or not. They only take *Ozo Alor*.

3.5 Disqualification of Candidate for *Ozo* Title-Taking

There are several reasons why a candidate for *Ozo* title may be disqualified and dismissed from the race as already mentioned. In *Ozo Obodo*, any person who is found guilty of theft of yam or ram will be withdrawn from the race. Thus, Ilogu (1974), maintains that among the major prohibitions in Igbo land it is taken as a taboo, the “stealing of yams either from the barn or from the farm... theft of any kind by an *Ozo*-titled person” (p.125). A notorious thief in the community is not allowed to take *Ozo* title. Any one known to be notorious in evil doing is not considered a good material for *Ozo* title-taking. Such a notorious fellow is disqualified at the onset to quit the race. The *Ozo* moral code has all these things well spelt out for the members to be fully aware of them and act accordingly. There has been a false assertion that Igbo people kill in order to take title. According to Basden (1920), the candidate for *Ozo* title, “may have stolen

every penny of the money he tenders. Some communities prohibit the applicant stealing from fellow tribe's men... but allow full liberty to rob outside natives or foreigners for the purpose of taking title" (p.258). Basden's assertion is not true at all. The general practice in Igbo land is that stealing from anybody at all to take title is not a welcomed idea. The person may do that secretly but it was never a general practice among the Igbo people as Basden affirms. In Igbo tradition, there have been rules and regulations as well as basic human rights guiding the various communities. The Igbo people had native courts where misdemeanors were tried and prosecuted. They had native police for law enforcement which is the masquerade. According to Onyeneke (1987), masquerade helps in "controlling the civil strife" in Igbo communities. For the assertion of Basden, although he began with the phrase "may have stolen...", it is unfounded, neither in Igbo land nor in Ozubulu as a town in Igbo land.

Moreover, another strong reason that could disqualify a candidate for *Ozo* title in Ozubulu is the issue of *Osu or Oru*. According to Ogbalu (n.d), "an *Osu* is a slave dedicated to an idol..."(p.72). In the olden days in Ozubulu, there were so many people who escaped death from their kinsmen from all the nearby towns and from Ozubulu who ran to common shrine in Ozubulu called "*Ndekwiri*" shrine for protection. They were banned from interacting with the rest of the people not to talk of coming to take any title at all. Mgbeobukwa (1996), deliberating on this maintains thus:

The free born believe that in human society, some class of people must be up and some class of people must be down. To ensure that they are always up, provisions are so well made that those who are down will in no way be up. *Osu* is always made to be conscious of his debased state all the time. The free born would love to see that their inequalities are

yoking down the *Osu* since that is his life mission. This explains the reasons why the death of an *Osu* is a non issue to the free born. (p.32).

Uchendu (1965), maintains that “to be a *Diala* is to have the doors of title societies and other institutions open to one. The only barrier to social climbing is economic: the payment of the membership fees” (p.88). The social outcast was not given such opportunity even if he has all the money to take care of the huge spending involved in *Ozo* title ceremony.

Apart from the group called the *Osu*, there are those designated as slaves who were sold and bought over by their masters and mistresses as property and could be disposed of, any time. They were not allowed to take *Ozo* title in Ozubulu. Basden (1920), writing on this says, “A slave, whether acquired or born in that state, is ineligible as a candidate for a title, but he may be called upon to contribute towards the sum required to enable his master enter a higher degree” (p.257). This is more prevalent about a decade ago. Nowadays, it has been over taken by time and circumstance. The *Osu* and the outcast issues have almost been scraped off. Moreover, there have been a lot of injustices in the condition of slaves regarding title-taking. If the society does not consider slaves worthy to take title, then they should also consider their wealth unworthy to be used to augment the ceremony too. Our people use to say that ‘if you avoid women, you avoid any form of lying down with or beside them’.

Moreover, someone caught in an illicit affair with another man’s wife will be disqualified from the group also. It is taken as a disgrace to the group if a member could not control himself and his emotions as to mess up with another man’s wife. His *Ozo* title will be suspended –*akpaa Ozo ya*. But if the person is a new candidate, he will be screened out. It is worthy to note that some of

the rules are general whereas, some are peculiar to the communities where they are being practiced. Any person who is notorious in evil is not allowed to take *Ozo* title in Ozubulu.

In effect, the candidate for *Ozo* title should be one who is looked upon as a model. He is somebody who is respected among his kiths and kin as a good man. According to Mbiti (1975), the fellow will promise to speak from hence forth with caution and also promise to avoid at all cost, the failings of the ordinary people. He will be ready to uphold the good moral status of the ancestors they represent which include justice, uprightness, and holiness of life. Adibe (1992), rightly affirms this thus:

The one who is not of age and one who is not morally sound is not accepted or initiated into the title society. Any public sinner is not accepted. For one to be accepted or initiated, one must have worked oneself up through what the elders express proverbially, that if a child washes his hands well, he will then eat with the elders” (p.23).

In some communities in Ozubulu, nowadays, such barriers as enunciated above cause serious squabbles, power tussle and so on. Some young men who have enough financial backup to organize a party for *Ozo* title and acquire more statuses see title taking as a “do-or-die” affair. They feel they are being blockaded from attaining their heart desires. They resort to fighting and violence. They fight with everything they have. They fight tooth and nail to acquire it. Helder (1970), affirms this thus:

Now the egoism of some privileged groups drives countless human beings into this sub-human condition, where they suffer restrictions, humiliations, injustices, without prospects, without hope, their condition is that of slaves. This established violence, this

violence No.1, attracts violence, No.2, revolt, either of the oppressed themselves or of youths, firmly resolved to battle for a more just and human world (p.30).

Helder (1970), makes an affirmation of what is in practice in Igbo land in general. Some people clear their way through bribery and when they see that it might not go far, they try to take it by storm. On the other hand, according to Ifesieh (1989), “evidence abounds of conflicts... or bitter struggles with respect to *Ozo* title and who held the *Ofo* and its accruing benefits... Such dangerous conflicts... brought disunity and great hardship on the people, created great disorder and raised important questions...” (p.76). The same fact is affirmed by Egboh (1987), when he says, “selecting chiefs in some of the autonomous communities was not an easy thing, as there were often two or more contestants to a chieftaincy stool in a community”(p.126). In the same vein, Nwabara (1977), sums up the whole scenario when he maintains that Igbo people, “exhibit a tendency to materialism resulting in a highly competitive and economically stratified society... But this feature has its disadvantages-envy, jealousy, internal squabbles, and, in early days, inter-village or inter-town fighting” (p.16). The assertions of these authors are all correct. The issue of selecting the candidates both for *Ozo* title, chief, *Igwe*, and so on, raises a lot of dust. That is why it demands a lot of carefulness on the part of the team in-charge of the screening so as to handle it well.

Visitation of Local Shrines:

Ab initio, when *Ozo* was for only the traditionalists, among the immediate preparations for the final initiation ceremony was the visitation to the seven deities in the town. According to G. Okwuzuligbo, (personal communication, December 4, 2013), the candidate had to visit the village shrine and pay a tribute to the deity. Then, he visits the shrine at the maternal home and

also pays a tribute to it. He will visit *Akpu* shrine and pay a tribute there. The last to complete the seven was always the central shrine in the town called “*Ndekwili* shrine”. Arazu (2005), confirms this when he says that, “in every town, *Ozo* is taken in honor of some local deity or deities” (p.190). Okeke (2006), affirms this when he says, “it has been observed that some communities continue to demand allegiance to idols or idol-worship as a prerequisite for the title-taking” (p.57). According to Egboh(1971), “as an institution closely associated with the traditional religion, the *Ozo* title-taking had been surrounded with rites of the traditional religion, which had to be performed before the conferment of the title” (p.13). Okeke (2015), therefore, affirms that “in some communities, the title was tied to one idol or another...some Catholics are accused of performing secretly some traditional rituals inconsistent with the Christian faith in the process of title-taking” (p.70). Onwubiko (1991), comments that there has been a pressure to reduce to monetary terms, the items like goats, sheep, fowls, yam tubers, coco-yams presented to the titled men by the celebrant due to fear that some of them might be used for sacrifices to the gods. It is good to observe that with the introduction of *Ozo ndi Uka*, the visitation of the shrines for ritual sacrifices was stopped. According to A. Chukwuneta, (personal communication, 20th July, 2014), the practice is no longer effective now. According to him, the practice was struck off following the Church’s intervention in the bid to Christianize the *Ozo* institution within the past few decades.

3.6 Monetary Involvement in *Ozo* Title-Taking

One of the characteristics of *Ozo* title-taking in Igbo land is that it involves a lot of money. That is why it is the title for the well to do people. Many scholars like Uchendu (1965), Arazu (2005), and so on, emphasize the heavy financial involvement in *Ozo* title. Uchendu (1965), affirms this when he says:

The title-taker and the initiate in the society pay a heavy initiation fee which is shared equally among members, ... In fact, these associations serve as mutual insurance societies, enabling the socially ambitious to invest the savings he accumulated in his youth while guaranteeing him continued economic support and prestige during his old age. (p.82).

According to Arazu (2005), “every title-taking in Igbo land involves the paying of fees and a feast which is at times quite elaborate. *Ozo* has these in common with other titles...” (p.185). In the olden days in Ozubulu, some part of the money, a very meager amount was taken to certain named shrines seven (7) of them: home shrine, maternal shrine, *Uiasi*, *Akpu*, et cetera for prayer for acceptance and protection during the ceremony as pointed out earlier. According to B. Okeke, (personal communication, November 10, 2013), this has been abrogated and no longer in practice. He said that the money paid was shared there in front of all the members and everyone gets his own share. That is why it is quite lucrative and serves for not only social but also economic purposes. According to Ogbalu (n.d), “the title initiations were popular investment institutions ...” (p.25). In the words of Forde and Jones (1967), “admission to titles and to associations of title-holders is by appropriate payments in cash and kind, and by the provision of feasts”(p.18). According to Basden (1920), “the desire for rank and honor is not confined to the Ibo people, nor is the essential element in the transaction peculiar to them; money is always the controlling factor in the business” (p.255). And Green (1964), maintains thus:

In many parts of Ibo country... there are certain titles which men can take by performing a series of ceremonies and expending a considerable sum of money which goes to those who are already title-holders. The best known and most widely spread of these titles is probably *Ozo* (p.58).

Nwabara (1977), caps it up by giving some reasons behind this too much spending and financial commitments in a way of “give and take” in *Ozo* title among the Igbo people when he said, “they exhibit a tendency to materialism resulting in a highly competitive and economically stratified society” (p.16). Every Igbo man believes in himself and what he can achieve by working hard. That is why they are quite enterprising wherever they are. They invest in whatever they consider to be very lucrative. *Ozo* title was one of them in the olden days when there were little or no white kola jobs. Many people saw *Ozo* title as an easy way of making money in a prestigious way. Such was the practice in Ozubulu town for many years in the past. Moreover each of the stages provides the necessary platform for the up-coming stage. The normal procedure according to A. Chukwuneta, (personal communication, July 11th, 2013), is that when there is any *Ozo* title ceremony elsewhere, those who are taking their title piece-meal are allowed to collect their share of the money realized from the title ceremony going on up to the stage they stopped paying. When a higher degree of *Ozo* title collection is being shared, those who do not reach that level should not share in it. However, they join in all the feastings. Such restriction will spur them to buckle up. The youngest man to be inducted into the *Ozo* society is called “*Nwata Nze*”- meaning the young *Ozo* title man. He is in-charge of the kitchen and service at the celebration of the person following him. According to Arazu (2005), “every title taking in Igbo land involves the paying of fees and a feast which is at times quite elaborate”(p.185). In the words of Forde and Jones (1967), “the essential qualifications are free birth and the ability to make the necessary payments...”(p.19). This testifies to the fact that if one does not have the money as *diala*, one cannot take any title unless another person pays on his behalf. Apart from these barriers enunciated above, the candidate will go on in his preparations with a list of items required for his title taking.

3.7 The Regalia of *Ozo* Titled Man

Just as Police men and Soldiers are known with their uniforms, their booths and their guns, every title taking in Igbo-land has some paraphernalia attached to it. For instance, in Ozubulu town there are different uniforms and symbols of offices for different titled groups. There are those referred to as “*Ndi Agbara Nze*” group. They have their own Regalia: uniform, cap, staff and so on. There are those called “*Ndi Ichie*,” “*Ndi Obi*”, “*Ndi Akana Obi*”, “*Ndi Nze na Ozo*” and so on. Each of these groups has their regalia. And they are always identified as such, with their regalia and symbols of office. Mbiti (1978), describes it thus:

Many symbols are used in connection with the office of the ruler. Examples are the keeping of the sacred fire in the palace as a symbol of the nation’s health, the use of leopard and lion skins as symbol of strength and power, the use of scepter as symbol of authority, and royal drums which symbolize his ability to communicate with the people (p.162).

An *Ozo* titled man is well dressed when going to occasions. His dressing singles him out where ever he is as titled fellow with dignity and honour. A well dressed *Ozo* titled man puts on a nice wrapper over his trouser. The wrapper is tied at the side on his waist or allowed to hang down right from his shoulder over his “*Akwa isi Agu*”- the traditional shirt with lion head design all over. He puts on a red cap with white and red feathers of eagle. Every *Ozo* titled man has his *Ofo Ozo* as his symbol of power and authority. *Ofo* is the symbol of office for the elders but *Ofo Ozo* is a symbol of office for every *Ozo* titled man. As an elder, every titled man uses his *Ofo Ozo* for so many purposes as occasions demand. According to Ejizu (1986), “*Ofo* is intrinsically bound up with the Igbo cosmology serving as a vital medium of communication between man and the supernatural order (p.61) According to him, *Ofo* is used as a medium of communication between

man and the gods or the forefathers. That is why, according to him, there are many occasions for the use of *Ofo* in Igbo setting.

Ofo is used for the legitimization of office or status. This is done during the initiation ceremony into a particular title like the *Ozo* title. The candidate is usually given the *Ofo* as the symbol of office. *Ofo Ozo* is handed over to the candidate for *Ozo* title as a staff of office. From hence forth, he uses it as a symbol of his status, power and authority. As an elder, he uses his *Ofo* for prayer. According to Ejizu(1986), “all classes of *Ofo* ... serve the primary religious function of putting the holder in touch with the divine” (p.61). *Ofo* stick is traditionally regarded as a sacred stick for prayer. The holder uses it to seal his prayer to the gods and to his fore fathers.

Ofo is also used for ritual sacrifices to the gods. It is used as a medium of communication with the gods during the ritual sacrifice. During sacrifices at the shrine of a deity, the blood of the sacrificial victim is poured as a libation on the *Ofo* stick. The accumulation of congealed blood on the *Ofo* stick makes it to swell gradually in size and increase in weight.

According to Ejizu (1986), the ritual specialists like the diviners, herbalists, rain makers, and so on make use of *Ofo* as a medium of contact with their spiritual sources of power like the “*Agwu Nsi*”. The craft man like blacksmiths and goldsmiths also make use of *Ofo* in their works.

The child naming ceremony in Igbo land is always an occasion of joy and thanksgiving to the gods for the new life given, and for safe delivery. In such occasion, the eldest man in the family will take the lead in the ritual prayer to the gods with his staff of office as elder and leader, to seal the prayer on behalf of all present.

According to Ejizu (1986), *Ofo* is also used for affirming the moral uprightness of the person that holds it. According to him, each morning, all those who have *Ofo* in their custody use it to

declare their moral uprightness during their morning prayers. The general belief in Igbo land is that it is counter – productive in that it can even turn against the holder who uses it when he is not morally upright. Nowadays some evil men find a way of manipulating the power of *Ofo* against other fellow human beings. Some use the “*Ofo Anunuebe*” to invoke evil spirit to kill others for no just cause and yet remaining unharmed. Such people go to powerful medicine men to secure the antidote of the power of *Ofo* in order to avert its counter effects. Nevertheless, *Ofo* is used generally in Igbo land to affirm ones moral uprightness.

It is also used in sealing of covenants in Igbo land, be it among the family members. It is generally believed that whoever breaks the covenant without the consensus of the members will face the consequences.

According to Ejizu (1986), *Ofo* is also used in decision making and determination of calendar of events in Igbo setting. It is also used in settlement of cases and disputes. It is used for oath taking. When someone is alleged to have done something wrong and he or she is denying it, the person is brought to swear to his/her innocence with *Ofo* stick. If the person dies, then it is a clear indication that he or she is guilty of the offence but if the person survives it, then he/she is taken to be innocent. Nowadays, some people use “*Ndalu Iyi*” – the antidote to avert the effect of the oath especially when they are guilty. In a similar case, some evil men go as far as planting charms for the innocent opponent to die so that the people will declare them innocent rather than the fellow who is really innocent.

Ofo is also used in decision making and promulgation of laws. It is always the eldest of the family or the kindred who uses his *Ofo* to seal the unanimous decisions of the group and/or promulgate laws in order to be binding on all the members. The promulgation of laws and the

sealing of decisions with *Ofo* evoke fear in the members and compel them to abide by the laws. Be that as it may, the paraphernalia of *Ozo* titled chief, symbolize in a special way the office, the status, the power and the authority of the person who has them.

The use of phallic chalk is very common among the titled elders. Their offices are closely associated with it. It is usually kept at the palace-*Obi* of the titled man and it is always kept at a strategic point where every visitor that enters the palace would be able to see. Another way to indicate the type of *Ozo* which one has taken is through drawing of phallic chalk "*Nzu*" on the ground. A visitor is given *Nzu* to draw and then *Oji* for prayer afterwards as sign of welcome and a bid to feel at home in the house of the host.

According to A. Chukwuneta, (personal communication, July 11, 2013), "*Nzu*" means "*Isi Awele*"- that is "good favour" or good fortune. Among scholars like Umeogu (1996), *Nzu* means "purity of heart, gift of love for all"(p.163). "*Nzu*"-phallic chalk is a symbol of purity. It can also serve for peace and protection. In the olden days, when a visitor from another village or town comes, he is smeared with *Nzu* on the forehead so that the villagers will allow him to go home unharmed. In Ozubulu, according to Anthony Okolo,(personal Communication, March 4th, 2015), a young man or an untitled man draws five (5) lines. He is usually called okolo. A titled man-*Nze* draws eight (8) lines. An *Ozo Udu Ulasi* titled man draws nine (9) lines; while the man for *Ozo Udu Akpu* title draws twelve (12) lines. The number of lines indicates the level of *Ozo* which the fellow has attained. The drawing of lines with *nzu* on the floor is part and parcel of our culture. There is nothing fetish about the drawing of *Nzu* on the ground as some people falsely claim. Any person, man or woman can draw it. Some draw only three lines to represent the Trinity in one God. The general notion in most Igbo Christian communities is that drawing of phallic chalk on the ground is a fetish practice. But this is not true. This false assertion is born

out of the misinterpretation of our cultural practices and traditional symbols by the white missionaries. The drawing of nzu is never attributed to any deity or for any idol worship as some purportedly believed.

3.8 The Death and Burial of *Ozo* Titled Man in Ozubulu

The Death of *Ozo* Title Holder in Ozubulu

Death is a tragic event in the life of the Igbo people. The departure of a loved one is always painful. It brings sorrow to the family members, relatives and friends of the deceased. The sudden death of a loved one leaves the family and friends of the deceased heartbroken and sad. Some are thrown into confusion. Mbefo (2000), articulates this fact well when he says that death is a source of terror to the Igbo people who are so driven about by the passion for success and achievement in life. For them, death is seen as the end of every ambition in life. An Igbo proverb which depicts this says, “*Abado nwoke aja, izuzu nwoke zuru alaa*”- meaning that when a man dies, all his plans come to halt. According to Mbefo (2000), death is seen as an evil phenomenon that is why the Igbo people say, “*onwu di njo*”- death is bad. It must therefore, be averted through prayer and supplication “*onwu biko*”, “*onwu chekwa*”- death should wait; “*onwu atu egwu*”- death has no fear; “*onwu aso mba*”- death does not even spare a whole community as was evident during the time of pests; “*onwu aso anya*”- death is no respecter of persons and positions as it levels everybody alike; “*onwu zuligbo*” and “*onwu ga mba*”,-death reaches everywhere; “*onwu ka dike*”- death is stronger than the warrior; “*onwu emelie*”, -death proves victorious; “*onwu di egwu*”, -death is terrible; “*onwu di iwe*”, death is angry, and so on. These are terminologies which the Igbo people use to describe death. According to Mbefo (2000),“before death we are like cities without walls, defenseless” (p. 146). Heidegger (1996), affirms

that “death is *Dasein*’s own most possibility” (p. 307). He emphasizes the fact that man’s surest truth is the reality of his death which only awaits him at the consummation of time. This is in fact the resume of his book “Being and time”. According to Gelvin (1970), “it is clear that in death one does confront one’s genuine, true and authentic self...” (p. 143). Further on the reality of death, Heidegger (1996), says thus:

Holding death for true ... shows another kind of certainty, and is more primordial than any certainty which relates to entities encountered within-the-world, or to formal objects; for it is certain of Being-in-the-world. As such, holding death for true does not demand just one definite kind of behavior in *Dasein*, but demands *Dasein* itself in the full authenticity of its existence. (Pp. 309-310).

The death of *Ozo* title holder is a great loss not only to the family of the deceased and his entire community, but also to *Ozo* title society, to which he belonged while he was alive. The burial arrangement is almost done in alliance with the titled group since they are fully involved in the funeral arrangements. As a member, they will play some part in seeing that a deceased colleague is given a befitting burial. The titled group to which the deceased belonged offers a great support to the family of the deceased colleague: both financially, morally and other wise. This is to make sure that the fallen colleague is given a befitting burial that entitles him to join the college of the ancestors.

Befitting Burial:

The practice of giving a deceased person a befitting burial is one of the criteria for deciding who is an ancestor. The deceased person is given a befitting burial by the family members who are alive. What this means is that if the family members are not able to accord the deceased family

head that has just died a befitting burial, he is being deprived of the opportunity of joining the fore fathers in the land of the spirits. The Igbo people therefore, believe that the fellow has not been laid to rest. Little wonder then why the people do shout *laa n'udo* – go in peace!, at the stroke of the canon shot whenever their relative is being buried. They believe that the canon shot wrecks the sky and opens the door of eternity to the deceased fellow on his/her journey to the land of the spirits. In Igbo setting, it is seen as a bad omen for a man to die without leaving an offspring, to take care of him, to propagate the family lineage and, to give him a befitting burial when he eventually joins his ancestors. Child bearing is one of the essential values of marriage in Igbo cosmology. At this juncture, one can easily understand why families without children in Igbo setting do not take it funny at all until they have theirs. The Igbo people believe that eternal life lies in the continuous handover of the baton of life from the father to the son in successive generations. (*Ndu ebebe ndi Igbo bu nna muta nwa, nwa ya amutakwa nwa, wee diri gabazie*).

However, in a situation where a man dies without an offspring to bury him, the surviving brothers will take it upon themselves to do that. If the deceased person has no surviving brother (s) to perform the funeral rites for him, the kindred will contribute to do it. There are exceptional cases however, where the burial is postponed indefinitely due to enmity and inter family disputes. In such a case, the deceased keeps on hovering around until the funeral rites are performed. According to Obilo (1991), “Igbo people insist on giving a dead relation decent burial...” (p.5). He outlines about four reasons for such a befitting burial: to enhance reincarnation of the deceased soul; to express filial care to the deceased; to show prestige and status symbol of both the deceased and the family left behind; and lastly to avert social pressure of not being able to bury a dear one. It is always a reference point among the kiths and kins that such a family could not afford to bury their father. There have been some families like that who

could not afford the burial of their parents because they were very tender when the parents died. When eventually they came of age to do the burial, they organized it for them. It is a noble act to do that for a virtuous deceased one. Such an act attracts blessings from the fellow to the persons involved. There were some who were being molested by their deceased ones for neglecting their funeral rites. When they actually found out the cause of their misfortunes in life, they dismissed their case with a sarcastic note like “how could the deceased fellow be molesting me when he has left nothing for his funeral rites”. Or he would say, “let him (the deceased) bring resources in plenty so that he would be buried in a befitting manner”.

The deceased ones who were believed to have committed certain atrocities or abominable acts while on earth are taken to *ajo ohia*- evil forests. They are laid on the bare ground unburied. The general belief is that they are a curse to the land and the Mother Earth/the Earth goddess-*Ani* has rejected their corpses.

The Igbo people venerate their ancestors so much due to the respect they command while they were on earth. Respect for elders is one of the values in our cultural heritage. According to Onwubiko (1991), the respect for elders is due to the fact that they are taken to be the repository of communal wisdom and also because of their nearness to the ancestors. They are called *Ndi ichie*-literally translated as the chiefs who of course, they were. The living members of the family call upon them from time to time to intervene in their family affairs. In times of trouble, they beckon on them for help. Awoonor (1993), relays the prayer of a fellow in grief to his ancestors when he writes, “Let those gone before take note. They have treated their offspring badly. What is the wailing for? Somebody is dead Agosu himself. Alas! A snake has bitten me, my right arm is broken”.(p.31).

This is the prayer of a fellow deeply wounded by the events of the moment. He calls out in sorrow to the ancestors for them to intervene on behalf of the family. From the tone of the prayer he believes that they will surely come to their aid in the spirit of this oneness. Thus his position is the intermediary between *Chukwu* and man. He is part and parcel of worldly family and he is every inch interested in it.

In summary, the functions of the ancestors include among others the duty to their families from time to time to oversee to the needs of the family members. They have interest in what is going on in their families. They act as custodians of their family traditions, ethics and activities. Offence in these matters is ultimately an offence against the forefathers who in that capacity act as invisible police of the families and communities through the help of the masquerades as their viceroy.

The Igbo people spend a lot of money for the burial of a deceased fellow. Some people sell their piece of lands in order to bury the dead relative. Others borrow from the neighborhood or take a loan with interest. At the end of the day, some are able to pay up what they borrowed for the funeral ceremonies, others are not. Some families collect the materials for the funeral ceremonies on credit hoping to pay back in a short moment. Some families waste the money that could have been used in training the children of the deceased in organizing a high class burial for the deceased, only to leave the children of the deceased to go hungry and without going to school. Some families tear apart due to misunderstanding that crops up during the funeral ceremonies. All these and more are the problems encountered during burials. Mbefo (2000), comment thus:

Burying anybody who has become somebody in Igbo-land is a costly exercise. If there is not enough resource to foot the bill, the burial is delayed until such a cost could be

executed ... Nobody who is somebody may be buried like a dog without fanfare. The dead are being accompanied by music and dance, and transported to the ancestors with canon shots and alarums to the netherworld. (P. 148).

The merriment according to him is to alert the ancestors of his coming for them to receive him. When the merry-making is not done, the dead man goes half way and returns to disturb the living members until they complete the ceremony. According to him, when the missionaries preached about hell fire at the on-set of their missionary enterprise as the lot of those who die without receiving baptism, many of the Igbo traditionalists preferred to join their fore fathers in hell than to be separated from them on grounds of receiving baptism.

In some communities in Igbo land, however, efforts have been made to re-organize their funeral protocols in order to make it less burdensome on the people. In Ozubulu town, for instance, the local authorities have tried to cut down on the expenses during funerals. They cut down the quantity of food and drinks demanded by certain groups at funerals and even the number of canon shots for each funeral; be it male or female. Those who are well to do, pay the stipulated fine in order to celebrate their funerals. And they are exceptions to the rule to indicate that funerals have grades. Moreover, the funeral of a titled chief has some special antecedents. Ifesieh (1989), articulates it thus:

If the dead were titled (*Ozo or Nze*) there are further funeral rites to be performed in order to remove the ankle cords on his two legs before he can be buried... The ram rites and dropping of its blood in the eyes of the dead is a dynamic rite which makes him “*dike*” – powerful for the journey. (p. 183).

The removal of the ankle cords is done to dissociate him from the titled group. It is also part of the purification rites that frees the dead of any earthly commitment in order to travel light to the land of the spirit. While he was alive, the ankle cord becomes a constant reminder to the person wearing it about his life commitment as a titled person. When the person is dead, such a life commitment is gone. That is why the group removes the ankle cords as a way of dissociating him from the group and the burden of the cords. According to Chief Martin Ilona, (personal communication, Nov.10th, 2015), the taking ankle chord on the legs of the deceased person is a sign of his level of *Ozo*. The man who took *Ozo Alor* title alone cannot challenge the *Eze Udu Akpu Ozubulu* because both of them are not of the same level. The same applies to the burial of the two. The burial of *Eze Udu Akpu Ozubulu* is more involving. According to him, the removal of the ankle chords on his legs involves consultation with a diviner as regards the burial ceremonies. It is also the diviner who will cut the ankle chords with the necessary ritual prayer to punctuate it. Ifesieh (1989), rightly explains it thus:

The rite gives the dead the freedom to travel long journey to the spirit world across seven lands, seas, mountains, such that those who fail to obtain a befitting burial rites never have the strength to cross and therefore, hover in the air and become mischievous to the living. (p. 183).

The general belief in Igbo traditional society is that a befitting burial must be given to a deceased family member. It is almost regarded as a shameful thing when a family could not afford to accord her deceased member, a befitting burial. Some of the villagers use it as a by-talk against the family. The kindred (*Umunna*) use to come to the aid of such a family by way of financial contributions to ease the burden and ensure that the burial is done in order to let the dead rest in peace in the land of the spirits. A family where there is no surviving person to host the burial of

the last deceased member, the kindred (*Umunna*) will plan the burial and make contributions to that effect. When the burial is over, the kindred will take over the patrimony of that extinct family in perpetuity and allot it to another person.

There are some people who are believed to be diabolical when they were alive. Such people are never buried like the rest of men. Rather all those who were known to be notorious in committing abominable acts were never accorded a befitting burial. Such dead bodies are those believed to be hovering around and causing havocs in the neighborhoods. According to Metuh (1985), wondering is part of the punishment for such damned souls. For they have very little joy and without any hope happiness. Their confusion, frustration and isolation are made evident by the gloom, stench, disorder and darkness of the evil forest where they are dumped. A title holder, however, who lives a virtuous life, is sure of being given a befitting burial when he dies. According to Obilo (1991), “Igbo people insist on giving a dead relation decent burial for at least four major reasons:

- a. To enhance reincarnation.
- b. To express filial care.
- c. To show prestige or status symbol and
- d. To off-set social pressure...” (p. 5).

The Igbo people believe that it is only those who have been given befitting burials that will reincarnate into the family again. Thus, the good virtues of the deceased spur the surviving family members to even go and borrow money or sell family land in order to bury the dead so as to help him incarnate once again into the family. The burial of a dead family member is also a

way of showing love and care to the dead in order to allow him or her rest in peace. Above all, it is also a way of protecting the family prestige and averting the pressure from the outsiders especially if the burial is postponed indefinitely. Be that as it may, Metuh (1985), makes his submission thus:

It is commonly believed that when a person dies, his spirit remains in this world for some time, wandering restlessly in the vicinity of his home and other places he used to frequent during his life time. After the completion of the funeral rites, the spirit enters the *Ndichie*, ancestral shrines. (p.105).

Above all, *Ozo* title-taking in Igbo land is very lucrative due to the benefits it accords its holder not only in his entire life time but also in his death. The benefit accruing from the prestigious society punctuates the entire life of the title holder. The titular name and the garbs, the honour and prestige, the change in social status, the leadership opportunity, the financial buoyancy; the befitting burial at the death of the title holder accord him a proper place among his ancestors as "*Ndichie*". Thus, the vertical and the horizontal intentionality of *Ozo* title-taking in the Igbo land is clearly evident. The attainment of the temporal and the eternal manifestations of these becomes the ultimate desire of every mature Igbo man. In Igbo cosmology, a man has lived a fulfilled life when he has been vested with all the titular honor and prestige while he was alive; and then accorded a befitting burial when he is dead, in order to be gone to join his ancestors in their rank and file.

It is worthy of note that some towns have three stages while others have more. For instance, Ozubulu has about four stages to pass through to the final *Ozo*.

From the except above, one notices that Awka people have about seven (7) stages to the final *Ozo* which everybody intending to the title has to pass through to the final stage. Ozubulu people have four (4) stages, whereas, in some other places one may find something more or less, as the above shows.

In summary, *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu are of two types: *Ozo Alor* and *Ozo Udu*. *Ozo Alor* is more common than *Ozo Udu*. It is the one taken by all and sundry. It has four stages which include: *Ido Ndichi Ani*, *Omele Ibi Uno*, *Ozo Alor* and *Itu Ugo*. These stages are taken piece meal to the final *Ozo* as a way of gradual maturation and integration into the system. Each of the stages has items to provide to the guests. The final day is always a festive day. It is all about merriment and entertainment of the guests in grand style. *Ozo Udu* is a special type of *Ozo* that is taken by special candidates called by the deity in question to serve it. It has not got much ceremony because the candidate has been an *Ozo* title holder. Its nature does not even require a lot of celebration. *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu is a big occasion that takes a lot of preparation, screening and money to make the day a festive one.

It is good to note that since three decades ago, most people in Ozubulu have been taking *Ozo Ndi Uka*. This is as a result of the transformation that has taken place in *Ozo* institution in the town. In spite of that, the names of the types of *Ozo* and stages remain unaltered. Almost all the ceremonies at each of the stages which require provision of items have been monetized to make things easier.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHRISTIAN *OZO* TITLE LEADERSHIP IN OZUBULU

Every society in the world today has its own culture and tradition. Culture, they say, is the way of life of a particular people: the way they are; the way they dress, speak, think, behave; what they eat and how they eat, the way they socialize and so on. Culture according to Edeh (1985), is “an inherited pattern of thought or action, such as a religious practice or a social customs”(p.59). Okeke (2015), sees culture as “the whole gamut of the way human beings in a given society think and behave” (pp 14-15). For Madu (1992), culture is “the totality of all that is formed by a system of representation, norms, expressions and actions of a collectivity” (p.104). And for Iwuchukwu (1990), “culture is entirely people’s way of life: mode of dressing, dancing, worshipping, eating, marrying, friendship, birth, upbringing, burial ceremonies, etc... culture is the embodiment or compendium of people’s way of life” (p.22). Title-taking especially *Ozo* title-taking and its leadership are part and parcel of our cultural heritage. It has been handed down from one generation to another. According to Okeke (2015) “*Ozo* title is very common and a strong traditional institution, with very significant social consequences”(p.70).

People take titles everywhere in the world. In Nigeria, for instance, Hausa people have their own titles which they take. The Yoruba also have their own traditional titles. Many different tribes in Nigeria have their respective titles which they take in their different localities. The taking of these titles helps to quench their thirst for membership into those title groups and also makes them feel the sense of maturity as adults. In Igbo-land, *Ozo* title-taking seems to be among the most dominant titles for the men folk. The women do not take *Ozo* title but rather they partake in their husband’s *Ozo* title-taking as well.

Ozo title-taking opens the door of leadership to the members. In Ozubulu, an *Ozo* title holder is regarded as a leader. The initiation and installation ceremonies performed for the candidate enrolls him into the society of titled men. From then on, he is regarded as an elder and also a leader. In Ozubulu, there are elders by virtue of their age and as well there are elders by virtue of their office as *Ozo* titled men. Some of the members may appear young by age but then due to the fact that they have taken *Ozo* title, they are regarded as elders. Similarly, the elders are also the leaders of the people by virtue of his status as an elder. Thus, an elder is also a leader and vice versa.

As Adler (1968), points out, there are two groups of people as far as leader-follower relationship is concerned. According to him, there are the submissive ones and the imperious ones. The servile group refers to those people who abide by the rules and regulations and try always to maintain their servile position. These people might want a change of condition to a better position but find it difficult to initiate the move. This could be out of fear of the unknown whether they could make it or not. It could also be fear of the leader on top who might fall out with them for trying something he/she might consider funny. According to Adler (1968), the imperious group is not comfortable with the position where they are. What do they do? They keep on struggling to move higher. And by dint of serious effort sooner or later, they are there on top where they will occupy the position of authority as leaders. This is exactly what happens in the leadership of the *Ozo* titled members. They are men who struggled through their sweat to climb to the top echelon of leadership of the people in the village. They came through thick and thin to be where they have desired all through their life to be. It was not easy for most of them to make it due to the heavy financial involvement in the *Ozo* title-taking. But when they have

reached the final stage of *Ozo*, they forget the difficulties encountered along the line. This is because of the joy they experience for having reached the final stage.

4.1 The Structure of Christian *Ozo* Title Leadership in Ozubulu

Leadership is necessary in any human society. Any society or a community without a formidable leadership is bound to disintegrate. A leader is to a group of people, what an army commander is to a battalion, and a sailor to the ship and the inmates on the cabin. Leadership is the tool for social control. A good leader helps to keep the community together. A good leader offers a quality leadership that helps to motivate the people and give them sense of direction. It is therefore, a necessary tool in the hands of a good leader in order to work out strategies for moving things forward for the benefit of the group in question.

Thus, the *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu has about five sections. They include – *ndi Nze na Ozo*, *ndi Akana Obi*, *ndi Okenye Ozo*, the kindred Leadership and the family leadership.

4.2 The Leadership of *Ndi Nze na Ozo*

This refers to the *Ozo* titled members in totality. It refers to all the *Ozo* titled men who by virtue of their initiation join hands with the king in the daily running of the kingdom. They meet as often as possible to discuss on issues pertaining to the traditional matters in the town. Ab initio, these *Ozo* titled members were misconstrued to be cult members and *Ozo* institution as a cult institution. This was the reason why for instance, from the 80s down to mid 90s, the early Christian converts were not allowed to take *Ozo* title for the fact that it was then a thing for the traditionalists. For that reason alone, people thought that *Ozo* institution was a cult institution. The members suffered a lot of stigmatization from the villagers. This made some of the members to quit their membership of the group. They abandoned their good job as collaborators with the

king in the running of the affairs of the town. They lost everything including their financial entitlements due to the stigmatization. The rest of the members who paid deaf ear to people's side talks, developed thick skin and hooked on till the air was cleared about *Ozo* institution in their favour.

It is by creating awareness, thanks to the efforts of scholars who threw more light on *Ozo* institution coupled with the directives from some Christian Church leaders (as discussed above) who relaxed the rules against *Ozo* title-taking, that the people began to appreciate *Ozo* institution for what it really is as a prestigious leadership institution and not a cult institution. This became a turning point in *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu. The institution experienced a boom both in its numerical strength and its leadership organization.

Writing on *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu Ejiofor (2006), comments thus:

When this title is taken, it reclassifies one from an ordinary classless indigene of *okolo* or mere indigene to a person of recognition, of note, counted with his equals but before his unequal. When the *Ozo* title holder arrives, he is noted. *Ndi Nze na Ozo* in Ozubulu like in other towns in Igbo-land that have such institution are honourable men in our society, particularly by the virtues associated with the title. Their women folk are automatically installed *Lolos* during the installation of their husbands. Just as the men's folk are honoured, their *Lolos* are equally honoured in the society particularly among their fellow women. (p.30).

This is a fact about the status and the prestige of the members of *Ozo* titled group in Ozubulu town. They are the leaders of the community. They join the king and the *Obi* of the four quarters in piloting the affairs of the town. Adibe (2008), also writes thus:

Titled men are protectors of Igbo cultural heritage. It is an expression of economic and social blessing. It is Igbo traditional method of recognition of hard work and the proof of honesty in wealth acquisition in the ancient Igbo world. It certifies purity of purpose and truthfulness of lifestyle of the initiate. It is an association of the wealthy members of Igbo society. It is an ancestry position given to man. (p.81).

As the leaders of the community these *Ozo* titled men are charged with the responsibility of propagating cultural heritage to avoid extinction. They do this by making sure that each year these Festivals are organized and done and the little children are taught the importance of those festivals to the people. As leaders they make every effort to safeguard these cultural values and traditions.

In Ozubulu town, it is this group- *ndi Nze na Ozo* that decides on the annual traditional calendar for the whole community. They fix the dates for annual festivals and other ritual ceremonies like the New Yam festival, *Afia Olu*, *Asala*, and other traditional ceremonies. Ejiofor (2006), explains this thus:

...*Nze na Ozo* title of Ozubulu which is referred to as *Ozo Obodo*. This body as a matter of traditional responsibility must always exercise the scheduled annual, biannual and tri-annual festivals of Ozubulu such as the *Iwajiofuu* festival (New Yam Festival), *Okeife* Festival (*Ofala* Festival), etc. (p.26).

According to Chief Martin J. Ilona, (personal communication, January 15th, 2017), *ndi Nze na Ozo* normally have their meetings at *Igwe's* palace once a month. The king joins them as long as he is in town. They discuss affairs concerning the whole town especially as it concerns traditional matters. They make references to the king in certain matters that needs his attention.

They constantly consult with the king during decision making in matters concerning the annual calendar for the town. They settle cases for the people and make references to the king when there is need to do so. They are always available to assist the king in the day-to-day running of the town. According to Joseph U. Okoye, (personal communication, January 15th, 2017), the role of *ndi Nze na Ozo* is more quite traditional. No other group can take up the functions of the *Ozo* titled group as far as fixing of events for the town is concerned. For instance, the *Igwe's* cabinet is there to advice him and also help him during decision making regarding his own office. They are his advisory committee. They do not fix the traditional calendar. *Ndi Nze na Ozo* group is in-charge of fixing the calendar and the feasts and festivals for the whole town. They also plan on how best to organize it every year on behalf of the town. They see to it that everything went fine during festivals like the new yam festival. During the ceremony they gather with the king to grace the occasion. They represent their various villages at such meetings with the king on how on traditional matters. They are the mouth piece of their kindred and villages at the town level. When people's opinion is need on an issue, they gather them together to sample their opinion on the issue. They in-turn, present their opinions to the whole town assembly in matters that require to people's opinion. They therefore, bridge the gap between the villagers and the entire town's assembly.

According to A. Chukwuneta, (personal communication, 15th January,2017), the role of *ndi Nze na Ozo* in Ozubulu come out so sharply during the some traditional ceremonies like the *Igba Nkwu* ceremony or traditional wedding. They are the people at the helm of affairs. They direct activities during the ceremony. During the *Ime Ego* ceremony too, that is the payment of dowry, they are the people to stay aside with the prospective in-laws to decide on the dowry. According to him also, these *Ozo* titled elders are the people to plan the burial of any dead relative in the

neighbourhood. Their leadership roles of these titled elders in the villages are quite enormous and very much felt by all and sundry during these traditional ceremonies.

In the respective villages, these men are regarded as the pillars of their village administration. They are at the helm of affairs to take decisions for the smooth running of their village communities. In difficult moments they stand out to seek solution to the problem facing the people. When there is a dispute their role as leaders of the people come out clearly. In Ozubulu town, it is this group that encapsulates an all important organ of traditional leadership in the town called *Ndi-Akana-Obi*. This means that it is from the group of *Ndi Nze na Ozo* that the group known as *Ndi Akana Obi* emerges. In fact it is a law in Ozubulu that before a person can take any other titular post he must have taken *Ozo* title. Ejiofor (2006), affirms this when he says, “customarily before one is admitted as a cabinet chief in our land, one is expected among other prerequisites to take *Nze na Ozo* title of Ozubulu” (p.26). Adibe (2008), asserts that, “*Ozo* title empowers the initiate to Igbo political and ritual functions” (p. 80). They help to maintain peace and tranquility of the whole community by settlement of disputes. They also lead at prayers during religious or social gatherings. They see to it that their local communities are being taken care of as it should be. These *Ozo* titled men are recognized as elders of the town by virtue of their age and more, by virtue of their status as *Ozo* titled members.

4.3 The leadership of *Ndi Akana Obi*:

Obi can be understood as palace. It is regarded also as the ancestral home. It is the place of meeting for the elders. Every *Ozo* titled man has an *obi* where he receives visitors. *Obi* can also be described meeting place of the living and the dead. This is because the elders gather there during the day while the ancestors gather during the night. *Obi* refers also to the first son of the

family who occupies the chair of the family head. This is the reason why in Ozubulu for instance, the persons occupying the ancestral chair at the four quarters are called *Obi*. According to Ejiofor (2006), both the *Obi* as the base and the *Obi* as the designated head and the entire people he is looking after are sacred. For that reason they attract positive things like good fortunes, sacred trees, and sacred forces. Ejiofor (2006), traces the origin of *Obi* and *Akana Obi* in Ozubulu town when he affirms thus:

Usually it is the eldest son who lives in the *Obi* and he derives his designation from the institution and he is regarded as *Obi* also. Other sons are meant to move out at maturity and establish another base, where others will emanate and so the tree of *Obi* institution continues to grow. That is how we have the *Akana Obi*. (Pp. 12-13).

Ndi Akana Obi therefore, refers to a group of *Ozo* titled men taken from among the *Ozo* titled members to act as representative of the *Ozo* titled members at the four *Obis'* palaces. They are subsidiaries to the four *Obis* who are in-charge of the four quarters in Ozubulu but their status is higher in rank to that of the rest of *Ozo* titled men. They work in close collaboration with the four *Obis* in Ozubulu. They are the people who make the leadership of the king felt both at the four quarters and the grass-root, inside the villages and the respective kindred. Their leadership roles circulate around the *Obi's* palace. Of course this does not mean that they cannot participate at their different villages or kindred. They mediate between the people and the *Obi* of the quarters and between the *Obi* and the king. They run errands for the *Obi* and for the entire quarters they represent. They join hands with the *Obi* of the quarters in the leadership roles thereof. Their job is akin to that of *ndi Nze na Ozo* except they are attached to the *Obi* of the four quarters as their close associates. They could be regarded as the cabinet members to *Obi* of the quarters. They hold regular meetings with *Obi* in his palace. They also accompany him on regular visits to

Igwe's palace. The members of *ndi Akana Obi* are rather addressed as *Obi* but their status is of a lower degree to that of *Obi* of the four quarters. There are few things peculiar with these traditional leaders: the king, the *Obi* of the quarters, the Cabinet members, *ndi Akana Obi* and the *Ozo* titled men. They are first of all, *Ozo* titled members before ever taking any other titular post beside it. If any candidate is aspiring to join the king's cabinet, he must first of all take the *Ozo* title before the day of investiture as the king's cabinet and so on. This gives them the power and the authority to perform as such. It also accords them the respect and reverence of the people under them. It is note-worthy to remark that *Ozo* title-taking opens the door of leadership to young people who are found worthy to join in the *Ozo* institution. In *Ozubulu* when the screening is done, men of integrity who are tested and trusted as the spiritual, social and political leaders of the people entrusted to their care. As leaders of the people, they make efforts to live up to the people's expectation. They carry themselves with dignity and always avoid behaviours that could tarnish their image as the leaders of the people. Of course those at the helm of affairs in some of the groups have a way of check-mating the activities of the groups to help them abide by the rule.

Ndi Akana Obi group has the obligation to represent their people at their village meetings. They are always in consultation with the *Obi* of the quarters when certain important decisions are being made. According to Eze Amurunobi, (personal communication, 30th January 2017), *ndi Akana Obi Ozubulu* have the obligation to settle cases that come to their group. It could be from among them or from those they represent. When it is an old case that has been handled by the *Ozo* titled elders, they will have to recall their judgment to see how to settle it amicably. According to him, when a case passes their table unresolved then the king will be involved. It belongs to this group also to accompany the *Obi* to funerals and other social gatherings they need

to attend. They also represent the people at political rally. They are always consulted when it comes to political campaigns and meeting the right people to discuss on how to deliver the wards to any part of their choice. They speak on behalf of the people in political matters. According to him, these men are the mouth piece of the people in relating with the outside world. They intervene whenever visitors come on a town based visit. They are always called upon to welcome them and direct them as should. If the visitors are to speak to the villagers, they are the ones to arrange for it and send message across to the entire village for people to gather. Accordingly, they join *Obi* in planning for the celebration of New Yam festival and *Afia olu* for each quarters. They also join *Obi* in attending such celebrations at *Igwe*'s palace.

According to Ekwuru (1999), the colonial masters introduced the indirect rule which shattered the "Umunna" and the elders' forum. In the past, the decisions of the elders made up a body of laws that were binding on every member of the family or kindred. People's problems and cases were tried and laws were enforced by age grades and masquerades to maintain order. Nowadays, the police force and the court are believed to be in-charge of all those. However, it is quite disheartening to note that such institutions nowadays are so corrupt that they help to perpetrate injustices at high places than ever. Nowadays, such government institutions which are assumed to have substituted the traditional order as the hope of the hopeless and the mouth piece of the poor people; are full of corrupt practices and corrupt people that people now yearn for a return to the traditional way.

4.4 The leadership of *Ndi Okenye Ozo*

This group is made up of elders from the community. They are so called because of their all important position as the elders of their various communities. Among the elders of the

community, there are the *Ozo* titled members and the untitled ones. All of them exercise authority as the leaders of the people in the community. They act as custodians of the cultural values of the community. However, there are certain occasions when the need arises that a particular function will be performed only *Ozo* titled man. In such occasion, the *Ozo* titled person will take up the demand. For instance, during the payment of dowry in Ozubulu, an *Ozo* titled men must be there to represent the rest among the hosts and the visitors. The elders of the people are the men of integrity who are respected by virtue of their grey hairs as well as their old age as the custodian of the people's tradition. Adibe (2008), describes them thus:

Ndi okenye are the college of village family heads and the titled men. They are called the council of elders-*ndi isi obodo*. Each member has an *Ofo* of his family. They preside over village issues and give verdict which all members must adhere to. The village has the oldest male among them who represents them in town's meetings. (p.193).

The status of the village elders is a divine mandate. It is *onatará chi-* from nature. This is because it is not something that one claims to oneself just like that. The elders play the role of a-go-between in their relationship with the gods. They constantly consult with the spiritual beings in order to ascertain their opinion in certain important issues. The Igbo people believe that their opinion count so much in every way for the peace and tranquility of the entire community. Adibe (2008), also maintains thus:

They are regarded as *mmuo na madu* on all issues bordering the town. Their decisions are laws and never questionable. They are the ancestral representatives by age and titles. They settle inter-family crisis; land problems; social, political and religious problems. All unbecoming attitudes and negativity to community norms are handled by them. They are

the mystical agents of the grouped family ancestors and as such preservers and custodians of morality. Their decisions are binding on every member of the town. One who disobeys them is ostracized. Their services are still very important for all Igbo people no matter where the person resides. Social change has not very much affected their roles in Igbo communities. (p.194).

The elders are the renowned members of the Igbo traditional society. They play vital roles in the affairs of the village communities. They are the leaders of the community. Their roles include settlement of disputes, governance, decision making, sharing of community farm lands, presiding over village meetings and other social gatherings, and so on. They constitute the major part of the governing body of the entire Igbo society. They are at the fore front of the leadership of the community. Their wealth of experiences plays the major part in the decision making for the people of the community.

In the main, however, one would notice the exalted position of our titled elders as our leaders. Such exalted position demands respect and reverence. Among the Igbo race, respect for elders is one of the virtues which the parents and elders inculcate into their children and young ones. They do that through teaching by words of mouth and by practice. For instance, when an elderly person passes by and the children do not greet the person, he/she will call them to order by inquiring why they did not care to greet them. If a child enters any house to deliver a message, the child will first of all greet the elders in that house before delivering the message. If however, the child forgets to do so, the elders will immediately call him/her to order saying “*bia nwatakiri a, idi ekene mmadu ekene?*”-hey this little child don't you greet your elders? Some hot tempered ones might even go to the extreme of turning the child away just for not greeting them before delivering the message. Conton (1966), puts it succinctly thus:

Africans generally have deep and ingrained respect for old age, and even when we can find nothing to admire in an old man, we will not easily forget that his grey hairs have earned him right to courtesy and politeness. (p.29).

This is exactly true of African people as a whole as it is true of the Igbo people south east of Nigeria. Respect for elders and our leaders is a duty we owe to them as far as our society is concerned. Onwubiko (1991), says it all when he affirms that respect for elders in Igbo setting begins right from the immediate family. Hence, the parents being the prime teachers of children have the duty to instruct their children on the need to pay respect to them as well as the elders outside their family. Oyejola (2006), affirms this thus:

In the traditional Africa family leadership systems, the father and the mother have much influence on their children either positively or negatively. Their attitudes of life reflect on their children. In the family, all are involved in the welfare of the family. Here, the leader, usually the father, sets the pace while all participate actively. (p. 11).

Oyejola confirms what Onwubiko has said as the whole truth. According to Onwubiko (1991), the elders are respected because they are the teachers and instructors of the young ones based on their years of experiences in life. The young ones cannot but bend down and listen to them, to learn. The elders have the duty to instruct the young ones out of their wealth of experiences and wisdom. According to Onwubiko (1991), “the elders are taken to be the repository of communal wisdom and therefore they are conceded leadership in the affairs of the people. One of the reasons for this is the nearness of the elders to the ancestors”(p.28). Earlier in this chapter, there have been some deliberations on this issue of nearness to the ancestors as reason for their becoming the community leaders. As people who saw the ancestors and when we respect and

revere them, we respect and revere the ancestors they represent among us. As Onwubiko (1991), has pointed out, the elders are the representatives of the ancestors among the living members of the family or kindred. From the discussion so far, one will be right to say that *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu is the door post to leadership and position of authority. The induction ceremony into the prestigious *Ozo* title society marks a change in social status for the candidate who is now introduced into the college of elders who pilot the affairs of the people in different communities in Ozubulu.

4.5 Leadership of the kindred Heads

In Ozubulu town, each village is divided into kindreds-*Umunna*. Each kindred have their own formidable leadership. The eldest of the kindred is seen as a leader by nature- *Onatara chi*. The normal practice is that before the eldest man in the kindred takes over the mantle of leadership of the kindred, he will invite all and sundry to his *Obi*-family palace for prayer and merriment for the opportunity granted him as the eldest of the kindred. If the person has not taken *Ozo* title, he will also be assisted by the whole kindred both financially and otherwise in order to enable him take *Ozo* title. When all these things are achieved, he assumes the office officially as the rightful kindred leader.

On the political side too, one finds an elected leader who also helps in piloting the affairs of the kindred. He is designated as the chairman of the kindred. His seat is a political one because he is duly elected to take up the post which has duration to expire. Thus, while the duration of the eldest man of the kindred as the kindred leader lasts till his death, that of the chairman lasts according to the tenure as agreed in the constitution of the kindred. The chairman is in constant consultation with the *Okenye Umunna* in order to move the kindred forward.

The functions of each of them are well streamlined. The chairman can plan on events for the kindred and map out the modalities on how to carry them out. He can also initiate structures to build like kindred *Obi* or civic centre for social gatherings. He can direct the kindred's meetings and give guide lines on how activities are to be carried out. He can preside over settlement of cases. He can take certain decisions on behalf of the people. However, there are certain decisions that would warrant due consultation with the eldest man of the kindred. He will refrain from action pending on when he duly consults with him. He can also lead at prayer during community gatherings. When however, there is an important ritual prayer to say, the eldest man of the kindred should be invited to lead at the prayer.

The eldest of the kindred in turn, has numerous functions to his office as the eldest of the kindred. He takes the lead at prayers during gatherings of the kindred. He can also delegate the duty to anyone of his choice. Every prayer that has its own rite is reserved to him as the eldest of the kindred like the New Yam Festival prayer; Child's naming ceremony, traditional marriage ceremony and so on. He can direct the meetings of the kindred too. He has all it takes to take decision for the kindred which he seals with his *Ofo Umunna*. Nowadays the *Ofo Umunna* is being replaced with a copy of the Holy bible to depict the Christian atmosphere in which we are. Whenever they gather they read a little passage from it and share the word of God before they begin the usual meeting. The eldest man has it as part of his duty to settle disputes for the people. Both the *Okenye Umunna* and the chairman of the kindred work harmoniously together in moving the kindred forward. The leadership of the two is based on mutual understanding and love. They are always careful to avoid unnecessary infringement on the rights of the other. The chairman always pays allegiance to the eldest man as the spiritual leader of the kindred. He is the mouth piece of the kindred in their external relationship with the rest of the villagers. Whenever

there is need for one voice, he speaks on behalf of the kindred. The chairman will only speak on his behalf when he is not there. This is one of the reasons why people began to take *Ozo* title. In the gathering of the villagers or the whole town for traditional matters like funeral rite, traditional marriage rite, and so on, it is only the *Ozo* titled men that have the right to talk. They are the only decision makers apart from the key family members who are organizing the ceremony being organized. Other elders in attendance who did not take *Ozo* title are recognized but they do not strictly participate in the decision making in those traditional rites. The leadership of the kindred heads is so streamlined and well organized that one hardly sees any friction between the two heads.

4.6 Leadership of the Family Head

The family is divided into two: nuclear family and extended family. The discussion here will focus more on the extended family. The extended family refers to the group of nuclear families that make up one larger family under one *Pater Familia* -forefather of the family. In Ozubulu, the extended family is popularly known as *Ime Nne* (One forefather and mother). The eldest man of the extended family is the leader of the families under the *Pater Familia*. He is the only person who has the right to hold the family *Ofo*-known as *Ofo Ime Nne*. The *Ofo* becomes his symbol of power and authority in the family as the family head and leader. Just as the kindred head, he is the leader of the family. He is always consulted whenever there is need to do so. The rest of the family members see him as their father –*Nnaa* and address him as such. He uses his *Ofo* to pray for the entire family every day. He takes decision on issues affecting the nuclear families within the large family. Everybody call upon him in times of happiness and sorrow. In times of good tidings and moments of sadness he is alerted to be present.

The leadership roles of the family head is very clear to all the members of the family. He is the one to break the kola nut anywhere in the large family. He calls for family meetings often. He settles disputes where there is any. He decides on issues affecting the contingent families. Whenever he takes decision on issues after much deliberation with the members, it is taken as the final opinion to hold. He is seen as the fore fathers of the family come alive. That is why he is accorded the whole respect as the family head.

According to Nze Chiugo Okeke, (personal communication, February 10th, 2017), every family head has a parcel of land which goes with the family *Ofo* together with some economic trees attached to the land. These items move from hand to hand in successive manner. Thus, when the family head dies, the next person to take over from him will possess those items. If however, the next person is not willing to hold *Ofo*, he will hand it over officially to the next in age with some of the items he will a lot to him from the communal patrimony in his custody like *Akwu Ofo*-communal palm trees, *Ani Ofo*- communal land, and soon.

The family head enjoys the respect of all and sundry within and outside the family circle. As the leader of the family he coordinates affairs to maintain peace in the family. He not only prays for the entire family members but also inquires about their welfare from time to time. The family heads join in the meetings of the rest of the villages as the co-leaders of the entire community. If the family head has not taken *Ozo* title at the time of assuming office as the head, the family members will contribute as well to make it a reality just as at the kindred level. He acts as the mouth piece of the family everywhere. If it happens that he has not taken *Ozo* title, he will not be representing the family well at the external forum because he will not be allowed to make contribution at certain special gatherings as an untitled man. That is why the family members

have to contribute to help him to take the *Ozo* title so as to be fully equipped for the post he assumes on behalf of the entire family.

One thing peculiar to all these groups is the collaborative efforts of both the king, the *Obi* of the different quarters, *ndi Akana Obi*, *ndi Nze na Ozo*, the kindred leaders, the family heads in the leadership of the entire community. Each of the groups works harmoniously together for the good of the town Ozubulu. When there is any slack at some quarters, it will affect the rest. That is why the king is always out to address very quickly, any issue that crops up to avoid creating unnecessary problems in the leadership scheme of the town.

Besides that, they all have in common their *Ofo* which is their wand of office. It is their source of power and authority to perform their works effectively at their different levels. According to Ejizu (1986), *Ozo* and *Ofo* are inextricably linked together. Each is part and parcel of the other. Both of them go hand in hand. According to him, it is not possible to obtain a personal *Ofo* except by taking of *Ozo* title. Ejizu (1986), defines *Ofo* as, “a staff of office which symbolizes justice, righteousness and truth” (p. 24). The ceremony of handing a candidate for *Ozo* title his staff of office has its own ritual. This goes to buttress the fact that it is a very important part of the *Ozo* title-taking. Every *Ozo* titled man has his *Ofo* *Ozo* as the power and authority to perform. In the 80s, many people in Ozubulu use their *Ofo* to obtain loan. The titled men used to borrow money with their *Ofo* as the last resort. They use their staff of office as collateral trusting that they will eventually struggle to pay back and take back their authority of office. If they do not pay back the person who borrowed them the money will continue to hold their *Ofo*. This is to show the enormous power and influence of *Ofo* as the staff of office for the *Ozo* titled men. The borrower tries as much as possible to pay back because the moment from the time of borrowing the money till the time of paying back is a period of powerlessness for the elder who borrowed

with his *Ofo Ozo* or kindred *Ofo*. It is regarded as a criminal act for the kindred head to borrow money with the kindred (communal) *Ofo* which he is supposed to be using to pray for the entire kindred every day. When the rest of the members know about the act they will penalize the kindred head for doing such a thing without their consent. He can only borrow with his personal *Ofo*. But when he borrows with *Ofo Umunna*, he must do that secretly to avoid penalty.

According to Ejizu, (1986), there are two kinds of *Ofo*. They are *Ofo Ozo* and the extended family *Ofo*. *Ofo Ozo* is actually the one that pertains to *Ozo* title-taking under discussion. This is handed over to the candidate for *Ozo* title-taking to empower him in his new office as one of the community leaders. The candidate for *Ozo* title-taking is handed over his *Ofo Ozo* which he will accept and move silently to his temple where he will now place the *Ofo* on his altar. The other kind of *Ofo* is for the extended family. That is the power of office for the eldest son of the family who, as a matter of fact, is supposed to be *Ozo* titled man. He uses it to pray for the entire extended family as their father.

According to Ejizu, *Ofo* is primarily a staff of office and as such it plays a prevalent role in the socio-political and religious life of the people. As the leaders of the community, they use *Ofo* to pray on behalf of the people. They use it to seal every prayer to the divinities. They use it in the conferment of titles especially the *Ozo* title. They use it to officiate during oath taking ceremony. They use it for the enactment of laws that remains binding on the members. And whatever, the entire group agrees upon and seals it with *Ofo* staff shall remain binding on all the members. They play a key role in the settlement of disputes in Ozubulu. As the elders of the community, they invite the parties in dispute and after listening to their complaints, they give their ruling according as the facts on their table suggest. They do that without fear or favour because they

know that if justice is aborted it will boomerang on them as unjust leaders. According to Ejizu, *Ofo* is used together with its counterpart *Ogu* in maintaining and claiming of innocence.

Be that as it may, the leadership of the *Ozo* titled men in Ozubulu revolves around these special groups: *Ndi Nze na Ozo*, *Ndi Akana Obi* and *Ndi Okenye Ozo*, the kindred heads and the family head. They work harmoniously together to effect positive changes in the town. They always work in collaboration with the king in the leadership affairs of the town. They are always there to make peace in times of trouble. They are there for everybody: the rich and the poor, the adults and the kids alike and so on. They get to the root of matters in order to save the oppressed from their assailants who would have over powered them to do away with their belongings. They settle cases for the entire people and maintain peace and harmony for the entire community in order to balance the equilibrium.

These leaders are elders of the people. They are always committed to true leadership that is why the people believe in them so much. They lead by example. They are down to earth in their relationship with the rest of the members. They work even at the grass root towards the successful leadership at the states and the national levels. Their leadership roles contribute in no small measure to the success of the leadership scheme at the higher levels of the nation.

The leadership of the *Ozo* titled men in Ozubulu is a welcomed development. Many people in Ozubulu cherish their work so much. This is because they make positive impact on the life of the people and the entire nation at large. The people are happy to follow the injunctions that come from these titled men than those of the government. This is because of the trust which these traditional leaders have built in them more than the government who is far removed from the reality of life right in the village community at the grass root level.

From the above discussion, one would notice that the leadership of *Ozo* titled men in Ozubulu town is well organised. This is based on mutual trust, respect for one another, brotherly love, honesty, integrity of life and so on. Both the leaders and the members know what is expected them to do and do it to be where others are and avoid being odd. The Igbo adage says ‘*nke m di iche bu ajo aha*’- this means that it is not always good to be different from the rest especially when the fellow goes contrary to something good which the rest agrees to do.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHRISTIAN *OZO* TITLE LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

In this chapter, the discussion will center on *Ozo* title-taking vis-a-vis leadership in Nigeria. A lot has gone wrong with the system of leadership in Nigeria. A meaningful discussion on the leadership of our country Nigeria will have to proffer solutions as a way forward. It is believed that if the principles of leadership in *Ozo* institution are applied to leadership in Nigeria, there will be a real change for good. Following what was already discussed in the preceding chapter about the members of *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu, they are known for their leadership ability. They are people of integrity who are guided by some moral code of conduct as community leaders. There is a proactive group that has the ability to effect meaningful change in the leadership of the various communities and even Nigeria at large. By way of inference, it could be deduced that if given the chance, they would help to restore peace and tranquility to our troubled nation that is bugged like canker worms by corruption, hunger and strife, religious fanaticism, political instability, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, destruction of people's life and property, and so on.

5.1 Leadership in Nigeria

The leadership in Nigeria is characterized by unprecedented and unbridled increase in marginalization, deprivation, corruption, injustices, greed, selfishness, and so on. Indeed, a practical concern for the future makes the question of leadership in Nigeria quite topical. As a matter of fact, politics in Nigeria seems to have constituted a serious predicament. There are stories of political intolerance, hired assassination, blatant corruption, and nepotism all over the country. All these go on without anybody doing something concrete enough to put a stop to it.

The leadership in Nigerian revolves around a selected few who see it as their birth right and personal business. This explains why there has not been any meaningful progress in Nigeria since independence due to poor leadership. Okolo (1996), affirms this thus:

The summary judgment of the one-time Federal Minister for Communication, the late Alhaji Aminu Kano on the real power and progress of the country, the giant of Africa, in 1971, that ‘after ten years of independence, she hasn’t moved a step forward economically and politically’ is easy to confirm from the happenings of later years. (p.7).

Okolo went on to outline some of the causes of backwardness evident in our society to include ourselves and our values, our life priorities, our materialistic outlook on things, which characterizes our political, private and public ways of life, our pursuit of material progress and modernity which becomes obstacle to true progress and self development. Okolo explaining further on this maintains that our squander-maniac mentality is the cause of lack of meaningful progress and development in our society today. This is because our leaders do not make long term planning and make a budget that will take a few years to mature for the benefit of the society. Rather what they consider is short term budget that will benefit them here and now. In the same vein, when we see the evidence of technological break-through in Europe and America, we do not consider the years of thinking, self sacrifice, initiative, responsibility, self discipline, foresight, hard labour, tears, sweat and blood that produced those quality materials.

Idike (1998), understands leadership thus:

Leadership is the most important element for order and progress in any human undertaking. Leadership is extremely vital and in fact central to the control, motivation, and direction of every human society towards development, progress, and meaningful

achievement in all human affairs, whether social, economic or political, both domestic and national. (p.140).

According to him, leadership is very necessary for social control and for motivating the human society toward a meaningful achievement in every sphere of life. It is therefore a tool in the hands of the executive harnessed to achieve the desired goal. It is the ability to take initiative, to motivate, to influence, to control the thoughts, the opinions, and the actions of the people in any given society towards the achievement of any desired end. Idike (1998), however, perceives leadership as a divine phenomenon since every power and authority comes from above. The leaders should always bear in mind the common goal of the group for which they are voted in so as to work towards achieving them. As long as that end is being pursued, he or she as the leader will continue to be in control of the group that put him or her on top as their leader. In the words of Nzomiwu (2012), “a good leader must be disciplined, humble and must not deny a place for criticism by his followers” (p. 360). It is one of the qualities of a good leader, to be open to criticisms. This will help him or her to sit up for good. Criticism could be either constructive or destructive. A constructive criticism is quite positive and progress oriented. A destructive criticism by its name tends towards the negative. A constructive criticism is the one that should help the person at the helm of affairs for checks and balances in his or her manner of administration.

According to Ukaegbu (2010), leadership is the ability of the incumbent at the helm of affairs to make use of his rare attributes or agency in order to move the society towards self-realization. Based on this, Achebe (1983), maintains that the ability of our leaders to rise up to the responsibility and challenge of personal example are the hall marks of true leadership. D’Souza (1994), rightly views leadership thus:

Leadership is characterized by vision, focus, direction, fore sight, and purpose. A focused leader with vision is wise and seeks the enduring good. He has a strong sense of history and a constant commitment to creating a better future for his people. He sees the bigger picture and acts in full view of the overall purpose, keeping not his personal interest but rather the national interest at the fore front of all his decisions and activities. (p.12.).

For D'Souza (1994), leadership is all about having a vision and being focused in the bid to actually realize the set dream. For him, a well focused leader with a vision to actualize is wise. In his wisdom, he seeks the good of all and prizes it above personal interests. When personal interest gives way to common interest, there is bound to be greater achievements as well as progress onto greater heights.

For Roberts (1989), leadership is the privilege of having the responsibility to direct the actions of other people in pursuit of the purpose of the organization at various levels of authority and with accountability for successful and failed endeavours. Roberts (1989), views leadership position as a privilege. Indeed a rare opportunity of service to God and humanity. If the leader does well by showing good examples, his or her name will be engraved on the marble; clearly written among the elites and leaders of thought in the community. According to Iroegbu (1996), "leadership for the Igbo has this God-oriented basis"(p.106). This means that it is a Theocratic system of leadership. There is no doubt about it. According to Iroegbu (1996), "the role of leadership is so fundamental that a choice of good leaders is a *conditio sine qua non* –condition without which there is no other for the communal good"(p.108). He stresses the need for choosing a good leader, someone who will be eager to serve and by so doing meet the people's mandate for placing him or her on top. According to him, if leadership is meant for the common good of all, then it is only those who can deliver the good, actually qualify best for it. For Sanders (1967),

leadership is the ability to influence another person. According to her, anyone who has the ability to influence other people for good is *de facto*- a leader. The power to influence therefore lies at the corridor of leadership. In the strict sense of it, the ability to control and/or the power to influence others is one of the finest qualities of a good leader.

Every society or group of people needs the presence of a good leader and a quality leadership at that in order to achieve a common goal. In any society or community where there is no good leader and quality leadership, there is bound to be anarchy, disorder and confusion. Lack of meaningful development is what one sees in such a society.

Speaking from the Nigerian point of view, Udebunu (2014), maintains that leadership in the Nigerian context breeds all manners of corruption and varying degrees of crimes in the society. According to him, the corruption in Nigeria is the outcome of the unfocussed and disoriented leadership. The present administration is a case in point. As it stands now, the country which was once tagged one of the fastest growing economy in the world would now be rated as one of the poorest ever. This is the negative effect of poor leadership and bad governance.

Ewelu (1999), speaking from the point of view of the African leaders, stresses the point that our leaders who, as a matter of fact, should be the custodians of African values like the sacredness of life, honesty, accountability, and so on, have succeeded in mutilating these values and turned to demi-gods. They kill with impunity and hire those to kill on their behalf. They dry up the public treasury without qualms of conscience. Most of these leaders bribe themselves into office thereby, selling off honesty and integrity. They become rich overnight and take many titles. In such a situation, what type of value are the citizens going to attach to the value of honesty and integrity? For in a country where the leaders refuse to pay workers' salary or sometimes

embezzle the money, how would one blame the poor workers if they begin to indulge in funny acts like bribery in order to keep life going? What about a situation where the leaders kill at will to protect their businesses and selfish political interests, there is nothing strange about the citizens killing in the streets also to protect their own selfish interests. In a country where most of our leaders sit on power and close their eyes and ears to the strife, genocide, starvation and suffering of all kind originating from their refusal to hands off power. In such a situation, what type of value does life have? According to him, most of our leaders have contributed a lot to the total loss of sense of value and break down of the entire system in the country due to greed and pursuit of selfish interests. This is the reason why according to West (1980), the leadership of the First Republic in Nigeria tried to draw its essence from ethnic and tribal consciousness. At that time leadership was sentimental, idolized and transmitted into semi or demi gods or supermen. Since then leadership has become a weapon for suppression and dictatorship in the country in the hands of politicians instead of being an agent of progress and meaningful development; an agent of security of life and property.

According to Osudibia (2004), mismanagement is the order of the day in the leadership of our country Nigeria. The leaders in office see their status as a good opportunity for wholesome mismanagement of public fund. Osudibia (2004), therefore, comments thus:

Carelessness in the management of finances is one problem that has beleaguered our entire system. Remember it was bankruptcy of the Crown more than anything else that instigated the French Revolution. In Nigeria, all our past leaders bear the shame and stigma of this vice of mismanagement and unaccountability. (p.88).

Obi (2006), narrates the pitiable situation of the nation when he says thus:

Nigeria is a country of bleak prospects. Nigeria is burdened with sloppy economy, soaring unemployment and inflation of prices and wages, comatose educational and cultural edifices, and collapsing socio-economic and political infrastructure. It is pitiable to see Nigeria so richly endowed among the league of beggar states. Given the background of great natural endowment and potential, Nigerian state society is experiencing symptoms of failure of its statehood. This failure is a collective responsibility of the leadership and followership, as in any of the states of Africa. (p.17).

From the opinion of scholars it is clear that our leaders seem to have failed the masses in such a way that they have no other option than to voice out their mind in clear terms and sometimes resort to violence. They want to take their destiny in their hands since those at the helm of affairs are involved in the corruption.

5.2 Applying the Leadership Qualities of Dialogue, Non Violence and Peaceful Co-existence in *Ozo* in the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria

Ours is country that is violence stricken. Many Nigerians out there in the street are likely to resort to violence as an option for the fight for basic human rights in our country. One finds out that most often violence does not yield the desired goal. Rather it creates more problems than ever. Ikeke (2014), thinks out aloud when he explains violent conflict thus:

Violent conflicts are conflicts in which one or both of the parties involved in a dispute, disagreement, and struggle over resources, services, exchange of goods, or on which position or decision should be taken; takes up arms or other material or non-material elements to do harm to the other in order to be victorious in the struggle.(p.95).

According to him, there are both material and non-material elements in the violent struggle. The non-material elements include the use of words of mouth or fight by polemics. It includes also

the spiritual and other diabolical means to harm the other person or group of persons involved in the struggle. According to him, violence consists in acts of deliberate attack on another person's physical or psychological integrity. It includes homicide, genocide, murder, kidnapping, torture, rape and other forms of maltreatment. According to Oyeshola (2005), violence has many connotations. It can be understood as an encounter with some life-threatening forces. It can also be understood as a physical force geared towards abusing or injuring someone. It can also connote an unjust distortion of the truth for some ulterior motives. The use of violence is bad because of the negative intention of the unjust aggressor right from the onset to either kill or injure another. Moreover, any form of abuse even by mere polemics is an act of violence that can even provoke the other person to go hay wire. It can even rouse a group of people to a violent demonstration or even war. In football pitch, for instance, the use of abusive language is a punishable offence because of the power in the spoken word. Ekwutosi (2002), holds a similar view when he says, "there need not be a murder case, a stabbing or shooting for violence to occur" (p.15). However, according to Robin (1994), the issue of violence includes among others, the psychological dimension as well as the physical dimension. The physical dimension is the open physical confrontation that makes the situation more or less a violent one. It is in fact, the psychological aspect of violence that induces the physical violence. According to Schaefer (1994), "human beings are prone to conflict over such scarce resources as wealth, status, power"(p.195). In *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu, people believe that the titled men especially their leaders are behind the violence and the constant scramble for status and positions as titled men. This is because, they create the impression that there is a limited number to recruit and that those who are fortunate enough to be taken to join the rest of the titled elders are the most privileged few. They will become friends of the king and be numbered among the crème of the town. Such

rosy painted scenario tickles people's fancy and arouses their interest and the desire of every young adult who is eager to assert himself among his kiths and kins. Such lofty benefits and lofty desires spur the over ambitious young adult to scout for money and grab it where ever it is found either by hook or crook provided they take the title and join the titled men.

The notorious ones who may have been screened out as the only available option owing to the nature of their offences, most often resort to violence in order to have their own pound of flesh especially when they see that their bribery could not push them through. Such people get their insignia of office with threat. This is more rampant in kingship affair than *Ozo* especially where it is rotational. According to Anifowose (1982), "political conflict is an endemic feature of most of the world's political system. This is particularly true of the developing countries, including Nigeria where political conflict, crisis, violence become essential characteristic of the political process..." (p.39). According to Oyeshola (2005), "economic problems, discriminatory economic systems and economic difficulties as a result of economic development and modernization are the major potential economic and social source of internal conflict" (p.123). Brown (1996), comments thus:

It is true that many groups have legitimate grievances against others for crimes of one kind or another committed at some point in the distance or recent past. Some ancient hatreds have legitimate historical bases however, it is also true that groups tend to white wash and glorify their own histories and they often demonize their neighbours, rivals and adversaries.(p.21).

Violence is borne out of grievances against the other person or group of persons. In Nigerian context, it is the masses that bear grievances against the leaders for their lack of care and concern for the people they are voted to lead. It is a fact that violence most often does not meet the goal it

sets out to achieve. Sometimes it creates more problems than solve them. A saying goes that to say no to violence is to say yes to dialogue.

Contrary to the idea of violence, however, Holmes (1990), preaches non-violence as the better solution to abnormal situations like that when he says that the badges of the non violent should be their own weapon where as God becomes their shield. According to MC Evenue (1998), violence means thus:

Any radical damage to life which appears to be unnatural in our universe that is created and maintained by an all-powerful and living God, any wild and destructive event that causes acute pain or lowers human living to an unacceptable level, removing all comfort and dignity.(p.336).

In *Ozo* title screening, for instance, violence occasionally occurs there. The eruption of violence in *Ozo* title screening is quite an ugly thing that mars the image of the prestigious *Ozo* title society and belittles the integrity of the title elders or the over ambitious youths involved in such behaviours. This poses a serious challenge to *Ozo* title society nowadays.

However, there are few solutions to the problem of leadership and violence both in *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu and leadership in Nigeria. One of them is dialogue. There is the need for dialogue between the candidates about to queue in for the title race and the top leaders of the *Ozo* title society regarding the high price-tag. They should be meant to understand that money is not the only criteria for screening of the candidates. Other areas of assessment like one's personal behaviour are also important and should also be emphasized. The dialogue will let them know that there is no need of over emphasizing the financial aspect to the detriment of other important criteria for choosing candidates. Osudibia (2004), confirms this when he says that, "to say "no" to dialogue is to say "yes" to violence" (p. 92). According to Osudibia (2004), "for the survival

of any organization, dialogue between the leaders and the subjects on the one hand, and between the subjects themselves is a desideratum”(p.90). In the same vein, Ojukwu (1996) rightly comments that, “no war in history has ever solved the problem it set out to solve” (p. 178). According to Oburota (2001), the “society should balance the tension of inherent violence with a healing atmosphere of constructive non-violence” (p.25). Odey (1996), is also on point when he says, “under no circumstance, therefore could Gandhi allow non-violence to be used as a vindictive weapon. It is not meant for the destruction but for the conversion of the enemy”(p.216). In response to the inherent social violence, Cone (1992), says, “we will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force”(p.270). According to Chukwudozie (2000), “the oppressed should mobilize into positive actions to shake off their yoke and the inhumanity of man to man! Tragic insensitivity and almost criminal lack of concern for the people, must be vehemently protested”(p.51).

These authors stress the need for dialogue and the philosophy of non-violence as the best solutions in resolving the problem of violence in *Ozo* title-taking, in Nigerian leadership system as well as other areas of socio-political violence and conflict. In Nigerian polity, too, violence has done more harm to the society than good. A lot of life has been lost due to political unrest as a result of bad governance and poor leadership.

Another solution is to do away with god fatherism which breeds corruption everywhere in our socio-political system. According to Achebe (2012), Nigerians should find a way of dealing with god-fatherism which he considers an archaic and corrupt practice by which few individuals with their ill gotten wealth choose to sponsor some half-baked candidates to some desired political positions amidst bribery and threats. According to him, they occasionally murder their opponent

in broad day light without qualms. He therefore, calls for non partisan groups to handle elections without government interference. There is also need to make the nomination of party candidates to be free of charge so that people with integrity can join and be voted in to power to effects a meaningful change. Presently in Nigeria, it is only those few politicians with the money to throw about are circulating the power among themselves. There is the need to make it open to the public in order to inject fresh blood into our political system for good. This will help to clear the political system of its mess and breathe in fresh air for meaningful change.

Ewelu (1999), bears the same opinion with Achebe when he said that our major problem of leadership is our means of choosing our leaders. According to him, before civilization came with colonialism, we choose our leaders by way of participatory democracy-*oha zuru chi*, whereby everybody is freely involved in choosing who to lead. In this type of democracy, no one dared to impose himself as a political aspirant to campaign for supporters. Rather the people simply know their leader and ask him to lead. This is because they have known themselves and who can lead well. Thus, there is a proper check as to whether the fellow being nominated has the qualities needed to be called a leader. In certain occasion, the person might object to the vote of the people to be their leader. The whole group will take it upon themselves to supply the things considered as a lack which makes the fellow to object to their unanimous vote. Such a vote is purely on merit and it is naturally democratic. According to him, the western democracy which is partisan democracy breeds corruption: lobbying, dishonesty, hi-jacking of votes, tuggery, selfishness, greed, and so on. Idike (1998), in his own opinion maintains thus:

Leadership is the soul of any community and the life blood of any nation. Nigeria as a nation, however corrupt and undisciplined, can change any day that Nigerians can discover the type of leadership which will bring about the desired change. Such

leadership is charismatic leadership. Such leadership should be leadership endowed with divine grace, leadership with a prophetic vision, a sense of direction and purpose, leadership with inspired imagination, leadership with a mass oriented spirit, and rooted in the fear of the Lord. Such leadership is for the new era. (p.139).

The problem we have in Nigeria is that our leaders do not want any meaningful change to happen in our political system. They do this because of their greed and selfish interests. That is the why they sit on even the western democracy we claim we practice and refuse to give it the chance to materialize into something good for the people. They do not have any good agenda for the masses. They are there to achieve their ulterior motives. According to Nzomiwu (2012), what Nigeria needs for stability is nothing but good leadership. According to him, this is an ethical issue because a good leader should have conscience. A good leader should also be a morally responsible person. It is not sufficient to be intelligent, educated or well skilled in the art of governing to be a good leader. It is not sufficient to be able to deliver the goods to be a good leader of a country. It rather requires that the person should be able to give moral leadership. A coward will not be able to face the daily challenges of good governance with confidence and determination. It is only a courageous man that will be able to resist and also denounce greed, selfishness, and so on.

Apart from the issue of dialogue and curbing of god fatherism, there is need for change of attitude among Nigerians. This change of attitude will be better achieved through proper orientation. It is believed that if the masses are given proper orientation on personal dignity and self worth, honesty and selfless service to all, there will be change of attitude towards people and issues.

The *Ozo* titled men are at the fore front in promoting this idea of non violence in our local communities. They engage the people in a dialogue during settlement of disputes in order to ensure that peace reigns. They try as much as possible to avoid god fatherism and unnecessary patronage to individuals with questionable characters. They see to it that screening of candidates for leadership positions are properly done to avoid trouble. They do these as worthy leaders in our villages and by so doing help the government in the leadership of the nation at large.

5.3 The leadership of *Ozo* Titled Men as an Application to Leadership in Nigeria

According to Ezeanya (2010), “the leadership structure of traditional Igbo (African) communities is far from being politicized but is believed to have descended from God and exercised through the council of elders” (p.176). According to Iroegbu (1996), if a leader is found wanting, may be the person has turned to be a dictator, “the *umunna* assembly by a general consensus would strip him of his powers and select another leader” (p. 107). In his discourse, he propounded the idea of “*ohanweze*”. This means that it is the people who owns the king and because of that they demand accountability and briefing in all his dealings as their king and leader. In Nigerian political system today, if the *Ozo* titled members are allowed to take up governance, for instance, the Iroegbu’s *Ohacracy*, *Umunna* Assembly or *Ohanweze* saga will be introduced to be the guiding political principle. This will first of all, remove the practice of the government trying to lord it over the masses. The politics will now be people oriented. The era when the politicians treat the people as mere artisans, people without future, people without identity, people to use as ladder to climb to power and discard would be gone.

Ewelu (1999), affirms the idea of Iroegbu when he says that before civilization came with colonialism, we choose our leaders by way of participatory democracy-*oha zuru chi*. This is a

situation whereby everybody is freely involved in choosing who to lead. In this type of democracy, no one dared to impose himself as a political aspirant to campaign for supporters. Instead, the people simply know their leader and ask him to lead. This is because they have known themselves and who can lead well. Thus, there is a proper check as to whether the fellow being nominated has the qualities needed to be called a leader. According to him, the community goes as far as contributing to provide whatever the newly elected leader lacks (probably the material needs like house, clothes, et cetera) that necessitates his refusal to accept the election as the new community leader.

Similarly, the *Ozo* title members have a lot of role to play because they can offer a meaningful leadership in Nigeria following their strict moral code of conduct as men of integrity. It is believed that if they are given the opportunity to translate their system of leadership at the local community to the national assembly and the presidency, they would be able to transform our country and restore sanity to our corrupt political system. For instance, a cursory look at their moral code of conduct reveals a lot to their credit as men of integrity.

According to Ejiofor (2006), the *Ozo* moral code in Ozubulu stipulates that the members should uphold the truth and live by equity and fairness. They should not steal or perpetuate injustice whenever there is need for justice to be upheld. They should not eat in the open place. They are to show love and kindness to the all and sundry. They should always preach and stand for peace in my community and so on. Other rules include shading of human blood. If a candidate has shed a human blood except by a publicly certified accident, he is disqualified. If it happened after the candidate has been vested with the *Ozo* title, it ceases his title, together with other contingent punishments which vary from one place to another. The *Ozo* candidate and members should not

covet the brother's or neighbour's wife. If such a case is brought forward against a member, the person is severely penalized for that.

The promise to uphold the truth and live by equity and fairness enjoins on the members of *Ozo* to be firm in saying things as they are without fear or favour. They are so disciplined that they strive to control themselves while talking, in order to say only the truth they know and should be said. They avoid telling lies in order not to incur the wrath of the earth goddess. They always speak only but the truth. They do not speak too much. As the (book of Sirach 19:6) says that a man of too many words makes a lot of mistakes and incurs the wraths of God. As a matter of fact, the titled elder demonstrates the veracity of whatever he is saying by striking his *Ozo*-titular staff (*Ofo*) on the ground. It is a proof that what he has said is the truth; and only but the truth, no more any less. Anything on the contrary incurs the wrath of Earth goddess. As a Nigerian leader the *Ozo* title man would be known as a man of truth. It is believed that he will be more trustworthy in office as a political leader.

The promise to avoid stealing enjoins on the members to be contented with whatever each one has and avoid taking what belongs to other people without their consent. A heavy penalty awaits a member of *Ozo* title group who steals his neighbour's belonging. The penalty however, is more severe if it involves things like yam tubers or ram.

The promise not to perpetuate injustice in the community is binding on the members. As leaders they do everything possible to avoid injustice and to uphold justice, equity and fairness. According to Okonkwo (2014), justice can be seen as a firm resolution to render to one another what belongs to each. Justice, according to Aquinas in Nwoko (1988), means "rendering to each one his right" (p.53). Kukah (2011), used the term "miscarriage of justice" to refer to injustice in

our society today. It is the duty of the *Ozo* titled members as the leader at helm of affairs to maintain justice and equal right of the masses.

The rule to show love to mankind is a general virtue. It is a general virtue in the sense that it embraces all other rules. Following the biblical notion of love that it covers many a sin, the rule to love mankind holds all the members in check against committing any evil act whatsoever against neighbour. With these *Ozo* titled men as our leaders, it is believed that brotherly love will take position of the tribal hatred and marginalization evident in our country today. The assassination of people with impunity will be a thing of the past because when love of life is in practice, there will be nothing else to price above.

The rule to stand by peace lies at the centre of their work as *Ozo* titled leaders. The popular maxim among the Igbo people about peace is “*Egbe belu, Ugo belu, nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwaa ya*” - let all the birds perch together on a tree, any one which would not allow the other birds to perch, let its wings break so that it falls down to create a space for others to perch. The symbol of a hand shake depicts this brotherly love, peace and unity among the Igbo Christendom. Live and let's live. Hendrickx (1986), expatiates on peace thus:

Peace implies many different things to different people. Some may identify peace as a lack of manifest conflict. Peace-making is associated with conflict resolution without the use of violence. Contrary to the traditional definition of peace as the absence of war, the concept of peace is now broadly understood to include many situations that guarantee positively human condition. Peace prevents loss of life and builds human capacity. The Hebrew word for peace is *Shalom*. Its Greek equivalent is *Eirene*, which means ‘to be sound’, ‘to be safe’ and its fundamental idea is totality. (p.2).

Ozo title institution upholds life and enjoins on its members to avoid whatever may terminate life. This is the reason why they expel anyone guilty of killing and terminates his *Ozo* title. Thus they try as much as possible to avoid anything that will terminate life. This is the reason behind the vow taken by the titled elders to uphold peace in so far as it helps to promote the course of building up the human capacity and also prevents the loss of human life as Hendrickx (1986), rightly pointed out.

Peace reigns when there is a relatively calm atmosphere, devoid of all worries, frustration and despair. It can be understood as the absence of violence or war. The *Ozo* title members are called upon during their induction ceremony to openly declare their readiness to uphold and maintain peace and tranquility in their various communities regarded as basic for moving the community forward. By so doing, they act as the Mahatma Gandhi of our time. Mahatma Gandhi was the apostle of peace and non violence. Gandhi, according to Fischer (1954), “tried to spread the gospel of love and peace” (p.181). He made every effort to spread this gospel of love and peace among his followers, his people, the Hindus, the Sikhs, and even among the Muslim minorities who would not defend themselves in the midst of the thickly populated Hindu society of India. Gandhi would quench the boiling passion among the militant Hindus and address them with cold reason to allow the molested Muslim members to stay. As a man of peace, says Fischer (1954), Gandhi would walk through the blood thirsty mob wearing a smiling face and doing the palm touching in their traditional way of blessing. With such kind gestures and gesticulations of peace, love and non-violence, the angry mob would put down their arms and disperse in total tolerance. “Everybody would not agree with everybody else, but they could be nonviolent despite disagreement” (pp.181-182).

According to Obasi (2010), when there is selfishness and self-centeredness in the community, they fight to destroy the peaceful atmosphere of that community thereby, engineering conflict. A peaceful society is that in which the people can live and work harmoniously together as friends. This type of peace eliminates any artificiality or coated peace. A coated peace is quite negative and culminates in structural violence. According to Obasi (2010), peace is a common word everywhere in the world. The Buddhist religion understands peace as closely related to spirituality and human actions. For them, morality means the absence of violence as well as the propagation of equity and justice, compassion, and concern for one another. In Christian religion too, the prayers, songs and the sermons harp on the necessity of the members to uphold peace and harmony in the neighbourhood.

Having considered all these, it is believed that with the strict observance of the rules as they do, these *Ozo* titled men will be able to restore sanity to of troubled nation if given the opportunity at the state and national level.

5.4 The Impact of *Ozo* Title Leadership in Ozubulu and Beyond

The Igbo people have their own traditional system of title-taking and leadership before the advent of the colonial masters. Their activities down played on the Igbo traditional system of leadership. And when colonialism ended, *Ozo* title institution was once more revived to take care of the people's needs in terms of title-taking and other related matters. Thus, ever since it was revived, it has created a lot of impact among the Igbo people and the nation at large. Thus, there is no gain saying the impact of *Ozo* title-taking and its leadership in Ozubulu and beyond. Thus, this title institution has done a lot as an umbrella of unity and oneness among the male folk in Ozubulu and beyond. It has also gone out of its way to include even the women folk in its

umbrella, all, in the bid to make the title group a real socio-cultural institution. It has helped a lot in moulding the character of its members by the mere observance of the moral codes. It has helped in moulding the character of the people in the various Igbo communities where *Ozo* is perpetuated. The good moral life style of titled elders has been worthy of emulation, and has gone a long way to influence not only the women folk but also, the youths and the children. Indeed the entire village community feels the impact of the good moral life style of our titled elders. For instance, it is a well known practice in Ozubulu that an *Ozo* title holder does not eat in an open place or at a general gathering. He comports himself well in the gathering of the villagers. The impact of the *Ozo* titled group has lead to the popularity of the institution in Ozubulu and beyond. The impact is felt not only at the social-economic level; but also at the political level, religious level, cultural level, psychological level, and so on.

The Sociological Impact of *Ozo* Title Institution

Ozo title institution is a social institution. It is a social institution that draws men from all walks of life together for the common purpose of achieving their mutual interest. A society is a group of people who has something in common. The members of a particular social group are quite conscious of their aims and objectives. The set aims and objectives become the common front for that particular social group. Any given society has the capacity of existing longer than the contingent individuals that make up that particular society. The constituent members of any given society share in the rights and duties of the society. They are fully aware of the way that particular social group functions. This means that the individuals within the social group have the full use of their reasons as mature adults. They interact among themselves and work harmoniously together in order to achieve their set objectives. According to Nwoko (1980), a society is an association of persons in corporations which metamorphoses into a civil society (der

burgerliche Gesellschaft). The contingent individuals in any given society, according to Nwoko (1980), are “a bundle of needs and necessity”. He therefore cannot but maintain a cordial relationship with the other persons as a means to satisfying his needs. According to him, it is quite remarkable that in civil society, there is the reign of selfishness and self-centeredness. Every person craves for his or her own needs. This brings about anarchy and chaos; what the philosopher Hobbes in Stumpf (2003), calls the survival of the fittest, or better expressed as, the state of nature. In other to forestall that, however, the legal system and order become an imperative.

Ozo title-taking, as a formidable social institution, continues to draw people from different villages and communities as members of the prestigious society. According to Egboh (1987), most Igbo men demonstrate their high social status by taking *Ozo* title and belonging to this highly respected *Ozo* title society. This is always the ultimate desire of every adult Igbo man. It makes for self fulfillment as a full Igbo man. Ifesieh (1989) observes thus:

All *Ozo* title holders took oath of office and endeavour to keep them as any breach would attract the wrath of the gods. They also share their social lives by virtue of the *Ozo* purification rites as decent groups whose life styles and behaviours are recognized and honoured by the members of the society... Their achievements are recognized through their religious conviction and the material and social status which go to emphasize the peculiar and exalted ... social context that legitimizes the worth of the holder. (p.90).

Those who show interest in joining the society undergo a moment of training on the activities of the society. According to Van Gennep (1960), the first phase of initiation into the family, clan or community as an integral member involves learning about the values of co-operation among the members as well as learning the value of sharing which characterized such a social group.

According to him, one is nothing without belonging to a community. The community in-turn cannot exist without the contingent individuals that constitute that particular community. The community in question will collapse and disintegrate and in fact, ceases to be. The withdrawal of a member signifies death from which the member of the group must be delivered by way of integration into the community. *Ozo* institution, no doubt, cherishes these values of cooperation and sharing among the members. Such values have kept the society moving for ages. Such rare values of social life like cooperation, sharing, brotherly love, mutual support, and so on, have made *Ozo* institution to pull many people together as one society. Every member has a duty to contribute to the up-keep of the group in as much as every member shares also from the group when the opportunity calls for it. For instance, the contribution of the new candidates is a general practice done by all the initiates. They stand in turn to share as much, from the contributions of the subsequent new in takes. By so doing, the *Ozo* institution helps to drill the titled members on the need for brotherly love and mutual support for one another. It inculcates in the members the practice of mutual co-operation among themselves as one social group that is success oriented. And just as Van Gennep (1960), would say, the individual in the community cannot do without the community and the community ceases to be without the individual members. These titled elders bearing in mind the danger of withdrawing from the common exercises and duties of the *Ozo* society; work together in order to keep this social institution in being. As a social group that regenerates through induction of new candidates, the practice of teaching and learning is very important. Van Gennep (1960) points this out when he maintained that there should be a long period of instruction for the new members. The period of instruction will help them to be abreast with duties and/or the responsibilities of such members within the society and also the rights

there off. As members of a given social group, they share both in the rights and the duties of that society to which they belong.

As a highly placed social institution, *Ozo* society has transformed the status of many individuals for the better. It is a social institution that brings about change in social status. According to Ilogu (1974), *Ozo* titled men “socially, belong to the noble men’s rank- a social status marked out by the honour accorded to those holding that position” (p.32). As a matter of fact, the Igbo people cherish title, titular names and titular honours in a special way. *Ozo* institution gained enormous popularity because of the change in social status which it accords the members. Thus, every Tom, Dick and Harry works hard to join the noble group. According to Ilogu (1974), the men who have taken the title take precedence in all public gatherings and public entertainments irrespective of their age. Of course, every titled person, though he/she might be young in age but the mere fact of taking the title, an office that marks change in social status during one’s life time, the fellow is automatically an elder and therefore, a leader by that fact. Even the women, according to Ilogu (1974), are co-opted into the titular society to mark the socio-numerical strength of the group. According to him, the normal procedure in most Igbo areas is that the first wife of the titled man is introduced into the women folk of the *Ozo* society to add to the number. The women folk do not take the *Ozo* title; rather they join their initiated husbands to attend their gatherings. They have always to have their own booth stand whenever they have a official outing. They are given their own share of whatever has been presented to the titled elders especially the food and drinks. The women answer *Lolo* whereas, their husbands answer titular prefixes like “*Dim*” which means a noble man, “*Eze*” which means a king, “*Nze*” which means a titled chief, and so on. Abanuka (2004), rightly affirms this when he says, “usually the names

chosen include the prefixes such as *Okwara/Okpara, Duru, Dim, Nze, or Ichie*, depending on the type of *Ozo* title one takes” (p.88). Thus, Egboh (1971), is right when he says:

One way through which most Igbo demonstrated their high social status had been through the taking of the *Ozo* title. The *Ozo* title occupies in Igbo society, the same position which the Peerage Institution occupies in the English society. An Igbo holding the *Ozo* title, occupies the position of ‘Lord’ in the society, and the special name which an *Ozo* title holder assumes after his installation signifies this. (p.13).

Egboh (1971), makes a comparison between the *Ozo* title institution in Igbo society and the Peerage institution in the English society. According to him, both of them have some similarities in the sense that they occupy the same position in both societies. They form a social umbrella for the titled men in the two societies. Both of them transform the members and make them the noble men of their societies. Both *Ozo* and Peerage institutions transform their titled members into elders and leaders of their different social groups with the titular names and exalted positions of honour attached to them. Uchendu (1965), is also on point when he affirms that *Ozo* title taking provides the title holder with, “a pan-Igbo pass port which he carries with him, a passport which guarantees him all prerequisites and accords him a place of honour and dignity among “foreign” associations which would otherwise give him a hostile reception” (p.82). By the excerpt, Uchendu (1965), sheds light on another aspect of the sociological impact of *Ozo* title society which is free movement as well as freedom of association within the entire Igbo society. According to him, these associations exercise control over the conduct and behaviours of the members by laying down certain rules and regulations to guide the members. By so doing they proscribe certain forms of behaviour which are considered either worthy or unworthy of titled men as the case may be. Uchendu (1965) also maintained that all titled positions are usually

achieved where as the rights to hold *Ofo* are usually assigned to whoever has the right to hold it. One thing obvious is that both the achieved *Ozo* title positions and the assigned *Ofo* positions are part of the sociological impact of *Ozo* social institution. According to him the membership of a full fledged man in a title society indicates his social status while his pecking order, that is his mode of greeting in the company of others, indicates his hour and prestige. These are made possible by becoming a member of *Ozo* society. These are part of the sociological impact of *Ozo* society. There is no gain saying the sociological impact of *Ozo* title society in so far as it is all about people of a particular race (Igbo), their traditional system of governance and the hierarchical structure within the various communities, the hierarchy of titles and the titular names; the change in social status and the honour and prestige thereof. Even the religious aspect of *Ozo* title institution finds its expression in the sociological aspect. The religious gathering of the people is always a sociological conglomerate called a congregation. That is why the term congregation is always deployed when addressing the religious gathering of a people.

The Political Impact of *Ozo* Title Institution

Adibe (2008), affirms that *Ozo* title taking “is an initiation which transforms wealthy person into the elders forum for community development, it is accepting responsibility of the Igbo ruling class on behalf of the ancestors; it is a designation into Igbo noble rank...” (p.257). Ilogu (1974) on the other hand attests to the privileges associated with title-taking in these words:

The privileges which the *Ozo* titled man enjoys are many but the principal ones relate to political and social status. In most Igbo areas only the *Ozo* men holds political offices and represents their families and lineages in the village group councils or preside over settlement of cases, making of covenants and the establishment of new cults. (p.32).

Ilogu (1974), is very emphatic on the impact of *Ozo* title-taking when he said that the privileges enjoyed by *Ozo* titled man are many. These privileges have been made possible because of his enrolment among the group as a full-fledged member. The enrolment accords him all the privileges of the rest of the members. *Ozo* title institution makes a serious impact, from the political point of view both on the candidates who join the group and also on the various communities from where these titled men come. For instance, as Ilogu (1974), points out, these titled men experience change in their social status in the sense that they become leaders of their various communities they hold political offices and represent their communities in their external political affairs. They preside over cases and take active parts in the decision making of their entire communities. Such leadership functions depict the exalted political positions they have attained. This is one of the political impacts of *Ozo* title institution. Arazu (2005), is correct to say thus:

For the traditional religionist (formerly called ‘pagan’), *Ozo* represents a means of salvation. Through it, he escapes the human condition of powerlessness and receives power from the gods, the kind of power he demonstrates with the number of chalk lines he describes on the ground. (p.190).

The various communities experience this political impact of *Ozo* institution. These titled men help in enforcement of law and order within their various communities. By so doing, these communities experience relative peace and order, love of neighbor and progress in the neighborhoods. According to Esikot (2002), “the possession of authority confers on the possessor a certain degree of power. Such power when effectively and properly used would always ensure that what is beneficial and of common good is realized. (pp. 141-142). This is true of *Ozo* titled men. Their enrolment into *Ozo* society accords them the power as elders and leaders of their

various communities. The handing over of the “*Ofo Ozo*” becomes the authorization there off, to act with full authority as the political leaders and the representatives of their various communities in their internal and external political affairs. Such power and authority help them to protect their various communities from external aggressions.

Ofo Ozo is therefore, the symbol of power and authority for every *Ozo* titled man. It is their symbol of office. Okere (1997), describes *Ofo* as follows:

Ofo bu Ofo Chukwu, ike ochichi Chukwu na-eji amanye mmadu ime ezi omume. Ikwuba aka oto ya mere Igbo na ebuputa Ofo oge a na-ekpe ekpere ututu, oge a na-anu iyi, oge a na-ekpe ikpe na oge a na-ama iwu. Ofo bu ike Chukwu ji achi mba nile, ike oji edebe ndi mmadu n'ezi okwu na ezi omume... .Obu nani Ofo bu ozuru Igbo onu, ozuru uwa onu, onye na-akpa ike sin a mba ruo na mba maka na o si n'aka Chukwu, Chukwu oha nile ...
(p. 62).

Okere (1997), explains that *Ofo* belongs to God and therefore, the power by which God compels people to behave well and live upright life. That is why the Igbo people bring out *Ofo* during morning-prayer, during oath taking, during the settlement of cases, and during the promulgation of new law. *Ofo* is the power by which God rules over all the people. It is the power with which he keeps the people in truth and good behavior. It is only the *Ofo* that reaches the entire Igbo, and the entire world. It holds sway from place to place because it comes from God, the God of all the people. According to Okere (1997), *Ofo* is regarded as the symbol of power and office for the *Ozo* titled men because it originates from God. It is also the power of God by which he compels people to behave well and lead a good moral life. That is why the titled elder brings it out during occasions like the time of decision making, the time of promulgation of law, the time of oath taking, and so on. The eldest among the group has to strike his *Ofo* on the ground as a

seal on the oath or on the new law promulgated, and so on. *Ozo* title institution made a serious political impact by the elevation of *Ofo Ozo* as the symbol of power and authority for the *Ozo* titled men. The description of *Ofo* by *Ejizu* (1998), also reveals the exalted position of this all important ritual symbol among the Igbo people. His description reveals the fact that *Ofo* occupies a central position in the socio-religious and political life of Igbo people. *Ozo* institution entitles the members of the society to possess “*Ofo Ozo*” as their symbols of office; their symbol of power and authority, their symbols of leadership which is one of the political impacts of *Ozo* social institution. According to Parrinder (1976), every head of the family who is also the oldest member of the family possesses *Ofo* as a symbol of authority. And he is respected as an intermediary between the family and the ancestors. According to him, *Ofo* is the wand of office and every priest, medicine men, and elders hold theirs. The family head, which is regarded politically as the president of the committee in charge of settling disputes, uses his wand of office to seal a case when the final decision has been agreed by all. He strikes his staff of office four times on the ground declaring with his power and authority that it will kill anyone who will disobey the rule or go contrary to the agreement reached. The rare opportunity to occupy such a political position in the community, to hold the wand of office - *Ofo*, and to preside over the affairs of the entire community is one of the major contributions of *Ozo* social institution to the entire Igbo tribe. According to Okoye (1965), titles especially *Ozo* title in most parts of Igbo land, put the title holder higher upon the rungs of the social ladder. The titled men are regarded as the noble men of the town and are equally treated with great honour and respect. The titled man has the right to stand and speak in certain circles and also hold certain offices which ordinarily requires a title holder to occupy.

According to Chiegboka (2001), due to the leadership opportunity which the *Ozo* title holders enjoy as part of their gains from the *Ozo* institution, they formed the habit of initiating their male children into the society irrespective of the disposition and preparedness of those children to live up to the demands of the institution. According to him, the main aim of registering those children at such early stage is to help them get control of the leadership positions of the *Ozo* institution in the future. Such practice is a welcome phenomenon even among the members of the noble *Ozo* institution because it is all about the politics and the political positions of this noble title institution. And man being a political being by nature, sees politics as a game if one could play better. *Ozo* title taking accords the holder the opportunity of occupying certain positions of power while the wand of office accords him the authority to exercise his power to the fullest as the leader of his community. Ilogu (1974), therefore, posits thus:

In most Igbo areas, only the *Ozo* men hold political offices and represent their families and lineages in the village groups' councils or preside over settlement of cases, making of covenants and the establishment of new cults. Socially, they belong to the noble men's rank- a social status marked out by honor accorded to those holding that position. They also take precedence in all public entertainments and feasts irrespective of their age (p.32).

According to Ejiofor (1982), *Ozo* title began out of the need for a coordinator, a social figure who will take the lead in coordinating the affairs of the entire community. He will become, as it were, the father of the community, and also the embodiment of the values of the community. He will become the chief priest to represent the entire community before their deity. He will become the protector of the community against every external aggression. He will be the one to preside over the resolutions of conflict and the one to take initiative in matters affecting the whole

community. According to him, he is also the one to facilitate the transfer of the title to the first son of the deceased member after his burial rites have been concluded. It is called “*Isa Ozo*”. According to S. Nwanekezi (Personal Communication, 23rd July, 2015), although the ritual ceremony of father - son *Ozo* title transfer is called “*Isa Ozo*”, the more common term used to designate the ceremony in Ozubulu town is called “*Imakwa Ozo*”. The usual thing is that when someone’s father dies and is buried, the first son who is the person to inherit the deceased father’s *Ozo* title will have to wait for the first “*Izu na Asaa*” that is 21 days to pass; which they call “*Asaa Muo*” that is 21days dedicated to the spirits. This is then followed by the next period called “*Asaa Madu*” that is another 21days dedicated to the living members which must also pass. At the expiration of the “*Asaa Muo*” and “*Asaa Madu*”, the first son of the deceased member will quickly apply for the transfer of his father’s *Ozo* title to him according to the prescribed rituals, what the people of Ozubulu call “*Imakwa Ozo*”. When the head of the *Ozo* society has finished the ritual ceremony, the person in question becomes a full member of the title society. It has its own rites and rituals, which, when having been completed, the first son of the deceased member automatically begins to enjoy the dividends of the *Ozo* title society without going through the rigours of initiation and the heavy payments thereof. This becomes an automatic transfer of the father’s power and authority to his son. According to S. Nwanekezi,(Personal Communication, 23rd July, 2015), if at the expiration the “*Asaa Muo*” and ‘*Asaa Mmadu*’, the first son of the deceased fellow did not make a request to inherit his father’s *Ozo* title, it will be vanish.

From the fore going discourse, the political impact of *Ozo* title-taking is quite obvious. They work for the good of the entire community in their external relationship with the rest of the world.

The Religious Impact of *Ozo* Title Institution

Apart from the socio-political and economic impacts of *Ozo* title-taking, the impact of *Ozo* title institution is clearly felt at the religious/spiritual level too. The nature of *Ozo* title institution is so composed that one cannot do justice to its explanation without touching the religious/spiritual aspect. The religious aspect of *Ozo* title institution seems to be the most important of all the aspects because of the nexus with the divinities which the title members represent in their various communities. The religious/spiritual impact of *Ozo* title institution spans beyond the physical realm to the spiritual realm, unlike the other aspects which stop at the material level. Ilogu (1974), observes this when he said that *Ozo* title institution grew out of the need for priests in their ranks who will help to preside at their various families, extended families and lineage worships. They will also be in charge of supervising the cult of the family of *Ozo*. According to him, the person who has taken the *Ozo* title must live a holy life and uphold both publicly and privately, the morality of the land. He has to observe all the taboos, the religious ceremonies as well as the ritual of the gods and goddesses of his community.

According to Mba (1983), the “*Ozo* titled men are priests in so far as they offer sacrifices and perform ritual functions including praying to *Chukwu* and to ancestors” (p.25). According to him, *Ozo* title-taking also confers on the holder the power to perform religious functions like ritual sacrifices. The *Ozo* title holder is also a priest by the fact of being *Ozo* title holder. This means in effect that there is no need for duplicity of functions as well as the personalities involved in *Ozo* title-taking and the Igbo traditional priesthood. For one to be a priest in Igbo traditional setting, he must have taken *Ozo* title, and whoever takes *Ozo* title can perform the functions of the priests. Both of them possess the wand of office - *Ofo* which gives them the power and the authority to perform their duties as and when due in any religious issues.

According to Egboh (1971), “the *Ozo* title as an institution closely associated with the traditional religion, had been surrounded with the rites of the traditional religion which had to be performed before the conferment of the title”(p.13). In the words of Ejizu (1988), the Igbo people use *Ofo* to pray during Morning Prayer, during oath taking, during settlement of cases, disputes and so on. The titled elder is the person to seal prayer or the consensus agreement by striking his *Ofo* on the ground. Anyone who goes contrary to it will attract the wrath of the ancestors or the deities. In the same vein, Okere (1997), maintains that Igbo people use *Ofo* as a point of contact with *Chukwu*- God and the ancestors. *Ofo* is therefore a sacred symbol. As a cult object, it is used as a medium of contact with the spirit world. The *Ozo* titled elder is the person who uses it to pray for and on behalf of his family and his lineage. Anusionwu (1994), therefore comments thus:

The qualities required for admission into the *Ozo*...association; deep sense of religion, untarnished conduct and moral repute indicating that religion holds a prime place in these societies. Apart from this, admission involves a ritual consecration with ceremonies certainly expressive of the Igbo communal sense of religion.(p.187).

Anusionwu (1994), observes that religion plays a vital role in the selection of candidates for *Ozo* title taking. The candidate must of necessity exhibit the character of deep sense of religion and of good moral repute which is in fact one of the major criteria for choosing a candidate. The code of conduct by Ejiofor (2006), shows the heavy presence of good moral virtues to be upheld by the member.

Thus Arazu (2005), is right when he observes, “*Ozo* represents a means of salvation. Through it he escapes the human condition of powerlessness and receives power from the gods, the kind of power he demonstrates with the number of chalk lines he inscribes on the sacred ground (p.190). According to Arazu (2005), the traditionalists believe that *Ozo* title-taking is a means to attaining

salvation. It becomes a means to communicating with spiritual beings from which they receive the power to administer to the entire community. According to Arazu (1970), *Ozo* title-taking acts as “*Ogbo ogu*” – something to settle the score and calms the situation, in a family that is wrecked by premature death of family members or loss of property or goods. The family might be visited by some serious illness or the wife of the man does not bear children or that their crops fail to yield the produce. When such odious events are investigated upon and it is ascertained that a particular deity is angry with the family or a member of the family, the solution to calm the situation will be that one of the members of that family will take the *Ozo* title in the name of the troubling deity. A good example of such situation is the case of someone who had the call of the deity in charge of destinies called “*Agwu nsi*”. At the initial stage the person is visited with terrible sickness which at times culminates in quasi madness. In the bid to cure the madness, the herbalist will diagnose the cause of the madness by way of divination. The fellow who is possessed by the spirit of “*Agwu*” gets healed when the prescribed sacrifice is made. Of course, this will not be complete without the person taking *Ozo* title. The religious impact of *Ozo* title taking is deeply felt in the role it plays to restore peace in a family that is troubled by a deity or even in the life of a fellow that is also molested as such. Thus, accordingly to Arazu (1970), “the pagan concerned is not looking for increased prestige but he is fulfilling a religious obligation necessary for the realization of his dreams” (p.193).

According to Egboh (1971), the *Ozo* title institution is closely associated with the traditional religion, and as such this institution has been surrounded with rites of the traditional religion which had to be performed before the final day for the conferment of the title. According to Adibe (1992), “all title-taking, in Igbo land are motivated by the faith of the individual to be religiously associated with the earth goddess and the ancestors and also with the perspective of

upholding the moral conduct of the Igbo society” (p.10). According to Ejiofor (1982), *Ozo* title-taking came into being when there was need for a spiritual leader, a Chief priest to represent the people before the deity of the community, to offer ritual sacrifices to it and by that fact, occupies a sacred status in their relationship with their deity and the fore fathers. *Ozo* title taking no doubt has a deep religious affiliation. It is the brain child of the spiritual realm for the good of those at the temporal realm.

As Elechi (1982), rightly points out, *Ozo* title in Igbo land is not meant for people of questionable character. Rather, it is meant for people with high repute in the community, such that, if the person has got enough wealth but he is quite disreputable, he is not allowed to proceed with the preparations for *Ozo* title-taking. All these point to the religious impact of *Ozo* title-taking.

The Cultural Impact of *Ozo* Title-Taking

Culture refers to the way of life of a particular people over a given period of time. The culture of a particular people encompasses the way they eat, the type of food they eat, their mode of dressing, their mode of thinking and manner of behaviour, their mode of living and so on. Okeke (2011), rightly observes thus:

There can be no human society without a culture, a system of thought and expressions, actions and artifacts, beliefs and assumption, that human beings generate, promote and transmit for the stability and well being of the society. It is only people who are ignorant who believe that there is culture only when people do antiquated things, dress in out mode ways, dancing in a particular way and behaving in ways that are clearly out of tune with present conditions. (p.53).

According to him, culture is the people's way of life brought into existence by way of the interactions of human beings with the totality of their environment. The people change along side with their environment in so far as they remain within the environment as it changes. The change both in the environment and the change in the people within the environment bring about culture dynamism. Thus, culture cannot be static but always evolves and changes. Nwabueze (2011), thus, maintains:

Culture, therefore, is everything a society thinks, believes, does, and possesses as members of that society... The normative aspect of cultured involves goals we should pursue and how we should pursue them, the way we should espouse, systems of morality, including what is sinful, shameful, and embarrassing. (p.41).

According to Okeke (2015), "human beings are makers of culture and there is never a time when the culture of the people will stagnate because new experiences and new encounters produce and update cultures" (p.1). According to him, the human cultures have its limitations which flow as it were from the limitations of the human beings who invent the culture. Culture exists through man, by man and for man. It is the whole of human activity, human intelligence, emotions, customs and ethics. Therefore, it is the product of human nature. It is man-made.

According to Coon (1999), culture is "an ongoing pattern of life that is passed from one generation to the next. Some readily visible aspects of culture are language, marriage customs, concepts of ownership, and sex roles"(p.618). Nwigwe (2004), explains Igbo culture thus:

Igbo culture is a culture with lofty values; respect for human life and the liberty of man, love of truth (*Eziokwu bu ndu*-truth is life), social justice (*Egbe bere Ugo bere* –let the kite and the eagle coexist with each other) the people cherish equality of opportunity, parental authority, filial loyalty, domestic solidarity and responsibility, hospitality,

respect for elders, integrity in the administration of public trust, belief in retribution and reward in life after death, etc. (p.1).

The propagation of all these important values as enunciated above, form part and parcel of the Igbo culture. Unfortunately most of these values are being jettisoned today as either archaic or out of fashion with the wholesome importation of the European culture as paradigm whether fitted or not. This could be inferiority complex. As Okeke (2011), rightly observes, “Culture makes a man and man makes culture. Culture is said to be the way people do their things”(p.52). According to Vatican II document; The Church in the modern world (1965), the word culture in general refers to all those things which help to develop and refine man’s diverse mental and physical endowments. He tries his best to subdue the earth with the use of his knowledge and his labour, he tries to upgrade his social life both in the family and the community by improvement of the customs and traditions; he communicates and preserves his experiences as inspiration for the progress of all mankind. This means therefore that culture has both historical and social overtones. It means that culture, as a word, carries with it, sociological and ethnological connotations in which case, one can talk of the plurality of cultures. In effects, it is pertinent to note that it is man that moulds people’s culture. Every culture is the product of the people who own it. Therefore, Okeke (2011), citing the Pontifical Council for Culture, observes thus:

Culture only exists through man, by man, for man. It is the whole of human activity, human intelligence and emotions, human quest for meaning, human customs and ethics.

Culture is so natural to man that human nature can only be revealed through culture. (p. 53).

From the foregoing, one can easily situate *Ozo* title institution in its proper place in the entire scheme of the life and activities of the people of Ozubulu and Igbo people in general. *Ozo* title

institution is part of the Igbo culture. It came into existence, according to Ilogu (1974), due to the exigencies of the moment, to have priests to preside over the ritual sacrifices to the divinities and the ancestors. The *Ozo* title institution is a time-honoured title institution. Because of that, it has evolved from the remote past, changing and transforming to suit the modern time.

The cultural impact of *Ozo* title-taking is so obvious that even the non members feel the aura (*Ebube Ozo*) in the members. For instance, as one of the traditional institutions in Igbo land, there has been massive induction of the male folks into this prestigious title society. Due to the deep cultural impact in the minds of the Igbo people, the Christians in Igbo land fought tooth and nail between the 60s and the 80s, to Christianize the *Ozo* title institution in order to be able to take the title and still retain their status as Christians. This means discussing with the stakeholders of the title institution on how to jettison any of the obnoxious ritual ceremonies considered from the Christian prism as contrary to Christian faith. This raised a lot of dust at different quarters.

The traditionalists stood their ground and insisted on zero tolerance. But the Christians pressed on relentlessly until they began negotiations on a round table conference on the way forward. Dialogue became the necessary option when none of the two groups could let go. But at last they came to some point of agreement. Ogbukagu (1997), rightly observes thus:

The *Ozo* title-taking in the present time has been modified or christened to exclude fetish practices in order for Christians to participate in the exercises. At a meeting with the then Archbishop of Onitsha, Charles Heerey, about the mid 1950s, and after removing fetish restrictions, Christians ... were permitted to get initiated into the *Ozo* title society. The Christians are not to involve themselves in practices which would amount to paying homage to minor gods. (p. 88).

Apart from becoming members of *Ozo* title society, which at a point, became a sign of reaching maturity status as an Igbo man, the wearing of *Ozo* title garbs, like the red cap; the traditional *Akwa Isiagu* – the cloth with tiger head design, and wrapper, became very well known both nationally and internationally as the official tribal regalia of the entire Igbo nation. It is the *Ozo* title-taking that gave the Igbo people this lifelong emblem, creating a deep rooted cultural impact that remains indelible, in the annals of history as far as the Igbo people are concerned. It is a giant stride for *Ozo* title institution. Indeed, it became a land sliding victory for this prestigious society. Nowadays, many government officials of Igbo extract are fond of putting on the red cap as a sign of their root. Many of them have been duly initiated into the *Ozo* title group. Others however, put it on casually just because others do so. Such habit is usually tenable in the urban areas. At the Igbo village communities, the *Ozo* tax force group bar the uninitiated from putting on the *Ozo* title red cap.

The Psychological Impact of *Ozo* Title-Taking

According to Coon (1999), “psychology is a journey into inner space” (p.1). According to him, psychology is scientific study of the behaviours of both human beings and animals. Psychologists devote time to study and observe the behaviours of animals including those of the human beings. The psychological impact of *Ozo* title-taking focuses, therefore, on the reactions of the family members of the recipient, his close associates, friends and well wishers. More importantly too, the observation focuses on the newly inducted person to find out how he responds to the newly attained status. Psychologists believe that the mind is the seat of coordinate activities of every human person. Thus, it is easy to know the state of the mind through someone’s behavioural attitudes. In the case of *Ozo* title-taking, the initiate exhibits some attitudes of joy and happiness during and after the entire ceremony. Psychologically, he is laden

with inner joy. He is mentally light and feels on top of the world for the dream comes true. In contradistinction to the fellow heavily saddled with all sorts of worries, the newly initiated into the *Ozo* title group, is light hearted and cheerful. Psychologically, he has a sense of self fulfillment. The fellow feels that he has achieved his dream. Since this is the long awaited dream comes to reality, he feels fulfilled now. He feels on top of the world when he reflects upon the change in social status which he begins to enjoy automatically from the moment of the final initiation.

Be that as it may, an *Ozo* title holder feels that he has achieved the most important thing in his life time. He has a strong sense of personal achievement. He develops a strong sense of self fulfillment and self actualization. *Ozo* title-taking therefore helps to liberate him from the prison of the psyche wherein, he feels inferior for not being a full grown titled man. The psychological trauma of being regarded as “*Okolo*” or “*Ofeke*” is indeed removed. This is the beginning of his empowerment as a traditional elder. *Ozo* title-taking plays a vital role in the actualization of the human person, its members. It plays an important role in the development of the human personality. When one is psychologically liberated from the prison of the mind, he/she as a free thinker could reflect upon the situation in which one finds himself or herself and a way forward to a greater self empowerment and self actualization. This is the whole story of Mbeki (n.d), when he observes that African liberation will take effect when the people are empowered with education, knowledge and information so as to become their own liberators as well as join in the liberation of their lives and lives of their countries.

The title holder who is newly initiated into *Ozo* society expresses this inner joy of the mind in words and actions. For instance, the newly initiated may rarely indulge in over drinking and getting drunk out of joy for what he has been able to achieve. This is because every title elder,

especially the *Ozo* title members, are conscious of the penalty of getting drunk at public functions. Some may spend a huge sum of money on issues they may ordinarily not give any serious considerations. The newly initiated is more likely to indulge in verbal expressions of the joy of the moment which radiates right from the inside. Most often, the fellow ends up in thanksgiving prayer to God for the elevation in status. The psychological impact of *Ozo* title taking is very important in the life of the newly initiated because of the joy which radiates right from the inner self. The joy which envelops the fellow in moments like that is always communicated to the family members, friends and relatives and all who are close to him at that material point in time. The psychological impact of *Ozo* title-taking can never be over emphasized because it enhances the overall well being of the person in question and the people around him. The psychologists nowadays, emphasize the importance of recreation at amusement parks in order to lighten the mind and tone up one's mood. Such recreations contribute immensely to the mental health of every human person. Health according to Hornby (1998), "is the state of being well and free from illness in body or mind, the condition of a person's body or mind". A balanced definition of health does not focus on the physical/corporeal aspect alone. It encompasses also the mental as well as the psychological aspect.

The impact of *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu and beyond can never be over emphasized. These titled elders create a lot of impact in their various localities. And by so doing, they indirectly participate in the leadership of the nation since they work harmoniously with those in government to maintain the peace and unity that are very necessary for national growth and meaningful development. Thus, their impact is not only felt at the grass root level but more importantly too, at the national level because they help in the moral training of the young ones who are the leaders of the nation tomorrow. They mould the characters of those who take up

leadership positions in our society. Indeed, they are nation builders since they train the man power at the grass root who in turn take up the task of nation building. The impact of *Ozo* institution is felt in everywhere. It is the talk of the elders and the young. The celebrations involved in it wreck the entire village to drive home the point.

5.5 The Challenges of *Ozo* Title-Taking in Ozubulu

In everything that is good, there must be some challenges in realizing it. The challenges could be in the form of difficulties or obstacles encountered towards achieving the desired goal or achieving a particular task. As the preceding chapter dwelt on the impact of *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu and beyond, it becomes necessary also to discuss the challenges thereof. *Ozo* title-taking, no doubt, has a lot challenges as everything has two opposite poles-positive and negative aspects. The challenges of *Ozo* title-taking range from the difficulties encountered during the screening exercise to the problem of struggling to make money quickly for the payments. The challenges span across caste issues as well as the gender differentiations. The challenges are both material and non-material in nature. The challenges are not only many but they are hydra-headed in nature.

The Christian-Traditionalists' Relationship

Long before the advent of Christianity, *Ozo* title-taking was purely a traditionalists' affair. And as such everything was done in the traditionalists' way. At that time anyone who desires to take the *Ozo* title will do everything according to the rules and regulations mapped out by the traditionalists. The visitation of local shrines was in fact, one of the major aspects of *Ozo* title-taking to phase out recently in Ozubulu. This involves isolation from the family members, friends and well wishers as well as the tribal marking- "*Igbu Ichi*". All these were being observed

in those days. The advent of Christianity really influenced *Ozo* title institution and its “*modus operandi*”- mode of operation. Some of these practices were jettisoned as it were, to accommodate the teeming Christian population who were itching to join the prestigious *Ozo* title society. At the early stage of Christianity in Igbo land, the relationship between Christians and traditionalists was not cordial at all. This is because the traditionalist would not allow any half measure in the recruitment of candidates for *Ozo* title-taking. At the initial stage, the rule was that you either belong by undergoing all the processes as they were, or you do not belong at all. The traditionalist would not exempt any one on grounds of his faith to skip any of the stages or procedures in *Ozo* title-taking. However, the spreading of Christianity east of the Niger brought a lot of transformation in *Ozo* title institution in this regard till date. The spreading of Christian gospel saw a mass exodus of people from the traditional religions to Christianity. This affected virtually everything. There was a big shift from the traditional religious culture to the Christian culture. The shift was quite noticeable as it touched the mode of living, dress code, and so on. Even the *Ozo* title institution had to undergo some changes and transformation in order to adjust to the new religious trend. This of course, is in line with the philosophical truth that change is the only thing permanent on earth. Everything continues to change for better, for worse. Egboh (1971), was on point when he observed that, “as an institution closely associated with the traditional religion, the *Ozo* title-taking had been surrounded with rites of the traditional religion, which had to be performed before the conferment of the title”(p.13). At the onset of Christianity, the traditionalists would not compromise on any of these traditional rites for *Ozo* title-taking. They always insisted that whoever wants to join the *Ozo* society would have to undergo all the processes without exception otherwise, the *Ozo* title-taking is not complete. The stand of the traditionalists who were the custodians of the *Ozo* title-taking rites startled the Christian converts

a lot because some of the rites were clearly understood to be in opposition with the Christian faith. On the Christian side, however, *Ozo* title-taking was a non issue for the Christian missionary leaders. They made efforts to dissuade the Christians from joining the society since it was a pagan title society. Egboh (1971), rightly comments on this thus:

Rather than christianize the *Ozo* title-taking by eliminating the unchristian practices, the missionaries rejected the *Ozo* title society root-and-branch and forbade Christians to have anything to do with it. Anyone who disobeyed and took the title was disciplined by the Church authorities, and devout Christians refused to have anything to do with the society. (p.13).

As time rolled by, and the Christians got more converts into Christianity, there was a high demand from the new converts to be allowed to take *Ozo* title as Christians. The demand became high at the time when the traditionalists began to mock the Christians and threw away their contributions as trash during the kindred's meetings only because they did not take *Ozo* title. Egboh (1971), recalls this when he observed thus:

The urge to become members was very high that by 1970, over 5,300 Anglicans had taken and the Anglican Bishop on the Niger Dr. L.M. Uzodike told them to renounce it because it would mean serving God and Mammon; but about 300 obeyed and over 5000 refused saying it is sacrilege on the sacred institutions of Igbo land.(p.129).

The same thing was applicable to the Catholics. There was also a high demand from the Catholic faithful to be allowed to take *Ozo* title but their Church leaders were still silent probably to investigate the matter more critically before giving a definite answer.

Be that as it may, the transformation was never an easy one because traditionalists were not ready to compromise anything as far as *Ozo* title-taking was concerned. They made frantic effort

to block every avenue of tampering with this prestigious title society since that was the only way by which the Christians would begin to participate in it freely. They insisted on the performance of the full pagan rites for whoever wants to join the title society. This became a very big challenge to the Christians who would like to join them. Many Christians succumbed and performed the full pagan rites for *Ozo* title-taking. That attracted sanctions from the Roman Catholic Church leaders at that time. Egboh (1971), recounts this thus:

Regarding Catholics who had taken the title with pagan rites, the Catholic Church stated that such people must renounce pagan superstitions and sign before their Parish Priests and three witnesses, a written declaration that they had done so before they could be received back into the Church. (p. 129).

According to Nwosu (1985), there is no gain saying the fact that titles like *Ozo* title-taking was highly coveted by the entire Igbo society, where one is rated according to his achievements and the social status he is occupying. According to him, some communities in Igbo land made a unilateral attempt to reform the *Ozo* title society in order to accommodate the teeming Christian population desiring to take *Ozo* title. They later appealed to the Church leaders to give their approval to it. After a careful study of the institution, the Roman Catholic leaders gave their approval for those willing to join the society to do so. However, they should not take part in any pagan rites performed by the traditionalists. This wise decision taken by the Roman Catholic leaders became an “open door” for fresh air. Many Catholics queued up for *Ozo* title-taking amidst the clamour for a reform of this title institution. Nwosu (1985), replicates the discussion between Archbishop Hereey and the traditional ruler Obi Okosi II of Onitsha on *Ozo* title-taking, in the wake of the clamour for a reform of this title institution thus:

In 1942, the traditional ruler...Obi Okosi II wrote a lengthy letter to Bishop Heerey outlining the clauses of a “settlement” of the *Ozo* title controversy between Christians and members of *Ozo* society... He said that “the matter is settled and unanimously agreed upon that as far as Christians are concerned: the *Ozo* title shall constitute only in cash payment according to rates assessed by families to cover the cost of ceremonies that *Ozo* title is stripped of all pagan sacrificial and superstitious ceremonies, that *Ozo* title conferred on the Christian candidate gives him no power to perform pagan priestly functions. That payment of cost of title, presentation of staff (the insignia of title-ship) and invitation by candidate of members to feast and dancing fully constitute the complete and accepted installation. (p. 385).

According to Nwosu (1985), Obi Okosi II maintains that the authorities concerned are obliged to give a closer scrutiny to this matter on ground and duly encourage the decisions taken as a move in the right direction towards eradicating the discrimination, disagreement and quarrels which have been going on between the Christians and the non-Christians. According to Nwosu (1985), “In his reply, Bishop Heerey expressed his joy and support for any move which could bring about a reform of the *Ozo* title...” (p.385). According to him, Bishop Heerey made an objection, however, to the last clause in the write-up as the real bone of contention. According to Nwosu (1985), Heerey says, “Is it not the staff (the insignia of title-ship) the very symbol of ancestor-worship, which the very first of the Divine precepts forbid?”(pp.385-386). That is in fact the real problem. Nwosu (1985), further observes however, that:

The matter remained unresolved for a long time for Catholics in Igbo land. Earlier attempts by other Christian Churches to resolve it had also been unsuccessful. Meanwhile, some Catholics were not contented with mere condemnation of *Ozo*, and

other related titles, and with debarring them from taking them. As the number of Catholics that defy the ban on *Ozo* title-taking increased, pressure came from Catholics in many towns on the Church authorities to re-examine the matter and reach an agreement which would throw open the title-taking to the Catholics.(p.386).

At that time in the early 70s, the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church shifted from the white missionaries to the indigenous (Igbo) Bishops who grew up within the culture and could understand the language of their own people very well. They were better placed to make an unbiased investigation on *Ozo* title institution so as to judge correctly *vis-a vis* the situation on ground. As Egboh (1970), rightly observes thus:

After reviewing the situation, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha Dr Francis Arinze issued a statement in 1970 that members of Catholic willing to be members should do so in such a way that they do not take part in “pagan” rites contrary to the Christian faith.(p.129).

The statement of the then Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha, Dr Francis Arinze made a paradigm shift towards assuaging the thirst of the teeming male Catholics who were even ready to disobey their Church leaders provided they took *Ozo* title. In contradistinction from the Anglicans who were asked to renounce *Ozo* title-taking as serving mammon, the Catholic Church leaders saw it from the point of view of evangelizing our own culture and as a pastoral necessity, allowing the light of the gospel to shine on it; to transform it, to fit with the new religious confession. Indeed that was a decision in the new direction, a way forward out of the confusion at that moment. Such erudite decision became the spring board that saw *Ozo* title- taking to its glorified, transformed state today. The transformation was rather quite progressive and dialectical because

there was always the need, at that time to come together quite often to dialogue on one issue or another concerning the problem of *Ozo* title-taking. Nwosu (1985), rightly observes as follows:

The steps taken in the sixties had a great impact on the society. It won for the Church the good will of many title holders by making it now possible for them to admit new members into their fold. This was at the time when they were beginning to find it hard to recruit new members, many of whom were already Christians, and could not join because of the ban. Therefore, by allowing Catholics to become members of the title societies, or similar societies, the Catholic Church not only showed herself to be not inimical to this aspect of the people's most cherished custom and tradition, she won herself the goodwill of the very vital segments of each community.(pp.386-387).

Be that as it may, Egboh (1971) had earlier on made a similar observation that the Roman Catholic Church leaders were better off, than banning the people from participating in *Ozo* title-taking. According to him, what happened with *Ozo* title here in Igbo land is akin to what happened during the Italian renaissance when the pagan practices which had been condemned by the Church were revived and adopted by the Christians. There is no gain saying the fact that the glory of *Ozo* title institution today was as a result of the mature and erudite way the Igbo Catholic Church leaders handled the issues concerning it a few decades ago. That gave rise to a hybrid of this prestigious title society where in, no doubt, there were changes here and there to jettison the long overdue traditionalists' rites in order to allow the title institution stand out more meaningfully to the modern generation of men who vie to join the society.

As time went on, however, the traditionalists came up again with the propaganda that those Christians who took *Ozo* title without the traditional rites did not truly belong to *Ozo* title

society. The then Catholic Bishop of Awka-Albert Obiefuna made effort to reconcile that. Egboh (1971), rightly observes this thus:

Because of the claim that those Christians who did the title without pagan rites did not truly belong to the *Ozo* title society led to the agreement reached between the Roman Catholic Church under Albert Obiefuna...and the non-Christian members of *Ozo* title society... The agreement read: “the religious ceremonies traditionally connected with title taking are hereby recognized as non-essential to the title itself. Therefore, the titled man who takes the title without these ceremonies must be regarded as fully titled and in no way inferior to his counterparts who performed the ceremonies together with pagan religious observances.(Pp. 130-131).

This became as it were, the demise of the whole rancour and the bickering between the Christians and the traditionalists as far as *Ozo* title-taking in Igbo land was concerned. Everything was laid to rest and everybody was then at peace with one another. The agreement reached during the meeting has been in practice till now.

As from the mid 90s, however, there was a massive evangelism in preparation for the year 2000. In Ozubulu community, according to C. Arinze (personal communication, 10th January, 2015), this massive evangelism of the Christian Churches lead to the weakening of African Traditional Religion and the resultant, colossal defect to Christianity. This no doubt, influenced the decision making body of *Ozo* title society. Most of them became Christian converts and as such were no longer holding so tight to the positions that posed serious problem to the Christian members of *Ozo* title society. The very few leaders, who are still traditionalists nowadays, have a minority voice in matters of decision making of the title society. The relaxation of some of the controversial issues came at the right time when there seems to be only a few of the core

traditionalists to hold tenaciously to them. Thus, according to him, the mutual agreement between Christians and traditionalists, gave a boost to *Ozo* title society both in Ozubulu and beyond. This mutual agreement was better explained by Uchendu (1965), when he says, “Igbo is a society in which the old and the new coexist, and each one modifies the other in order to make this co-existence possible” (p.92). This means that the weakening of the African Traditional Religion owing to the massive exodus from the traditional religion to Christianity was not the end of African Traditional Religion but only an opportunity for its regeneration, re-envigouration and revival. Since change is the only thing that remains constant in the entire cosmos, it became as it were, a golden opportunity for both the African Traditional Religion and Christianity to exchange values and some religious practices for mutual growth and transformation.

In effect, both have continued to coexist in perfect harmony as Uchendu (1965), rightly pointed out. Both live in mutual exchange of *give-and-take*. In the light of the fore-going discussion Okafor (2002), rightly observes thus:

Where *Ozo* title has been purified of idolatrous elements and agreement of this effect reached between the community and the Church, Catholics may continue to take the title. However, if aberrations and anomalies in the application of the agreement are discovered to be widespread in a particular area, title-taking by the Catholics in that area will be suspended until the anomalies are cleared up or a fresh agreement is reached.(p.4).

The reformation of *Ozo* title-taking took effect owing to the wonderful agreement reached between Christians and traditionalists. This became a progress in the right direction towards evangelizing our culture to the extent that today, the beautiful *Ozo* title institution which would have been given a bad name only to be destroyed, has been evangelized and transformed by the light of the gospel into a hybrid that could be designated as “*Ozo ndi uka*”-the Christian *Ozo*

title-taking. This became a major breakthrough in the annals of history in Igbo land as far as *Ozo* title taking is concerned. This is because, according to Nwosu (1985), it came at the right time when the traditionalists were finding it very hard to recruit more people because of the massive defect of the people in the communities to Christianity, and the letter reduction of the numerical strength of the traditionalists. At that time, those who converted to Christianity were banned from participating in the ceremonies of the *Ozo* title society. Secondly, it became the point of convergence of both the Christians and the traditionalists amidst their divergent religious confessions. It paved way for the growth and sustenance of *Ozo* title institution in Igbo land. In the face of all these, there have been mutual understanding and report between the both parties till now.

The Christian-traditionalist relationship really posed a very serious challenge to *Ozo* title institution for many decades both in Ozubulu and Igbo land in general. The most interesting aspect of it is the eventual marriage between Christians and traditionalists as far as *Ozo* title-taking is concerned. It brought unity to both the Christians and the traditionalists alike without interfering in their different religious affiliations, respectively. Worthy of note is the fact that the shift of administration, in the Catholic Church, from the European missionaries to the indigenous (Igbo) Church leaders helped a lot in the mature handling of the challenges of the Christian-traditionalists rapport as far as *Ozo* title taking is concerned. They were careful to use dialogue to lure the traditionalists to relax some of the rules and as well remove some of the practices in *Ozo* title-taking that posed a serious challenge to the Christian brothers who wish to join the *Ozo* title society.

A similar reform took place in Ozubulu town in the late 60s, all in the bid to accommodate Christians in *Ozo* title-taking as our rich cultural heritage. According to M. Ilona (personal

communication, 11th September, 2015), the reform took place in Ozubulu during the time of Rev. Fr. Willian Doolin an Irish missionary priest who was the then parish priest of St Michael's Catholic Church, Ozubulu parish in those days. According to him, during the meeting which took place in 1968, there was no new set down rules, rather he relied on the decisions and already reached agreement of the bishops: Shanaham and Heerey with the traditionalists what he did was to appoint a committee that will be supervising the activities of the *Ozo* title ceremonies of any Catholic member. The leader of the committee was Mr Nobert Okoye who is now Late Professor Nobert Okoye. The leaders of the various *Ozo* title societies in Ozubulu wrote a memo to the parish priest, Fr. Doolin on the procedures of *Ozo* title ceremony in their different societies. He scrutinized them and gave his approval for use by all both the Christians and the traditionalists. Moreover, according to him, the clamour of the Catholics to join the *Ozo* title society began in Eziora section which is the third among the four quarters that constitute the town, Ozubulu. The other three quarters: Amakwa, Egbema, and Nza joined later on. Ezeanya (1986), rightly comments thus:

The *Ozo* title taking for instance, which has been traditionally cherished by our people both from the religious, social, and economic point of view, has been received into Christianity in many parts of the Archdiocese after it has undergone necessary modifications suggested by the Church and acceptable to the traditionalists. In all cases, the agreement was arrived at after a series of dialogue by both parties. (p. 61).

Ezeanya (1986), talks from his wealth of experiences as a Church leader who was even involved in one way or the other in the series of dialogue that led to the settlement of the *Ozo* title-taking problem with the traditionalists. Reflecting further on this, Ekechi (1972) comments thus:

If the Igbo after one hundred years of Christianity and all the influence of secularization still find the *Ozo* a very useful and functional institution of their society, then it is a very important “value carrying” institution of community life. Now that we are arguing for the infiltration of Christian normative principles into the cultural life of the Igbo (and we have discovered that *Ozo* is one of their central cultural institutions), it must be “Captured” into the Christian value orientation as part of the strategy for the Christianization of Igbo life. If this is not done and Christian *Ozo* title-taking compartmentalizes itself away from that of non-Christian, the village community becomes divided at an important item of its culture and the hoped for Christianization of this important cultural item will never materialize. (Pp.226-227).

The marriage between the Christians and the traditionalists in Igbo land was truly cemented by the traditional *Ozo* title institution. Due to this unity in taking the *Ozo* title, the fear of division as envisaged by Ekechi (1972), was duly taken care of, much thanks to the leaders of the Christian Churches between the 50s and the 80s who painstakingly sought this union of both the Christians and the traditionalists in a peaceful dialogue in *Ozo* title-taking. Thus, *Ozo* title institution brought about unity in diversity among the titled members both Christians and traditionalists. As Mgbeobukwa (1996), rightly observes:

There are certain practices which we inherited from our fore fathers that can be explained with relative ease. Because such practices were understood, those of them that are good are retained by our well meaning people. The urge is so strong that such practices should be brought into Christianity since they are well rooted in the life of the natives. *Ozo* title-taking is a good instance of such. There are also some practices which are bad in

themselves and because they were easily understood as such by the people, it was not difficult to do away with them when the opportunity called for it. (p. 10).

Ekechi (1972), and Mgbeobukwa (1996), talk about the Christianization of *Ozo* title institution as the ultimate target to pursue. This may rather be seen from the point of view that *Ozo* title institution has been detached from any form of religious affiliation and then kept aside as a purely socio-cultural institution available to all and sundry. *Ozo* title-taking is ab-initio, a social institution *in se*-in itself. But because Igbo society is a densely religious society, it took up the religious colour of the society and people who initiated it. Thus, at the time when the Christian Churches began to flourish in our land, there was a clarion call for those at the helm of affairs to divest *Ozo* title of any religious inclination so that it would retain its proper status as a socio-cultural institution, affordable to all and sundry in Igbo land irrespective of one's religious confession. This means that the so-called Christianization of *Ozo* title institution does not properly portray the idea of what was to be done, else it would be misconstrued that the Christians are trying to hijack the *Ozo* title institution. The right construction would be "to divest *Ozo* title-taking of any traditionalists' attachments". That decision was in the right direction and also a giant stride indeed, which helped to move *Ozo* title institution to a higher level.

Financial Barrier

One of the greatest challenges in *Ozo* title-taking is that of inadequate fund to run the cost of *Ozo* title ceremonies. Lack of fund has remained a perennial problem in *Ozo* title-taking till today. The cost of taking *Ozo* title is high and people work hard to make the payments. It becomes very difficult to reduce the cost for the new candidates since the old members have paid similar huge

amount during their own induction ceremonies. This is the reason why the *Ozo* title societies in different communities in Igbo land have continued to review the cost of membership. In some communities the new members pay above four hundred thousand Naira (N400,000) cash which is a non-refundable fee. According to C. Nwaete (personal communication 20th August 2015), some *Ozo* title society collect N300,000 where as others collect as from N400,000 and above. This is a great deal of token to part with, for an average family man with wife and children to cater for. It is only a few men in the community who could afford to pay such amount of money just to take title. According to him, the idea is that title-taking is not meant for all but only those who have the cash to spread. This is what the Latin says, *qui potestas capit*- let he who has the power take it and also the Hobbesian survival of the fittest.

Many average men in the community who desire to take *Ozo* title could not afford the heavy financial demands in the title society. This affects the *Ozo* title institution so much because it reduces the numerical strength of the group and also makes the growth of the title society to be very slow. It is because of the huge sum of money that is involved in *Ozo* title-taking that the leaders gave room for payment in installment until the candidate is up to date, financially. In spite of the huge amount of money involved in *Ozo* title-taking, many people struggle their way to make it because they know quite too well that at the end, they are not going to pay anything again but rather they will continue to share from the dividends got from some others all through one's life time. A good number of them are well to do, so they do not have problem paying the required fees. Others pay by installment.

In Ozubulu, there are four stages to the final *Ozo*. The required fees have been broken down according to the four stages such that those who desire to pay by installment will be taking it piece-meal, (stage-by-stage) until they get to the final *Ozo*. There are also people who could not

in any way afford the required fees in their life time, but their position in the family or the community requires that they should become an *Ozo* titled chief. For instance, the eldest son of the family, the first son of a dead king who is not yet grown to a full adult, a poor person who has been endorsed by the entire community to become their king, et cetera. Such people like that have been helped to take the required titles like *Ozo* title-taking by wealthy persons in the family. In some occasions like the dead king's son, the entire community contributes money to help him take the required titles.

The titled elders do occasionally review the cost of *Ozo* title-taking. That is the reason why the requirements are always high for an average Igbo man to cater for all the expenses so easily. A good number of scholars like Nwabara (1977), Arazu (2005), Ogbalu (n.d), et cetera, harp on that. Okoye (1965), rightly observes that:

The candidate usually gives out money and valuable property such as cows, horses, and yams to a group of men who had previously done the same thing. The sum of money and the quantity of other things vary from place to place and also according to the particular title in question. (p.26).

These scholars believe in the fact that there is a heavy spending both in cash and kind as far as *Ozo* title-taking is concerned. The heavy financial involvement in *Ozo* title-taking poses a big challenge to *Ozo* title society. This is because it prevents a lot of men who desire to become members from joining the group. This accounts for the clear evidence that *Ozo* title-taking is a title society for the affluent people. It becomes a title society for a selected few-the rich people. The poor ones are elbowed out because of the exorbitant spending in *Ozo* title-taking. Even the opportunity of paying by installment does not remedy the situation for the poor ones because of this heavy expenditure that is involved in the *Ozo* title-taking.

The Use of Violence in Securing Title Opportunity

According to Ikeke (2014), violence occurs when two parties are involved in a dispute, disagreement, or struggle over resources, services, exchange of goods, and so on. They take up arms or other material or non-material elements to do harm to the other in order to emerge victorious. According to him, when this happens, there are both material and non-material elements in the violent struggle. The non-material elements include the use of words of mouth or fight by polemics. It includes also the spiritual and other diabolical means to harm the other person or group of persons involved in the struggle. According to him, therefore, violence consists in acts of deliberate attack on another person's physical or psychological integrity. It includes homicide, genocide, murder, kidnapping, torture, rape and other forms of maltreatment. *Ozo* title-taking have been surrounded by the use of violence at some quarters in Ozubulu. This is because of the commercialization of title-taking in Igbo land. Since *Ozo* title-taking gives room for the members to share the money paid by the new members for their up keep, the organizers tend to commercialize on the title-taking to maximize profit. In Ozubulu, the *Ozo* title-taking organizers believe that *Ozo* is not meant for poor people. Sometimes they no longer pay attention to the integrity of the candidates who want to take *Ozo* title. Rather they consider the capability of the candidates to be able to pay the prize-tag for *Ozo* title-taking and throw in a party for them to make merry. The morality of the candidate that intends to take *Ozo* title counts so little. The major determinant nowadays is the money which the candidate has amassed, which of course, turns out to be his control force. Commenting on this, Arinze (1978), rightly observes that:

Some use their money to bribe their way into places or to buy positions. In this connection it is to be recalled that not only the acceptance of bribes but also the giving of

them is wrong. Some people use their money to buy political votes from students' union elections to national elections. This means that often the wrong person gets elected, with all the bad consequences for the community, or the right person gets elected but only after this sordid exercise of money exchanging hands. (nn. 33 - 34).

As Arinze (1978), indicates, people use money to bribe their way into positions of authority and places of affluence. This is the order of the day in our society today. The same practice is even rampant in *Ozo* title society. The usual screening of candidates for *Ozo* title-taking has drifted so much from the status quo which focuses more on the moral conduct of the candidates in order to make sure that they are men of integrity to up lift the name of the title group. Nowadays, the normal screening is sometimes not done or done haphazardly. The main focus is on the amount to charge the candidate right in front of the screening committee. This means that there is no longer a fixed amount to pay as a new candidate. Each *Ozo* title society has to negotiate on the amount to pay by each candidate that appears before the committee depending on how buoyant the candidate is. This is the practice nowadays in *Ozo* societies in Ozubulu. This is not even a surprise since *Ozo* title-taking right from the onset, is regarded as a very lucrative title society to covet. Those at the helm of affairs see it as opportunity of having something in their pockets after all, the candidate involved proves to have the money.

The result of such practice is not far-fetched. The news will soon go round that the ultimate criterion is the money to spray on the titled elders before, during and after the initiation ceremony. Others will rush to queue up and the titled elders will rejoice and count their blessings. Since the major criterion now focuses on money and what money can buy, there will be competition for whomever to get the cash first to spread. Nwafor (1973), is right when he says thus:

The Igbo are a compendium of paradoxes but their greatest asset is a copious supply of versatile common sense and the unique capacity for improvisation... They exhibit a tendency to materialism resulting in a highly competitive and economically stratified society... But this feature has its disadvantages-envy, jealousy, internal squabbles, and in early days, inter village and inter town fighting. (pp. 13-16).

Nwafor (1973), has said it all. The competition will now continue to push the prize-tag higher and higher. In economics, when the demand of any particular goods is high, the price will rise, and when the demand of those particular goods is low, the price will fall. This is the principle of demand and supply and price control in economics. This in fact is the tactics used by the titled elders to maximize their profit in *Ozo* title society.

Moreover, this idea of get-rich-quick mentality drives a lot of young men crazy. They end up on a bad note. Some steal in order to make money quickly. Others kill for money rituals. Others visit diviners and medicine men for charms they will use to boost their businesses, and so on. As Nwafor (1973), observes, the end product of the entire competitive attitude is not far-fetched because it cannot but culminates in envy, anger, jealousy, internal squabbles and so on. People with such “get-rich-any-how” mentality gets easily irritated especially when things seem not in favour of his inordinate ambition of making money as quickly as possible. Some may resort to theft and other crooked ways to extort money from the unsuspecting victims. A lot of other people with inordinate ambition to get rich quickly take to violence, maiming and killing of innocent souls all in the bid to make it fast. For instance, the drug barons, the human traffickers, and so on, not only maim the anti drug and human traffic agents, but also they kill whoever stand in their way to making a successful delivery and hitting the cash.

In Ozubulu for instance, there are some of them from South Africa and Malaysia who have made it by way of violence only to take *Ozo* title as illustrious sons. Of course, only God knows if actually they are the illustrious sons people take them to be or not. Sometimes, there are minute squabbles about certain titular positions and offices which relate indirectly to *Ozo* title-taking; which have occasionally aggravated to police case in broad day light. All these mar the image of *Ozo* institution and those involved in the scandals.

In Ozubulu, people believe that the titled men especially their leaders are behind the violence and the constant scramble for status and positions as titled men. This is because, they create the impression that there is a limited number to recruit and that those who are opportune to be taken to join the rest of the titled elders are the most privileged few. They will become friends of the king and be numbered among the crème of the town. Such rosy painted scenario tickles the fancy and arouses the interest and the desire of every young adult who is eager to assert himself among his kiths and kins. Such lofty benefits and lofty desires spur the over ambitious young adult to scout for money and grab it where ever it is found either by hook or crook provided they take the title and join the titled men.

The notorious ones who may have been screened out as the only available option owing to the nature of their offences, more often than not, resort to violence in order to have their own pound of flesh especially when they sense that their bribery could not push them through. Such people get their insignia of office anyhow.

These authors stress the need for dialogue and the philosophy of non-violence as the best solutions in resolving the issue of violence in *Ozo* title-taking as well as other areas of socio-political violence and conflict. The over emphasis on the monetary contribution of the new candidates should be curtailed. This is because when the leaders come to understand by way of

dialogue, the harm of too much emphasis on the financial aspect, they will refrain from looking on faces when quoting the amount to contribute and also avoid insinuations that would encourage the young men to endanger their life in order to make money quick for the sole purpose of taking title.

Gender Barrier

The issue of gender differentiation is very strong in Igbo society and because of this works are assigned along that direction to reflect the gender. For instance, women are regarded as the weaker sex in terms of physical strength. Thus, any tedious jobs like the digging of graves, manual works on the path ways and village roads, going to battle, and so on, are willingly taken up by the men folk whereas, the women take care of the house chores, cook, feed the children and take them to a safety in times of inter village battles, and so on. The same is applicable to certain issues in Igbo land like land discussion, everything about masquerade, the issue of kola nut and the ritual ceremony of breaking the kola nut, the negotiation about bride prize, the issue of *Ozo* title-taking, sharing of cow meat and allotting of farm lands for cultivation at the kindred level, et cetera. All these have always been handled by the men folk alone. The women do not even dare to near the *Obi*-palace where the men gather to discuss them. Any woman who must appear at such men's gathering must be led in by one of the family members who is a male fellow. Thus, since *Ozo* title-taking is among the issues that are exclusively reserved for the male folk, it affects the number of those recruited each year as well as lacks the female touch in core *Ozo* title decisions.

According to Ilona J. (personal communication, September 11, 2015) in Ozubulu community, women are not allowed to take *Ozo* title. They may take any type of title but not *Ozo* title. According to him, the custom in Ozubulu is that when a man takes *Ozo* title, his wife

automatically assumes a new name in accord with the title status of her husband. The wife puts on traditional garbs to match the new status. In a situation where the titled man marries more than one wife, his first wife is the one to be clothed as “*Lolo*”. She puts on the traditional bead “*aka*” on her neck and even on her wrist. Ifesieh (1989), comments on this when he says, “if a man takes *Ozo/Nze* title, his wife/wives become, de facto, titled woman/women” (p. 184). This is almost the case throughout the Igbo nation. Ejiofor (2006), also observes as follows:

Nde nze na Ozo in Ozubulu like in other towns in Igbo land that have such institution are honourable men in our society, particularly by the virtues associated with the title. Their women folk, are automatically installed *Lolo* during the installation of their husbands. Just as the men folk are honoured, their *Lolo* are equally honoured in the society particularly among their fellow women. (p.30).

The idea relayed by Ejiofor (2006), is generally practiced everywhere in Igbo land. This shows that *Ozo* title-taking, in the strict sense, is a men affair. And this affects the holistic growth of the institution. Agbasiere (2000), also maintains that Igbo woman equally have their equivalent title names to those of the men folk. According to him, most of them who are well off in years equally wield political powers among the women folk. In other tribes like Hausa, it is very hard to access the real Muslim women not to talk of coming to take title in the public.

Moreover, the same thing also applies to the holding of *Ofo* ritual symbol. According to scholars, like Ejizu (1986), *Ofo* is closely associated with *Ozo* title-taking. Thus, it is only the men who actually hold the *Ofo*. However, Ejizu (1986), quoting Ojike says that, “married women possess and make some limited use of *Ofo* sticks. These are usually small in size”(p.24). Ejizu (1986), however, adds that, “from all available data, none of the titles taken by women is associated with *Ofo* ritual symbol as such” (p.35). Ejizu (1986), caps it up when he rightly observes thus:

Ritual experts who happen to be women, such as diviners, native doctors, etc, and the category of married women known as the *Umu-Ada/Umu-okpu*...as well as married women from upwards of middle age... possess small sized *Ofo* twigs which they use for few events, such as in meetings and settling disputes among their ranks. Ritual experts among them use theirs, very much like their male counter parts to communicate with their spirit patrons-*Agwu*. Ordinarily, the small sized *Ofo* which the groups of women keep is known as *Ofo Nkiti*. Some keep theirs at their Chi shrine. Some carry their sticks about in their hand bags. (p. 52).

He is of the view that women do not hold *Ofo* stick but occasionally the elderly ones among them make use of “*Ofo Nkiti*”. The “*Ofo nkiti*” means the ordinary *Ofo* stick that has no specific successive office like that of the kindred that could be successively inherited. “*Ofo Nkiti*” could also refer to the original *Ofo* stick that is as natural as ever without any libation poured on it to make it potent. Although it would be called *Ofo*; but in the real sense of it, it is not regarded as one. It is more or less an ordinary stick that is powerless although the holder uses it in rare occasions. From the fore going, it is an established fact that, *Ozo* title-taking is an exclusive reserve of the men folk. The women do not take *Ozo* title. Rather they take other titles like “*Ada di Ora Mma*”, *Gold Umu Agbara*”, “*Star Lady*”, “*Ada Mbute Ego*”, “*Ada ka Ibe ya Ogo*”, “*Ada Obodo Oyibo*”, et cetera. As the biblical word says that no one takes the honour upon oneself except he is called just as Aaron was. Such titles most often are given by the entire community to those they consider suitable to merit them. However, the custom is that when the men take *Ozo* title, their wives automatically become, *lolo*.

According to Igbo custom too, before a man takes *Ozo* title, he will first of all, have a wife and a family of his own. That is why the *Ozo* title of little boys (usually organized and sponsored by

their able father) is usually called “*Ozo Akpa*” or “*Ozo Mkpuke*”- meaning that such *Ozo* title-taking is not official. And because of that, the boys in question will not put on their regalia like the cap or hold *Ofo* stick as long as their father is still alive. Those women, whose husbands have taken the *Ozo* title, being what they are, form their own organizations as the “wives of the titled elders”. They have their own set up leadership order and rule of life to follow. They have their own uniforms. They do routine contributions “*Isuso*” in order to help themselves since their husbands have their own way of helping themselves, alone, from the financial contributions of the new members.

Be that as it may, the numerical strength of the members of *Ozo* title society is being affected because of the non involvement of women in *Ozo* title-taking, proper. They do not join in the decision making of the group. They are merely consulted only when occasions warrant it. They were not to share from the money and presents from the new member. Each man’s wife only carries her husband’s share of the gifts and nothing more, whereas, her husband posts the share of the money deep down his pocket.

Social Stratification and Classification

Igbo society is socially stratified into the rich and the poor, the-haves and the-have nots, the big and the small, the free born and the non-free born, et cetera. The social stratification creates a very serious barrier that influences the numerical strength of *Ozo* titled men and their achievements. The word stratum, according to Hornby (1998), refers to “a level or class of a society: people from all social strata” (p. 1180). The Igbo society, like other traditional societies of the world, is a society that is socially classified and socially stratified. A society that is stratified is a society that divides along the caste strands. In such a society, one finds the free

born and the non-free born, the “*diala*” and the “*osu*”, et cetera. A socially classified society is more or less grouped in terms of economic prowess whereby you have the rich and the poor, the-have and the-have not, et cetera. All groupings affect and influence, in one way or the other, the *Ozo* title institution in as much as they play out in a very decisive manner both within the Igbo social groups and in the selection of candidates for core traditional institutions.

In the selection of candidates for *Ozo* title-taking, however, money plays a vital role both at the screening stage and during the final celebration as already discussed in the preceding sub-chapter. In matters like this, there is always a clear cut gap between the rich and the poor. The *Ozo* title-taking is one of such moments when there is a fine demarcation between the rich and the poor because it is the moment of choosing and allotting of class. It is a moment of playing out, “the-have” and “the-have not”. In occasions like that, the society has no mercy on the poor. Rather, they are pushed off the track to steer clear of the race. Any person who declares his intention to take title automatically tells every person in the neighborhood that he has made the money and that he is willing to dole it out. It is telling on the survival of the institution a lot. The practice of payment by installment was really introduced to bridge the gap but it proved abortive. This is because; those who could not complete their payments stopped half way. They are neither regarded as members nor allowed to partake of the gifts presented at the *Ozo* final ceremonies save food and drinks. The best option for them would be to bow out when one is not able to meet up with the basic requirements of the group. Thus, the poor condition of the people affects the *Ozo* title institution as well as threatens the regenerative power of the title society. Another factor which poses a serious challenge to the growth of *Ozo* title-taking is the problem of *Osu* caste.

Apart from the fore going challenge discussed, there is also the challenge of reduction in the number of those inducted into the title society. The social stratification affects the numerical

strength of *Ozo* title institution since a good section of the Igbo society is cut off completely on grounds of not being the free born. Of course, it incurs untold hatred on the members of the society and on the *Ozo* social institution in general. It engenders personal acrimony and squabbles in the community. The most annoying part of it is that such people will be very ardent in the routine contributions of the kindred for the up-keep of the group. But when it comes to the issue of taking the mantle of leadership as the eldest son of the kindred, such a fellow will be disappointed and withdrawn. Mean while, the person who is seconding him in age will be asked to take over. It is always painful.

The Demise of a Member

The exit of a colleague to the great beyond is not only painful but also disorganizes the group to which the fellow belonged while alive. Death is a reality meant for every mortal. According to Onwubiko (1991):

The Igbo knew that death is an inevitability and say: *Onwuamadike, Onwukamike*, et cetera, yet he pleadingly asks death not to kill him and says *Onwuegbule, Onwubiko, Onwuekwe*, et cetera. This is so because ... the Igbo do not want to die because the spirit world is often thought of as a place of unrest and at other times as a place of happiness depending on how the deceased has been buried and the proper and expensive rites performed for him. (p.90).

The death of *Ozo* title holder is a great loss not only to the family of the deceased and his entire community, but also to *Ozo* title society, to which he belonged while he was alive. The burial arrangement is almost done in alliance with the titled group since they are fully involved in the funeral arrangements. As a member, they play some part in seeing that a deceased colleague is given a befitting burial. The titled group to which the deceased belonged offers a great support to

the family of the deceased colleague: both financially, morally and other wise. This is to make sure that the fallen colleague is given a befitting burial that entitles him to join the college of the ancestors. Whenever it occurs, it creates a vacuum. However, it is always accepted as the will of God above since everybody must surely die. Death concludes every human life on earth and brings to a halt whatever he has/she has been doing. In *Ozo* title institution, the exit of a member poses a challenge to the surviving members and also disorganizes the society momentarily. For instance, when a titled elder dies, the members reduce by one automatically. This helps to weaken the strength of the society that has been under threat by the non inclusion of all eligible men in the community and women, too. Apart from this, if the deceased fellow is among the executive members, his exit will surely affect the administrative process of the group for the time being, until a replacement is made after his burial. However, when the dead is well advanced in age, his wealth of wisdom and experience about *Ozo* title institution is totally lost. Everything ends up with him in the grave. A huge wealth of experience is lost through the death of the aged members of *Ozo* society. This informs the poor performance of the members nowadays because the young ones seldom find the aged ones around to give them directives and the necessary information on the nitty-gritty of *Ozo* title-taking. As a way of regeneration within *Ozo* title society, it is the custom in Ozubulu town, that after the burial of a deceased *Ozo* titled man, his first son will succeed his father by joining the group through the ceremony of “*Isa Ozo*”-the transfer of the deceased father’s *Ozo* title to his son. This is done to fill up the gap in number and function of *Ozo* title institution.

Be that as it may, there is no gain saying the fact that our *Ozo* titled leaders live among the people of diverse cultural, socio-political and religious confessions. Therefore, they are always the flag bearers of peace, non violence and good-tidings, to their various communities. Okeke

(2009), summarizes the need for the titled elders to abide by the rules and also make frantic effort to propagate these virtues when he says, “honesty, integrity, carefulness, transparency and faithfulness should be the watchword” (p.23). Thus, according to Ifesieh (1989), *Ozo* title holders take oath of office and endeavour to keep to the oath since the breach of the oath would attract the wrath of the gods. Uchendu (1965), stresses the same fact when he says, “the associations exercise a form of social control by laying down certain rules of conduct for their members and proscribing certain forms of behaviour which are considered unworthy of a titled man” (p.82). Davidson (1969), also affirms that, “legitimate power lies in the office sanctioned by ancestral norms, and the person lost his right to exact obedience once he abused that office” (p.200). From the fore going, one would understand the position of the *Ozo* titled elders in Igbo cosmological outlook as leaders of their communities.

These traditional *Ozo* title leaders have respect for the people and divinities. They are also respected because of the positive impact they have created in the communities (where they lead by example) and the nation at large.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

In the face of the dwindling condition of the African traditional institutions owing to the deadly blow of the western civilization, this dissertation tries to make an appraisal of the Christian *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu as an effort to add to the struggle to revive the African traditional institutions that are growing cold. The dissertation has six chapters.

The dissertation dwells on Christian *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu. From the research it is gathered that *Ozo* title-taking in Ozubulu takes a lot of money. However, it has different stages which the candidates will pass through to the final *Ozo*. The final day is always a festive day full of ceremonies and merriments. It is gathered that *Ozo* title leadership in Ozubulu is shared among these groups of titled men which include *ndi Nze na Ozo*, *ndi Akana Obi* and *ndi Okenye Ozo*, kindred heads and family heads. These groups of leaders are in charge of all the traditional affairs of the town. They work harmoniously together with the king in the leadership of the town.

The dissertation also delved into the issue of *Ozo* leadership vis-a-vis the leadership in Nigeria. It was gathered that there has been poor leadership in the country and *Ozo* title institution which is a leadership institution can be a source of meaningful inspiration for change in the system of leadership in Nigeria for growth and development.

6.2 Conclusion:

This dissertation is an effort to appreciate the Christian *Ozo* title-taking as an institution in Ozubulu due to its contributions in the area of leadership, the maintenance of peace and harmony in the community, the propagation good moral virtues among the people, the promotion of Igbo

culture and its contributions to nation building. Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004), are right when they observed that the continuity of African Traditional Religion was made possible through various channels like the child naming ceremony, marriage rituals, funeral ceremonies, and rites of passage like birth, puberty, and death rites. *Ozo* title-taking is also one of the means of propagating our traditional religion.

Be that as it may, the task of appraising *Ozo* title-taking embarked upon is a way of appreciating this noble title institution. And by so doing, there is bound to be transformation and a re-packaging of the institution for the younger generations of our time to cherish it as our rich cultural heritage. Of course, the research as a matter of fact helps to reawaken the zeal and interest in this prestigious title institution.

The dissertation has been able to reveal the fact that the Christian *Ozo* title-taking is an institution that opens on to leadership position in Igbo cosmic world. The leadership of *Ozo* title institution is seen as a paradigm for the leadership of the entire nation. It is believed that if given the opportunity to spread out, it will change the system of leadership in our country for better.

The research helps to clear the air regarding the misconception that *Ozo* institution is a negative cult and the members are cultists. It is rather a leadership institution that needs to be given the chance to even pilot the affairs of our nation Nigeria for better life and meaningful development of the nation.

The research on *Ozo* title-taking helps the members realize the need for them to have some sense of personal and corporate dignity. They should be aware of the change in social status which comes with the *Ozo* title-taking. This means that the members do not need to be told before they know that they are by virtue of their office regarded as elders and therefore, leaders because of the titles they have acquired. Remarkably, as leaders, they play the role of piloting certain affairs

of their rural villages to maintain peace, order and good rapport among them. They should know that the people look up to them as elders. They should not betray the trust they have in them.

6.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This research work challenges the Igbo people to cherish what they have especially those who regard *Ozo* as something fetish and obsolete. There are also some who take it to be a secret cult and the members as cultists. This is the reason why it appears that many young people today do not find any meaning in *Ozo* title-taking due to some misguided information or religious beliefs. Above all, the research tries to effect a change in the leadership of our country Nigeria from the small prism of the leadership of *Ozo* title institution in Ozubulu. This will bear much more fruit if this *Ozo* title leadership is given the opportunity to spread out to the entire nation.

6.4 Recommendations

Ozo title institution is a leadership institution in Igbo land. Although is not practiced in all the Igbo communities, those areas it is in practice, it helps to raise up elders that take care of the leadership affairs of those Igbo communities. Thus, it is recommended that the leaders of *Ozo* title institution in Igbo land should return to the original sanity of this noble institution in order to restore its seemingly lost glory through the influence of modernity. The integrity of this title institution has been watered down by the rise in materialism and the “get-rich-quick” mentality of the teeming Igbo youths. This has filtered into the *Ozo* title society and succeeded in luring many of the elders away from what they are committed to do as the custodians of the traditional norms of their various communities. The government should find a way of integrating the leadership system of *Ozo* title institution into the leadership scheme our country for good.

It is recommended that the amount of money paid by the prospective candidates for *Ozo* title-taking be reduced so that young blood will be injected into the institution to make it vibrant once

again. Most youths cannot afford to pay the money involved in *Ozo* title-taking. The huge amount of money involved in the title-taking nowadays has made the number of those willing to join the society to drop drastically. It therefore faces the threat of extinction in the future if something is not done right away to salvage the situation.

It is also recommended that the Professors of African Traditional Religion should reflect over the enormous task facing them regarding packaging their courses well; in order to be ever more appealing to the up-coming generations. They will do that by employing the new trends in Religious studies so as to capture the interest of the modern students of African Traditional Religion. For instance, the use of society-based method in the study of religion helps the students to appreciate the social dimension of the congregation gathered for prayer. The use of computer based documentary of the near-extinct cult objects of the African Traditional Religion in the lecture room will go a long way to captivate the interest of the modern day students who are more easily thrilled by what they see rather than what they hear. By so doing, some of those cult objects that are phasing out would be preserved in documentary form for teaching the younger generations of students in the field who may not be opportune to behold physically some of those cult objects like *Ofo*, *Ogu*, *Ozo* title regalia, and so on. In other words, researchers on African Traditional Religion should try as much as possible to present it in a better light to be more appreciable to the modern generation rather than being seen as an archaic religion that is due for relegation to the background. As they take interest in the study of the religion they equally study the various institutions there of which include among others, the prestigious *Ozo* title institution.

It is strongly recommended that the *Ozo* title holders should be truthful and honest. They should be of good moral conduct. They should always have the sense of the shame, upholding justice, equity and fairness at all time.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

There is no research material that is so exhaustive on a particular issue that there is no room for further research in that area again. Thus, there are a number of issues to be investigated upon as far as *Ozo* title institution is concerned. They include: the role of women in *Ozo* title-taking, the issue of those with impediment like the out-cast vis-à-vis the leadership position of the *Ozo* title holder in Igbo land. For instance, in most of the communities, the argument is that the outcast will not take *Ozo* title so that he will not come up tomorrow to take over the mantle leadership in the community. The same thing is applicable to a visitor who was accommodated in a community of sojourn. He is not allowed to take *Ozo* title lest he or she would someday begin to demand the right to assume the office of traditional leadership of the community.

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