

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The Church from inception has rendered various levels of social welfare services to humanity as a duty and an embodiment of the church. Jesus Christ in His time engaged in welfare services to people apart from teaching the word of God. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, cast out demons, and gave hope to the oppressed. The apostles continued from where Jesus stopped. With the authority invested on them by Jesus, they preached to people, healed the sick and provided for the welfare of the congregation. The early church equally offered welfare services to the people. In the early church, the care was carried out by the deacons and widows under the leadership of the Bishop. Carter (2007) notes that:

Welfare service was not limited to members of the Christian congregation but was directed toward the larger community, particularly in times of pestilence and plague. Eusebius noted in his Ecclesiastical History that while the heathen fled the plague at Alexandria, “most of our brother-Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty” in caring for and frequently dying with the victims. (n.p).

The foundation of the church was laid on evangelization through preaching the word of God and provision of welfare services to humanity. Part of the social welfare service provision by the church done under pastoral care is identified by Ernst (2007) as the principal interest of pastoral care-whether exercised by clergy or laity. It is the personal welfare of persons who are hurt, troubled, alienated or confused within. The historical expressions of pastoral care have focused on the predominant but not exclusive expressions of ultimate concern characteristics of the periods in question. Fundamentally, however, pastoral care has always attempted to respond to

the totality of human needs in every age in consonance with the words of Jesus Christ: “I was hungry and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Matthew 25: 35-36).

The Christian congregation has traditionally cared for the poor, the sick, widows and orphans. The letter of James says: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.” Widows formed a special group in the congregations and were asked to help with nursing care and other service obligations as long as they did not need help and care themselves.

The church by the 4th century had founded orphanages and the monasteries took over this task during the middle ages. They also fought against the practice of abandoning unwanted children and established foundling hospitals. In this era, as in others, a secularization of church institutions took place in connection with the spreading autonomy of the cities. In Protestant churches the establishment of orphanages was furthered systematically.

The society keeps changing with the advent of time and as new trends keep on emanating, so does the services provided work to meet the demand of the time. Ernst (2007) stipulates that: the Christian community’s response to the questions of poverty and the poor may be sketched in terms of four major perspectives, which have historically overlapped and sometimes coexisted in mutuality or contradiction. The first perspective, both chronologically and in continuing popularity, is personal charity. This was the predominant form of the church’s relationship to the poor from the 1st to the 16th century. The second perspective supplements the remedial work of personal charity by efforts for preventive welfare through structural changes in

society. The third perspective is a retreat in to the charity models of the earlier Christian community. This is because of the overwhelming effects of the process of secularization and human misery caused by industrialization, the key to social welfare was expressed that social change depended upon the conversion of individuals. The fourth perspective, present in churches of the modern period, envisions systemic social change to facilitate redistribution of the world's wealth. Personal charity is not neglected, but the primary goal is to change the unjust structures of society.

The missionaries who brought Christianity to Igbo land engaged in preaching the word of God and provision of social welfare services to the people. Such social welfare services included medical services and school education which served as strategies to reap tremendous success in their work of evangelization. The success and increase is based on numerical strength of converts. There seemed not to be deep-rooted conversion as many hankered over what they were to gain from the white man. They looked for such gain like freedom from oppression, medical attention and other social welfare services. The missionaries used social welfare service as evangelization strategy, while rivalry and competition characterized missionary era of Christianity in Igbo land.

The Catholic Church has at various ages provided laudable plan to cater for the needy. In 1943, the council of Bishops in United States of America instituted a body known as The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) as an arm of Caritas to provide relief in emergency situations and help people in the developing world to break the cycle of poverty through community-based sustainable development initiatives as well as peace building. Assistance is based solely on need, not race, creed or nationality. Catholic Relief Services was originally founded as war relief service to aid the refugees of war-torn Europe. By mid 1950's, with confluence of events

including the independence many countries, the name officially became Catholic Relief Services in 1955. During the Rwanda massacre in 1994, CRS offered tremendous assistance in supply of welfare services.

With the effects of the Nigeria civil war which ended in 1970, the church had much more to offer in welfare services. This social welfare services offered by the church at this time hinges more on rehabilitation. The effects of the war left the people hopeless. According to Madiebo (1980), “the civilian population of Biafra suffered even more than the army” (p.383). Achunike (2000) describes it as “a hopeless situation” (p. 45). This state of the society comprised of orphans and refugees who were homeless, hungry and sick without any hope for remedy. By 1968, the war effects had fully blown. Many who were displaced lived in refugee camps, with little or no food, many died of hunger, malnutrition and consequent ill-health like *Kwashiorkor*.

The church saw it as paramount to provide the utmost need of the hunger stricken people with drugs and food. As the war advanced, many lost their homes and family members. The number of the internally displaced persons, indigents, and orphans were on the increase. The Church took up the responsibility of providing the necessary social welfare services to rehabilitate the war-torn people. Taking care of the large population by the church that suffered the same war-effect is amazingly good gesture, though a huge project. Thanks to the Caritas, (a welfare arm of Catholic Church), that supplied some food items, clothes and drugs to the people. The Nigeria-Biafra war just like any other war infested the nation and most especially Biafra with the usual ravaging characteristics of war torn area.

The people were confronted with lots of social, religious, psychological, political and economic problems which were yearning for immediate attention and solution. Anything that

seemed to alleviate the hopeless situation was most warmly welcome. The people in their desperation for solution to the ravaging war effect impact of any source of alleviation. The mainline churches did not seem to have the immediate and adequate answer to the hopeless situation and the rehabilitation of the displaced refugees. In is desperate situation, and being people who are religiously inclined, they resorted to prayers for divine intervention. At this time the Aladura and the Pentecostal churches traded their unique capability to provide immediate solution to the problems especially through prayer houses and healing homes. Ojo (2010) identifies that “in the 1970's Pentecostals directed their teaching to transformation of individuals. The most noticeable of this change is in the emphasis on healing” (p.41). The people resorted to visit prayer houses and healing homes. Many prayer houses and healing homes sprang up in response to the immediate need of the war-torn people. Fake prayer houses emerged too and people who actually needed help were rather exploited. Madiebo (1980) acknowledges that many resorted to spiritualism and prayers as the only alternative.

In their effort to implore divine intervention to provide solution to their desperate situation, the effort of the mainline churches who though instituted orphanages, led prayers for the people, provided medical services, clothing and food; were perceived as incapable to provide the required solution. There was some air of confusion among the people as they were enticed away in the search for more immediate welfare alleviation by the radical prayers of the Pentecostals. Achunike (2000) states that:

There were many refugees in this war period. Before the war, the established churches had attained stability. ...hardship, social tensions, dreadful sickness like kwashiorkor, refugee lifestyle and psychological problems which the mainline churches could not offer solution, diverted the attention of many Igbo towards the

Aladura churches and prayer houses which are springing up at an alarming rate at this time and promised to offer solutions to some of the problems. (pp 55-56).

The above statement by Achunike gives the picture of the Igbo people during and after the war to which they were confused as to how to remedy the situation. The social welfare service offered by the Catholic Church at this period seems not to be adequate as the main source of remedy to their hopeless situation. The welfare service need at this period of war devastation was beyond the available source of relief. Relief materials were shared to the people irrespective of denomination. The Aladura prayer houses and the Pentecostals displayed unique capacity to draw down the power of the divine which is in affiliation to the nature of Africans, so it thrived well. Many people who equally needed rehabilitation took to opening of prayer houses, not for sincere religious/social welfare services to the people but as a way of alleviating their own problems too, as people will contribute money to the prayer houses. The true situation and the later consequential instances were hidden under the platform of attending to immediate confusion and problem created by the war.

Madiebo (1980) expresses the hopeless situation when he mentioned in his writing the opinions of different meetings and different leaders who advised that the war should be stopped. Their suggestion was born considering the level of humiliating agony the people were passing through, saddled with the problem of rehabilitation and especially in urgency. Amidst this state of confusion, fraudulent acts, fake prayers, fake healing, and cheating developed in the church and the society.

As time went on, events took shape to the realities of the moment and so did Christianity. The growing complexity of the society made new demands on the activities that surround man's life. The motherless babies such as Ahiaeke Motherless Babies Home, Umuahia, Okwelle

Motherless Babies Home, Okigwe, Sisters of the Needy Motherless Babies Home, Nekede and many others have expanded to include the services of protecting and providing for the mothers of unexpected pregnancies till the baby is delivered to ensure the safety of the mothers and the children.

The Caritas is a catholic organization that supplies relief materials and aids to war-stricken people and socially depressed society. During the Nigeria-Biafra war, (1967-1970), Caritas supplied, food, clothing and drugs continually to the people. They equally attended to the sick and the maimed. They took with them some who needed more intensive care when they are returning.

Justice, Development, Peace and Caritas Commission (JDPC) is another organization in the Catholic Church that is instituted to cater for the welfare of the people. Apart from supplying the welfare needs of the poor, which included food and routine drugs, they equally taught people to know their civic rights, duties and responsibilities. They are also the mouth piece of the oppressed and are more concerned with the welfare of the entire society while catering for the needs of the indigents. As a committee, they had serious financial challenge which explained the poor funding, inadequate close monitoring and the widely alleged diversion of welfare materials to unapproved channels or spheres of operation.

Recently under the Archbishop in-charge of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, Archbishop Obinna J.V.C., Eu-care is instituted. Informations were gathered from some parishioners of St. Paul's Catholic parish, Owerri and Maria Assumpta Cathedral Owerri. A. Uzoukwu and R. Ofoegbu (personal Communication 14th May, 2017) explain that Eu-care is the Eucharistic care for the vulnerable. It has representatives in the parishes in Owerri Diocese. It was inaugurated at

St. Mulumba parish, Wetheral road, Owerri. Part of their duty is to search out for the indigents, supply their details to the church from where they will receive adequate care and supply of relief materials. It has been established under Eu-care obligations to collect relief materials from the parishes every third Friday and supply the relief materials collected to Maria Assumpta Cathedral of Owerri Archdiocese. The indigents on every Tuesday of the week gather at the pavilion to receive food, drugs, clothing, cash, medical services and so on, to alleviate economic tension on them. G. Alaribe, a chaplain with Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, (Personal Communication on May 7th 2017), attested to the existence of Eu-care as a means of providing social welfare services in Owerri diocese.

The medical services, attention to the elderly and weak priest, the motherless baby's homes, schools for the scholarship schemes, poverty alleviation schemes and many other social welfare services that meet the demand of time came into existence and took shape with the changing society despite all odd and complexity of human nature. Courtesy of the humanitarian services for which the church has long been known. In all these services rendered, the society does not seem to acknowledge the church for the eminent humanitarian services of such magnanimity.

The issue of ambiguity and vagueness of the role of the mainline churches, especially the Catholic Church in social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in particular and Igboland in general have opened a lot of questions by well-meaning people. A cross section of the society may have thought that religious life does not extend to social welfare services by the Catholic Church. Seeing social welfare services as not part of the cardinal programmes of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and Igbo society seems contrary to the socio-economic development of the body of Christ.

This above disposition, doubt and misrepresentation tend to leave members of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province insignificant both socially and economically. It becomes imperative, therefore, that this study is carried out in order to bring to limelight the various aspects of social welfare services of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

1.2 Statement of Problem

Social welfare services which is the provision of the basic needs of the people to alleviate their economic, psychological and social problems, to make life more meaningful and worth living, has been part of the Catholic Church from inception. Jesus Christ provided for the welfare of the people likewise the apostles and the early church. The European Missionaries of Catholic Church capitalized on the provision of social welfare services to the people to reap success in evangelization.

The Nigerian-Biafra war created a society that is comprised of maimed soldiers, orphans and refugees who were homeless, hungry and sick. The Catholic Church plunged into action and provided for food, drugs, clothing, especially with the aid of Caritas to the depressed war-torn people. It was not easy as the society was filled with people in desperate need for rehabilitation. This created avenue for fraudulent and counter-feit solution-like issues in the church and the society as healing homes/prayer houses started springing up without check; major distraction to the service of social welfare provision of the church. By the end of the war, there was still the need for rehabilitation; hence poverty alleviation schemes and orphanages were used to rehabilitate people while provision of drugs, food and clothing continued.

Before the arrival of the European missionary, the Igbo indigenes of Owerri Ecclesiastical province were self-reliant and hardworking whose main occupations were farming, trade and industry. Success in diligence is often gratified with titles. The application of missionary and colonial strategies disrupted the people's lifestyle. One of such outcome is the white-collar job which distracted the people from being self sufficient but turned them into servants. Unemployment crept in as there is not enough employment vacancy for all; hence poverty and dependency marked the society.

The growing complexity of the society with advent of time made new and more complex demand on the life of man; the Igbo in Owerri Ecclesiastical province inclusive. From the social welfare foundation laid by the European missionaries, expanded on by the demands of the effect of Nigeria-Biafra war, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical province improved on to offer social welfare services to humanity in areas of need such as: Motherless Babies Homes - Ahiaeke Motherless Babies Umuahia, Orphanages - Sisters of Needy Orphanage-Okigwe, Schools for physically challenged, Hospitals - Mater Misericordiae, Afikpo, Schools example, Holy Ghost College Owerri, Health Centres, Home visitations-to sick and indigents, Poverty alleviation-schemes, Youth empowerment - joint venture of Church and individuals-Orjiako foundation, Social emancipation strategies - scholarships and so on.

According to C. Agu, (personal communication 8th February, 2017) the Parish priest of Our Lady of Assumption, Umuariam Obowo, it was made known that apart from these institutions, intermittent demands to provide for welfare of people may arise at any point in time and the Catholic Church will not relent to offer the required service. They at times call on wealthy members if necessary to offer help where it is beyond the church's capacity.

With the war-effect and impact of European missionary activities in creating inadequate white-collar job opportunity, many people in the society are faced with the problem of poverty. This created room for dependency. Some of the poor are fit to work but are expecting to be employed and paid salary. They resort to depend on alms. Many social vices have developed because of this societal misdirected situation. The church by the founding nature has continued to embark on provision of the needs of the poor, socially oppressed, the physically challenged and many others in need. Despite all efforts of the church, the number of people in need seem to be on the increase. John Paul II, (1987) observes that:

This is a frightening time. Never before has the world enjoyed such material blessing from God, yet never before has poverty been so wide spread. Never before has the world produced so much food, yet most of the world still goes to bed hungry. Never before have we known such medical advancement, yet disease is till rampant. Never before have we been so able to bring prosperity and life to man this very year millions will die of starvation and disease. In today's world the rich keep getting richer, but the poor remain desperastely poor. (p.36).

The above statement is true of the contemporary society. Barely few years after the devastating Nigeria-Biafra war, the country reaped a boom in the oil industry. Rather than solve the problem of the devastating poverty of the socio-economic situation of the society, it created room for corruption while economic mismanagement took its turn. The word embezzlement became prominent in the society such that it is on the lips of all and sundry. The outcome is increase in the poverty rate in the society especially in Igboland. A few become richer while majority become poorer.

Are all the people who receive the welfare services from the Catholic Church of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province actually poor, incapacitated or indigents? Quite noted that the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province have been rendering social welfare services to the poor and the needy over the years, there is yet to have any historical documentation of it by historians. There is no well articulated and adopted programme of events for a fortified service that will stand the taste and demand of time. This study therefore embarks an articulation of the available social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church made of Owerri Archdiocese, Okigwe diocese, Umuahia diocese, Orlu diocese, Ahiara diocese and Aba diocese. The problem of the study will equally focus on the efficacy of the social welfare services provided by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, the condition under which the church and bodies involved in provision of the services operate, the mode of operation and accountability of the workers in the social welfare institutions, and efficient ways to curb the increasing need for social welfare services. All these are embodied in the work in the course of the historical discourse of social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

There is need to explore new frontiers of scholarship not part of indigenization policy, but to develop to the fullest the human, spiritual, social and economic resources. Social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province seems to be virgin area very little or nothing is articulated for posterity and in the light of contemporary scholarship. A historical resume of social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is imperative in approaching the level of socio-economic predicaments of people, institutions and relationships in the study area. The study will find out possible ways of instituting well articulated programmes to handle social welfare issues in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province so as have fortified welfare services. The problem of the study thus stated is that the social welfare service offered by Owerri

Ecclesiastical Province is yet to be given a scholarly historic documentation. The study therefore sets out to find out the nature process, programmes, problems and possible solutions to the work of social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

1.3 Purpose of Study

This dissertation aims at articulating the social welfare services of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. In order to achieve this aim, there is the need to critically examine the nature of social welfare services and their attendant socio-economic challenges. There is equally a compelling need to find out the reasons for social welfare services, critical areas of need and how the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province have lived up to this expectation. It hopes to establish the validity of the Catholic Church claim of tackling indigency, high poverty level, social and economic deprivation in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

The study will clarify the true picture of high poverty rate, squalor, lack of shelter, disease, hunger and other desperate conditions which the Nigeria-Biafra civil war created and compounded by economic recession, maladministration and mismanagement of scarce resources in Nigeria. There is need to give accurate, balanced and informed report based on contemporary scholarship that will correct the misinformation, misinterpretation and misrepresentation. The essence of this research is to portray all about welfare needs in the society with tool of reason from historical records and from contemporary programmes, what social welfare services are carried out.

The work will equally point out how poverty has eaten deep down into the fabrics of the society within the area of the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. It will scrutinize previous solutions

to the social welfare services and will posit calculated, systematic and practical solutions that deal with the root causes

1.4 Scope of Study

The scope of the study centres on historical discourse of social welfare services offered by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is made up of Owerri Archdiocese, Okigwe diocese, Orlu diocese, Aba diocese, Umuahia diocese and Ahiara diocese. The choice of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is informed by the felt need to articulate the various social welfare efforts in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province which hitherto is lacking. The membership of the province by birth, marriage and residence will offer a great deal of primary data for the study. Similarly, the challenges encountered by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in the course of provision of social welfare services, the various levels and types of social welfare services will not be difficult to articulate. The Catholic Church has been involved in the provision of social welfare services at various levels of demand and this may encounter certain problems which will be identified in the course of the study. Possible strategies to curb any vice emanating from the service or posing problem to efficient welfare service will be suggested.

From the foregoing, it is imperative to state that the dissertation is set to analyze how the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has been able to tackle the challenges of social welfare needs of the existing society between 1968 – 2016. The Nigeria-Biafra civil war which erupted in 1967 used among many other strategies of war on Biafra, hunger and economic deprivation which led to malnutrition, hunger, desperation, hopelessness, disease, death, among many more outcomes.

By 1968, the situation has aggravated to a very sorry state. Many were homeless, orphans, motherless, sick, malnourished, displaced and hopeless. The need for social welfare services at this period became paramount. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in this period felt it most because Biafra has started losing some territories to the Nigerian faction such that the population concentrated around the area that falls within Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Nwalo (2012) confirms that: “the longer the war lasted, the more Biafra shrank in size. Andthe heavier the concentration of the population in Igbo heartland, principally Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, which at a particular point became all that the new republic had” (p.130). This called for greater responsibility on Owerri Ecclesiastical Province who swung into action with the aid of the social welfare arm of the Catholic Church; the Caritas, welfare services were provided to cushion the war effect on the people. For this reason the researcher found it convincing enough to site the work to commence from the period of 1968.

By the end of the war many were hopeless and needed serious and immediate attention including the Catholic Church that suffered even more devastation. Some of the institutions like the motherless babies’ homes were rather adopted and improved on. The government policies favoured neither the Catholic Church nor the entire Igbo society. The oil boom that followed few years after the war, 1975-1978 ushered in more grievous situation that encouraged looting from the government coffers and corruption became the order of the day. Agriculture began to lose its taste in the order of things among the Nigerians as the economy depended on oil. Mismanagement of funds and lootings created a different style of poverty where poor got poorer and the rich got richer through looting.

The government of Nigeria embarked on various stages of poverty alleviation strategies such as “Green Revolution”, “Operation Feed the Nation”, Better Live for Rural Women” and so

on, which had no basis and bore no fruit as corruption blurred all the efforts. The Catholic Church worked to carry along the members of the society who are stricken at different periods and points in time with the periodic release of poverty as a result of unfavourable policies and unfruitful strategies.

The need for improvement of the social welfare services of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in order to meet up with the changing socio-economic situations led to formation of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) and the Eu-Care. The duties of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) and Eu Care are toto provide the necessary care for the poor and the needy while trying to bring in improved means of ensuring better welfare services to the poor and the needy.

The recent economic recession took its worse turn in 2016 when many were laid-off from their duty post and prices of basic items like food, drugs and house soared high. Many suffered and poverty stirred in the society like whirlwind catching up on many and leaving them helpless especially with the unprecedented high rate at which the economic recession struck on the people. The researcher for the above cogent reasons finds it convincing to cite the study within 1968 to 2016.

The dissertation will lay emphasis on the followings: investigation of the prevailing need for social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province; identification of the stakeholders in the social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, their activities and challenges. Others areas of emphasis include, examination of the impact of social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and how the social, economic, religious, psychological and political impacts have led to the growth and

development of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in particular and Igboland in general. Furthermore, the determination of the faithfulness of social welfare workers and agents in the assignment entrusted in their care is studied. The study will also ascertain the problems encountered in the course of dispensing the required welfare services and to proffer dynamic ways of improving the social welfare service in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

1.5 Significance of Study

Significance of the study entails the benefits that accrue from the study and who benefits what? The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has significantly made some landmark achievements such as the establishment of motherless babies' homes, orphanages, old peoples' homes, school apostolate, medical services, relief materials, youth and women empowerment. Others include prison apostolate, poverty alleviation programme, farming and other skill acquisition programmes in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. A number of issues raised in this dissertation are significant for academic and practical purposes. In the light of this premise, the study will help the masses to realize and appreciate the social welfare services offered by the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. It will also help the church to identify and check fraudulent practices of people who receive the social services in disguise. The study will bring to limelight areas of need for provision of social welfare services. Workers in social welfare institutions will benefit from the study because the research will bring out possible ways of improving on their services and in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. It will provide avenue for possible attraction of the state to help the church for a better and improved welfare services to the people. The research will contribute to the contemporary body of literature on social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. It will serve as resource materials

in the historical march towards intellectual stimulation, academic excellence and a patriotic response to the call to look inward in order to show case the potentialities in African historiography.

1.6 Methodology

There is substance in upholding the premise that the nature of a research problem determines the choice of methods. Thus the nature and purpose of this historical investigation determines the sources, methods of data collection and analysis. The study adopts primary and secondary sources of data collection. Interview of key informants and resource persons were adopted. Those interviewed include priests, the Catechists, some members and executive of Catholic Women Organization and Catholic Men Organization, the nurses psychiatrics, and doctors who work in the hospital arm, of the social welfare, workers in the welfare institutions like the motherless babies homes, orphanages and old people's home, the officers of Justice Development, Peace and Caritas Commission. Others include the recipients of the welfare services; both in the institutions and those who received from their homes. The researcher visited the welfare institutions at different occasions and spent some time in order to observe some important operational systems of the institutions of social welfare services. Some elderly people were consulted for viable data on the culture of the people before the advent of the European missionaries, especially the cultural practices peculiar to the area of study.

Observation of incidences of sharing of items of basic needs such as food, clothing, drugs and so on is not left out of primary source of data to be used. The use of observation and interview is important to the study to give first-hand information for the study. Historical method will form another primary method which will examine the background of the problem of social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Historical method traces

the origin, causes, challenges, prevailing needs over time, examines the salient issues involved and elucidate the current predicament the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province face. Although it was criticized of displaying vested interest and biased feeling, historical method was rich in providing oral historical materials.

The library was judiciously utilized especially e-libraries, textbooks were consulted; diaries and available minute books of the societies, and pious organizations were utilized. Apart from e-libraries, other sources of internet materials were adequately utilized. An important site of ruins like Uli Airport site was visited to collect viable data for the study. Any available record of social welfare services offered in the past was adequately utilized to gather the necessary data for the study. Archival buildings at Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri and St. Patrick Catholic Parish, Ogbo were sources of data. The data is collected from primary and secondary sources.

The nature and purpose of this study, the data and the interpretations were carried out under a culture area approach which Kanu (1996) describes as “a geographical delineation of an area that has the same dominant and significant culture traits, complexes and patterns” (p.9). culture area approach is useful in providing basis for comparison and aids significantly in the interpretation of data by showing the impact of cultural factors on the vertical and horizontal patterns of social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province as a given culture area. Similarly, the complementary role of data analyses was achieved through historical, phenomenological, analytic and descriptive analysis.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The terms that are prominent in the study are given proper and adequate explanation. This is necessary because there is need to explain its place, importance and articulation in the study. It explains the meaning and relevance of the terms to study.

- a. **Discourse** in this study refers to a formal speech or essay on a particular subject. It could also mean serious convention. In this research, discourse refers to a serious critical examination of an issue. Discourse defined by dictionary.com (2017) as communication of thought by words; talk; conversation, earnest and intelligent discourse. Formal discussion of subject in speech or writing as dissertation, treatise, sermon. It is much more of academic exercise based on selfless, honest and objective assessment of issues in this instance such as social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.
- b. **Social Welfare services** in this study refer to the provision of the basic human needs of man to humanity or to the less privileges in order to alleviate their depressed condition. In its narrowest sense, social welfare includes those non-profit aimed at alleviating distress and poverty or at ameliorating the conditions of the causalities of society. Welfare is a combination of the words 'well' and 'fare'. Well has to do with good state or condition of a person or service. Fare relates to travel. Fare well is a good wish for safe journey. Fare equally represents a modern sense of price of journey, 'what is the fare'? According to Quinion, (1998), a figurative sense grew up of how you were doing or how well you were being provided for- how are you, faring? - and this was the origin of the word in its sense of "food" (as in bill of fare).

Welfare originally meant the condition of well-being of someone's happiness, good fortune, and good health. The word moved from being a term for condition to that of process or activity. This replaced the work of charity in America and Europe. In Nigeria the extended family system takes care of the welfare of the members of the family. The advent of European lifestyle introduced a new approach to social welfare services aimed at putting smiles on the faces of people and promoting true humanity.

The church planted it as a means of making converts and it later improved to purely provision of the needs of the less-privileged for their improved social and psychological welfare. Social welfare services in this study refer to the provisions of the needs of the people, especially the basic needs, to alleviate peoples' economic, psychological and social problems and make live more meaningful and worth living. The enhancement of the financial status is not left out.

- c. **The Church:** This can be explained to mean the people and can refer to the building. The Hebrew word '*qahal*' refer to assembly and '*edhlah*' means congregation. The Greek work *ekklesia* (*ecclesia*) means congregation of people who for the purpose of worship of one God are called or set apart. Caris (1992) explained that "*ekklesia* refers to any gathering of people irrespective of the purpose as it concerns Christianity. The Church as an *ekklesia* is traced to the divine act of God in calling people into the universal family of elect through Jesus Christ" (p.. 20). Jesus own words in Jn 15:16 justifies the use of the word set apart. Jesus said "it was I who choose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last". The church therefore refer to people who are called or set apart, gathered together in one faith to the worship of God. Youngblood (1995) explained that the church means a local assembly of believers as

well as redeemed of all ages that follow Christ as savior and Lord irrespective of locality or time (p.79).

The Church can also be referred to as a building where Christians gather to worship God. Snyder (2003) identifies that in the second half of 3rd century CE, the first purpose – built halls for Christian worship (*aula ecclesiae*) began to be constructed. This implied that church can mean the building where the Christians gather to worship God. Hornby (2008) defined the Church as a building where Christians go to worship, as well as a particular group of Christians. Jesus told his Apostles when he referred to Peter as the rock and upon this rock he will build his church (Mtt, 16:18). Paul demonstrates the meaning of church as assembly of people and as a relationship between Jesus and the church to that between husband and wife.

The church in this situation has been identified to mean; assembly of the people of God, a building for Christian worship, the redeemed, the elect and the body of Christ. No matter the perspective from which it is identified, it all amounts to Christians and their house of worship. It therefore refers to a conglomeration of people who share the Christian faith with the building and the activities therefore ascribed to the worship of God Almighty in union with the Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

- d. Catholic:** This is derived from the Greek word '*katholou*' means 'on the whole' or 'in general'. The Greek adjective of the word '*katholikos*' means 'universal'. It was used in the early second century to identify the church in its universal nature. The use of term Catholic for this study refers the Catholic Church that has the leadership of visible, leader-Pope in Rome.

e. **Ecclesiastical Province:** Ecclesiastical is derived from *ecclesia* which means church as has been explained earlier. According to Diogenes (1964) ecclesiastical took the meaning of community who shared beliefs. This meaning originated from Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and later adopted by Christian Community to refer to the assembly of believers (Bauer & Danker, 2000). An ecclesiastical province is an area of Church organization/government made up of several dioceses. Vocabulary.com (2016), defines Ecclesiastical Province as the area within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop and the dioceses thereof are suffragan dioceses. The Archbishop exercise vigilance over the province. The dioceses are under the province and each has a bishop. Being under the province does not restrict the administrative authority of the bishops of the concerned dioceses. This is a basic form of jurisdiction in Christian churches with traditional hierarchical structure. The administrative seat of each province is the Episcopal See. The ecclesiastical province in this study refers to Catholic jurisdiction in which dioceses of Umuahia, Okigwe, Orlu, Aba, Ahiara and Owerri are identified to make up the ecclesiastical province. According to code of Canon of Eastern Church (2017) the borders of province have often been inspired of often determined by historic and /or present political borders. The same is often true of diocesan borders.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature considered germane to the subject of this research will be reviewed under conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical studies and summary of the literature review. The review will bring out the strength and weaknesses of social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, 1968 – 2016.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The major concepts are discussed in this section of the study. Literature is reviewed on the concept of social welfare services, historical discourse, Ecclesiastical Province, types of social welfare services, social welfare services in contemporary society, features of social welfare services, social welfare in Christianity, social welfare in O.T, and N.T. This will give elaborate conception on what the topical concepts of the study seeks to humanity.

2.1.1 Concept of Social Welfare Services

The concept of social welfare services ranges from the provision of the basic needs of food to higher needs that bother on self actualization like education and other levels of needs. Sources for the provision of the various levels of social welfare and levels of needs vary equally. It all depends on available resources and the desired needs. The concept of social welfare services appears to be broad as the component is dependent on the section of the social welfare services engaged in. Dolgoff & Feldstein (1980) stated that, “in its narrowest sense, social welfare includes those nonprofit functions of society, public or voluntary, which are clearly aimed at alleviating distress and poverty or at ameliorating the conditions of the casualties of society” (p. 91). This definition presents social welfare service as a concern for the indigents and

provision of basic needs. The social welfare concerns that draws more of the attention of the society is that which has to do with the attention to the poor. Social welfare services involve more than taking care of the poor and provision of basic needs. Stolink (1997) enumerates that:

Social welfare as an organized function is regarded as a body of activities designed to enable individuals, families, groups and communities to cope with the social problems of changing conditions. But in addition to and extending beyond the range of its responsibilities for specific services, social welfare has a further function within the broad area of a country's social development. In this larger sense, social welfare should play a major role in contributing to the effective mobilization and deployment of human and material resources of the country to deal successfully with the social requirements of change, thereby participating in nation-building. (p.5).

A broader view of the meaning of social welfare services is here postulated. Social welfare services go beyond the provision of basic needs. A community can organize training of their children to attain a stipulated purpose: economic or political. Social welfare services, in the areas of education, medical, housing and other parallel services, form a part of the social welfare services which most developed communities have come to require and expect

Uche (2006) defined Social welfare as the provision of minimal level of well-being and social support for citizen without current means to support basic needs (p.46). Social welfare as earlier indicated comprises of many aspects. This level of social welfare services concentrates on the poor that require the basic needs to survive. According to Ramsay (1988), "Social welfare is clearly a constituent of the "resource otherness" component; however, it is also closely connected to the

activities intrinsic to the role of “validator otherness” within this environmental framework” (p. 57). This implies that the provision of social welfare services is dependent on the resources and the administrator of the services. Social welfare services are required by those who are not capable without help and support of standing on their own feet as fully independent or 'self-directing' members of the community.

Used in its broadest sense, the term 'social welfare' can embrace all efforts aimed at improving health, education, employment, housing, recreational and cultural services for the community at large. However, for the purpose of this paper, 'social welfare' will be used in a narrower sense as the range of services provided by Social Welfare Departments of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and the joint voluntary welfare sectors for the purpose of improving on the living standard of the recipients.

Friday (2015) defines social welfare as a programme that provides assistance to the needy individuals and families. It is more concerned with the quality of life that includes factors such as the quality of environmental air, soil and water, level of crime, extent of drug abuse, availability of essence of social services, as well as religious and spiritual aspects of life (p.32). Friday's definition borders more on state concern on the condition of the individuals in the state, ensuring equality to all while trying to curb the excesses of evil tendencies such as crimes and abuses to ensure security.

In some cases, social welfare is identified as institution that caters for the welfare of the needy. An institution that handles dependency and facilitates interdependence. Such institutions include the motherless Babies homes, the orphanages, home for the elderly and schools for the physically challenged. Prior to 1900 in Australia, charitable assistance from benevolent societies,

sometimes with financial contributions from the authorities, was the primary means of relief for people not to be able to support themselves. The 1890s economic depression and the rise of the trade unions and the Labour parties during this period led to a movement for welfare reform.

Social Welfare Institutions refer to institutions taking care of old people without children, handicapped people and orphans. They include social welfare institutions run by civil affairs departments, children welfare institutions, social welfare institutions for mental patients, collective-owned old people's homes in rural areas, convalescent homes and community service centers with the capacity of receiving those people. This indicator reflects the input in social welfare institutions. According to Estonia (2013), "a social welfare institution is an agency that operates daily or around the clock where people are cared for and if necessary provided with treatment, nursing, education and therapy" (p.4).

This institution according to Harvey (1989) has developed into a major resource within the society, for it serves as a direct means by which society is able to respond to the needs and wants of its members in an organized and collective manner. Ideally, it expresses society's humanitarian interest in the social and individual well-being of its citizens, and it reflects a genuine effort directed towards enhancing the quality of life for all of its members. Social welfare as a service to humanity is here presented to be better organized when done through the concerned institutions. This explains the place of Motherless Babies Homes, Old People's Homes, Orphanages, Psychiatric, and other viable homes in disseminating the welfare services in the proper manner to ensure justified disbursement of the available resources. Galper, 1975 states that:

The social welfare institution is one of the many institutions which reinforce the tenets of liberalism. It espouses the liberalist notion of what constitutes the good life, the good society, and the means by which to achieve it. It adheres to the various values and perspectives outlined above, and incorporates all those functions within society which lead to intervention for securing human well-being. According to the framework of liberalism, the social welfare institution serves a primary social purpose of “representing the public pursuit and extension of social values... through the specific social welfare programs that impose social values concerning people’s rights to certain minimum standards of living on otherwise unfettered economic forces. (p.12).

Social welfare institutions as here explained does more than sharing of goods to the poor but promotes societal values and customs through their work. Not only do the institutions give people food and clothing but help to channel people’s effort towards being productive. So the institutions can equally train people in skills acquisition; hence promoting employment opportunities as well as encouraging development societal values in the recipients of the welfare services. Thus, the social welfare institution reinforces the tenets of liberalism in this society, while at the same time, its service content and scope are shaped by these same values.

The result of poverty is death and it kills real people. If we live according to our needs rather than according to our wants, we will meet the needs of the poor. We have many baptized pagans who fill our church pew weekly. We might be the largest church in the whole world but how many of our members really know and experience the good of a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ? Of course, there is an element of faith active within the soul of a person who

weekly makes the commitment to come to church, hear the word of God, and receive the sacraments, but how many actively experience a saving faith in Jesus Christ daily?

2.1.2 Social Welfare Services in Contemporary Society

The pastoral concern of the church for the world is shown in numerous pronouncements in the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*. As Christianity developed through the years, so did the Social welfare service offered to humanity increase with each demand of the time. The advance of time and age brings with a new dimension of demand on provision of social welfare services. With modernity and technological advancement, new lifestyle and change in values advanced. One such baby of the technological advancement and modernity is the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Carter (2006) commentes that:

As the year 2000 approached, I was invited to speak at a major forum and asked this question: "What is the world's greatest challenge in the new millennium?" It was an interesting question, and I replied, with little doubt, that the greatest challenge we face is the growing chasm between the rich and the poor people on earth. There is not only a great disparity between the two, but the gap is steadily widening. At the beginning of the last century, the 10 richest countries were 9 times wealthier than the 10 poorest ones. In 1960 the ratio was 30:1. At the beginning of this century, average income per person in the 20 richest nations was \$27,591 and in the poorest nations only \$211, a ratio of 131:1! (n.p).

Even in the time of Amos, more than two thousand years ago, the difference between the poor and the rich was glaring. Poverty brings about so many social ills such as suppressive feeling, inferiority complex, lack of confidence, self denial, relegation, destruction of self esteem

and actualization. Apart from the deficit of social projection, the poor suffer hunger, malnutrition and consequently fall sick which at times lead to death.

The system of organized provision of social welfare services came with Christianity in Igboland. The earliest Christianity in Igbo land was planted on the platform of Social welfare services provision. The Church in the 19th and early 20th Centuries managed by the missionaries thrived on the provision of social welfare to the converts. This helped the missionaries to reap tremendous success but the social welfare services offered was more of tool to convert people than as a way of attending to the people's needs. Afigbo (1981), notes that "the success of the Christian missions in Igboland was, like in many other parts of Africa, brought about not so much by preaching 'Christ crucified' as through the parade of the advantages of literacy over illiteracy, that is through the school" (pp. 339-340).

This welfare service is limited to those who converted to Christianity. Ekechi (1972) notes that the Children received baptism first before they received the medicine (p.76). It was given for the purpose of making and retaining converts. The welfare services of the European missionaries include medical services, freedom from slavery, home visits, schools education, clothes, food etc. Ekechi (1972) states that "Missionaries established charitable institutions and schools more as instrument of rivalry and evangelical strategy than concern for the good of the Igbo" (P.54). Though born out of competition and rivalry to achieve success in evangelization, the school education, the medical services, the care for the needy formed the foundation upon which the later church social welfare services rely. Onyeidu (2004) notes that the school education today is a product of the foundation by the European missionaries. Some of the schools include Emmanuel College Owerri, St Charles College Onitsha, Denis Memorial

Grammar School, Onitsha, Union Secondary school Ibeku, Mercy High School, Ehime and many other schools and hospitals that stand out among the best in the recent time.

The outbreak of the Nigeria- Biafra war created a very serious avenue for provision of social welfare service that is paramount for the war-stricken people to survive. With a lot of refugees, hungry people, sick people, depressed people, harassed people and those suffering from psychological trauma, the challenge posed to be insurmountable as noted by (Madiebo, 1980:339) . The Church is a family of God. A gathering of those in union with God, therefore a total gift of self to God in service to humanity. The church has been custodian of social justice which is part of welfare service especially in the Igboland with economic degradation, social malaise, and political failures. Many people are suffering. The church liberated the slaves, preached against killings, saved twins from savage killings, offered solace to the downtrodden and hopes to the oppressed.

In the contemporary society the social welfare services rendered by the church is founded on the ones already established by the European missionaries. Though the foundation social welfare services were mainly for success in evangelization; it achieved the purposes of providing the required solace to the recipient. In this recent time, the social welfare services rendered serve the purpose of up-keep of the recipients and provision of the required service to the individual or community. The characteristics nature of the church in Igbo land which hinges on rivalry and competition seem to be alive in the church despite the ecumenical movements. The contemporary society is made up of the members of the different churches who still affiliate to their churches despite all odds. What they have learnt and adopted from the church tradition established by the European missionaries and improved on by the demands of the effect of the Nigeria-Biafra war, they build on to offer social welfare services to fellow men.

The church offer social welfare services through provision of medical care, food for the hungry, justice to the oppressed, establishment of people in trade and skills, care to prisoners, scholarships and on many other social welfare demands. Social welfare services in the contemporary society have developed into various classes and styles as the time demands. In some cases it has taken the form of private business where some individuals use the less privilege in the society to ask for financial aid. This is not for the welfare of the less-privilege but for the financial benefit of the proprietor of the beggars organization.

Social welfare services have taken many dimensions. It has gone international. Foundations are instituted for the purpose attracting foreign financial aid. In most cases people who institute these Foundations try to sell their plans and ideas to foreign countries in order to attract foreign money and connections. In some cases they succeed in attracting financial aid but end up spending the money for their personal needs and desires; paying little or no attention to the supposed welfare institution. Chukwu Ignatius from Obollo in Imo state spontaneously became wealthy from the sponsorship of S S Amoure who gave him money to build home for the destitute. Instead he first erected mansion for himself, took chieftaincy title, bought estates and squandered the money. He instituted Nursery/Primary schools in one of his estates as a makeover for the home for the destitute. When his sponsors visited to evaluate and ascertain the progress so far made, they were disappointed, and the financial aid was withdrawn. Another case of same misplacement of priority in providing social welfare services was that of Joseph Igwe from Ibeme. He rather took the title of 'Nchemmiri 1' and made patches of promises of welfare services to the community which was never fulfilled till he died.

Contemporary society of Igboland has in the recent time witnessed campaign visits of politicians who come into the church to be identified. It cannot be said that they do so for

worship of God. Their main target is to campaign through identification with the church in order to be voted for by the congregation. Some do it for political purpose; to make them appear humanitarian in order to appeal to the populace who will cast their votes. Those who engage in social welfare services for political success do so in various different forms especially when the campaign and election period is at hand. They automatically become ardent Christians identifying with various churches where they eventually make donations. Often the donations are as pledge, some of which are hardly redeemed. This is evidence of unreliability at times they promise or give scholarship; they share food items to the communities and even share cash to them. They do these adhoc welfare services to win the trust of the voters.

People are disillusioned and disenchanted with this their unreliable system. Most people are disgusted with their plies. Social welfare service in the recent time wears different faces. Some are for real while some are deceitful like the forms mentioned above. To some it is a business venture therefore they gather the destitute and use them to make money. Some are kids who they engage in begging in order to help them. At the end of the day the money gotten belongs to the proprietor who will provide as he/she wishes to the clients who have done the job

Recently in Nigeria, National Assembly is currently considering the None Governmental Organization (NGO) regulation bill for passage. This bill has gone through the first and second readings and is now in committee stage. Later the committee on NGO in the House of Representatives will be holding a public hearing on the bill. This bill will control operations outside government institutions and organizations including humanitarian services. This is very dangerous if it becomes operational. It will entail that one cannot operate anything outside the government unless after obtaining two-year duration license from Abuja (Odinkalu, 2017). This bill will affect free will social welfare services people offer to the poor, indigents, orphans,

motherless babies, schools for the handicapped and some other institutions and organizations through which the vulnerable receive welfare services.

Some of the crusades launched promise solution to the downtrodden, the oppressed, the poor, the sick, hope for the hopeless and many other social welfare reliefs. The new generation churches know that the oppressed and hungry society filled with unemployed are in dire need of solution to these problems. They therefore cash on it. They launch their crusades which are often tagged for prosperity, freedom from oppression, babies for the childless, restoration and so on. People who need welfare services, rush to these places with hope of a divine solution to their welfare problem. A by-product of the desire for divine intervention, of Nigeria-Biafra war. They end up donating to the church in the crusade for solution to their problem in the name of sowing seed which does not germinate. A thorough analysis of the whole issue will show that churches, especially the new generation churches owned by individuals, and the crusades are merely business ventures. It counters the ministry of Jesus that rather fed five thousand after preaching to them and did not demand anything from them. This implies that some church activities are in guise of true care for the teeming populace that are poor.

Some communities contribute to train their intelligent children with a common force. Health centres are built in different communities to cater for their health services nearer their homes to save life. Some wealthy individuals established scholarship foundation for the society such as Olumma Obiodu foundation in Umuna, Okigwe set out to train girls as medical doctors. Some communities, organizations, companies and institutions engage in provision poverty alleviation works, establishing trade for them after training, and giving the tricycle (Keke) to some to drive for commercial purpose. Some organizations take care of indigents such as Progressive Cooperative Society Onitsha. Orjiako Foundations, Uli offers scholarship, gives

employment to people in various walks of life like schools companies, church compound sanitation and payment of hospital bills for patients. Many spheres of human life are touched in provision of social welfare services in the contemporary society. The school for the physically challenged is located at some places in Orodo, Mbaitoli L. G. A., Ozubulu in Ekwusigo Local Government Area, Uturu Okigwe and so on. Home for the elderly is located at Ogbaru, Ihite-Uboma and so on. Salmars Foundation is a joint effort of the St. Ita Catholic Church, Ibeme Mbano and Egwim family of Ibeme Mbano. They encourage and promote excellence and reputation in family; hence they give token to such families that merit the status. This Salmars equally give scholarships, give jobs to people, pay hospital bills for some sick people among other relief materials they give.

Social welfare services are of various types. The care for the indigents, scholarship scheme, medical services, school education, orphanages, motherless Babies home, offer relief materials, provision of clothing to the poor, establishing business or industries whether small or large scale for the less-privilege and the widows. They are many and change with changing time.

2.1.3 Types and features of Social Welfare Services

Social welfare services are sources of solace for the oppressed, hope for the hopeless, source of alleviation for poverty stricken people, source of sustenance to the recipients and help the society to achieve organized aim through sustained provision of the services. The need area determines the social welfare services provided. Therefore the types range from the social welfare needs. It ranges from the provision of basic needs of food and clothing to reconstruction of already existing status for improved situation. Rehabilitation depends on what is to be rehabilitated. Some need a home while others need skill acquisition or establishment of business or job opportunity. The types of social welfare according to Nze (2007) include provision of

basic needs such as food, clothing, medical attention, and housing, rehabilitation through giving of loan, scholarships, instituting small scale industries for people, skill acquisition and youth empowerment, social emancipation which covers liberation from social injustice, oppression and segregation, denial of one's right, liberation from abuses of various kinds.

According to Hong Kong Government (1979) 'social welfare' can embrace all efforts aimed at improving health, education, employment, housing, recreational and cultural services for the community at large. The types of social welfare vary from society to society and are dependent on welfare needs.

The social welfare provided are determined by the type of social welfare needs created by different states of poverty situation as enumerated below.

Poverty is a state of being financially incapacitated to provide the basic human needs. Below are some terms frequently used to describe different kinds of poverty.

Absolute poverty: which is also called extreme poverty, destitution or penury. The United Nations (1995) at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen defined absolute poverty as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services." Many people in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province fall within this range. Of course it is obvious in Nigerian situation which Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is part of that the provision of basic amenities like water; not to mention good drinking water, electricity, food, sanitation facilities, good health services, education and many other have grown wings and flown away. According to the standard set by the International Community, "extreme poverty" widely refers to earning below the international

poverty line of \$1.25 a day, set by the World Bank. In other words, absolute poverty is the total absence of the most basic needs, (food, health care, shelter).

Overall poverty: The United Nations (1995) defined overall poverty as lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion.

This is obvious with the society that falls within Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. There is no security of lives and property. Jobs are not equally secured. Some people get sacked from their job for flimsy excuses like redundancy instead of engaging the worker in a more meaningful production for the development of the organization or the company or institution. The economic depression of the moment spurred so many evil in the society as it led dumbness of business and consequent layoff of workers creating more avenue for the demand for social welfare services. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries: as mass poverty in many developing countries, pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries, loss of livelihoods as a result of economic recession, sudden poverty as a result of disaster or conflict, the poverty of low-wage workers, and the utter destitution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets.

Relative Poverty: Brown (2014) contends that relative poverty is viewed in relation to the income or consumption of others in the same region. For example, a girl who attends a school where all the other teenagers own smart phones when her parents cannot afford to buy her a cell phone would be experiencing relative poverty; she is poor in relation to those around her.

Affirming this point of view, Nobbs (1984) maintains that relative poverty could be seen as the relative deprivation which people suffer from when or because they are unable to enjoy things, which the majority of the people in that particular society enjoy. Relative poverty occurs when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by a government that vary from country to country, sometimes within the same country.

Urban Poverty: Urban poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. And as a matter of fact, the urban poor usually live with many challenges and deprivations. These daily challenges may include: inadequate and insecure housing and services, limited access to adequate health and education opportunities, violent and unhealthy environments, little or no social protection mechanisms, and limited access to employment opportunities and income. Onah (2006) elucidating further posited:

The poverty at this level is common and associated with the urban areas. Poverty exists due to the absence or inadequate presence of the required basic needs of life in the urban area. In this case, there could be shelter, portable water good food etc, but these are inadequate due to level of demands. The high demand after the few supply results to high cost of living in the area, thereby making the low income earners to suffer miserably in the urban areas. This results in forcing people to seek for accommodation in urban slums, 'ghettos and under flyovers, eating unbalanced diet. (p.75)

Urban poverty is usually caused by high rural-urban migration. If the problem of urban poverty is to be addressed, it should start by resolving the problem of rural areas, at least, curtail, if not control migration. McDonald and McMillen, (2008) contend that Urban poverty is usually defined in two ways: as an absolute standard based on a minimum amount of income needed to

sustain a healthy and minimally comfortable life, and as a relative standard that is set based on average the standard of living in a nation (p. 397).

Rural poverty: This simply refers to poverty found in rural areas. Rural poverty is a global problem or phenomenon. Individuals living in rural areas tend to have less access to social services, exacerbating the effects of rural poverty. According to *The Rural Poverty Report* (2011):

Despite massive progress in reducing poverty in some parts of the world over the past couple of decades, there are still about 1.4 billion people living on less than US\$1.25 a day, and close to 1 billion people suffering from hunger. At least 70 per cent of the world's very poor people are rural, and a large proportion of the poor and hungry are children and young people. Neither of these facts is likely to change in the immediate future, despite widespread urbanization and demographic changes in all regions, (p. 16).

Rural poverty, according to *The Rural Poverty Report* (2011), "results from lack of assets, limited economic opportunities and poor education and capabilities, as well as disadvantages rooted in social and political inequalities.

Capability Poverty: Low income is a cause of poverty but lack of income is the primary reason for a person's capability deprivation. Poverty from this perspective is seen as a deprivation of basic capability. This corresponds to what is obtainable in Imo State of the present era where workers are owed arrears of salary and pensioners neglected. Narrating her ordeal, Mrs Ukwu Nkeka (2017) in a personal communication that said she retired from service for the past five years from Imo State, has till the moment of the interview not received either her gratuity or any pension and no viable answer has been given to her for such a sordid act on her.

Corroborating this view Kwazu (2012) argues that, "every individual in a given society is expected to have certain advantages which enable the person to live worthily as humans. These are considered logically to be capabilities that a person has. To deny a person these can lead to poverty (p.49). In this context, a poor person becomes one who does not have the capability to secure a sufficient level of resources to meet this standard.

Sen as cited in Suraidi (2014), proposed five general freedoms which underpin capabilities, the derogation of which will give rise to deprivation or poverty: 1. Political freedom including civil rights; 2. Economic facilities which includes access to credit; 3. Social opportunities which include arrangements for access to health care, education and other social services; 4. Transparency in relations between people and between people and governments; and 5. Protective security which includes social and economic safety nets such as unemployment benefits and famine and emergency relief. In this lens, poverty is now seen as deprivation of choices available for an individual to live the life they have reason to value and also the deprivation of the individual's abilities to exercise that choice. Gutierrez as cited in Dear (2011) makes distinctions between material or real poverty, voluntary poverty and spiritual poverty.

Real Poverty means deprivation, or the lack of goods necessary to meet basic human needs. It means inadequate access to education, health care, public services, living wages, and discrimination because of culture, race or gender. This is the type of poverty the Igbo have experienced especially in the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province which housed many refugees during and immediately after the Nigeria-Biafra war. The relative deprivation theory is linked to this state of poverty. Some parts of the nation are neglected and equally held in suppression with policies that work against personal effort to improve such as the Igbo in Nigeria who have been suffering since the incidence of Nigeria-Biafra War. Gutierrez reiterates that such poverty is

evil; it is a subhuman condition in which the majority of humanity lives today, and it poses a major challenge to every Christian conscience and therefore to spirituality and theological reflection.

Spiritual Poverty is about a radical openness to the will of God, a radical faith in a providential God, and a radical trust in a loving God. It is also known as spiritual childhood, from which flows the renunciation of material goods. Relinquishing possessions comes from a desire to be more possessed by God alone and to love and serve God more completely.

Voluntary poverty is a conscious protest against injustice by choosing to live together with those who are materially poor. Its inspiration comes from the life of Jesus who entered into solidarity with the human condition in order to help human beings overcome the sin that enslaves and impoverishes them. Voluntary poverty affirms that Christ came to live as a poor person not because poverty itself has any intrinsic value but to criticize and challenge those people and systems that oppress the poor and compromise their God-given dignity. It involves more than detachment, because the point is not to love poverty but to love the poor.

Individual poverty: This views individuals as largely responsible for their own destiny, choosing in effect to become poor. Here poverty is seen as an individual phenomenon. Individual poverty means that people are in poverty because they are lazy, uneducated, ignorant, or otherwise inferior in some manner. If this view were true, it would follow that impoverished people are basically the same people every year.

Institutional poverty: This occurs when the government is unable to get its citizens and private companies to pay their taxes. This creates a poverty cycle whereby national institutions constantly lack money. Public servants are then underpaid; the most qualified ones try to get a

job elsewhere. This is a great incentive to indulge in corruption. This situation is linked to relative deprivation theory where people are deprived of what they deserve rendering them to poverty level and in state of need. These different types of poverty situations contribute to the determination of the type of social welfare service deserved and offered.

Features of Social Welfare Services: The definition of social welfare services point to what it is all about and the features by which it is to be identified as social welfare services is provision of care and needs to those who deserve it but are incapacitated. The following therefore are embodied in social welfare services. Though it may entail some level of spontaneity. It is usually carried out in an organized manner. There are sources of funding, the workers and the beneficiaries. The need determines the service rendered. According to United Nations (1967),

Social welfare as an organized function is regarded as a body of activities designed to enable individuals, families, groups and communities to cope with the social problems of changing conditions. But in addition to and extending beyond the range of its responsibilities for specific services, social welfare has a further function within the broad area of a country's social development. In this larger sense, social welfare should play a major role in contributing to the effective mobilization and deployment of human and material resources of the country to deal successfully with the social requirements of change, thereby participating in nation-building. (p.52)

Wilensky & Lebeaux (1959) identified five features of social welfare which include: organization - delivered through organizations (Government and None Governmental

Organizations); social sponsorship_and accountability - service providers answerable to funding sources (government and donations), to provide quality service; non-profit motive (though sometimes fee-charging); functional generalization: - to meet different aspects of society need; direct focus on human consumption (example, housing, medical service, and so on). As a product of modern trend, it serve the following purposes: substituting functions of extended family and kinship system provides affectional, developmental, socialization, rehabilitative needs, facilitating economic growth - human resource development (example, by education), producing vs. consuming society resources; sustaining individuals in periods of dependency (example sickness, disability, maternity, retirement, unemployment).

Social welfare services rendered in the Igbo society in the recent time as earlier noted is a product of European missionary activities. It was not the original style of the Igbo society. It is therefore imperative to view the developmental stages of social welfare service illustrated by the Hong Kong welfare development plan (1988) in the table below.

Table 1: Historical development of social welfare as a social institution

The table explains the developmental stages of social welfare services from the traditional setting handled by the members of the family and immediate community to the technologically advanced society of the contemporary era.

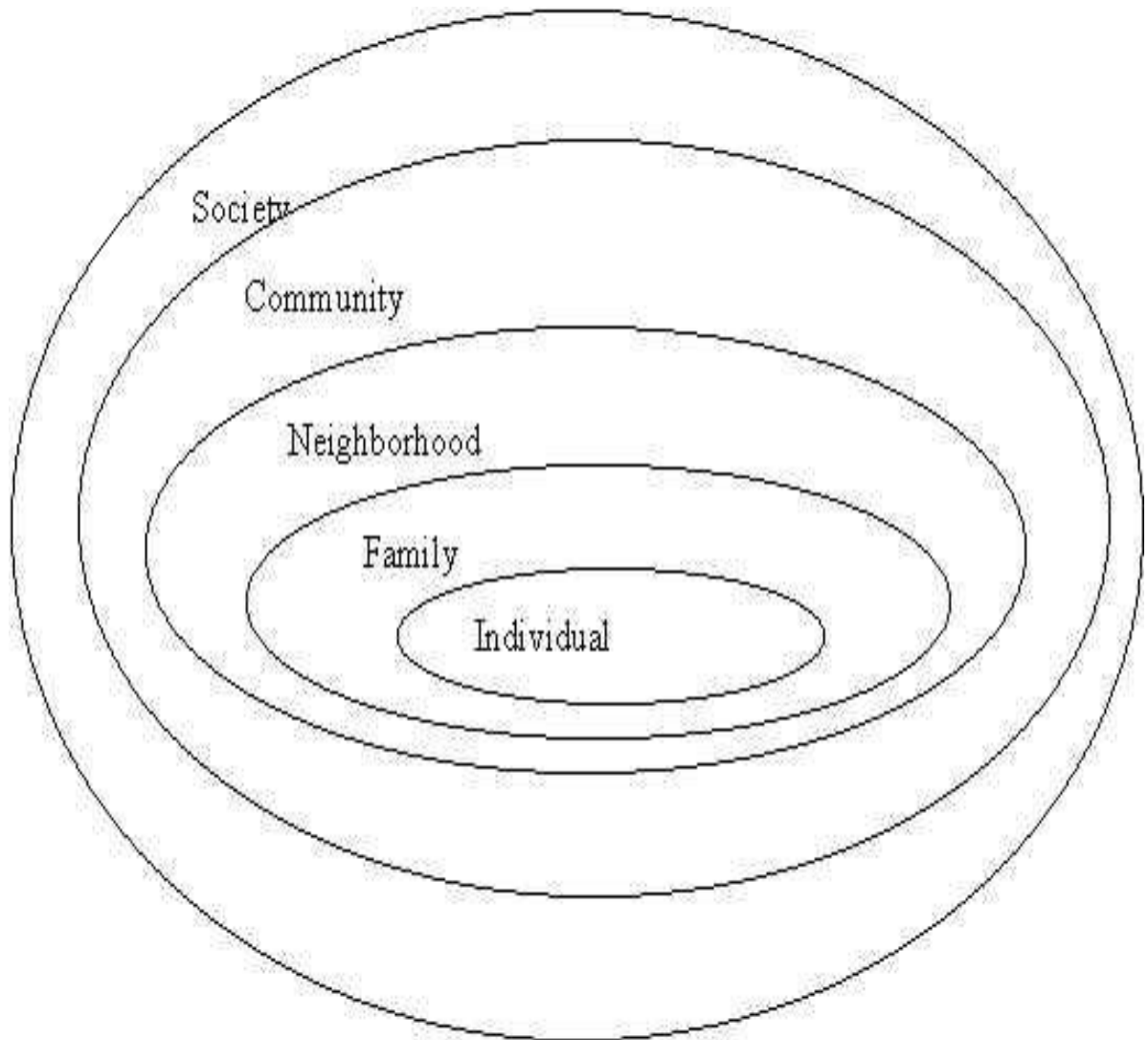
<i>Stage</i>	<i>pre-industrial, agricultural, rural society</i>	<i>Industrial urban society: (post-19th century)</i>
Provision by:	family, kinship system, neighbourhood, informal support networks, religious institutions....etc.;	systematic provision by state/ government;
People involved:	provided by layman, non-professional, unspecialized;	specialized, professionalized; elaborated differentiated services;
Basis of welfare:	based upon normative values of mutual help, kinship or locality ties, charity, religious beliefs...etc.;	based upon liberal values: universal, welfare right,
Nature of service:	largely remedial in nature, selective, stigmatized;	safety net approach, social wage concept , etc.; institutionalized; conceived as an integral system of society, not a remedial appendage;

This explains that the features of social welfare services involve human beings, who are the providers of the resources, the services and the beneficiaries. All these are subject to place, period/time, the need, the availability of the resources, and the efficiency of the personnel rendering the services. Basic to all the features is love to humanity. Care for humanity as is expressed in social welfare services springs from a loving spirit. Paul expressed the true meaning of love as an entity that has no bounds. (1 cor. 13:4-8). The love of God for all as is expressed in Mtt 5. Other features include selflessness, concern, as Jesus expressed in the in the story of the Good Samaritan.

Social welfare services can be for individual needs, family welfare need, community needs, and the entire society. The society need may hinge on reconstruction of the societal system for the improvement the societal lot.

Below is the diagram of aspects of features social welfare service by Ernest (1988),

Fig 1: Aspects of Features of Social Welfare Services by Ernest



Source: www.google.com/search?q=diagrams+of...

Retrieved on 4th October, 2017.

Some other features associated with social welfare services are that it serves community interests as it is derived from community need assessment and service designed to satisfy such needs, value-based. Social welfare services are human rights, citizen responsibility, social justice, prosperity, stability, equity, and so on. For instance it entails non-market activities. They are not directly capital generating, not subject to purely market mechanism/ dynamics (demand and supply), but depends on donation, subsidy and is accessible to all other features include citizen right, efficient service delivery system, equal opportunity. The service providers are accountable to the sponsor/donors for effective public and social administration, professional code of practice.

2.1.4 Social Welfare Services in Christianity

Social Welfare Services in Old Testament: Social welfare is part of the Church activities from inception, even in the Old Testament. It is a normal thing for people to offer help or welfare services to those in need of it. Many records of social welfare services rendered in Old Testament are evident. Abraham offered food and water to the men who were on their way to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah Gen. 18:2-10a. He in time received the favour of the knowledge of the mission of these men. Lot offered welfare service to the same men who left Abraham and headed to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 19:2-3). Rahab offered shelter to the Hebrew spies and was favoured with security from the Israelites when they came to destroy her city. Josh. 2:14-21. Though her type of service is act of sabotage. Moses offered social welfare service of redeeming his people from oppression. Rebecca gave water to Abraham's servant, Eleazar, who have travelled long distance (Gen24:17-20). Pharaoh released Joseph from prison and made him a ruler of Egypt.

These are acts of Social Welfare Services to humanity. It marked a call to duty and freedom from oppression. Welfare services therefore stand for various reasons. In all they are meant to give solace to the receiver. Pharaoh's daughter saved Moses from death and adopted him as her son. (Exo 2; 5-10). This can be equated to the work of the Rev. Sisters of the Catholic Church who take care of abandoned and Motherless Babaias. David spared Saul's life when he had every opportunity to revenge on Saul. Saul was chasing him to eliminate him. (1 Sam 26:1-12). The Jews suffered serious suppression under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It was the family of Maccabeus led by Matthias that fought and liberated the Jews from the suppressive policies of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The Jews gained their freedom from suppression, (Macc 1:26-3, 26). Jethro offered refuge to Moses when he fled Egypt for fear of Pharaoh over his murder case. Moses burning Zeal for the freedom of his people led him to the commitment that helped him to liberate his people from Pharaoh's bondage in Egypt. There are many other social welfare services found written in the Old Testament.

Social Welfare Services in New Testament: The New Testament is the record of the fulfillment of the prophecies of God in Old Testament. The prophets prophesied of the coming the Messiah. The New Testament announces the fulfillment of the messianic expectations of the Old Testament. The three wise men from the East, John the Baptist, some Jews, Peter, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus and many other prominent figures acknowledged the fulfillment of the Messianic expectations in Christ Jesus. Paul succinctly wrote in Galatia 3:15 - 19 that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Promise; the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis that through him (Abraham), all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

By the time of Jesus Christ, there were many poor and oppressed people as is indicated by his teachings and parables. The parable of the unforgiving servant, the hiring of labourers, indicates the high presence of poverty among the people at that time. The wicked tenants indicate that wickedness and injustice was the rule of the period as was exclaimed by Amos. The parable of the Good Samaritan and that of the rich man and Lazarus points to absolute lack of care and concern for the poor and the needy. This may imply the state of selfishness where only the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. There was no record of care for the poor among the Jews, except in the case of the servant whose master was about to sell to regain what he is owing, the servant pleaded for some time to enable him pay the debt and the master accepted. He pleaded for the grace, not that the master decided to pity him voluntarily.

The presence of Jesus Christ created hope for the hopeless. There was absolute need for care for the teeming number of poor people as is indicated in the feeding of five thousand people; only men were counted excluding women and children. Jesus did not just offer welfare services but took it as a duty to cater for the sick, the poor, the hungry, the depressed and the oppressed. There are many records of acts of social welfare services found in the New Testament. Jesus Christ offered a lot of social welfare services to humanity (Mtt 15:29-31). He taught them (Mtt 5: 6-7) raised the dead, (Jn 11) he made the blind to see (Mks 5:22-26), he healed the sick (Jn 10:5-9, Lk 71-10), he cast out demons (Mk 7:25-30). All these were done by Jesus to give solace and hope to the hopeless.

Many appreciated it and wanted to make him a king while some others see his act of welfare service as a threat to their lives. Reception of Social welfare service can be appreciated or rebuffed as is seen in the case of Jesus Christ who was regularly attacked by the High Priest and some members of the Sanhedrin. The teachings of Jesus on poor servants hired for day-pay

and debtors who are imprisoned compliments the condemnation of Amos on the live of the Jews who sell the poor for a pair of sandals and other social evils of the moments. These multitudes of 5,000 Jesus fed (Jn 5) and for which reason they wanted to make Jesus king indicates the hierarchy of need of the people. Jesus saw that they needed food.

The Apostles continued on the foundation laid by Jesus Christ. The apostles preached the gospel and equally provided social welfare service to the people and the Christian community who were organized to live a communal life. They shared things in common and provided for the needs of all the Christians. They healed the sick (Acts 5:12-16), made the lame to walk, (Acts 3:1-10), led people to salvific purposes through baptism and laying of hands which made them receive the Holy Spirit. Paul in his letter to the Galatians acknowledges the good done to him by the Christian brethren in Galatia (Gal 4:12-14). In order to ensure that the act of welfare services offered in the Christian community is adequate, seven deacons were appointed (Act 6:1-7). (Jn 51) The man was happy that Jesus has healed him but his healing made some people to challenge Jesus. This healing took place on a Sabbath day. This makes the healing act abomination to the Pharisees and the High Priest.

When the gentile converts faced the threat of circumcision, posed by the Judaizers, which would have made them to withdraw from Christianity, Paul's intercession arrested and addressed the situation in Jerusalem council, (Acts 15). The problem being settled gave peace of mind to gentile converts who then became free to practice the new found faith-Christianity. Paul pleaded to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus his servant. Onesimus therefore is supposed to return to his master Philemon not as a slave but as a friend.

2.1.5 The Concept of Historical Discourse

According to Nunan (1993), the expression discourse is being used in a number of different ways and there happens to be disagreement on its uses. But at least we can say that it needs to be distinguished from the expression text. Discourse, according to Crystal (1992) is a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit, such as a sermon, argument, joke or narrative. Cook (1989) states that discourse is “stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified and purposive” (p.156)

Nunan (1993) states that “discourse brings together language, the individuals producing the language and the context within which the language is used.”(p.6) Nunan (1993), further states that “a piece of discourse consist of more than one sentence and the sentences necessarily have to combine to form a meaningful whole to be called a piece of discourse” (p.6).

Discourse is a body of text meant to communicate specific data, information and knowledge, there exists internal relation in the content of a given discourse, likewise there exists external relations among discourses. As such a discourse does not exist *per se*, but is related to other discourses, by way of inter-discursivity; therefore in the course of intellectual inquiry, the discourse among researchers features the questions and answers of what is and what is not, conducted according to the meanings, denotations and connotations of the concepts (statements) used in the given field of inquiry.

Lary (2001) identifies that discourse is totality of codified linguistic usages attached to a given type of social practice. Example, legal discourse, medical discourse, religious discourse. Foucault (1969) explains that discourse describes an entity of sequences, signs, in that they are enouncements; statements of conversation.

A discourse is composed of semiotic sequences (relations among sign that communicate meaning) between and among objects, subjects and statements. The term “discursive formation” conceptually describes the regular communications (written and spoken) that produce such discourses such as informal conversations. As a philosopher, Michel Foucault applied the discursive formation in the analysis of large bodies of knowledge such as political economy and natural history.

Moreover, because a discourse is a body of text meant to communicate specific data, information and knowledge, there exists internal relation in the content of a given discourse. Likewise there exist external relations among discourses. As such discourse (in itself), is related to other discourses by way of inter-discursivity. Therefore in the course of intellectual inquiry, the discourse among researchers features the questions and answers of what is? And what is not... conducted according to meanings (denotations and correlations) of the concepts (statements) used in the given fluid of inquiry.

In humanities and social sciences, the term discourse describes a formal way of thinking that can be expressed through language; the discourse is a social boundary that defines what statements can be said about a topic. Discourse effects the person’s perspective. It is impossible to avoid discourse. For example, two notably distinct discourses can be used about various guerilla movements describing them either as “freedom fighters” or “terrorists”. In other words, the chosen discourse provides the vocabulary, expression and perhaps also the style needed to communicate. Discourse is embedded in different rhetorical genres and meagenres that constrain and enable them. That is language talking (describing) a language.

Discourse is closely linked to various theories of power and state, at least as long as defining discourse is seen to mean defining reality itself. (Power and State are the chief determinants of social and economic situation in the society. This determines whether poverty ravages or wealth is enjoyed by many). The wrong use of power can place the majority of society populace under severe poverty; hence the need for social welfare service in the society.

Hornby (2015) defines discourse as “a long and serious treatment of discussion of a subject in speech or writing”. All the literature reviewed under discourse present it as a statement of fact on issues. This is the concern of the study to make a categorical report based on the study of the welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Historical according to Hornby (2015) “usually describes something that is connected to the past or with the study of history or something that really happened in the past (P.744).” Making the discourse a historical one entails statement of facts on recorded events and oral speeches on past, tracing the course of the events to the recent time of 2016.

2.1.6 Ecclesiastical Province

The concept of Ecclesiastical Province is another theme that needed clarification in this chapter. From the study of the concept of Ecclesiastical Province presented by Kirsch, (1911), it was discovered that the concept has been a long standing name that emanated out the development of churches from the mother church. He described it as an Ecclesiastical Administrative District under the jurisdiction of an Archbishop. Ecclesiastical provinces first assumed a fixed form in the Eastern Roman Empire. The more important centres (example, Antioch for Syria, Ephesus for the Province of Asia, Alexandria for Egypt, Rome for Italy), whence Christian missionaries issued to preach the Gospel, were regarded as the mother-churches of the newly-founded Christian communities. From the second half of the second

century the bishops of the territories within the same natural geographical boundaries were accustomed to assemble on important occasions for common counsel in synods. Kirsch (1911) further notes that from the end of that century the summons to attend these increasingly important synods was usually issued by the bishop of the capital of the state province (eparchy), who also presided over the assembly, especially in the East. Important communications were also forwarded to the bishop of the provincial capital to be brought to the notice of the other bishops.

Thus in the East during the third century the bishop of the provincial metropolis came gradually to occupy a certain superior position, and received the name metropolitan. At the Council of Nicaea (325) this position of the metropolitan was taken for granted, and was made the basis for conceding to him definite rights over the other bishops and dioceses of the state province. In Eastern canon law since the fourth century, also the Synod of Antioch of 341, it was a principle that every civil province was likewise a church province under the supreme direction of the metropolitan, that is, of the bishop of the provincial capital. This division into ecclesiastical provinces did not develop so early in the Western Empire. In North Africa, the first metropolitan appears during the fourth century, the Bishop of Carthage being recognized as primate of the dioceses of Northern Africa; metropolitans of the separate provinces gradually appear, although the boundaries of these provinces did not coincide with the divisions of the empire. A similar development was witnessed in Spain, Gaul, and Italy. The migration of the nations, however, prevented an equally stable formation of ecclesiastical provinces in the Christian West as in the East. It was only after the fifth century that such gradually developed mostly in accordance with the ancient divisions of the Roman Empire. In Italy alone, on account of the central ecclesiastical position of Rome, this development was slower. However, at the end

of antiquity the existence of church provinces as the basis of ecclesiastical administration was fairly universal in the West. The delimitation of church provinces since the Middle Ages is a right reserved to the pope.

Owerri Ecclesiastical Province which is the area of concern of this study is made up of other dioceses and Owerri Archdiocese which is the seat of the Metropolitan See. The other dioceses in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province are Okigwe, Umuahia, Orlu, Ahiara and Aba. The seat of administration of the province is in Owerri where the Archdiocese is located. The Bishop of Owerri Archdiocese is the administrator of the province, hence the Metropolitan See. This administrative seat is the Episcopal See. Being under the administrative authority of the Metropolitan See does not restrict the authority of the bishops of the Suffragan dioceses. The Archdiocese only exercises vigilance and guidance over the Suffragan dioceses in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The subject, theoretical framework borders on the theories that are relevant for the study. The theory is the set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based. According to Business Dictionary (2018), it is a set of assumptions, propositions and accepted facts that attempts to provide a plausible or rational cause and effect (causal) relationships among a group of observed phenomenon. There are many related theories that are on human relations, social welfare, social deprivation equity, justice and so on. For the purpose of this study human relations theory and social deprivation and equity theory are reviewed to give focus on the study.

Many efforts have been made for the Igbo to view social welfare services as imperative for giving succor for the less privilege such as orphans, physically challenged and the vulnerable in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in particular and Igboland in general. This group of people are

created in the image and likeness of God with inalienable rights, responsibilities and freedom as able bodied men and women. They require love, care, compassion, respect and dignity as God's creation made explicit in the Human Relations, need motivation and social deprivation theory.

The choice of Human Relations Theory, and relative deprivation and equity theory is informed by the prevailing need to establish and sustain what scholars have articulated over the years in relation to human needs in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical province. From this insight the actions and activities of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, hope renew and continued renewing the less privileged in the society through social welfare services.

2.2.1 Human Relation Theory

Human Relation Theory was put forward by Mary Parker Follett in (1918). It was further developed by Elton Mayo (1920). Human Relation Theory was in reaction to the principles of scientific models of administration that Mary Follett, the champion of the movement on human relations contended that the central problems of any organization are the building and maintenance of harmonious human relations. She argued that coordination is the underlying essence of effective administration of organization. According to Follett (1918), coordination involves four principles namely;

Coordination in the early stages

Coordination as the reciprocal relation of all the factors in a situation

Coordination as a contriving process, that is, right from the beginning to the end you have to coordinate people, their works and the resources.

It was Elton Mayo, and Beethlisberger who suggested empirical data in support of human relations theory. Their experiments at Hawthorne factory of Western Electric Company (1923-

1926) produced interesting results. The experiments were conducted to study the influence of quality and quantity of illumination on efficiency in industry. They found out that each time they introduced anything new, there was improvement in production, but when the workers or newly introduced incentive were cut off, productions still increased. So they have to discover why there was no fall in production. It was then realized that human relations were the major factor.

According to them, the movement, the management starts invoking at workers as human beings and considers their welfare; they will start to develop the feeling of belonging to the organization. In other words, human relations create in the workers a sort of inner feeling or sense of belonging to the organization. This can be applied to the issue of voluntary poverty where one can associate with the poor and live at the same level with the poor to give them sense of belonging. Jesus Christ lived and associated with the poor not because he is poor but to criticize and challenge the policies that created the poverty. Archbishop Obinna A.J.V.C. associates with the vulnerable and challenge those in authority over suppression of the citizens especially the non-payment of workers' salaries.

According to Follett and Mayo (1918), their sense of acceptance and high morale matter more than monetary and economic incentives and other mechanical improvements. Application of this theory to social welfare services, in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is apparent because, as the church members, priests and religious are living and working with and among the people of God in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province enhance their pastoral development, they are to be sensitive to the feelings of the people and thus coordinate them in such a manner that they will have a sense of belonging and compassionate concern for mankind. This will lead to the general improvement in the Catholic Church which leads to Church growth.

The social welfare services of the Catholic Church in the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province promotes good harmonious relationship between people in the Catholic Church and Igboland. This is because any society that is devoid of good human relationship witnesses stagnation and retardation of development. But the Catholic Church with specific reference to the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province have over the time built and sustained this good human relations amongst the people of God in the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province through their social welfare services. For the critical examination of this study, Mary Parker Follett's human relations theory and Gurr's relative deprivation and equity theory were adopted.

2.2.2 Relative Deprivation and Equity Theory

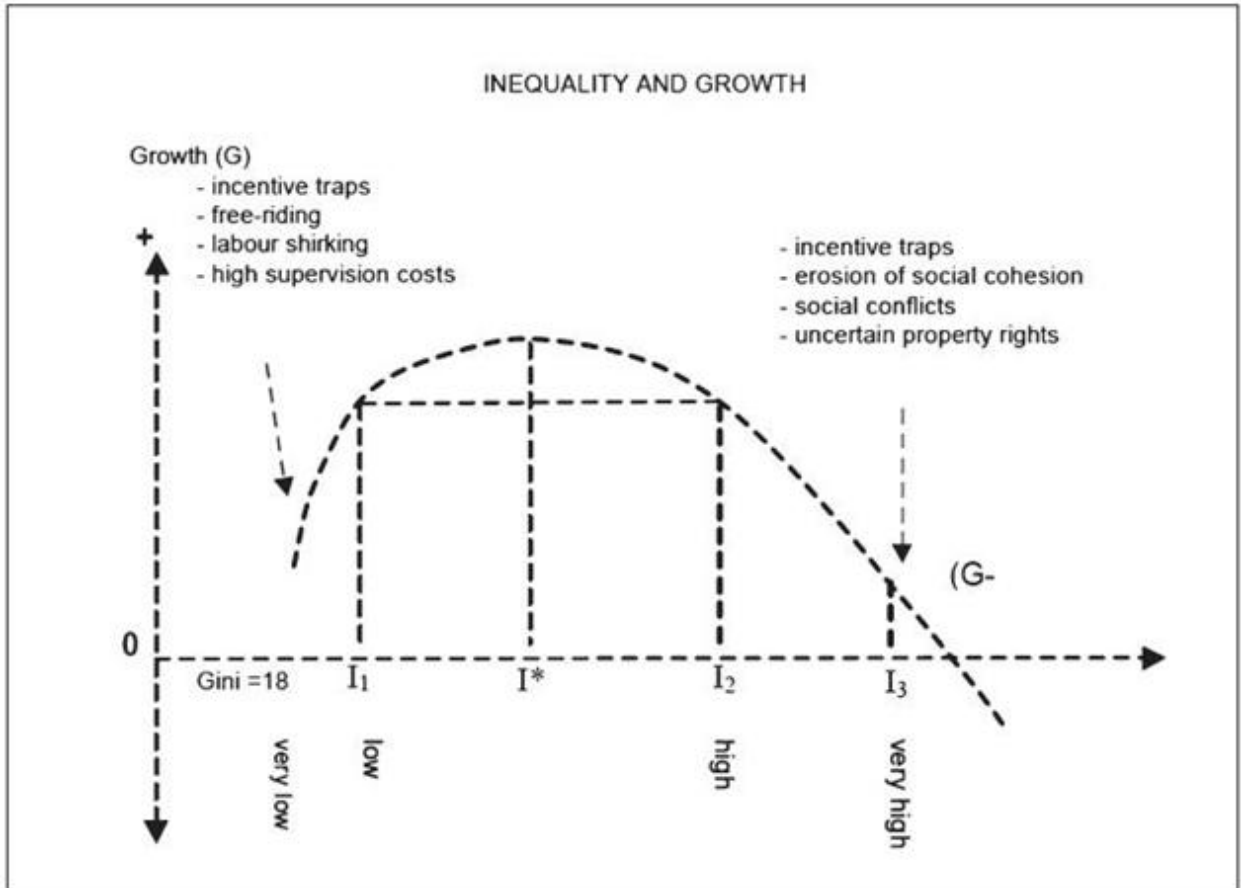
Relative deprivation theory is an ancient theory that dates back to the ancient Greece that is associated to Gurr (1970) and others. It is concerned with poverty and social segregation. Relative deprivation and equity theory are the two major social psychological approaches to the study of felt distributive injustice. Both theories postulate its antecedent conditions, emotional concomitants, and behavioural consequences. Both theories assert that not having and deserving something are preconditions of felt unjust deprivation; that resentment, anger, and dissatisfaction are among its emotional concomitants, and that the experience of unjust deprivation leads to behaviours aimed at eliminating it.

The social deprivation theory applies to the populace in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. There is need for equitable distribution of resources to avoid denial of rights and privileges in such area that is suffering from marginalization in a land of plenty. The social deprivation situation for many has left many in poor state. This the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province tackles to ensure that the poor are alleviated from such anomaly.

Davis (1959) asserted that a person experiencing relative deprivation experiences unfairness. It retains the merit of being value-neutral as between a feeling of envy and a perception of injustice. The appeal to justice will distinguish those feelings of relative deprivation which can and which cannot be properly described as a sense of envy rather than the perception of an unfulfilled right. Gurr's (1970) definition of value expectations as the "goods and condition of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled" (p.24).

Faye and Miren (1970) asserted that the similarities between the two theories are so marked that a number of re-searchers have pointed out that relative deprivation and inequity concerning distributive injustice refer to the same phenomena. Felt injustice and the undeserved benefits of others. Homans (1974) points this out when he asserts that relative deprivation is the same as distributive injustice. Adams (1965) declares that his theory of inequity is an integration of "two major concepts relating to the perception of justice and injustice," namely, relative deprivation/relative gratification and the concept of distributive justice (p.268). Pettigrew (1967), in his review of social evaluation theory says, "An unfair exchange' and 'injustice' are essentially a recasting of relative deprivation.' A fair exchange' and 'distributive justice' are not, however, equivalent to 'relative gratification' but to the neutral 'comparison level.'(p.266). According to Martin (1981), "Equity and relative deprivation theories focus on the same ... variables ... but equity labels and operationalizes those variables differently." Wheeler and Zuckerman (1977), ask, "Are relative deprivation and inequity different constructs? We think not. ... Our own position is that relative deprivation is a state experienced by the victim of inequity."(pp. 353-354).

Fig 2: Diagram on inequality and growth



Source: www.google.com/search?q=diagrams+of...

Retrieved 25th August, 2016

Despite the many similarities shared by the two theories in their approaches to felt distributive injustice, they have hardly ever been compared. The most likely reason for the lack of interaction is that the two theories have developed in different disciplines. Equity theory has grown primarily in the social psychological literature from the work of Homans (1961) and Adams (1965) and has been largely investigated in the context of behavior involving monetary exchanges. Relative deprivation theory, in contrast, evolved in the sociological and political science literature from the work of Davis (1959), Runciman (1966), and Gurr (1970) and has been applied to group- and societal-level phenomena such as worker (dis)satisfaction, urban violence, and collective political action.

It is only recently that some attempt has been made to differentiate between the hypothesized preconditions of inequity and relative deprivation (example, Cook (1977), Crosby (1976), & Hennigan, 1977; Martin, 1981). However, no intensive work has yet been done comparing the two theories in their approaches to felt distributive injustice. This examines how feelings of grievance about the distribution of outcomes have been approached by relative deprivation theory and by the exchange formulation of equity theory. This theory has three goals. The first is to deprivation of value expectations indicates that relative deprivation in his system involves the state of felt unjust deprivation. Crosby (1976) points out that "by definition, the sense of injustice is a part of relative deprivation" (p. 91). Martin (1981), in explicating the basic components of relative deprivation theory, points out that deprivation "is a feeling of discontent based on the belief that one is getting less than one deserves ... it is most frequently operationalized as dissatisfaction in the perception of injustice." The status value formulation of equity theory differs substantially from the exchange formulation. For expository ease, the term equity theory is used when discussing the exchange version.

Human relation theory and relative deprivation, and equity theory reviewed for the purpose of this study. This is because human relation is imperative in and among the church members and the priests. As they relate they are able to decipher the needy and how to involve them in the affairs of the Church. The Church in relating adequately with all and sundry will be able to decipher the level of social welfare need of the poor and needy among them.

The relative deprivation and equity theory links to the study in that it addresses the problem of deprivation of rights and privileges either directly/deliberately or through government policies and implementation strategies that can be devastating. This is very true of the situation with the Igbo citizens of which Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church is part of. The aftermath of the Nigeria-Biafra war left the Igbo with only twenty pounds irrespective of the enormity of money one has in the bank; a policy of deprivation to impoverish the people.

The rich in the society get richer while the poor get poorer. In this situation some of the citizens, in order to get a share of wealth stoop too low to enslave their conscience; engaging in many vices to survive. Where there is equity, there will equal opportunity for all to survive. There will be tendency of social poverty rate, hence less need for provision of social welfare services.

Though deprived of many opportunities to grow, the Igbo people in general, known for handwork and self-reliance developed attitude of non-total reliance on government. Many resorted to private business. Top government offices are manned by other tribes while the Igbo serve as sub-ordinate with little or no authority in contributing to policy statements and the implementations. This has relatively created deprivation and poverty among the hard-working

people of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of catholic Church. This state of poverty among many of the citizens of the Province has been an issue of concern for the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, hence the provision of Social Welfare Services to cushion the effects of the deprivation and consequent poverty of the people.

The periodic rolling out of government policies to enhance adequate provision of basic needs has born no useful fruit as the poor still get poorer. The Operation Feed the Nation, (OFN), Green Revolution, and many others yielded no viable fruit. These policies were devastated by corruption which enabled the deprivation of the poor from getting the required relief. Schuyler (1974) observes that “the rich – poor gap is, growing ever wider” (p.42). To this effect Anyanwu (2005) pointed out that helping to bridge the gap will be a positive contribution of the church. Ossi (1989) suggests that the Church is called upon to help bridge the gap by working for basic equality of all Nigerian citizens.

The theory of human relation reviewed show that relating with the people irrespective of class can give the less-privilege a good sense of belonging is a social need while that makes it easy for the privileged to ascertain the plight of the needy. The relative deprivation theory points out that deprivation constitutes social problem where people are denied the right to opportunities such as education, source of miame, health facilities and many more. This apart from generating poverty equally stirs up vices in the society.

2.3 Empirical Studies

A review of literature is carried out on studies already done in the field of the study. These studies reviewed are on both in the area of this and outside the area of the study. The

studies reviewed give insight on the gap that exist which is the lacuna the study seeks to embark on.

2.3.1 Trends in Social Welfare Spending

The following literature review touches on the highlights of prior literature on trends in social welfare spending, issues in measurement of state fiscal capacity and determinants of state and local spending on social welfare, including state fiscal capacity, need for service and political and institutional factors.

Fiscal capacity is the first determinant of state and local spending on social welfare. Overall research has found a positive association between fiscal capacity and social welfare spending. One study Mogull (1978) found that primarily fiscal resources, measured by per capita personal income and federal aid, determined state and local expenditures on antipoverty programs. Other studies Jennings, (1980). Plotnick & Winters, (1985), Dye, (1969) came to similar conclusions.

Although a strong association appears to exist between fiscal capacity and social welfare spending. Mogull (1989) notes that this correlation fails to explain the causal basis for the association. Most researchers, however, contend that the higher the income, the better able the state is to fund the additional services. The higher per capita income reduces the financial burden on the state. This is applicable to Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in the sense that the rate of indigents is dependent on the level of income in the various families in the province. Therefore high income earners can rarely be a social welfare problem to the society and the church.

Another factor to consider is the role that federal funding plays. Doughas and Flores (1998) found that federal government grants target states with the least ability to pay and the highest need for services. Without considering federal spending in 1995, high-ability states (ie, 10 states with the highest levels of personal income per poor child) spent 43 times as much low-ability states (ie 10 states with the lowest levels). When federal funding is included high-ability states only 1.82 times as much.

Need constitute the second determinant of state and local spending on social welfare. It is hypothesized that the higher the poverty and other indications of need, the more the state will spend on programmes benefiting the poor. Mogull (1989) suggest that poverty affects expenditures in two ways. First, high levels of poverty increase the pool of eligible persons. Second, increased visibility of concentrations of poor people can increase social and political activism, which in turn, leads to increased spending.

Some research has shown this positive association between poverty and social welfare expenditures. Mogull (1993) found that indicators of need such as unemployment rates, were estimated to exert a significant effect on social welfare spending, presumably by expanding the pool of eligible families. Similarly, Hicks and Swank (1983) found a direct impact of need on welfare caseloads.

Other research has shown an inverse relationship between poverty and social welfare spending. For example, Tannenwald (1999) examined the diversity across states in preferences for the size of state and local government given their fiscal need. If preferences for levels of state and local public services were similar across states, one will expect states with low levels of fiscal comfort (i.e. low ratio of tax capacity to need) to raise relatively more revenue from their

tax basis by taxing more intensively. However only a handful of states, had low fiscal comfort and are above average tax effort. Most states exhibit low tax effort and low comfort and high tax effort and high comfort. A number of states have both low and high effort. Overall, the correlation coefficient between effort and comfort was negative and statistically insignificant. This finding suggests that many low fiscal comfort states prefer lower levels of government than their fiscally more comfortable counterparts.

Another study by Jennings, (1980) examines welfare expenditure from 1964 to 1971 found an inverse association between poverty and welfare expenditures. This study found out that increases in percentage in poverty were negatively related to increases in the percentage change in welfare spending from both state funds and federal funds. As the authors note, this might reflect the inability of poor states to meet the needs of their poor residents given their low per capital income. Fry and Winters (1970) examined the effect of poverty on the ratio of expenditure benefits to revenue burdens for three lowest income classes (the net retributive impact). The authors hypothesized that the longer the proportion of low income families in the state, the greater the perceived need for redistribution through state revenue and expenditure policies. The study found however that the proportion of families with less than \$3,000 annual income was negatively related of redistribution. We should note that these two studies examined a much earlier period than our study.

Political and Institutional Determinants form the third determinant of state and local spending on social welfare. State political cultures and institutions might also affect state spending on social welfare programmes. But prior research often showed unstable results, and it failed to cover the wide range of programme areas dealt with in this study. In political science, the investigation into the effects of political and institutional factors on redistributive policies

and expenditure began with Key's study on Southern political (1949), where Key argued that one party dominance in the South limited political competition for voters and thus incentives to mobilize low income families. Also, intra-party divisions made enacting major policy initiatives more difficult for parties once in power. The result Key hypothesized, was a lack of real responsiveness to the interests of the have nots. The argument inspired a series of studies beginning in the late 1950s, which attempted to isolate the roles of party competition, party control and other institutional or political variables on retributive policies or expenditures while controlling for the effects of state wealth or fiscal resources, state need, and federal grant Dye (1966, Dye (1979).

In the earlier studies, the estimated effects of political and institutional variables proved small or nonexistent. Mogull's (1989) review of the literature found that neither party competition, hypothesized to create incentives to mobilize lower income strata nor government control by the Democratic party, view as more supportive of spending on social welfare programmes, corresponded consistently to state welfare spending in multivariable analyses.

More recent studies amended these conclusions by using more refined models and measures that attempted to isolate the conditions under political and institutional variables were likely to exert impacts. Brown (1995) claimed that inconsistent and weak effects of party across states in party coalitions, where parties were divided by class, party control over government was more likely to influence state and local spending. Brown found that the effects of Democratic Party control of government were greater, that welfare effort was reduced by the percentage of the state's population that was black.

Plotnick and Winters (1985) argued that the effect of political variables were underestimated because total welfare spending, the dependent variable typically used in the early studies, was not controlled by governors and legislators. They found out that the population density of the poor was positively related to the size of guarantee, while smaller guarantees were associated with large number of illegitimate births in the state and high proportions of non-white families or welfare.

Other studies followed Plotnick's and Winters' lead and focused on choices under state control. Gais and Weaver (2002) examined state policy choices under welfare reform and also found that the racial composition of the welfare associated with stronger sanction policies, short time limits and immediate work activity requirements for welfare recipients. Kousser (2002) like other studies found that the size of state minority population was weakly though significantly related to lower levels of spending. He found out that the measure of state ideology has no impact on spending.

The literature as a whole suggests that political and institutional factors might influence state policies and expenditure on social programmes. However the estimated effects have been unstable across the studies. Some of the instability seem to be due to differences in the measurement of dependent variables (e.g, results are more consistent when dependent variables measure actual state choices such as eligibility criteria and benefit levels rather than total spending). But some of the instability seem to be inexplicable, perhaps because of little real analysis in the studies of how states make decisions. With few exceptions, (Kousser 2002, Barilleaus and Miller 1988), most of the empirical analyses have focused on traditional cash welfare benefits, while the theories, have usually treated social or retributive policies as an undifferentiated whole. Thus little theoretical or empirical work has been done on whether and

how different kinds of social welfare programmes whether health or non-health, cash or services might be affected by different institutional or political processes or conditions.

2.3.2 Viable Strategy of solving the Problems of Poverty in the Light of Human Rights: A Case Study of Igboland in Nigeria.

Kwazu (2012) carried out research on developing a viable strategy of solving the problems of poverty in the light of human rights: A case study of Igboland in Nigeria. This research was carried in three subdivisions. Part one, structurally discusses the explication and meaning of poverty and human right. To him, poverty is a multidimensional concept which is complex in its origin as well as in its manifestations. Poverty cannot be claimed to a definite definition because of its complex nature, and different meanings due various perspectives and measurements of each national average poverty level. Poverty can be defined based on social, economic, and political perspective for a better understanding. Thematically, Kwazu (2012) defines poverty to "mean hunger, lack of shelter and powerlessness to one's right of freedom in a given society" (p.42). He further explained that "poverty can be understood as a deprivation due to lack of resources, in both material and non- material, e.g. income, housing, health, education and culture. It is a social exclusion which is inability to participate in societal opportunities because of lack of resources that are customarily available to the population" (p.43). Poverty can be of different forms or dimensions: absolute poverty, relative poverty, subjective poverty, case poverty, capability deprivation, rural poverty, and urban poverty. To him, causes of poverty due to political reasons include population growth or explosion, inadequate education and employment, environmental problems or degradation, and warfare.

There are multidimensional approaches to the measurement of poverty. Quoting Petrone (2002), he confirms that poverty could be measured in terms of food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. A person or family is impoverished if they cannot afford enough food to avoid all forms of malnutrition, adequate housing to not freeze in the winter, cloth adequately to satisfy minimum cultural standards of dignity, and enough medical care so that all members of the family have better than a 50 percent probability of living to age 60 (p.54). But he could contend with this view as ultimate and all-encompassing, because it is restricted only to material poverty since poverty is beyond just material needs. He is of the opinion that, one may have shelter, but lag behind in education for instance.

The World Bank method of measuring poverty is based on incomes or consumption levels. In other words, a person is considered poor if his or her consumption or income level falls below the minimum level or the poverty line necessary to meet some basic needs. He mentioned Human Poverty Index for developing countries as another approach for measuring poverty, which focuses on living a long and healthy life, having access to education, and a decent standard of living. Therefore he stipulated three measures that are the most commonly used, namely: poverty headcount, poverty gap, and severity of poverty.

This work further dwells on the experience of poverty in Igboland and sheds more light on the subject matter. The Igbo people concept of the poor as *Ogbenye* is tressed. Poverty is depicted as Ubiam (wretchedness). *Umu-Ogbenye* or *ndi uwa* include the needy, the destitute, orphans, widows, men who never married and who have little or no crops planted. The very poor who have not even a goat or a yam seed are typical *Ogbenye*; hence the expression, *Ogbenye onu ntu*, the very suffering poor. This expression as a matter of fact, represents extreme poverty. Here the author observes that the Igbo understanding of poverty is relative and classifies poverty into

categories: *Ogbenye* and *Ubiam*. While *Ogbenye* generally denotes and describes one who is poor, *Ubiam* paints a picture of somebody wretched, or who finds himself in an extreme situation of need and lack, under which a human being can hardly hope for the next day. The Igbo see the wealthy - *Ogaranya*- as the mayor or the modern capitalist, who has wives and many children with a number of servants and slaves and a big compound, whereas the poor, *Ogbenye*, in contrast, do not have these in their possession.

This work enumerated the causes of poverty in Igboland. It described Nigeria-Biafra Civil war as the journey to structural poverty in Igboland. The consequences of war had enormous effects which categorized a good number of the group into classes of destitute namely, the sick and the infirm, the amputated or the maimed. In Anambra State for instance, some of them were found inhabiting leper colonies with lepers. Many people lost a great deal to the war: their houses, private investments like industries or companies, private documents, and most importantly their families (p.128). Further on economic loss, the author quoted Achebe (1983) who explicitly confirmed that the routing of the Igbo people on the economic aspect continued with banking policies that nullified bank accounts of the people during the war and the indigenization that deprives them of promising business supporters after the war. Thus as a consequence of the war, the Igbo people today suffer from marginalization. Another effect or consequence of the war is the structural discrimination or socio-political exclusion of the Igbo group from certain substantive positions in the nation's administrative set up, such as the Head of State of Nigeria, Head of the Army, or Heads of key federal parastatals, etc.,

Political Instability in leadership is another contributing factor to poverty in Igboland. This happens when the political leaders are not elected but selected through the intervention of so called "political godfathers" instead of the masses. And this is not in congruence with ethics in

politics. These selected leaders are often under the influence of the "political godfathers." As the author observed, this practice of godfatherism has severally caused a chaotic situation, such as destruction of property and life. This practice of selecting leaders has fuelled political instability and increased insecurity, crippled the economy, dwarfed the development of the state and worsened the poverty situation as submitted by the author.

Weak Governance according to the author is a system of centralizing power in the hands of those whose interest in politics is basically selfish. Weak governance results in poor development which has caused untold hardship. Weak governance has affected education in Igboland. Another effect of weak governance is government's neglect of roads network in Igboland.

Underemployment of many Igbo, despite their industriousness and private businesses, are still jobless and underemployed. They have insufficient paid jobs. And this insufficient income opportunity or rather capability deprivation has proved to be a source of poverty in Igboland. The simple logic according to the author is this: lack of employment and steady income leads to poverty.

Inadequate Health Services has led to poor health condition of many and without good health of body and mind, one achieves practically nothing. It is the healthy that go for education; that are fully eligible as human resources for the development of a nation. Poor health impedes productivity and opportunity for one to be employed. The author draws inference thus: poor health leads to unemployment, which results into poverty. Therefore, poor health generally causes poverty.

Environmental Degradation is one of the causes of poverty in Igboland, the authors argued. This environmental degradation can be an ecological disaster, which takes different dimensions such as, flooding, land deforestation, and bush burning. These affect agriculture in no small measure, thereby causing poverty.

Polygamy: Here, the author observes that although polygamy has socio-cultural and economic reasons in Igbo society whereby farmers needed many hands in agriculture which led to marrying two or three wives, on the other hand, it multiplies the effects of poverty. Polygamy has some consequences: social, economic, and moral obligations in the up-bringing of children. Therefore the author submits that a poor family that can hardly afford these obligations exposes their children to dangerous life experiences and a condition of poverty. Large families, according to the author, are one of the causes of poverty in Igboland, especially when the parents are irresponsible or jobless.

Victims of Poverty in Igboland as presented in this work are mainly children in rural areas that are the first group that fall victims of poverty in Igboland because they have poor access to schools. The poverty situation among some Igbo families, as the author observes, has exposed many children to street hawking and child labour. This exposure to hawking is to support their family financially. But according to the author, the harsh conditions and risks to which they are exposed are physically and psychologically harmful and can cause serious social adjustment problems. Emotionally, some of these children are oppressed and maltreated, and their fundamental human rights are often infringed, namely: denial of meals, self-expression, and good schools. The girls among them experience ill-treatment and emotional abuses. House wives are other victims of poverty in Igboland; they are ever dependent on their husbands. The widows are equally victims of poverty because of their plight in some quarters in Igbo society. The

author identifies groups that are vulnerable to poverty as: low paid earners, the elderly people, and the sick.

The effects of Poverty in Igboland Here, Kwazu (2012) gives the following as a few socio-economic effects of poverty in Igbo society: (a) poor health (b) human trafficking, and (c) insecurity of life and property.

Efforts to alleviate Poverty in Igboland as is stipulated by Kwazu (2012) in this work include adequate attention to the following areas: healthcare delivery systems; adult and non-formal education programme; water supply and sanitation projects. The positive contributions of various Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are making in Igboland in poverty reduction are noted. The NGOs are divided into three major groups: (a) The International (sometimes called transnational) Non-governmental Organizations known as INGOs, (b) the foreign based NGOs known as FONGOs, and (c) the local NGOs known as LONGOs. NGOs in Igboland are the LONGOs, which have provided directly various basic public services to the poor. The NGOs in Igboland operate on the principle of solidarity with rural dwellers, who are poverty-stricken. Through their mini-job creation, a few poor people have got temporary jobs. The author also recognized the role that the Church in Igboland plays in alleviating poverty. Through health services and building of schools, the Church in Igboland liberates people from the shackles of poverty. The study has indicated various levels of poverty, the causes and the impact on the Igbo society. Though it enumerates some measures to alleviate poverty, it does not apply specifically to Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The study acknowledges the church liberating people from shackles of poverty.

There is no specific acknowledgement of the particular church. Besides the study on Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in provision of social welfare services seeks to study much more elaborately than poverty situation.

2.3.3 Causes of Economic Inequality

Leung (2015) carried out a research work on causes of economic inequality. This work stipulates that economic inequality which is also known as income inequality, wealth disparity, the gap between the rich and the poor, or wealth and income differences consists of disparities in the distribution of wealth and income. It refers to inequality among groups and individuals within a given society. Economic disparity is seen as the space that divides the rich from the poor. According to Ray, as cited in Ogbeide and Agu (2015), "economic inequality occurs when one individual is given some material choice/resources and another is denied the same thing" (p.443). Economic Inequality focuses on wealth, income, consumption, gender, employment, health variables etc. Economic inequality is a social problem and can hinder a long term growth.

Leung (2015) gives some reasons why the gap between the rich and the poor keeps widening. The first contributing factor that Leung stated as a reason for different levels of wealth is difference in income is that, people are paid different wages. There are several reasons why some people are paid millions while some merely earn minimum wage; wages are determined by labour market wages and are a function of the market price of skills required for a job. In a free market, the "market price of a skill" is determined by market demand and market supply. Education which is the second factor, affects wages. Statistics have really shown that Individuals with different levels of education often earn different wages. This is so because the level of education is often proportional to the level of skill. With a higher level of education, a person

often has more advanced skills that few workers are able to offer, justifying a higher wage. In fact, the impact of education on economic inequality is very profound.

Growth in technology widens income gap. On this factor, growth in technology arguably renders joblessness at all skill levels. For unskilled workers, computers and machinery perform a lot of tasks these workers used to do, even more effectively and efficiently. Hence, jobs involving repetitive tasks have largely been eliminated. Skilled workers are not also immune to the nightmare of their losing jobs. Gender which is the fourth factor does contribute to a difference in wages in society and hence economic inequality. This is a possible factor as some societies frown at women who engage in some duties. Such duties a special reserve of men such as tanker drivers and mechanics. It even goes down to the training of such candidates for such profession in schools. Personal factors - It is generally believed that innate abilities play a part in determining the wealth of an individual. Hence, individuals possessing different sets of abilities may have different levels of wealth, leading to economic inequality. Leung argues further, more determined individuals may keep improving themselves and striving for better achievements, which justifies a higher wage.

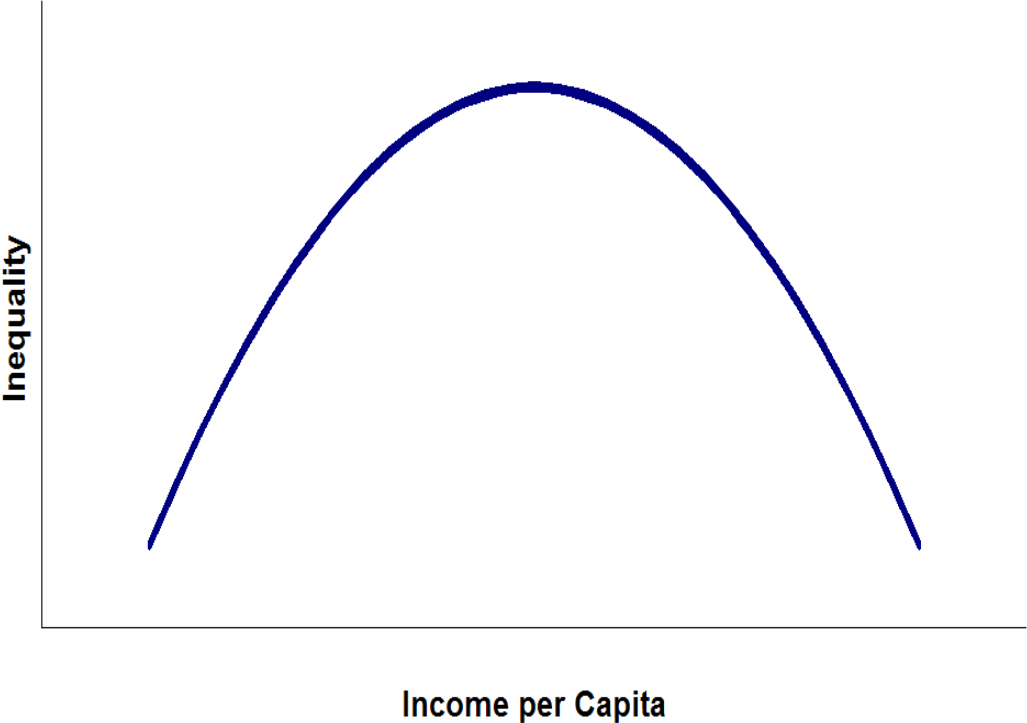
Economic inequality is a vicious cycle, as the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. Under this condition, there is a wealth concentration in the possession of already-wealthy individuals. The reason is very simple: People who already hold wealth have the resources to invest or to leverage the accumulation of wealth, which creates new wealth. The process of wealth concentration then arguably makes economic inequality a vicious cycle. The effects of wealth concentration may extend to future generations. Children born in a rich family have an economic advantage, because of wealth inherited and possibly education, which may increase their chances of earning a higher income than their peers. These advantages create another round of the vicious

cycle. Piketty (2014) holds the view that inequality will remain as long as the aforementioned wealth concentration process persists through generations, and this unequal distribution of wealth causes social and economic instability. Piketty proposes a global system of progressive wealth taxes to help reduce inequality and avoid the vast majority of wealth coming under the control of a tiny minority.

According to Kuznets' hypothesis as quoted in Keeley (2015), inequality is low in pre-industrial societies, where most people live at subsistence levels. As industrialization begins, however, gaps start to widen subject to the rising earnings of factory workers compared to those of farmers, and they continue to grow with the emergence of increasing specialization of industrial workers (p.65).

The figure below explains the gap that increases with the advent of technological advancement and modernization between the rural subsistence farmer and a highly industrialized worker.

Fig. 3: Kuznets curve



Source: <http://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/case-studies/causes-economic-inequality>

Retrieved on 6th July, 2015.

What Kuznets is arguing in essence is inequality follows a natural trajectory as economies move further away from their agricultural roots. Kuznets insists that economic growth inevitably creates inequality. Kuznets presented that increased taxation by the state which is distributed as benefit to the people helped to reduce the gap. This is represented in the cone-shaped curve called the Kuznets curve.

According to some scholars, a major cause of economic inequality within modern economies is the determination of wages by the capitalist market. In the capitalist market, the wages for jobs are set by supply and demand. If there are many workers willing to do a job for a great amount of time, there is a high supply of labor for that job. If few people need that job done, there is low demand for that type of labor. When there is high supply and low demand for a job, it results in a low wage. Conversely, if there is low supply and high demand (as with particular highly skilled jobs), it will result in a high wage. The gap in wages produces inequality between different types of workers. Increased demand for high-skilled workers adds to a widening wage gap. Companies are investing more heavily in developing a high-skilled workforce, driving wages up for high-skilled workers. This leads to de-emphasizing or automating low-skilled functions, pushing wages for low-skilled workers down. Neckerman and Torche (2007) maintain that economic inequality can be due to reasons like receiving a whole variety of an unequal earning, wealth or opportunity.

Sutter (2013) was of the opinion that the first step to reduce economic inequality is for people to recognize how divided we have become advanced, and he suggested seven ways to narrow the rich-poor gap, breaking down of the social barriers, improve public schools and unify them, raise the minimum wage (policies like a higher minimum wage would help the economy work for everyone), tax the rich at a reasonable rate, give workers a voice in their companies,

reign in crazy-huge donations to political campaigns, and give money to the poor (maybe at random). In addition to the above list of Sutter, some economists contended through nationalization or subsidization of products (providing goods and services that everyone needs cheaply or freely), such as, food, health care, and housing, income inequality can be reduced. Also, government can effectively raise the purchasing power of the poorer members of the society and minimum wage legislation, which is raising the income of the poorest workers.

Keith-Lucas (1989) asserted that though all Christian groups continue to give consideration to the poor, the emphasis on personal responsibility meant that the poor were responsible to live holy lives. God would bless faithful believers. The reformers were outraged at the abuses of power perpetrated by the church. According to Couture (1991), they described the greed of the Ecclesiastical establishment and sought to restore biblical concern for individual dignity and faith. The perspective of social welfare teaching was also shifting. This is against Proverbs chapter 11 that said “one man gives freely, yet grows all the richer, another withholds what he should give and only suffers want. A liberal man will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered” (vs 24 - 25). The secret of wealth is in giving, liberating the many poor and wretched masses of our time. The scripture once again reminded the Christians according to 1Jn:3 that:

By this we know love that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay our lives for the brethren. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him. (vs 16 - 17).

It could be observed that the biblical imperatives to show compassion and mercy had ebbed in relation to the need to urge the poor towards personal responsibility and labour. For Dolgoff

(1997) the principle of less eligibility established in the poor laws continued to show that of those who receive aid.

2.3.4 Economic Well-being of Kin and Non-kin caregivers

Another interesting empirical study was carried out by Berrick, Reiko, and Wiegmann (2008) on the economic well-being of kin and non-kin caregivers: comparing financial resources, payment levels and service supports. Overall, it was found out that the sample of kin and non-kin caregivers included in this study are more similar to one another than they are different with no differences in the characteristics of kin and non-kin for a large majority of measures. They indicated that this finding is in sharp contrast to dozens of other studies over the past two decades and may be related to the following: It may indicate that the two selected counties for this study draw from a different general population than what is typical in other studies; adjustments in kin policy over the past two decades, including the narrowing of licensing standards for kin and non-kin, may have changed who is included among characteristics of kin; the profile of conventional foster parents may be changing to bear greater similarities to kin, suggesting more vulnerabilities than what was found in the past and a decline in socio-demographic characteristics.

It is believed that the introduction of Resource Family Approval standards in California will continue the trend of making more similar kin and non-kin caregivers. The two groups represent economically vulnerable caregivers. One-quarter of kin and non-kin had annual incomes below \$25,000 – well below the poverty rate for a family of four (the average household size in this sample). Another one-third lived on household incomes between \$25,000 - \$50,000, well under the self-sufficiency index generally acknowledged for families. The stark differences they noted in average monthly payment rates between kin and non-kin at the first time

(approximately \$200) are important as most kin were trying to raise their relative children below the sufficiency standards. At the second time, it was found that about half of the kin caregivers had seen their monthly subsidy rise following the implementation of the ARC. It was anticipated that the average payment differences between kin and non-kin are likely to continue to diminish, though caregivers in Non-ARC counties will continue to see significant payment differentials. This study on provision care which is a social welfare service is pointing to the fact that the level of availability of financial resources determines the extent a caregiver can go on provision of social welfare service to those that need it. This applies to Owerri Ecclesiastical Province that engages in various strategies to provide welfare services to the Needy.

Findings from this sample suggest that caregivers receiving Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) or no funding at all compared to caregivers receiving a foster care subsidy cared for children with more challenging peer relationships, reported poorer health, and maintained parenting attitudes that reflected higher levels of attachment to the children in their care.

This study also revealed larger-than-expected proportions of kin receiving foster care subsidies, but troubling findings regarding the proportion of kin reporting zero state support. This study was carried out using the population that depend on government subsidy or support under the state policy statements and provisions towards care for the less-privileged. In all, it is a study carried out to find out welfare status of children under the care of vulnerable parents who need to depend on support of either the government, agencies like the Church or individuals to be able to sustain a living. Findings indicate that they are in need of financial support to give adequate care to the dependent children. The stated needs of caregivers, to receive greater financial remuneration for their challenging work, to partner with responsive social workers, and

to gain access to more services for children, are common themes as revealed by Shlonsky & Berrick, (2001). They found out that Child welfare workers are often stretched due to their large work volume. Agency level efforts to support their partnership with kin and non-kin caregivers and to ensure the provision of accurate and timely information about financial supports, the child's case, and service availability will likely have far-reaching effects in reducing caregiver stress and burden, and increasing the quality of care. The findings indicate that there is need for adequate and timely intervention in supplying the necessary information towards adequate and timely provision of social welfare service. This information is equally important for effective provision of social welfare service in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Social welfare programs strive to improve the well-being of needy and vulnerable populations. The fact that states spend different amounts on these programs is well known, but why they do so is less understood, including the extent to which differences are affected by states' relative fiscal capacity, defined as their ability to raise revenue through taxation.

2.3.5 State Fiscal Capacity Affects on Social Welfare Spending

The federal government has long played an important role in offsetting state fiscal disparities. However, recent changes in federal grant programmes might have affected poor and rich states in different ways. This study was conducted for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by The Lewin Group and the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government. It addresses how a state's fiscal capacity affects its spending on social welfare, how states differ in their "packaging" of services for low-income populations, how economic conditions affect state spending on social welfare, and how the poorest states have adjusted to their relative economic austerity. The study also looks at factors in addition to fiscal capacity and federal grants that might influence state

spending, including state needs for social welfare spending, as measured by poverty and unemployment rates and political and institutional factors, including state budget processes. For the purpose of this report, we measure fiscal capacity—and thus distinguish between rich and poor states—using states’ real per capita income. By social welfare spending, we mean per capita states spending on programs intended to support lower-income households, usually programs that are means tested. These programs might include cash assistance programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or cash payments under AFDC’s replacement, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); health programs such as Medicaid and state child health insurance programs (SCHIP); and a wide variety of non-health service programs providing child care, foster care, low-income energy assistance, and social services to the physically disabled and programs funded by the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

The Study conducted over 21 months; the study involved two major activities: Analysis of expenditures across 50 states. The analysis examined variation in spending patterns across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The team analyzed 24 years of data on state and local social welfare spending patterns for four categories of social welfare spending and a residual category of all other state and local spending. These categories encompassed cash assistance; Medicaid; non-health social services, such as child care, child welfare, energy assistance, and services to the aged and disabled; public hospitals; and all other non-social welfare spending.¹ Because we are interested in the effects of state fiscal capacity on social welfare spending, we consider only spending that goes through the budgets of state and local governments, not direct expenditures by the federal government. Thus, we do not analyze the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Food Stamp Program (FSP), or, with some exceptions, Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

They approached the analysis of spending in three ways: (1) employing descriptive data to analyze trends and patterns, (2) developing and estimating econometric models of state spending to estimate how differences in states' fiscal capacity affect spending, and (3) using the results from the descriptive and econometric analysis to better understand the spending variations we observed between rich and poor states. They collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from six states— Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Carolina, and West Virginia—selected for their high needs relative to their fiscal capacities. Findings from the econometric analysis were used to compare states on their propensities to spend on certain types of social welfare. Comparisons were drawn between rich states (i.e., states with high fiscal capacity) and poor states (i.e., states with low fiscal capacity) and among the six states selected for case studies.

To obtain in-depth information about how state fiscal capacity affects state spending on social programs, it was conducted through site visits to case study states. Four questions guided our interviews: How do states with the greatest needs and the least resources make financial decisions regarding their social welfare programs? How do these states respond to short-term financial challenges, such as the recent state fiscal crises? Why do some poor states spend more on social welfare programs than other poor states? And why did some spend more on certain programs and less on others? The analyses cover spending from 1977 through 2003, though the econometric study ends in 2000.

States of less fiscal capacity spent less per capita on social welfare programs than states with higher per capita incomes. Federal grants did not reduce absolute spending differences between rich and poor states. Average federal grants to the wealthiest states were actually higher in dollar terms when compared to states with lower fiscal capacity. However, because state own-

source spending was much lower in poor states, federal intergovernmental grants constituted a larger share of the social welfare budgets of poor states than of rich states.

State fiscal capacity bore a stronger relationship to spending on non-health social welfare programs than on health-related programs. Between 1977 to 2000, differences between rich and poor states were greatest for spending on cash assistance and non-health social services (such as childcare, child welfare, energy assistance, transportation assistance, and programs for the homeless). Differences between rich and poor states were smaller for health-related programs, such as per capita spending on Medicaid and payments to public hospitals.

Between 1977 and 2000, state spending on social welfare changed in major ways. Even after controlling for the higher levels of inflation found in health services, spending on Medicaid greatly increased throughout this period, most rapidly in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Spending on non-health social services rose gradually throughout this period. Average state spending on cash assistance rose in the late 1980s and early 1990s but fell dramatically after the mid-1990s.

These trends varied greatly between rich and poor states. Medicaid grew substantially for all states, but the growth was strongest among those of low fiscal capacity. The correlation between state fiscal capacity and per capita spending on Medicaid declined over time, as per capita spending by poor states climbed to levels only exceeded by the wealthiest states, while Medicaid spending in wealthier states grew slowly or stalled during the late 1990s. Wealthier states reduced their cash assistance spending during the middle and late 1990s, while poor states on average showed little change in their per capita spending on cash assistance throughout the last two and a half decades. By contrast, differences grew between rich and poor states in their

spending on non-health social service programs, as growth in spending on these non-health services lagged behind in the poorest states.

These changes produced major shifts in the composition of social welfare budgets in rich and poor states. States of all fiscal capacity have greatly increased the proportion of their spending devoted to Medicaid while reducing the proportion spent on cash assistance. Poor states, unlike rich states, also reduced the proportion of their budgets spent on non-health services. The packages of benefits offered by poor states have thus changed markedly in recent years, toward health care and away from non-health services. This applies to the area of the study with a reasonable number of people to be offered social welfare services to alleviate their condition.

Econometric analyses found that different factors influenced different social programs. Spending on cash assistance was increased by federal grants, unemployment, and greater population density. Medicaid spending was increased by fiscal capacity, grants, and unemployment. However, the effects of federal grants were particularly strong for Medicaid spending, and population density had an effect opposite to its impact on cash assistance, with higher levels of spending found in comparatively rural states. Finally, on-health social services were most affected by overall state income. It was strongly and consistently related to state fiscal capacity and federal grants for non-social-welfare programs.

The econometric models were most successful in explaining spending differences and changes among wealthy states; the models fared less well in accounting for spending in poor states. Most of the variables—including fiscal capacity, unemployment, and federal grants—showed relatively strong effects among the wealthier states. In poorer states, fiscal capacity,

unemployment, and federal grants showed little or no effects. One important exception was Medicaid. Spending on Medicaid was significantly and strongly affected by federal grant dollars in poor states.

There were substantial differences among poor states in their long-run propensities to spend on programs (as captured in the “state effects” of the econometric model). In particular, there were different propensities for spending on cash assistance and health-related programs (Medicaid and public hospitals). Some poor states (mostly rural southern states) spent very little on cash assistance but relatively more on health.

Though studies have been carried out as shown by the review of empirical studies, none has been done on social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in a historical manner to put into consideration the historic events of 1968 during the Nigeria – Biafra war, through the series of social and economic developments of the area to the recent period of economic recession.

The Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is highly involved in the provision of social welfare service to the poor and the needy. It has not been given adequate awareness through scholarly research and exposure to well-meaning citizen to be seriously engaged in the provision of the service.

2.3.6 Women Empowerment in Igboland

A study was carried out by Anyanwu (2005) on women empowerment in Igboland. The main focus of this study is on the effort of women – specifically the catholic Women Organization (CWO) – towards improving the lot of their fellow women. The topic of the study is; “Women and sustainable development: help to self-help from Igbo Catholic Women

Organization (CWO) perspective”. The study aimed at drawing the attention of the organization and other interested readers to what some of the CWO branches in the various parishes are doing in terms of sustainable development to themselves and the entire community.

Asogwa (1998) stipulates that:

Self-help organization is an autonomous organization which subsists (sic) on the contributions of the members in terms of entrepreneur, skills labour, capital or land. Self-help organizations are considered a means of achieving self-reliance which has been defined as the condition whereby the poor majority no longer depend on benevolence, initiatives and skills of third parties (outsiders) to secure their interest. (p.95).

The researcher explained help to self-help to share in the purpose of empowering the receivers to become self-reliant to secure their well-being. Help to self-help presupposes initial help from outside oneself or one group to enable one or group begin to get going on their own initiative, skill, resourcefulness and so on. The initial help can be given in financial or material form or by way of transfer of technical know-how. It can also be sponsoring group(s) or person(s) to learn a trade or to acquire some skills. In each case it is expected that whatever is received as help is to be invested judiciously, managed or employed in such a way as to make the self or group helped less dependent but rather self-reliant.

It is thus clear that to realize the goal of help to self-help demands hard work and initiative on the part of the recipients. He acknowledges the fact that women in the churches and communities in the recent time undertake various levels of different kinds of projects for development and sustenance of people, the church and the communities. He reiterated that this is

a statement of fact in Igboland because Igbo love for development through communal effort is unique in the whole Nigeria. Set with this knowledge , he proceeds to find out some of the ways women in Igboland especially under the auspices of the Catholic Women Organization (CWO), have sponsored and are continuing to sponsor programmes of sustainable development as helps to self-help.

The researcher with the background, set out to highlight through the study the achievements of the Catholic Women Organization (CWO). He also proceeded to articulate some of the lessons that can be learnt from the execution of some of such programmes by women and Catholic Women Organization (CWO) branches; and to project a number of such programmes being executed by Catholic Women Organization (CWO) and women in various places in Igboland.

The researcher found out that there are some projects instituted by the women and Catholic Women Organization (CWO) and manned by them. One of such findings is the Development Education centre (DEC) Enugu that is under the leadership of Asogwa Cecilia. Writing about the centre Asogwa (1998) notes that;

DEC in the past twelve years has intensified her programmes among majority of women suffering deprivation in Igbo societies of Eastern Nigerian through her identified and mapped out programmes with the women concerned aimed at building a mere equitable and sustainable society where Igbo women in Nigeria will be self-actualized and recognized as persons (p.55)

In the same vein, Asogwa (1998) further explains that the Development Educational Centre, Enugu carries out programmes through which majority of the rural women from Enugu “have a

more human face”. One of the programmes is the Awareness Building programmes conducted to over two hundred villages annually with at least ten thousand women participants. The awareness building seminars/talk center on human and legal rights of women, literacy training skills acquisition for women, land succession and property rights. Other programmes include new agricultural technique, family planning programmes and family health-care delivery programme through the training of community health workers and organization of drug revolving loan scheme in fifty remote communities annually.

According to Asogwa (1998), “Development Education Centre trains women leaders for a positive empowerment action in communities. The centre is committed to lay training both in the church and the society as an Association of Christian Lay Training Centres in Africa (ACLTCA) affiliated to World Council of Churches (W.C.C), Geneva, Switzerland (pp 56-57).

More activities of the centre include training of two hundred women group leaders annually in the field of organizational techniques, leadership qualities management of resources, accounting, book-keeping, projects identification and programme implementation. This training Asogwa (1998) explains is a participatory kind and mandatory for all Development Education Centre assisted women self-help groups “where each women group leaders are expected to participate in the leadership training programme consistently each year for the five years of their leadership of tenure.

Training of fifty out-of-school female youths in sewing, textile designing, computer, typing, printing cosmetology and beauty, bag production and many more is an aspect of the duties of Development Education Centre, Enugu. This particular programme is designed to last for two years. It takes place in the Development Education Centre and in different parts of

Enugu. Participants to this training are supported with transport allowance and accommodation. Such participants must be accredited and partly sponsored by Development Education Centre Women self-help association (Asogwa, 1998).

Notable is the fact that at the end of the training the Development Education Centre gives loan repayable after two years to each successful participant. This loan according to Asogwa (1998) will enable the beneficiary to establish her own business. A guarantor endorsement is needed not just as a surety to the loan but to ensure that these graduates make a good start. It was also found out that there is a two-week training exercise yearly for adult women in such skills as mentioned above or any other skill acquisition training the women may indicate interest in. The Development Education Centre pays for 50% of the training bill while the women group will pay the other 50%.

Other programmes run by the centre include loans to ten women groups annually for the establishment of a capital income generation project to be repaid in two years. This includes a credit scheme for more than three thousand women every year (from December to November the next year). This loan attracts interest of 24%.

Considering the findings on the Development Education Centre, it can be deduced that the services are helpful to the needy. It has social implication. It is an aspect of welfare services rendered for upliftment and empowerment of women who are socially deprived in one way or the other. But it lacks totally free service to the beneficiaries. The organizer of the programme places some charge on some of the services as the findings indicate. Despite the charge on the loan and the training toward giving financial help, skills acquisition and enlightenment to the ignorant and illiterate. This is an aspect of social welfare services though not free. Other aspects

of social welfare services are hitherto lacking in this service. It incorporates women in the church, it is only an aspect. It does not include all aspects of social welfare services of concern of the study. Men who are equally part of, if not the main sources financial sustenance to social welfare services are not included in this study. This study is not focused on Owerri Ecclesiastical Province but concentrates on Enugu as a focal point to other parts of Igboland. The service charges can deter qualified candidates from receiving the stipulated welfare services. These points so far raised creates a vacuum that is yet to be covered in the study of this work.

Anyanwu (2005), continues the study on help to self-help empowerment in some other parts of Igboland. This time he is focused on Catholic Diocese of Okigwe. Three parishes formed his sample. The three parishes are, our Lady Fatima, Isikwuato, St. Anne's Parish Eluama and Christ the King Parish Umueze II Ehime. The area of the study fall within Owerri Ecclesiastic Province of Catholic Church but is just within one of the Dioceses of the Ecclesiastical Province.

From the study in Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Isikwuato, it was gathered that the Catholic Women Organization were able to institute a nursery/primary school. Those employed to teach there are sustained through their pay. A bus is attached to the institution for the purpose of bringing the children to school and to take them back home after school. Between the early morning hours when the driver brings the children to school and the time of dismissal when he drives them home, the bus is put on road to commute between Ugba junction and Akara Junction. The school is a social welfare institution, it prepares the pupils for their future. The money realized from the bus and the school is used to relieve the women from series of contributions in the church as the money is used to pay for the contributions.

The Catholic Women Organization at St. Anne Parish Eluama and Christ the King Parish Umueze II Ehime where the researcher served, the women organized themselves to buy things they hire out to these who are engaged in ceremonies. Such items of hire include chairs, canopies, plates, spoons, flasks and pots. They engage in this as a means of financial sustenance in order to reduce the burden of financial contribution on the women.

The lesson he postulates from the study is that other women should wake up to embark on such duties of help to self-help and even do more to alleviate women, especially the socially oppressed and deprived. Those who received skill training are equipped with manual and technical know-how to be employed or to be self-employed or even employers. Apart from skill acquisition and empowerment, they also fulfill another source of development-conscientization which Frère (1972) described as “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and take action against oppressive elements of reality” (P. 14). They are assisted to grow in self-awareness and realization of what is happening around them with a challenge to take their destiny in their own hands. This refers to self-reliance which Rahman (1993) presents that it “implies de-alienation from his economic and social environment” (P.18).

This study by Anyanwu (2006) is on efforts of women in creating sustainable living through self-help. They touched on certain areas such as skill acquisition and empowerment for women, engagement in some means of financial sustenance such as school and items for hire. These can cushion the effect of social deprivation and poverty, no matter how meagre on the concerned citizens, notably women. There is need to go beyond this level of study and study other aspects of social welfare services which serve to alleviate the people from economic and social deprivation and oppression.

2.3.7 Owerri Ecclesiastical Province during the Civil War

A study was carried out by Nwalo Theophilus on Owerri Ecclesiastical Province during the Civil war years (1967-1970). He focused on the cause of the war, the hopeless outcome of the war on the Biafrans, the efforts made by all concerned to embattle the ugly and dreadful situation. Presently his area of study, Nwalo (2012) states that. “The area surveyed constitute the present Owerri Ecclesiastical Province which with all its vibrancy was soon to have its baptism of fire as the main arena of the Biafra-Nigeria war (the civil war)” (p.127).

Narrating the war incidence he expressed the urgent need to arrest the social and economic problems of hunger, sickness, death, homelessness, motherless and orphans. To this the church, humanitarians and international communities threw their weight heavily to cushion the dreadful situation which is too sever to be handled effectively.

The study provided information on the impacts of the war on the Igbo which range from loss of territory to the Nigeria, consequent displacement and homelessness. All the other outcomes of the war impacts consist of the church and other humanitarian bodies. The Nigerian government saw the church as a threat to the success of their intended two-week mission which lasted for more than three years instead. For this reason the Nigerian government engaged in expelling the expertriate priests without much success. Amidst all the bombs and guns, the church and other human-minded bodies provided the necessary social welfare services to the ailing war-torn Igbo which had shrank to exist only in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province by the end of the war in 1970.

In conclusion he expressed gratitude to all who contributed to sustenance of the Biafrans through the war period; the church, the youths who were zealous to defend their territory, the Joint Church Aid (JCA), the priests, religious and parents.

Though this study was carried out in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, its concentration is on the totality of the war and its effects on Igbo people. He addressed the issue of provision of relief materials to the war-torn people and many other cares and love. His study ended in 1970. Welfare service by the church did not stop as the war ended. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has ever since the war and after the end of the war continued to provide Social Welfare Services to the people especially with the periodic release of economic depleting policies and unfruitful strategies. The Igbo since after the war has been treated as vassal state in their fatherland. With no encouragement to the fruitful efforts of the Igbo, they continue to depression plot on them. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province being part of the humiliated society feel the pangs of the depression, oppression and deprivation. As a mission on course they have, amidst all financial incapacitations, carried the society along by ensuring that the poor and the needy are cared for.

This study on Social Welfare services in catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, 1968 – 2016, has to take off from 1968, the peak of Social Welfare need in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province with the whole population of the Igbo concentrating only within this province. The study by Nwalo Theophilus is concerned with the whole war incidents of which welfare service is inclusive while the study on Social Welfare Services centres on the Social Welfare Services offered at all levels, how it was carried out, how efficient it was and the impending vices out of the Social Welfare needs and the Services.

2.3.8 Church and Social Development in Nigeria

Another study was conducted by Anyanwu Simon (2005) on the Church and Social development in Nigeria. In this study he focused on the link between the church and social

development, the state of the church which he described as panorama, the Nigeria society, the place of the church in the social development of Nigeria and practical recommendations.

Quoting Paul VI (1968), he presents that “development” that is authority “has to promote the good of every man and of the man” (p.10). The view he qualifies as complete and integral because it recognizes the completeness of man as corporeal/physical and spiritual/intellectual qualities. It focuses on all that is man’s needs – incarnate-spirit. This implies that development according to Paul VI (1968) implies that “each (human being), can grow into humanity, can enhance his personal worth can become a person” (p.11).

Expatriating further on Paul VI definition of development, Anyanwu (2005) postulates that if the goal of development is rightly identified as the humanitarization of each and every human person, who then but the church should be the vanguard of working to see that man attains this goal? The church as the mediator of salvation (whole making) accomplished by God in Jesus Christ to free human kind from the shackles that hold humanity in bondage – be they physical or spiritual – is obliged by its vocation to work for human development. Like the Master, the church is to serve the “bread of life” (Jn. 6:35), that ensures that no one lacks nourishment.

Therefore he deduces that the nexus between the work of the church and social development consist in the fact that the latter as a process of according to Okolo (1998), asserts that anyone wishing to renounce the difficult yet the noble task of improving the lot of a man in his totality and of all people, “... will be betraying the will of God” (p.82).

Stressing the importance of the place of the church to social development, the study went on to x-ray the church in Nigeria from various perspectives to give a true picture of the situation

from the point of view of social development. Mbefo (1988) observes that the Nigeria church has... a cluster of problems peculiarly her own, a cluster of problems that differ from European context or Hebrew context, a cluster of problems would be strange to a North American Church or to church in Japan (p.82). Enumerating these problems of the church in Nigeria, the writer pointed out that there are many different many denominations of Christendom in Nigeria. Their inter-relationship is not encouraging leaves much to be desired. The rivalry, competition, and bickering characteristics among the church in Nigeria is a major hindrance to inter-relationship and ecumenism. Anyanwu (2005) notes that “while divided, the church may not be able achieve much” (p.11) in social development.

The writer describes many other situations prevalent in the church in Nigeria to include financial incapacitation as such the church is dependent on people’s help and unable to help itself hence hardly able to help others. Though he notes that the church has in the recent time began to embark on gradual but sure growth towards economic self-reliance. Another prevalent situation of the church in Nigeria is magnanimity of authority and reverence accorded to the priests creating a large gap between the laity and the priests. The church equally lacks the necessary machinery to efficiently engage in socio-caritative work and has no pastoral strategy. Despite these lacunas, the church is full of life and vigour, the laity are literate and vocal but still loyal to the authority of the clergy.

Describing the Nigerian society Anyanwu (2005), presents the situation in Nigeria to include the transitional status of Nigerian society, society full of empty stomachs and watering mouths – hungry people, homeless people, unemployment, inadequate health facilities, mounting external debts., political instability, lack of orientation, endemic corruption and lack of basic attitude of mind that enhance and promote socio-economic development. Here corruption is the

baby of lack of sense of commitment to nation-building which has devastated the fabrics of economic, social, political and religious status of Nigeria. The situation has left many in sorry state of poverty and need. Therefore the need arises for the church in mission of Christ to attend to the vulnerable of the society. Dozie (1999) states that “Corruption has almost destroyed all aspects of our national life- be our national life, intellectual development, education system, creativity, value system, interpersonal relationship and external image both as individuals and as a nation” (p.28).

Speaking for the church John Paul II reiterates that the role of the church is not primarily to be in control of technology or financial resources but is in calling the people to objective examination of social reality and operative decision aimed at the achievement of just solutions. This John Paul II’s view the writer appraises as the basis for the success of any developmental effort.

The church therefore is expected in the bid to care for the human race provide the social and economic needs in which the church can help alleviate the suffering of the Nigerian masses which include employment, caring for the poor and needy and speaking out for the poor, and the oppressed. Solving the socio-ethical problems to work and critical awareness.

Engaging in this project of this magnitude is faced with some hindering factors as financial incapacitation and may other problems of the church and the Nigeria society. He therefore made some useful suggestion to help the church achieve the role of social development.

This study centred on Nigerian Society and Social development by the church. The study actually touched on social welfare as an aspect in the effort of the Church to address the nation

towards social development. But it did not focus the study on Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and did not specifically carryout the study on Social Welfare Services.

Empirical studies so far reviewed have shown element of social welfare services embedded in the works. Some of the studies reviewed are in Igboland, of which Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is part of.

2.4 Evaluation of the Literature Review

The chapter has esposed the concepts needed in the work by explaining them and clarifying the meaning and relevance to the study. Therefore the literarure reviewed is on the concept of social welfare services, historical discourse, ecclesiastical province, contemporary social welfare services, types and features of social welfare services, social welfare in Christianity, welfare in Old Testament and New Testatment. This sets to clarify the operational terms in the study.

The chapter equally discussed the necessary theories underpinning the work. The literature reviewed shows that the needy or the indigents make up the many that require attention to take care of their needs. The welfare services rendered are dependent on many factors. For many reasons welfare services are rendered. It can be for the provision of the basic needs of man or to improve one's status, rehabilitation or societal goal achievement. In whatever the entire factor maybe or the purpose, there is human relation as is expressed in the theoretical framework. The relative deprivation and equity theory is focused on the injustice of denial of one's right to opportunities. The work has shown good knowledge of the works already done in the area as enumerated by the empirical studies reviewed. The empirical studies centres heavily on availability of resources and man's welfare need status depends on the income. The more the

poor families, the more the welfare need. Causes of poverty especially in Igboland, the impact and possible remedial processes were reviewed. Economic inequality was seen as a constituent factor to poverty which is equally caused by some other factors especially by industrialization and other man-made policies. The supply of welfare services though necessary for sustenance of life, can be burden to the organization providing it especially where the resources are not adequate. Theoretical and empirical studies reviewed indicate that man has needs. Some are unable to provide their needs due to their economic and financial status. In which case the level of needs and the availability of fund and other resources determine the social welfare services provided to the needy.

Social welfare services are embarked upon by individuals, Non-governmental organizations among others. They are poorly funded as a result they provide temporary relief while at the same time helping people to help themselves.

In most Christian churches, social welfare services have been in operation for years and were run almost entirely by some volunteer members although they were primarily established for the members of the church in particular and to assist the masses who are struggling. Based on the principle of self-reliance, the church social welfare services include canneries, farms and factories that provide food commodity for the needy.

The concept of provident living and caring for the less fortunate have been the primary objective of social welfare services which seem to have been ignored especially in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has distinguished their welfare services by embarking on School Apostolate, Prison Apostolate, Youth and Women empowerment, farming, medical services, relief materials and skills acquisition. These are the first of its kind that needed to be articulated in a collaborative research.

The studies so far reviewed shows that some welfare services have been in existence and people have received services from them. Though the studies reviewed can attest to welfare practices in the areas of the study, there is yet to be any study on social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church. The study on self-help among women by Anyanwu is only on an aspect of welfare services but lacks free access for the needy to harness. It does not cover all the areas of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. It studied only Okigwe in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and the on women self-help development only. It is not focused on Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Nwalo's study on Nigeria – Biafra war experience in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province centres on the war incidences of which provision of welfare services is part of it. The Lacuna in this study is that welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province did not stop at the end of civil war. His study focused on 1967 – 1970 and did not study all aspects of social welfare services provided during the war such as caring for the maimed. The social welfare services he mentioned centred on provision of relief materials like food and drugs. Social welfare services are beyond that. After the war, social welfare services have continued in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and have been improved on to serve the demands of the time such as in the Motherless Babies Home. The series of developments and trends in social welfare services provided by the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is yet to acknowledged and documented.

Though Owerri Ecclesiastical Province provision of social welfare services improves to meet up with the changing society, it lacks adequate preparation for continuity as the workers are merely volunteered church members who have their duty posts elsewhere. They can attend to the welfare services only when they are free from their main duty.

A project of this magnitude in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church deserves thorough academic research to really ascertain the exact nature of social welfare services offered, the efficacy, the challenges and to bring the limelight the necessary strategies to improve on it for better and more stable services.

CHAPTER THREE

CATHOLIC CHURCH IN OWERRI ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

Introduction

This chapter addresses the geographical location of the area of the study. The natural vegetation, resources, arts and culture thereof are discussed. It also looks into the historical setting of the people who live in the areas that fall within Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, in the ancient times to the contemporary era. This addresses the background on which the historical origin and development of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province formed. The interaction of the church that came and met already existing way of life with the cultural setting is also discussed. These gave insight into the last point in this chapter on the challenges of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province through their institution in Igboland, the developmental processes and in the present dispensation.

3.1 The Geographical Location of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

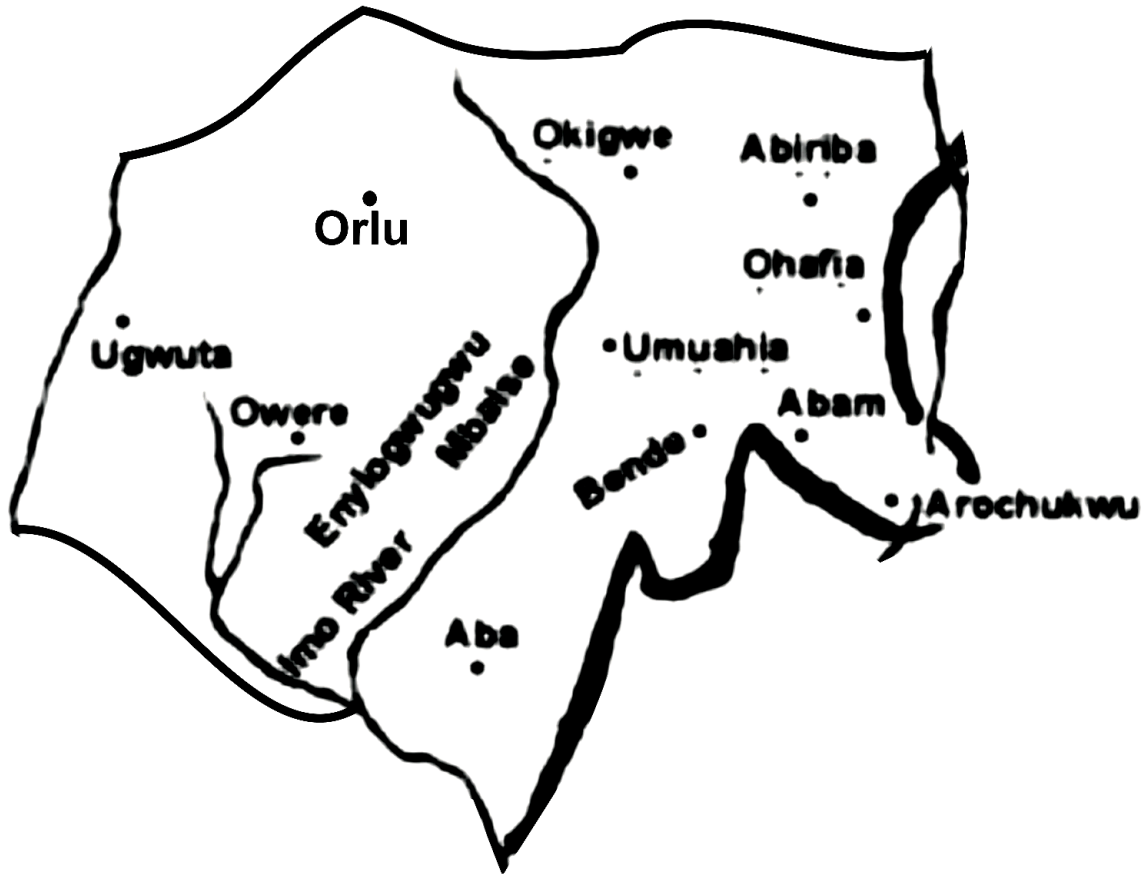
Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is located in Igboland which is in the South Eastern Nigeria. The Province consist of the following suffragan dioceses; Okigwe, Umuahia, Orlu, Aba, and Ahiara in addition to the mother Archdiocese of Owerri. The Ecclesiastical Province is bounded in the north by Ihiala and Ukpo, in the east by Ohazara, in the west by Ogbaru and in the south by Omarelu. Some of the towns located within the territory of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province are Owerri Municipal, Mbaise, Ikeduru, Mbaitoli, Orlu, Nkwerre, Mbano, Umuahia, Aba, and Okigwe Ngor-Okpala. The rivers found within the location of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province are Imo, Okatarankwu, Nworie, Mmiri Ihiagwa, Mbaa, Iyi Nwakpa, Orashi, Nwangele, Otamiri, Aba River, Azumini etc. Mmiri Ihiagwa, Nworie and Akataranku are rivers found in

Oweri. Imo River flows from Imo State; Okpuala, to Abia state, to Atlantic Ocean through the estuary of the Niger Delta. Iyi Nwankpaka is an ancient source of water supply to the people of Anike in Orlu and neighbouring towns. The river is attributed to a deity known as Mgbede worshipped by some people. It runs through Eluama and gets to Ideato. Orashi River is located in Ogboko. It is bigger than Nwankpa and flows through Okija to Ogbaru and then to River Niger. Mmiri Umuaka is located between Okwudo and Umuaka Orlu. Duru, (2015).

Mbaa springs from Umuopara while Uramiriukwa springs from Obollo, both in Ugiri Mbano. Otamiri flows through Awonmanma and Eziama-Obiato in Oru and Mbaitoli respectively. Azumini, the blue river is located in Azumini town in Ukwu East Local Government Area. These rivers are sources of fish, frogs and sharp sand for building. Some overflow their banks during rainy season thus fertilizing the land for increased agricultural yield. Ogike (2012) identifies that, the main tributaries of Imo River are Urashi, Njaba, Obana, Okatarankwo, Nworie, Otamiri, Oramiriukwa and Aba River (p.96).

The vegetation is green with ever promising high yield in agricultural products. Such permanent crops like palm trees, breadfruits, Oil-bean trees and many other trees are prominent in the area. Ogike (2012) notes that “the region is characterized by the mangrove swamp forest in the delta areas and rain forest in the upland areas” (p.95). Ogike’s claim is evident in the area. The forests around the rivers are thick mangrove forests.

Fig. 4: Map of the areas within Owerri Ecclesiastical Province



Source: Map of Igboland in Nigeria www.researchgate.net>figure

Retrieved on 6th February, 2016.

3.2 The Historical Setting of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is located in Igboland among the Igbo of the South Eastern Nigeria. Like other parts of Igboland, they speak different dialects of Igbo language. The dialect of Owerri is different from that of Orlu. Orlu speaks a different dialect from Umuahia. The different dialects account for their fragmented units or community existence and variations in art and craft styles, attire, and social ceremonies exclusive religious observances. Afigbo (1981) identifies the Igbo society as variegated in language with different dialects to every small community” (P.123).

They are known to be hard working and industrious. The Owerri people work hard on the farm land and produce more of the staple foods like cassava, maize and yam. Though they are hardworking, they do not spare opportunities to relax and enjoy themselves, hence the usual slang; *‘ayi tala ugba nuo mmanyi, ndi agbagba kuruma ndi uyo-elu wuruma’*. The Okigwe and Mbano areas are prominent in industry, art and craft. That is why pottery is found among them till date. They equally produce burnt bricks. The Mbaise people are more of traders. When school education came into existence into Igboland, the Mbaise indigenes embraced education. It became an alternative to their trading. They seem to be short land space and are highly populated. They are exceptionally industrious and care for each other. The people of Egbema and Oguta are rich in agricultural production.

The Oguta Lake is source of fishing which supplies fish to the neighbouring communities. Ihiagwa, Ulakwu, Obibiezna, Ngor-Okpuala and Obirinze are mainly farmers who produce farm products in large quantity. The Arochukwu are famous in trade especially slave trade. They are good war-lords. These qualities account for their various settlements in many parts of Igboland and beyond, hence Arondizogu, Aro-Ikwere, and so on. The Abiriba, Item and Uzoakoli are

good in industry, arts and farming. Orlu and Nkwerre are industrious and pose solid qualities in achieving the best in whatever they engage in, hence their occupation of Opobo to the extent of producing a king in a non-Igbo territory of Opobo – Jaja of Opobo. Ogike (2012) notes that “five young men from Orlu town undertook voyage on foot in 1914 from Orlu town to Calabar and back to Orlu and then from Orlu to Ozubulu, and then to Emekuku in search of a teacher” (p.97). They are known not to relent till they achieve the best and the desirable.

Apart from the specific qualities of the areas within the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, they are generally hard working and industrious like any other Igbo indigene and give titles to recognize the hard work and success achieved. Such titles include Ezeji, Ogbuagu, Dike, Nwokobo, Oluoha and many other titles. They observe festivals like Ahajoku and New Yam festival. Nta mkpuru ukworu is agricultural festival celebrated by women found in areas of Mbano, Ikeduru and some parts of Mbaise. It precedes the New Yam festival and the main crop of the celebration is maize. Ogike (2012) identifies that “there are numerous annual festivals among the people such as Oru Owerre, in Owerre Nchi Ise, Owu in Izombe area, Ogbo at Ekwe and Umuaka, and during the fresh corn harvest” (p.103). There are many other festivals peculiar to specific areas.

The variegated nature of the society notwithstanding, they share some festivals in common such as New Yam Festival and Ahajoku. Though there are some festivals peculiar to different communities. The period of these festivals are decorated with masquerades of different types, such as Okorosha, Ekwe, Agaba, Ekeleke, Mmanwu, Okonko, Owu and many others. The New Yam Festival is celebrated with newly harvested yams. Usually the people do not eat the new yam till they have offered it to God in the New Yam Festival known as ‘*Ekwe Ji*’ in Igbo

language. The celebration involves sacrificing to the Supreme Being '*Chukwu*,' Kolanuts chicken, palm wine and yam are the major items for the festival.

The Igbo are religiously inclined in what they do. The Ahajoku and yam festivals are Agricultural observance dedicated to deities in Igbo land. Madubuko (2004) cited in Madu (2004) explains that "ensuring favourable harvest was in their hands because they prepared and distributed the yam medicine (Ifejioku)" (P. 41). The Igbo religious inclination has made it possible for them to live and rely on the supernatural, powers. Leonard (1968).comments that:

They are in the strict and natural sense of the word, a truly and deeply religious people of whom it can be said as it has been said of the Hindus, that they eat religiously, drinks religiously, dress religiously etc. In a few of the religion of these natives as I have all along endeavoured to point out is that their existence is their religion. (p.68).

The people hold strongly to their relationship with the Supreme Being; hence the strong belief that whatever happens is the proposal of God. According to Uche (2013), "belief system goes on to assist man to direct, control the course of nature and how the invisible world impinge on the physical world" (p. 63). This view of Uche has helped to understand the worldview of the Igbo who accept that good and bad fortunes are directed from the spiritual world. The Igbo believe in dual world of physical and spirit. They believe in one God with other spirits that occupy the spirit world who serve different purposes. The dead elders of the family are believed to belong to the Spirit world. Ogike (2012) there notes that "just as the Catholics honour their Saints as intercessors between man and God, so the Igbo honour their ancestors and were in constant consultation with them" (p.99).

For every child born into a family, a personal shrine is assigned "onu chi". It is believed that these Spirits are personal to the person who serves them. There is equally a major God, "Chukwu" or "Chukwu Abiama" addressed by some other names to signify His might. The Igbo approach their Gods; Major or Spirits, with utmost reverence and adoration. They also believe in reincarnation of the dead. Every child is believed to have reincarnated from the Spirit world either from among the ancestors, any other dead relation or from the Spirits. The diviner is consulted to ascertain where the baby has reincarnated from.

Social life of the Igbo entails ceremonies such as marriage, naming ceremonies, burial/funeral, initiation into manhood; instituting Age-grades, masquerades, irumgbede, dancing, title taking etc. The Igbo had social cast system of free born, slaves and Osu. The family system is polygny for immediate family and extended family where grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews are members of one family. The society is patriarchal with the value for male children rated high, as heirs to the family. Male children according to Achunike (2002) "are of primary importance to Igbo man" (pp. 104-105). He therefore notes that the primary aim of marriage in Igbo land is to beget children especially males.

3.3 Historical Origin and Development of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

Christianity came to Igbo land through the Niger River at Onitsha. Apart from the Catholic, sometimes addressed as Roman Catholic Church, (RCM) there are other denominations that came to Igbo land. The church missionary society (CMS) the missionary arm of Anglican Church, were the earliest to the arrive at Onitsha on 27th July 1857, led by Samuel Ajai Crowther, an ex-slave, who was ordained priest after due training. The missionaries of Catholic Church arrived the shores of the Niger at Onitsha later on 15th December 1885; twenty eight

years after the existence of Church Missionary Society (CMS), in Igbo land. According to Njoku (2012), “this was shortly after the infamous Berlin conference at which parts of Africa were carved out to European colonial powers” (p. 1). The French Catholic priests billed for Akassa encountered some problem with their voyage on the Niger and stopped over at Onitsha in order to continue later.

The stop over turned out to be providential because they eventually were well received by Obi of Onitsha, Obi Anazonwu and settled in with their CMS counterparts (Ekechi, 1971:74). Both Catholic and CMS worked to establish their mission among the people in the way they deemed best which has given birth to the type of religion and life found among Igbo today. Nmah and Nwadiolor (2011) point out that "we shall be constrained to acknowledge that missionary activities had been tied to a dominant culture and ideology whose economic political and military potency have been the most far-reaching impact on Nigerian civilization, Christianity and culture" (P. 91). This is the true situation as the Christianity and lives of Igbo today is the product of the European missionary activities. It is important to note that the main features that determined the historical development of the church both in Owerri and Onitsha Ecclesiastical Provinces were the later arrival of Catholic Church in the evangelical scene of Igbo land and the phenomenological increase of converts. Nwosu (1982) therefore affirms that “two main factors may be said to characterize the history of the spread of the Catholic religion in this part of Nigeria (South Eastern). The first is the relatively late arrival of Catholic Church in the area and the second is its phenomenally rapid growth” (p.38). These factors actually form the wind that blows the actions, practices and the institutions of the church to the direction it takes.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) before the arrival of Catholic Church enjoyed the monopoly and unchallenged atmosphere from other missionaries of other denominations. The

CMS due to the unchallenged atmosphere seemed not to be in a haste to make converts but had not adequate supply of staff. Onyeidu (2014) pointed out that "since the inception of the mission, Bishop Crowther himself had continued to request for more men. But the response was poor" (p. 5). Apart from shortage of staff, the faithful natives have already become disillusioned because of the caricature made of the indigenes especially in reports and letters sent to Britain and the neglect of the welfare of the indigenes. Ekechi (1972) states that "request for increase in salaries by CMS agents, for instance were often described as absurd on the ground that the native agents were trying to live like Europeans" (p.78). Faced with the internal crises, the arrival of Catholic missionaries, though met with initial resentment because the people could not decipher immediately any difference between the white coloured skin men, provided a welcome alternative. The CMS adherents, catechist and teachers who had suffered adversity from CMS missionaries and merchants saw it as a relief as the RCM priest, Rev. Fr. Lutz, provided for the welfare of the people by providing drug/medical attention, food, dresses etc. Nwosu (1982) therefore notes that the presence of the RCM "must have provided the people with an alternative which they longed for" (P.40).

The sporadic success achieved by RCM in making converts out weighted the imagination of the CMS missionaries that it provoked jealousy in them and consequent rivalry and scramble for members ensued. Achunike (2007) notes that "the coming of the Catholic missionaries initiated the spirit of competition" (p.44). The report from Owerri district of CMS by Cecil Brown quoted in Onyeidu (2004) wrote that "a new danger threatens the district in the arrival of the Roman Catholic who are opening in or near our occupied station" (P. 16). According to Bosah (1977) "religious rivalries characterized the early dealings of the mission till the dawn of recent ecumenism" (P.72)

Apart from the rivalry and competition, there was agitation for the removal of French presence from British territory. This was taken care of by sending the Irish missionaries led by Rev, Fr Joseph Shanaham who replaced Rev. Fr. Lutz. Though Rev. Fr. Shanaham was Irish, he was a Holy Ghost priest. Irish Holy Ghost College was established by French Holy Ghost priests. Therefore Njoku (2012) notes that:

The mother house of the Holy Ghost Fathers was at the time still in Paris. Replacement of the French by the Irish was therefore seen in Missionary circle as mere formality to save the Catholic missionary enterprise in Igboland since the overriding missionary ethos, policies and principles of Holy Ghost congregation emanate from Paris not from Dublin. (p.3).

Though of the same Holy Ghost priests background, the leadership style of the priests differ. The French priest preferred as paramount the establishment of Christian villages where Christians were isolated from the acclaimed pagan practices of the indigenes, while the Irish priests under Fr Shanaham reached out to all as much as possible to ensure involvement of all for success of evangelical efforts.

Njoku, (2012) notes that, "the Irish missionaries involved a growing army of indigenous hands to anchor their missionary endeavours as guides as they ventured into the hinterland" (p.4). These made their efforts fruitful as these served as teachers, cooks, quasi-catechists, pastoral assistants. The missionaries made strategic use of schools for evangelization as they served as 'Church-schools'. This was Shanaham's ideology which appealed to the interest of the people. According to Ozigbo (1994), "it had a fascination for the elders as a gateway to new knowledge for some of their children" (p.43). In spite of the perceived ambivalence of the schools, according to Agu (1989), the elders accorded interesting recognition to school education

as a means of acquisition of the ability 'to read and write' , to speak like the white man and the hope of acquiring the powers, authority, influence and dignity that seemed to be part of its tantalizing package. This led to massive reception of the schools by numerous communities in Igboland which triggered conversion. Njoku (2012), observes that, "nowhere was this rapid response glaringly evident as in Onitsha - Owerri area. The legendary population of Owerri area made it stand out as a showcase and the pride of its missionaries" (p.5).

The people's massive response to conversion was so overwhelming that Bishop Shanahan by 1920 made regular visits to Ireland soliciting for more hands in the missionary work. In the course of his endeavour, he was able to bring along the Holy Rosary Rev. Sisters (Jordan, 1984:33), who manned the training of the female converts and served as nurses and midwives. These Rev. Sisters were useful at Mt Carmel hospital, Emekuku.

The missionary work advanced through Akuma, Uli to Ulakwo in February 1912 under Rev. Fr. Feral who said the first Holy Mass in Owerri region there and intended to settle there and create base for missionary work in the region. The stealing of his bell and some other experiences made him to leave in search of a better place. In his effort to get a better settlement, he attempted Awaka near Egbu but was rather sought after by the traditional ruler of Emekuku, Chief Obi Ejeshi who invited him and offered him land and security. Obi (2010), in an interview narrates that "on the 16th of July 1912, the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, Fr Feral and his companions arrived Emekuku on invitation of Obi Ejeshi" (p.6). This marked the beginning of fruitful missionary work in Emekuku, Owerri.

The then colonial administrator H. M. Douglas, made communication less cumbersome by constructing roads from Owerri through the hinterlands to other places like Onitsha, Umuahia

and Aba. This helped Fr Feral to reach out to more places other than Emekuku and was able to establish twelve outstations which include Nnebukwu, Naze, Agbala, Emii, Uratta, Orsu and Ezi Ogbaku (Osuji, 2010:16). He was succeeded by Rev. Fr. Daniel Walsh. Fr Daniel recorded impressive development in creating new outstations, administering the sacrament of baptism, confirmation and matrimony to many including Chief J. K. Njemanze who received baptism on the 16th July, 1915 (Osuji, 2010:17).

By 1920, based on the growth recorded by the Holy Ghost Priest, the Southern Nigerian Mission was elevated to the status of a vicariate headed by Bishop Joseph Shanaham. Njoku, (2012) states that:

By 1923, the outstations that are dependent on Emekuku were more than two hundred and sixty. The Holy Rosary Rev. Sisters who arrived Emekuku on the 7th March 1924 instituted a convent and with time established a clinic that grew into a hospital today known as 'Holy Rosary hospital, Emekuku' with later establishment of vast network of clinics and maternity homes attached to the growing Holy Rosary hospital. Archbishop Heerey who later became the leader of the Southern Nigeria Mission instituted indigenous religious orders beginning with the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart Sisters (pp. 9&10).

By 1948, the Southern Nigeria Mission has grown so large in population and expanse of land that efficient leadership may be unrealistic under the situation. On 12th February, the Vatican created two vicariates out of the Southern Nigeria Mission thus Onitsha and Owerri vicariates with Archbishop Heerey in charge of Onitsha while Bishop Joseph Brendan Whelan

was in charge of Owerri. Whelan established secondary schools for his area of jurisdiction. Such schools like Holy Ghost College, Owerri.

The Missionary work was affected by the world war between Hitler's Germany and other Europeans. The attention of the Papacy on the development of missionary work in Africa was affected. Instead able bodied men of European colonies were conscripted to the war, some of who were teachers and catechists who help in missionary works. Many viable men had to go into hiding. The missionary activities did not come to a halt completely. Some indigenous priests like Fr. Mark Onuoha Unegbu and Fr Emerenini were ordained during this period. This may be out of fear of the possibility of inability of the Vatican to continue to send missionary priests from Europe. These ordained indigenous priests can carry on the work of the Gospel. Njoku (2012) affirms that:

The Second World War (1939 - 1945) slowed down the work of the missionaries. Even though it was happening in far away Europe, it had repercussions in the African missions because the bulk of foreign missionaries in Africa at the time were from various parts of Europe (p.12).

After the world war, the missionary work came alive. By 1948, the Southern Nigeria Mission has grown so large in population and expanse of land that efficient leadership may be unrealistic under the situation. On 12th February, 1948, the Vatican created two vicariates out of the Southern Nigeria Mission thus Onitsha and Owerri vicariates with Archbishop Heerey in charge of Onitsha while Bishop Joseph Brendan Whelan was in charge of Owerri. Whelan established secondary schools for his area of jurisdiction, such schools like Holy Ghost College, Owerri and other secondary schools outside Owerri.

On 18th April, 1950, the Vatican erected three Archdioceses in Nigeria thus; Onitsha, Lagos and Kaduna. Owerri was raised to diocese. Bishop Whelan administered Owerri diocese from Umuahia despite the fact that Emekuku was a major church mission. This was due to the strategic location of Umuahia as a fast developing administrative and commercial outpost as the railway from PortHarcourt runs through Umuahia to Enugu and then to northern Nigeria. When Shell discovered oil and pitched their camp at Owerri, Whelan saw Owerri as promising and strategic. He therefore decided to move the administrative See of Owerri diocese to Owerri town.

In 1954, the Marian year, Pius XII promulgated the dogma of Maria Assumpta. Bishop Whelan developed a plan for the cathedral to be located in Owerri town and took the name of the new Cathedral from the momentous pious event of Maria Assumpta. He erected the bishop's house and instituted a means of catechetical and pen apostolate through the catechetical bulletin; 'the Leader', which later grew into newspaper. It stood with the distinction of being among the earliest.

With the level of development of the diocese, in 1958, Umuahia diocese was carved out of Owerri diocese with the first indigenous bishop, Bishop Anthony Gogo Nwedo as the administrator. This appointment points to the development of indigenous clergy to take care of the indigenous missions. This appointment was to experiment on capability of indigenous clergy to administer the ecclesiastical territory.

The Vatican II council gave rise to many changes such as use of indigenous language and involvement of the laity in the work of evangelization, hence the emergence of Christian Mothers, Christian Fathers, Mary League for the spinsters and other lay organizations. The Christian Mothers and Christian Fathers later metamorphosed into Catholic Women

Organization to embrace all cadres of lay women in the ecclesia and Catholic Men Organization. These organs according to Njoku (2012), have now evolved into veritable resource institutions that enhance the work of priests and the religious (pp.19-20). The Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province continued to grow and in 1961, PortHarcourt diocese was carved out of Owerri diocese and the bishop was Mary Paul Okoye. Ordination of more indigenous priests increased.

The Nigeria-Biafra war that lasted between 1967 – 1970 created another scenario in the ecclesiastical field. The bulk of the work of the Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in this war period tend to concentrate on provision of social welfare service to the war-torn people of the area in addition to the heroic work of the Caritas. Some of the centres for sharing relief materials include Ihioma, Amaigbo, Emekuku, Mbutu-Okohia, Uvuru and other areas. There was no static location for any activity. The seat of administration, the relief centres, schools, markets were unavoidably mobile as the territorial fortunes of Biafra shrank. Many documents of the diocese were lost as the bishop relocated from one corner of the diocese to another. The clergy and religious rallied round the bishop and as well catered for the many war-torn people who were homeless, displaced, hungry, harassed, widowed, orphaned, traumatized and hopeless. It was an apostolate of keeping hope alive. Njoku (2012) notes that:

Though provision of food, medicine and shelter dominated war time apostolate, the sacramental and evangelical aspects of the mission were not lost sight of. Holy Masses were still being said by priests but in and out of ordinary location, in safe private homes, under shade of trees and anywhere that security of the people could be guaranteed.... Hymns were sung in

subdued manners for the same reason. Catechetical instructions were still taking place....People due First Holy Communion were granted.... Weddings also took place....More frequent of course were the funerals. (p. 23).

Though these were observed but the people involved lived in abject fear of uncertainty and unprecedented death. The seat of administration of the diocese, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, was taken over by the Nigerian army. As the war advanced, complexities of the war made many to lose their moral balance. Many young men were conscripted into the war including seminarians. Many engaged in all manners of crime to survive the ordeal.

The Church was saddled with the problem of provision of solution to the immediate needs of the people. Being religiously inclined people, many resorted to divine intervention. Achunike (2002) notes that “the Pentecostal and the Aladura traded their unique capacity to draw down the supreme power of God” (p.57). This gave rise to many fraudulent spirituality who claim to offer solution to the immediate needs. Many trooped to prayer houses and healing homes. In that manner they saw no need relying on the Catholic Church for spiritual intervention.

At the end of the war, the foreign missionaries were expelled and the manpower of the diocese fell drastically. Bishop Whelan left the diocese under Moseignor Ignatius Okoroanyanwu who alerted the indigenous colleagues on the crisis situation they have to manage. Parishes were merged and the diocese focused on the urgent need for training of priests. The Church difficulties were compounded more when Ukpabi Asika government took over the Church schools in Eastern Nigeria depriving the Church one of the most viable means of evangelization.

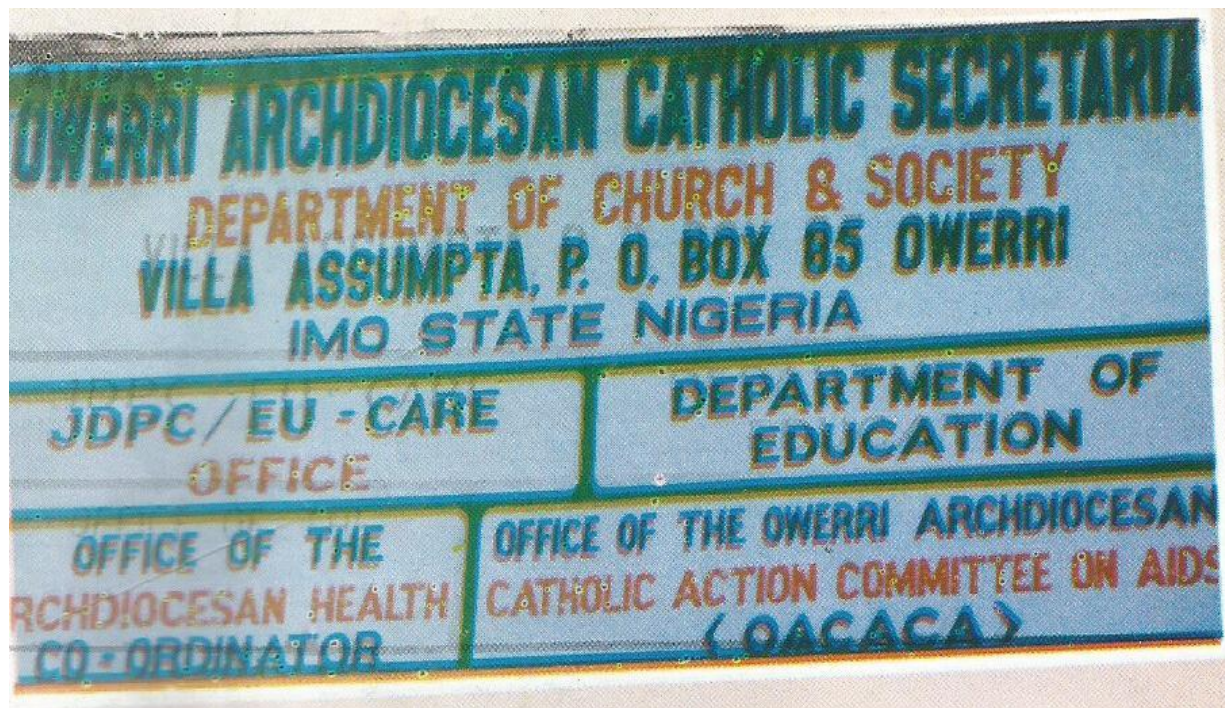
The Vatican appointed Bishop Mark Onwuha Unegbu to take mantle of Bishop of Owerri diocese. Bishop Unegbu embarked on reconstruction of the war affected diocese and training of seminarians to ordain them priests in order carter for the much needed clergy. The Church once again regained some of the loses continued to grow. On November 29th 1980, Orlu diocese was carved out of Owerri diocese with Bishop Gregory Ochiagha as the first Bishop and Okigwe diocese was carved out of Umuahia diocese on the 29th March, 1981 with Bishop Anthony Ilonu as the first Bishop. Later on in 1987, Ahiara diocese was created from Owerri diocese with Bishop Victor Chikwe as the first Bishop. Aba diocese was carved out of Umuahia diocese on 2nd April, 1990 with Bishop Vincent Valentine Ezeonyia as the first Bishop. Bishop Unegbu resigned on 10th June 1993 and Rev. Fr. Dr. Obinna John Valentine Anthony was appointed to succeed him. On 4th September, 1993, he was ordained and installed as the third bishop of Owerri diocese.

On assumption of office, Bishop Obinna worked with a new agenda to improve on what is already established and create more avenues for the development of the diocese. On March 31st, 1994, barely one year into his episcopacy, Owerri Ecclesiastical Province was created with Owerri as Metropolitan See. The Province is made up of Owerri, Umuahia, Orlu, Okigwe, Ahiara and Aba dioceses. Bishop Obinna was appointed the first Archbishop of Owerri diocese and the Metropolitan of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and was installed on 3rd September, 1994. He holds the office to date.

Archbishop Obinna has taken some great pastoral initiatives. In 1996 he instituted Odenigbo lectures for the promotion of Igbo language and viable aspects of Igbo culture. This is an annual event which attracts many members of the society. He unrelently and vehemently condemns oppression of the masses especially by the leaders of people and other evils in the

society. He equally speak out against the evil of the caste system in Igbo society. The major achievement among all he has done is the institution of the EU-Care through which he reaches to the poor and the less-privilege to provide them the needed welfare services.

Fig. 5: Shows the sign post of the administrative building of JDPC/Eu-Care, Owerri Archdiocese.



Source: Eu-Care handbook (2007) from JDPC office, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri.

3.4 The Historical Interaction of Igbo Culture with Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

Before the advent of the European missionaries, the Igbo had established way of worshipping God — their religious beliefs and practices. They knew God but did not know Christ. There is equally established social system in Igbo land. The white man did not understand these and never bothered to study the Igbo way of life. Jordan (1990) quoting Shanaham states that:

The hardest cross borne by the missionary was the sight of millions in the grip of Satan. The physical struggle in Africa is as nothing compared to the heart breaking struggle with the prince of darkness, whose power is felt among the pagan peoples and who holds so millions souls. (p.119).

Their encounter with the experience of human sacrifice must have made them to conclude that the African way of life is obnoxious; hence the decision to do away with African culture in order to establish Christianity and European culture truncated in Christianity. Therefore Iheanacho (2012) commentes that:

Bishop Shanaham made at the beginning of his tenure as prefect Apostolic to literally invade Igbo hinterland in order to confront, defeat and replace ‘the kingdom of Ekwensu’ with the kingdom of God.. in every sense of the word, it was a very daring decision. John Jordan describes it as the ‘most epoch-making decision [he ever] made in his whole life – to strike boldly into the heart of the country’ to expound the wonders of the divine life of the Blessed Trinity. (p.120).

On encounter with the already established institutions of marriage and family life, title-taking, masquerades, the cast system etc, they engaged in a possible strategy to ensure that it does not infiltrate into their system. Madu (2004) in identifying this features of cosmology states

that "all world views are mutually hostile and intolerant. There is no love lost between them. This can explain why religious and ideological conflicts are common amongst societies with different cosmologies" (p. 85).

Though there could be conflict in ideologies, the Igbo world-view generally is characterized by hospitality. So intolerance, though may be in few cases found, the Igbo are kind to visitors. But in all, the white men used some strategies to get the Igbo to discard their much cherished tradition. Iheanacho (2012) observes that 'the passionate zeal to push into Igbo hinterland to replace the *'Kingdom of Ekwensu'* with the Kingdom of God will form the backdrop of the movement of the missionaries into Owerri area" (p.120). With this set opinion, the missionaries embarked on the duty of eradication of the Igbo cultural practices which they have tagged evil. This has been source of conflict and disorderliness in Igbo land to date. Those who accepted to convert to Christianity were to relinquish their cultural affiliations and take up European lifestyle including means of identification — name. Boahen (1985) in his own contribution identifies that "to be admitted into a church, an African had not only to be baptized but had to change his name" (p.42).

The converts took western names which bears no root/meaning to the Igbo, hence, the names; Joseph, Ambrose, Agatha, Philomena, Jacinta and so on. Baptism replaced the traditional naming ceremony. Whatever dealing the European missionaries had with the Igbo, had no bearing with the Igbo culture which they do not understand and never bothered to. The cultural institutions faced the threat of extinction as the missionaries' condition for conversion to Christianity was total relinquishing of any attachment to the established cultural institutions. Family system of polygyny was rejected and monogamy type of marriage upheld. Christians were to marry only one wife, a very conflicting issue. Those who have more than one wife were to

wed only one. What happens to others? This created a lot of confusion and irreconcilable situation which has given rise to a vicious circle of evil in the society. This act polygny has not favoured the patriarchal society of Igbo who get desperate when a male child is not forth coming in marriage. Achunike (2002) explains that “some Christians have long joined the rank of polygnyists. The Catholic Church bars them from receiving the sacraments. But this does not put a permanent stop to this practice that looks like an ‘open promiscuity’ in a monogamous Christian society.

The issue of marrying one wife creates forum for strive for reconciliation between the order and the real situation of cultural fulfillment which makes the people who are the make-up of the faithful to yearn for the fulfilled cultural desires of their patrilineal responsibilities in a patriarchal society. The Catholic Church has not been able to address this conflicting issue that has posed source of worry to the faithful appropriately; hence Nwanunobi (1977), notes that “the issue of polygny must be assessed in total cultural context in which it operates” (p.33). Those who are not favoured by male child can engage in some vicious acts detrimental to Christian faith, such as serial polygny in which a man divorces his wife and marry another woman in the bid to beget children especially male children. Nwanunobi (1977) further states that “there is hardly any difference between what has been dubbed simultaneous polygny (the African type) and ‘serial polygny’, (the European and American type) a term in which constant divorce and remarriage in monogamous societies have been described” (p.34).

The effort to eradicate the already existing culture which formed the basis of the interaction between the missionary and the natives did not favour true conversion to Christianity. Some drop out the church once they notice that the Christian tenet is working against his/her wish. Masquerades were declared anathema evil and Christians were forbidden from initiating into

masquerade cults. According to Bosah (1977) church members were therefore barred from many customary social activities. Folk dancing and masquerading were proclaimed anathema. Taking Ozo title was forbidden. Marriage according to native laws and customs was caricatured and proclaimed unacceptable (p.65). Some of these masquerade cults like the Okonko had a writing system which would have been improved on but was rather destroyed and faced the threat of extinction.

The traditional priests became a major source of conflict to the missionaries as the priests cannot imagine the threat posed by the new Christian faith. According to Achunike (2002), "Europeans with their religion raped both the custom and religion of our people" (p.21).

The family system with tie of oneness became disorganized as members of the Catholic were not to interact with members of other congregations or even their brothers or sisters who were not yet Christians. Social interactions such as marriage, funeral, etc were based on religious affiliation. Brothers and sisters of same family are separated by church.

The white man's presence brought with it a lot of promising goodies which attracted the Igbo into complete alliance with their way of life including Christianity without retracing their steps. Achunike (2002) states that, "initially, Igbo communities received Christianity because it appeared peaceful and quiet" (p.84). The Igbo man became totally engrossed in the practice of the white man's lifestyle that they lost grip of their original way of life. Igbo were made to believe that the white man's religion and lifestyle is the ultimate. The earliest converts to Christianity in Igbo land were illiterates and were made to believe that everything the Igbo man does is evil and should be avoided (Okorocho,1987). They therefore took without refinement whatever they have received from the white men. The Rev. Fr. gathered the converts and ensured they do not get back to the original culture and religion of their people. Okwueze (1996) in effect

stated that "the missionary in the way they presented the gospel message upset the people's socio-religious heritage by imposing a structure which severed them from one another" (64).

The missionaries termed every cultural value of the Igbo and the entire Africa as evil which must be avoided. They paid no attention to the tradition of the Igbo. According to Baeta (1968), "until quite recently, the prevailing attitude has implied complete rejection of African culture, and the effort to assimilate Africans to the assumptions, values, and practices of the Christian west"(p. 6). The rejection of Igbo traditions formed the way of life of the Christians.

They imposed both the Christian religion and western culture on the Igbo, using various strategies that suit them at the expense of the peace, unity, social, and economic welfare of the Igbo. The Igbo in totality assimilated and adopted the western culture embodied in the Christianity they received. Achunike (2002) therefore notes that, "the new Christian converts seemed to work against the traditional belief and against the very communities that raised them up" (p.47). In the course of eradicating the obnoxious acts of killing twins, human sacrifice, social outcast, slavery and burying dead kings with human beings, they could have concluded that the Igbo culture in its totality was evil. It can be evidently stated that the cultural practices of the people gave way for Christianity to flourish, though some still survive to date.

In the recent times, the educated ones have come to realize the need for the survival of some of viable cultural values and have embarked in reviving them the much possible. This is done through many ways such as the inculcating the New Yam Festival into the Catholic Church, Ozo titles are given in the Catholic Church; though not with strong traditional process. According to Achunike, (2002), Ozo title is no longer the exclusive preserve of non-Christians. Indeed prominent Christians, mostly Catholics of various walks of life take Ozo title" (p.102).

Traditional songs and music are permitted in the Catholic Church. Attires chosen as traditional are promoted. There are other attempts in the recent time to revive Igbo cultural practices just as the Odenigbo of Owerri Archdiocese instituted by Archbishop, A. J. V. Obinna to revive and sustain useful cultural practices. Though there are attempts to revive the crushed cultural practices, a lot has been lost and there is no archive from where they can be restored efficiently.

3.5 Challenges of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

The Catholic Church brought to Igboland through the Niger shores later spread to Owerri, Umuahia, Okigwe, Mbano, Ihiala, Mbaise and other areas of Igbo land. The Owerri ecclesiastical province in which the area of this study falls into was carved out of Onitsha ecclesiastical province in 1948. From the time it was under Onitsha ecclesiastical province to the present time it is on its own, it has been experiencing some environmental situation and man-made challenges.

At the earliest time, they were faced with rivalry and competition resulting from misunderstanding of the success in making converts. The animosity has lasted for years and does not seem to have an end though not as serious as it is in the present Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province. Such unhealthy atmosphere has hindered spiritual and well rooted conversion. Rather there ensued scramble for membership and area of dominance. Onyeidu (2004) writes the report of Cecil Brown in Owerri in 1912 in which he reported the threatening presence of the Roman Catholic Church (RCM) who have entered their territory. (p.16-17).

So the Catholic Church had to survive and develop amidst the challenge of unfriendly atmosphere from co-workers in the Lords vineyard. Nwosu (1982) notes that "the presence of the

RCM was viewed with mixed feelings at first and with open antagonism later on especially when they began to gain ground" (p.39).

The Catholic missionaries had to face the interrogation by the British Trading Company (BTC), who suspected that they were going to be a threat to their commerce. The officers of the trading company had to make them sign a document to ensure that they will not pose a threat to their trade especially as they were non-British. This explains why Obi (1985), wrote on the expression of the Holy Ghost missionaries that "the great obstacle is gone. I mean the Royal Niger Company. Its charter is torn" (p.10).

They were faced with the challenge of transportation which determined the rate of their movement from place to place. The roads were not good enough for easy movement of vehicles and travelling with bicycle to long distance, though it served them, could not have been easy means of transportation.

Some natives rejected them for various reasons. From personal experience, 1978 – 1982, many of the converts maintained their traditional practices and will not drop it such as masquerades, taking of titles and new yam festival. In 1980 for instance, Rev Fr Nwokocha was rejected by the indigenes of Obollo in Ugiri parish for the retreat he conducted which involved the removal of 'onu chi' shrines found in some families. The traditional priests cum native doctors are vehemently against the church especially with the strange teachings which must entail rejection and total annihilation of already established way of life and institutions.

Due to the conversion style, many of the Christians go to church for what they get from God; for Divine protection and to be counted among the elites of the society. So the true

dedication to the worship God out of love for God and man is not rooted in the Christian faith. According to Alexander (2009):

We have many baptized pagans who fill our church pew weekly. We might be the largest church in the whole world but how many of our members really know and experience the good of a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ? Of course, there is an element of faith active within the soul of a person who weekly makes the commitment to come to church, hear the word of God, and receive the sacraments, but how many actively experience a saving faith in Jesus Christ daily? (p.68).

This has given rise to many vices like insincerity, religious promiscuity-(jumping from one church to another in search of solution to problem), and unfaithfulness. Criminals hide under the name “Christian” to carry out their criminal plots. Some who are truly converted are lured away by the corrupt minded who take shade under the umbrella of the church.

The Nigeria-Biafra war placed on the hands of the church a great duty of catering for many who were in need of immediate attention for food, clothing, house, medical services. There were many refugees, orphans, motherless children, widows, and many were very hungry. Some died of malnutrition effects like *kwashiorkor*. The situation became so unbearable that people resorted to divine intervention. Like a boom in the church many relied on the church to salvage the situation of hardship through prayers and provision of the needed welfare services. Madiebo (1980) affirms that “many officers and men, realizing that we lack the material force to prosecute the war successfully resorted to spiritualism and prayers as the only alternative way of surviving the war” (p.357). He further said that “this practice began in 1968 and assumed a disastrous situation in 1969” (p.32). Attending adequately to the ravished population of Biafrans who are concentrated in the area of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province was not feasible. In resorting to

prayers and spiritual intervention as people were faced with death created boom for spiritual and healing homes. Some of which were fake and those who attend them were rather exploited. Curbing the people in desperation from such deceitful plots was a great challenge to the Catholic Church. Amidst huge problem of catering for the large crowd of desperate and hopeless people without adequate resources was not enough challenge to the Catholic Church, the Nigerian government by 1970 repatriated the expatriate Rev Frs who were working in the church as missionaries. This was because they saw the effort of the missionaries who provided relief materials to the Biafrans during the war as a challenge to the success of their two-week police action on the Igbo. This act of the government left only the few indigenous priests to the work of evangelization, spiritual and physical provision. At this point the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province was posed with the challenge of training priests to fill up the alarming gap created by the repatriation of foreign priests

The society now hails acquisition of wealth no matter the source. This has infiltrated into the church where these wealth are given as donations and the church applauds the donation and accords it more recognition than the dedication to worship of God. This has created misdirection to many such that they equate God's blessing with acquisition of wealth. It should be noted that the priests are products of the society that is materialistic. This has drastically affected the spiritual development of the members who look unto the priests as models. The incessant launch for money and the attention and time spent on efforts to attract higher money donations may be a deterrent to anyone who is yet to understand the need for spiritual status and development desired of the Christians.

The society in turn influences the church as they launch the priests into materialism with the flashy cars they buy for the priests and the mansions they build for priests' residence. Most of

the donations introduced into the church are the architectural design of the officials of the church organizations. This is because they leader wants in such to register a landmark of economic success and physical development in his/her tenure to out-run the predecessor. In this case, rather than the demand for money to decrease, more strategic formulas to raise more money in the Church are promulgated by succeeding officials to out run the predecessors. In this situation, there is with no hope of attention to spiritual development at same rate; thus create avenue for gradual decline in attention to spiritual development. It is worthy of note that though the church need money to carry out some projects, the ultimate duty is spiritual development and care for the needy.

Nwodo (2016) explained that among other challenges of the church could be legitimate need to be familiar with the world and society today. In order to respond to the challenges the contemporary world pose, the church can be led to surrender to a passing passion with a consequent lessening of spiritual favour and discouragement (p.35).

The recent trend of prayer initiated by Pentecostalism is a major phenomenon in Igbo land especially after Nigeria-Biafra war. According to Achunike (2002), it weighs a tremendous influence on Christians in Igbo land and has also influenced the liturgy and the practice of the mainline churches (P.6). The rate at which people troop in to Pentecostal churches has become a source of worry to the Catholic Church. This has highly influenced the Catholic Church that they imitate the Pentecostal polity as a model in order to survive the demand of the era.

The modern era with the urbanization and globalization poses its own threat to peaceful and efficient development and existence of the church. Urbanization has its associate problems emanating from it. Nmah (2012) enumerates the problems of urbanization to include

unemployment, unchecked freedom, individualism, use of charms, armed robbery, erosion of the authority of the elders and many others. The frustrating problem of unemployment for those in the urban cities has created room for many vices in the society which filters into the church. Some falsely identify themselves with the church in order to be in the position of authority and some to gain affluence, respect and money. This in turn has created its own hydra-headed monster in the church. Some end up carting away the fund of the pious organization to which they are leaders. Okonkwo (Personal Communication, 15th June, 2012) St. Ita parish, Ibeme, narrated how the leader of the Mary league in his parish made away with the money that belong to the organization. Many other incidences are bound in Catholic Church of other areas of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and other non-Catholic Churches. Fraudulent members therefore are bound. This has equally led to locking up of church building and stationing of security men in the church premises even in the day.

The globalization of the modern era has raised a strange style of dressing in the contemporary period in the name fashion. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province mustered enough courage to disassociate the faithful from such evils by preaching against it, enforcing decency in dressing to the church, encouraging decent dressing at home, work places, market and other places. Enlightenment through sermons, bill boards and posters is carried out while totally frowning at indecent appearances.

The celebration of festivities of the church such as Easter and Christmas attracts the wayward into the church compound. They see the celebrations as a free opportunity to gallivant; hence constituting nuisance to the church, the congregation and the Mass session. Some of them come with a lot of knockouts of various noise sounds and even music of no relevance to the

worship of God. The Catholic Church in this situation resorted to employing the services of the security personnel to ensure the safety of the members and peaceful atmosphere during mass.

A recent concern of the Catholic Church in the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is the terrorist attack of the recent time. It has become a major concern of the church worldwide. In some parishes, it is no longer safe to park vehicles inside the church compound. People were searched or even are not allowed to enter the church building with any handbag. The consciousness and worry over unprecedented attack in the church from hoodlums is dwindling. There used to be a time when the thought was a serious concern that people were afraid of going to church.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN OWERRI ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the available social welfare services offered by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The findings indicate that social welfare services are provided by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in the areas of motherless babies' homes, orphanages, old peoples' homes, school apostolate, prison apostolate, medical services, relief materials, women/youth empowerment, skills acquisition and others.

A project of such magnitude is found to be laden with some challenges which are enumerated. Possible strategies to put the challenges under control were recommended.

4.1 Historical Overview of Socio-economic Situation in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

The Owerri Ecclesiastical Province area is found among the Igbo in south Eastern Nigeria. Like any other Igbo community, they are hard working and industrious. Their pre-colonial occupations include farming, trading, and industry. They value agriculture and the titles given to people for their great impact on agriculture attest to it. Afigbo (1981) notes that every Igbo man and woman are farmers. Most families produced enough of such staple food as yam, cassava, cocoyam, vegetable to last them all the year" (p. 124). Some produced in excess for sale. This depends on the family strength and fertility of the land. Afigbo (1981) states that there were some communities whose soil were so fertile and gave so much of their time to farming that by the dawn of modern times they have started producing for outside market (p. 125). This implies that the people traded on and ate the agricultural products. The industries produce pots, seats, raffia, basket etc the traders trade on the products of both the farm and the industry.

The people practice the extended family system where parents, children, grand-parents, cousin, nephew, nieces and uncles are members of same family and known to each other as either brother, sister or parents. The marriage system of polygny is observed and it is a mark of nobility for a man to marry more than one wife. Titles are given to men to acknowledge their impact in the society in areas of farming, exhibition of valour and philanthropic acts. The people were not known to depend on charity from others. Due to importance placed on self-sufficiency and handwork in the farm, it is seen as relegatory for the Igbo to depend on bought items or depend on someone. With the advents of the colonial era and the European missionaries, the cultural settings of the people were rejected and converts were made to drop their Igbo tradition to qualify for membership in Christianity. Baeta (1968) notes that “until quite recently the prevailing attitude has implied complete rejection of African culture and the effort to assimilate Africans to the assumptions, values and practices of Christian west” (p.16). With the adverse change created by religious adoption, the socio-economic life of the people changed. Those who went to school got white-collar jobs and were able to pay tax to the white man to avoid molestation of the tax masters. The trend later became to go to school in order to qualify for white-collar jobs.

The Igbo in great number deserted the farm work that has been the main source of sustenance economically and socially, the white-collar jobs were not enough for those seeking for it. This situation led to case of unemployment which was not known among the self-sustaining Igbo. Poverty set in due to unemployment and many other social ills followed.

The Nigeria-Biafra war had enormous and devastating effect on the socio-economic life of the people. This gave rise to many destitutes such as sick, poor, maimed, orphans, homeless etc. Great loss was encountered in the war; life and wealth. The people lived on relief materials.

Self sufficient people met with unprecedented drastic economic emptiness. To cater for this dangerous and threatening social and economic situation, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province with the aid of the Caritas; social welfare services arm of the Catholic Church, engaged in provision of the immediate need of the war-torn people such as food, medical service, clothing, and shelter for the homeless. The Orphanages and the motherless babies' homes were judiciously used to accommodate and cater for the orphans and motherless babies.

Apart from the problem of lack of basic needs, many social ills erupted out of the war experience, prostitution and armed robbers gained high position among the people in the bid to find means of survival. Many men went into hiding for fear of being conscripted into the war and women became bread winners Achunike, (2002). The war ushered in many social ills in the society that people could be said to be completely living a misdirected life from the cherished values of Igbo lifestyle. Like a vicious cycle one evil begets another and has continued to date leaving the church with abject struggle to redirect the people to good values amidst the fraudulent acts of fake prophets who continue to enjoy the proceeds from exploiting the desperate citizens. Anyaegbu (1991) affirms that “some of the prayer houses and Aladura were fake, instituted by smart individuals to exploit the already war-torn people” (p.20).

The Catholic Church did not relent in handling the social welfare of the outcome of prostitution and armed robbery. Serious catechism classes, institution of strong pious organizations like Catholic Women Organization, Catholic Men Organization, the Catholic Youths Organization and some other societies were established to encourage sense of belonging among the members; among many other reasons, which will deter them from engaging into social evils; especially with impunity. The fact that any member of such pious organizations

found engaging in any social evil has given a dent to his name as a member of such a reputable organization. This helped to curb the excesses of incessant robbery that emanated immediately after the war. It equally redirected the people's attention towards the usual earnest hard work to earn a living as decent members of decent organizations.

Kwazu (2012) notes that “many people lost great deal to the war, their houses, private investments like industries, companies, private documents and most importantly, their families” (p.128). These loses and many other loses had much impact on social and economic lifestyle of the people who were left in a hopeless situation. Achebe (1983) affirms of the additional loses of the war which were created by the banking policies that affected the Igbo solely. The policy nullified the bank account of the Igbo, rendering those who lost their businesses and companies more hopeless. No matter the amount of millions one has in the account, the person receives only twenty pounds. Life started from the scratch though not freely but with government policies that work against the development of the Igbo.

When the war was over, the government of Nigeria embarked on privatization of the government establishments. The Igbo, whose money in the bank was nullified, were deprived of the opportunity to acquire such government establishment. Policies of the government work seriously against social and economic development of the Igbo. This paved way for a long term marginalization and poverty among the Igbo. The war effect has equally left the Igbo behind in the socio-political scene. Most positions of authority in government office are only dreams away from the Igbo realization. The policy of quota system in Educational opportunity cut its junk of flesh from the Igbo realization of certain aspirations. The feeble minded turn into stooge to the authorities that be, in order to eat from the crump that fell from the master's table. The war and all about it worked against the Igbo, leaving many depressed and oppressed with little or no hope

for improved condition of living. While those who can, go lengths to be economically viable. These policies caged the Igbo in from many angles to curb their efforts to grow again. The poverty that crept in to Igboland could be enumerated into various categories.

With only twenty pounds given to the people, they embarked on the journey to reconstruction and regeneration in the land of war ruin amidst policies that can frustrate good efforts. Though unimaginable, but through thick and thin, many revived and built up wealth again in Igboland. Today there are many who are rich among the Igbo. Urbanization which emanated with European influence has developed over the length of time giving rise to many untold vices. It has equally influenced life in the rural areas. People are at liberty to live as they deemed appropriate. There are no checks; hence the claim for people to be what they are not in order to commit one fraud or the other. The orientation is that money and better life is easily made in the urban areas. The people drift to urban areas to seek the money and better life. Some become victims of robbery, fraud and many other evil prevalent in the urban areas. Some who failed to make the better life resort to begging. Begging has become a lucrative business in the contemporary time; hence the organized begging. In this case some of the physically challenged, especially the blind are gathered and promised better living. They will be sent to go and beg for alms with a young child guiding the person. Even during school hours, these children are seen each leading his/her blind person around the urban city especially in the market place or commutters parks. This implies that the child is denied school education or any viable training. The social stigma attached to lack of self-reliance has been debased. The Igbo including those in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province beg with impunity.

Urbanization has destabilized the Igbo family system. Extended families in most cases have lost the ties. People leave for urban areas without bothering to contact other family

members. The weak ones who are usually accommodated within the extended family system are neglected. Some may join the trend of beggars. These people, out of these circumstances are poor and dependant. They form part of the population that the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical province cater for.

Amidst the prevailing situation, not all could be rescued from the long lasting effects of the war which has drastically misplaced issues. With the imposing threat of modernization and changing society, many are lost along the line with no adequate directives on the right trend. This has created room for misguided people who either constitute nuisance to the society or are ignorant of the right values to live with; hence incessant abuse of human rights. Today there are beggars among the hard working Igbo known for self-sufficiency. The need for welfare services therefore is necessary to carry along those suffering of the effect of economic depression due to influence of western culture, war-effect of Nigeria-Biafra war, modernization, globalization and other natural physical challenges like the deaf and dumb, maimed, blind, crippled and others.

4.2 Channels of Social Welfare Services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

The church today took off from what the predecessors, the European missionaries have propagated. The caring for people, rejection of Igbo culture, rivalry and scramble for territorial dominance, all has part to play in church's involvement in the provision of social welfare to the people. In this context, its effectiveness and use must be examined in the light of Christian concept of Social welfare. Social welfare service within the church's worshipping community ascribes full care and human worth to all members of the body of Christ. Paul in (Gal. 3:27-29) upholds that by baptism all participate in the one body with no sense of division. In (1cor.12:25-26), he said that all its organs might feel the same concern for one another, if one organ of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer together and if one flourished, they all rejoice together.

The church as a body of Christ shares a common purpose, the attainment of heaven after living on earth according to God's commandments. The basic tenet of the church to achieve this is to love God and man in all sincerity. Benedict XVI, from his own point of view (2009), expresses concern for the poor in these words:

Feed the hungry (Mt 25: 35, 37, 42) is an ethical imperative for the universal Church as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods. Moreover, the elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet. (p.27).

Francis (2013) maintains that:

The times talk to us of so much poverty in the world and this is a scandal. Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry. (p.1).

Though the Igbo received welfare services from the white missionaries who used it for evangelization strategy, they did not go begging for it. The Igbo were known for self-sufficiency and self-reliance. It was poverty which set in through unemployment created by the institution of and reliance on white collar jobs and the hopeless situation which arose out of the war effect that brought the Igbo to the bare of the needy. The church has to battle with the changing world to scale through in provision of social welfare services to the poor and the needy. It is therefore worthy of note that the study on social welfare services offered by Owerri Ecclesiastical

Province of Catholic Church includes the very potent social welfare services they offered during and immediately after the war till the present time of 2016.

The church has been source of solace and succor to the poor, the vulnerable, the oppressed and the rejected right from the time of Jesus Christ. In the recent time the church has been taking care of provision and protection of the vulnerable of the society, hence the formation of the society for Justice, Peace and Development committee (JDPC). Among the various duties of JDPC is the defending the societal rights and taking care of the poor and the widow to provide their needs and to give them sense of belonging.

The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has through the social welfare arm, Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) and Eu-Care been giving free medical cares, scholarships, foods, drugs, defence of the oppressed and many other social welfare services without charge to the poor and the needy. The Catholic church in Owerri Ecclesiastical province through their hospitals such as Holy Rosary hospital, Emekuku, schools, like Hopeville Uturu, home for destitute and elderly and various cash and material donations have been able to cater for the needs of the poor and indigents as much as possible. Information gathered from the visits to the dioceses indicates that the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is a giant in provision of Social welfare services to the people. This social welfare services are not restricted to only members of Catholic Church as no prerequisite identity is required to determine the denomination. It cut across the boundary to fulfill the words of Jesus in (Mtt 5:44-48) on love for all as the father in heaven allows the sun to shine for all. Rev. Sisters manage and has reformed the destitute homes.

St. Ita Catholic Church, Ibeme in alliance with Salmers Charity Foundation have given scholarships to many people. In many other parishes and even at the diocesan level, scholarships are given to many people including the seminarians. The church has to a large extent subdued the relegatory caste system which has made some people to be segregated against. The Osu and the free-born sit on the same pew in the church and buy from each other in the market. In the case of exploitation of workers and the citizens, the Catholic Archbishop, Obinna, A. J. V., speaks out for the people and call the government to order. The Catholic Church in the Owerri Ecclesiastical province has provided among many other social welfare services empowerment for youth through skill acquisition, schools for the physically challenged, orphanages, provision of clothes, houses, food, for the poor and many other welfare services as the demand arises.

4.2.1 The Motherless Babies Homes

This is one of the destitute homes. The main purpose for which it was instituted was to offer accommodation and care to babies whose mothers are no more. There is another group of babies that receive care and solace from the motherless babies home; those babies from young mothers (girls) with unexpected pregnancy. Through the 1970s to early 1990s, there used to be incessant cases of babies thrown away into the gutters, pit latrines, waste bins and some other dirty places. The scene is touching as helpless beings are discarded like waste. The Catholic Church took up the responsibility of being foster parents to these abandoned babies through the effort of the Rev. Sisters. Some of the Rev. Sisters constitute members the Justice, Development Peace and Committee whose duty it is to cater for the welfare of the needy as well as create awareness to peoples on modern realities in order not to lag behind in the order of things.

In this way the church is working according the instruction of Jesus Christ “Anyone who welcomes one little child like this in my name, welcomes me....see that you never despise any of

these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my father in heaven” (Mitt 12:5 & 10). By this laudable duty of the Church through the Rev. Sisters, lives are saved. Those babies whose lives would have been terminated where they were abandoned were rescued and resuscitated. They grow up to be useful citizens of the society.

As earlier noted, the provision of social welfare services move with the moving trend and changes to meet up with the demands of the changing society. Rather than pick babies from gutters, the mothers of unexpected pregnancy are housed by the Rev. Sisters in the motherless babies’ homes, and are taken care of through delivery to ensure safety of both the baby and the mother. After the safe delivery, the mother takes the child home or leaves the baby with the motherless babies’ home. These babies can be adopted especially by childless couples, saving their marriage from crashing. The motherless babies’ homes have developed to deliver more functions than the original plan, meeting up with the changing situation.

On visits to some parishes and the dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province, the researcher conducted personal communication with some priests like S. Anyanwu (27th July, 2017), religious, M. Okorundu (5th Sept. 2017) and lay people, N. Otogboro (17th August, 2017). It was gathered that there are motherless babies’ homes in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province managed by the Rev. Sisters. These motherless babies’ homes do not belong to the Provincial body but are built by different parishes and dioceses. Okwelle Motherless Babies’ Home is in Okigwe diocese. Okwelle motherless Babies Home is managed by Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation. It was learnt from A. Iwuagwu (personal communication 22nd September, 2017) that Ahiaeke Motherless Babies Home in Umuahia belongs to Umuahia diocese and managed by the congregation of Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. Bishop’s Court Motherles Babies Home, Uratta, Owerri is in Owerri diocese and under the management of Holy Family Sisters of

the Needy, St. Monica Motherless Babies Home, Ohabiam in Aba diocese managed by the Rev. Sisters but was built by the Catholic Women Organization (CWO), Sisters of the Needy Motherless Babies' Home, Nekede, is in Owerri diocese and is managed by the Holy Family Sisters of the Needy.

Some other motherless babies' homes are established by organizations like the Red Cross Motherless Babies Home, Orlu Rd Junction Owerri, owned and managed by the Red Cross Society and other motherless babies' homes that belong to other Christian denominations, groups and individuals. These other motherless babies' homes are regularly visited by the Catholic Church to give items of food, clothing, drugs, toiletries, disinfectants and cash. What really means much more in the provision of social welfare services to the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is to ensure that the poor and the needy are cared for irrespective where they are found.

The mother has a very essential duty to perform in the life of the children. The absence of a mother in a home is like absence of salt in food. The food becomes tasteless. So does the live of the child become tasteless without a mother. That great importance of a mother in the live of a child is filled by the church for the children without mothers. Acholonu (1993) opines that motherhood and child bearing are central to the life of Igbo people. It s not over statement that motherhood is the anchor, the matrix and the foundation on which all rests in African society and especially in Igboland.

The pious organizations in the church like the Catholic Women Organization (CWO), who often stand their position as the mothers in the church often visit the Motherless babies' homes to show their motherly love to the children in such homes. According to N. Otogboro

(11th August, 2017) personal communication, E. Ilo (personal communication, 22nd September, 2017), S. Anyanwu (27th July, 2017) personal communication, M. H. Onwuka (personal communication 8th September, 2017) C. Ofuzue and many others, people interviewed from Aba diocese, it was gathered that apart from the children in the Motherless Babies' Homes that belong to Catholic church, the members of Catholic church take it as obligation to visit and attend to the needs of other Motherless Babies' Homes that belong to other Christian denominations, like the Seventh Day Adventist, Aba, some other organizations like the Red Cross Motherless Babies' Homes, and private individuals. E. Ilo (personal communication 5th October, 2017), for instance notes that in September, 2017, the members of Catholic Women Organization (CWO) and the Knights of St. Mulumba of the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Aba jointly collected food items, clothing, toiletries, and cash. They took these to Motherless Babies' Homes, prisons and orthopedic hospital in Aba.

Further on the research interview, some other people interviewed from other dioceses like Okigwe, Umuahia, orlu, Owerri and Ahiara such as A. Njoku, (personal communication on the 22nd August, 2017) the Chaplain of St. Joseph Chaplaincy, Imo State University, Owerri, Nze Casmir (priest in-charge of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC), Owerri diocese), S. Anyanwu, (personal communication 5th October, 2017) Chancellor of Okigwe diocese, M. J. Okorondu, (personal communication 5th September, 2017) of Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation in Orlu diocese, M. Korienta (4th September, 2017) Catholic Women Organization (CWO) president and S. Obasi (personal communication 4th September, 2017) member of Catholic Men Organization (CMO), both of Corpus Christi parish, Dimneze, Ihite Uboma, C. Ugha, T. Igbokwe (personal communication 3rd September, 2017) Catholic Men Organization (CMO) President of St. Aloysius Catholic Parish, Agbaja, Nwangele Local Government Area of

Imo State, and many other interviewees confirm that the Catholic Church in the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province attends to the motherless babies in the homes that belong to the Catholic Province of Owerri and beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church. In that way they attend to the welfare needs of motherless babies of other Christian denominations and organizations and individuals.

It is worthy of note that some philanthropists build and donate homes to the church for the motherless. The fact that the church and other organizations instituted motherless babies homes have created a very great opportunity for the wealthy who are of benevolent spirit to visit the motherless babies in those homes and make tremendous donation to provide for their needs.

4.2.2 The Orphanages

An orphanage is a residential institution devoted to the care of orphans- children whose biological parents are deceased or otherwise unable or unwilling to take care of them. This belongs to the group of destitute. The orphans in a traditional Igbo setting are the responsibility of the extended family. In some cases they are not well taken care of. Such cases of neglect on the orphan leaves, the orphan in a hopeless situation. This constitutes the group; the church has taken into consideration and instituted the home for proper attention to them. Though some orphans are properly taken care by their families, it is not African in nature for a member of a family (extended or nuclear) to seek help from outside. It is often in rare cases that such issues are allowed.

The orphans and the widows are of major concern of the early church. Uche (2007) notes that other social groups include orphans, slaves, and strangers who imposed a burden on the church. It is noted that this class of people faced cultural dichotomy which fueled social tension

based on a strong feeling of superiority and inferiority complexes. The church in the apostolic era, took it up to take care of the congregation of which the orphans were among them without social ostracism. The missionaries that brought Christianity to Igbo land had their congregation in Christian village. They had no orphanages among their institutions for evangelization strategy. The traditional society accounts for the welfare of the orphans.

With the advancement of time, or modernization, there were many more demands emanating from the demands of the advancing society. The adopted European ideologies planted new ecological disposition in human relations, political ideology, economic conception and practices, religious and cultural intolerance, the Igbo society took a different shape from the traditional setting.

New demands of live were on especially with independence in 1960. Like people without self control agitations came up for certain rights. Misgivings plunged into the Nigerian society and the unexpected happened, the war broke out and many lost their homes, parents, and everything they had. Hunger was experienced by all as the effect of malnutrition took toll, death and kwashiorkor was the order of the period, the institution of orphanage among other needs became paramount. Those orphanages instituted to service the war-effect created the foundation for the orphanages in existence in the recent time. Any of them are no longer in existence. For instance there were orphanages at St. Patrick Catholic church Ogor, in Ugiri Mbano. There was one at Ibenkwo Umunumo in Ehime Mbano, another one at Enyiogugu Mbaise, and Ekwerazu, Mbaise Another one was sited at Oziri Inyisi during and immediately after the war, all to service the war effects, but these are no longer in existence. They served the purpose of the moment and later ceased to exist.

This is accountable to the fact that in the traditional Igbo Society, every member belongs to the same extended family not just the nuclear family. It is relegate for a family to send the children of the late brother away to the orphanage home but in rare cases, there could be families who are too poor to cater for their needs and could not take up the addition burden of the late brother. The orphanages offer the needed attention to the orphans. Orphanages are institutions identifiable more with urban cities. It is easily acceptable among the urban dwellers who are used to live of individualism.

Uche (2007) identifies that the church as a sanctified body of Christ received a distressed call and in response to the prevalence large-scale discrimination the church was set to enforce its universal apostolic functions in order to promote individual freedom and liberty. The church has never relented in caring for those in need. But as the war ended and some of the effects of the war faded or even developed to a more dangerous or serious standard, the Church's attention to social welfare services took shape to address the matters of the moment. According to S. Anyanwu (personal communication, 5th October, 2017) the Catholic Church has in so many ways taken care of the needy and the poor, the neglected of the society. To that effect the Catholic church of Owerri Ecclesiastical province has orphanages at Alike-Obowo, - Holy family sisters of the needy are in-charge of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Orphanage Home at Amatu Alike Obowo. This orphanage home is built by Mr. Nwadinobi and handed over to the church.

Some of the institutions are not built by the church but by individuals and organizations and handed over to the church. The case of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Obowo is evident. Another orphanage is located in Aba diocese at Ntia in Isi-Ala Ngwa North Local Government Area. This orphanage home is managed by Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. Located in Umuahia diocese is the St. Vincent De Paul Orphanage at Umuafia which is managed by

Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation- DMMM. The inmates of these homes receive such social welfare attention like rehabilitation which attended to their psychological and emotional state to review them to realign their feelings and their physical self to the existing society and sit up to live. They are given school education to various levels, and equally learn skills. Some of these inmates became priest and some join religious congregations. According to Uche (2007):

The church has remained an agent of social change, transformation and development. The Bible in similar situations determines what the gospel can do for the various groups of people, societies and cultural life. The kingdom of God implies total transformation or liberation of the poor and the oppressed which becomes true sacrament of God's historic saving activity. (p. 145).

The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical province has among many other ways catered for the oppressed such as the orphans especially those that are depressed due to the oppression they received from uncaring relations.

4.2.3 Old People's Home and Care.

The old people being cared for in the Province consist of both the laity and priests. These include old people's home for the priests at St – Paul's Osu – pastoral centre of the diocese. Though it is the bishop's idea that old and retired priests remain in the parish where they retired, there is institution of old priest home at Osu too. The very sick old are kept there to enable them get immediate and adequate attention to their health. The purpose of allowing the old priest to remain in the parish when they retired is to enable them interact with other people rather than being in isolation.

Another old peoples' home managed by the church is Missionary Sister of Divine Providence Care Home for the Elderly in Ekwereocha in Ihite Uboma. This Home was built in 2016 by Chief Hillary Okwu and handed over to the church.

Apart from the institutions it is obligation to parish priests to undertake home visits to the elderly of their parishes that are unable to come to church. Some are weak while some are bed-ridden. This was attested to by some priests, Religious, Catholic Women Organization Members and Catechists in a personal communication. M. Okoro (personal communication 6th September, 2017), affirmed to the information. Iloakasi in a (personal communication 25th April, 2017) attested to it. E. Nwoha (personal communication 24th February, 2017) whose husband, Stanistclus, has been bed-ridden since 2011 attested to regular visits and care of the Parish Priest and the members of the church.

From the research conducted, it was gathered that the church had much at hand to improve on and reconstruct. The war-devastated church premises needs attention to ensure the stability of the church. The impact of the repatriation of the expatriate priests which drastically reduced the priest in the Lord's Vineyard calls for training and ordination of indigenous priests. Equally the immediate welfare needs of populace issue of Catholic are concern to Church. These require a lot of finance that it has a role to play in the strength of the erecting of the social welfare institutions. Though there are social welfare institution like the Ahiaeke Motherless Babies Home, Okwelle Motherless Babies Home, Opus Secretatis, School for the Deaf and Dumb Orodo, Hopeville Institution and many others, there does not seem to be enough. More institutions are needed especially in the area of care of the elderly. Bishop of Umuahia for instance is building a mega Pastor Bounus for the elderly priests which will hopefully be ready

for use by next year (2018) as reported by A. Iwuagwu (personal communication 22nd September, 2017).

4.2.4 School Apostolate

There are people in the society who are too poor to afford school education. Though with free tuition education as promulgated by the present governor of Imo state, Okorochoa Rochas, there are some people who still cannot afford school education. This is because apart from tuition fees, there are many other demands to it like school uniform dress, sandals, school bag and books. No meaningful education can take place in the absences of the necessary requirements. Before the free education declaration of Rochas Okorochoa, the Federal Government has instituted Universal Basic Education, (UBE) with free tuition, for the basic classes-primary one to Junior secondary class three (3). Prior to the UBE, tuition fee was binding on the students.

The school education as is found in the Igbo society today is a product of the schools instituted by the missionaries. Then schools were managed by the church and the graduates of the schools then were epitome of high moral standing. School education was associated with religious congregations. Education can be used for social change. Basically education can be defined as the process of transferring the societal norms and values from generation to generation. It is also a means of making someone to be self-reliant. In this case, a child denied the education automatically has lost all the benefits as enumerated above and more.

Brown (2013) remarks that education is a process which brings about changes in the behaviour of a society. It is a process which enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of the society and to make positive contributions to the progress of society. The distribution of education both in terms of quality and quantity is highly uneven in most societies.

Inequality in opportunities for education is found not only with reference to individuals and social classes but also in terms of regions and territorial regions such as urban and rural areas.

These differences in class and regions has contributed highly to lack of school education to some people from poor families and others from rural areas with little or no value for school education. Education is marked as a channel for societal and individual development. Therefore no one is to be left behind in the developmental trend. Mayer (1977) remarks that “education is central to public biography of individual, greatly affecting their life chances. It is also central element in the table or organization of society, constructing competencies and helping creating professions and professionals” (p.104). This implies that education helps individuals to be equipped with knowledge and skill that will help them in defining and pursuing personal life goals. It enables people to participate constructively, play their parts to improve their conditions and the condition of the society.

In consideration of the relevance of education to the live of individual and the society, education can therefore, be described as an inevitable entity in the life of the society and the individual and therefore a right. Uche (2007) notes that “the church has remained an agent of social change, transformation and development” (p.145). this implies that the Church equally engages in the duties bound in educational services. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is therefore in the right channel with the offering of education to the less privilege and equally enlightens the ignorant in the values of Education. In order to achieve the principles of transforming foundations, Owerri Ecclesiastical Province engages in ensuring as much as possible, that the children of poor families acquire this inevitable school education. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has given several thousands of children the opportunity for school education by financing the studies from primary to tertiary institutions.

Many have gained in this programme. According to Nze (2007), the scholarship scheme is a veritable tool of helping bright indigent students to get education. Opportunities are granted as many as possible in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The aim of this scheme according to Nze (2007) is to achieve, as the church's continued contribution; a mass literacy programme.

School apostolates have achieved much in the order of its programmes. The elderly who are illiterates can also afford the opportunity to achieve literacy capacity through the Adult education programme. Nwolisa (2007), notes that Ecclesiastical Province in addition has schools located in almost all the parishes to form part of "the saving mission of the church especially as instruments for educating children in the faith" (p.8).

Often philanthropist in joint effort with the church offers scholarship to the indigents. For instance Humphrey Egbulefu and Owerri Archdiocese jointly offered scholarship to sixteen indigent Altar Boys who were successful in the examination conducted for the award of Archdiocesan scholarship. From personal communication with the J.D.P.C staff and some other members of the congregation in Owerri Archdiocese that the Archdiocese offers quarterly financial assistance to scholarship programmes of the Archdiocese.

It is important to note that their scholarship cuts across boundary. It is not restricted to only Catholics. Their concern in caring for the indigents is to create a better society where people of all beliefs and practices can be happy together.

Apart from the school for the normal children from indigent families, there are schools for the physically challenged. Immediately after the Nigeria –Biafra the first of its kind was established at Uturu by the Marists Brothers of Catholic Church in the then Umuahia Diocese,

now Okigwe Diocese is the Hope-Ville Institute for the maimed and physically challenged. The war left many with less their viable human parts like legs, hands, eyes, and many other parts of the body devastated by the war. The Hope-Ville institute was established by the church to rehabilitate such maimed people and restore their hope to live and be viable. In a personal communication with S. Anyawu (5th September, 2017), the chancellor of Okigwe diocese, confirms that the Hope Ville institute served to cater for the maimed of the war effect of Nigeria-Biafra war.

Other schools for the physically challenged are situated in various places in the Ecclesiastical Province like the school for deaf and dumb in Orodo, school for mentally retarded in Ngor-Okpala, school for the impaired hearing in Ahiara. The catholic church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province gather the school drop-outs, the hawkers, visit poor homes and rural areas and gather those who can't afford the school education, interview them and offer them scholarship. This way some who would have constituted nuisance to the society are turned into useful and reformed members of the society. In Aba diocese for instance, up to five sets have graduated from secondary schools.

4.2.5 Medical Apostolate

During the time of the ministry of Jesus, the sick of all kinds were taken care of. Even the woman of syrophenicia who Jesus described as not being worthy to receive what was meant for the children, still received attention from Jesus and her demon –possessed daughter was liberated from demonic attack (Mk; 7:24-30). The centurion who was a Roman soldier acknowledged his unworthiness to welcome Jesus into his home, considering Jewish tradition, requested and Jesus healed the centurion's servant from a distance (Lk 7:1-10). So Jesus act of care and concern in healing the sick cut across worthy and unworthy.

By the time Christianity came into the area that make-up Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, evangelism was routed on provision of social welfare services of which medical services was inclusive. That foundation of the church has survived times and weather and has gotten to this modern era with sophisticated approach due to modernization and advancement in technology.

The provision of health/medical services to the people in the Owerri Ecclesiastical province of Catholic Church saw the height of this duty with advancement of Nigeria-Biafra war which posed a serious threat to life and survival, especially from 1968 when the war effect have aggravated the dreadful threat to life. The situation was aggravated by the starvation and malnutrition of the war period effect which gave rise many serious devilmets such as anemia and Kwaskiokor. The church with the humanitarian concern was posed in the face with a serious burden to handle. Omenka (2012) remarks that during the Nigeria-Biafra war “Whelan and Cockin cared for the soul of Igboland as well the body. They shared our joy as well as our sorrows. The air-lift to Biafra and the men and women who made it possible showed that our world still had a conscience” (P.188). Whelan was the Bishop of Owerri diocese before and during the Nigeria Biafra war. He worked with the assistance of Cockin who was the Bishop of Anglican Church in Owerri. Amidst all shortcomings posed by the war, the church fought vehemently to save lives by giving medical attention to the Biafrans threatened with death and life-threatening sicknesses.

Some were airlifted to Europe to save their lives while calls were made for donation of blood to save lives especially that of the solders. Personal experience, 1969, Okoroji Cyril of St Ita Parish Ibeme Mbano donated twice; a pint of blood each time at different times to save lives. Hospitals were relocated and make-shift hospitals were instituted to give medical attention to the sick, the maimed, the pregnant women, and most especially the solders. The need for medical

attention attained its peak between 1968 to 1970. Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of the Catholic Church with the aid of the Caritas and the Rev. Sisters worked tirelessly to give medical attention to the war torn Biafrans. Nwalo (2012) notes that:

Kwashiorkor a hitherto unknown word from a Ghanaian language suddenly became a household and frightful word in Biafra..... kwashiorkor was taking heavy toll on Biafra, especially within the fold of the children, the poor and the elderly. So many had died of the ailment and so many others were on the verge of death. (p.134).

Irrespective of the order from the Nigerian government that all the foreign priests and religious should leave Biafra, they did not heed the order but swung into action to save lives. Nwalo (2012) notes that:

The catholic church spear-headed the move to breach the blockage and other Christian churches and organizations came in tow. They ran the blockage from land to sea and eventually to air-lift of the most needed food and medical supplies. (p. 135).

Nwalo further states that “sick-bays were set up here and there where the children with advanced malnutrition ailment were hospitalized and given special care. At a point, many Biafra children were evacuated to Libreville, Gabon, to the “Biafra village” with Rev. Fr. Tobias Osondu (late) as their chaplain”. (p.136). A specified pediatric hospital was built by German Caritas at Ihioma which cared for children. At the end of the war, this pediatric hospital metamorphosed into St. Damain’s Hospital, Okporo Orlu.

With advancement of time the sick bays were no longer in use and were phased out, though some now serve as health centres like Obollo maternity. The catholic church having medical services apostolate as an embodiment of the church have continued to improve on what the European missionaries and the war effect has created and equally develop and institute new trends in medical services and hospitals. The hospitals in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province include Holy Rosary hospital, Emekuku which is the first hospital ever established by the church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Others include Mater Misericordiea hospital, Afikpo, Mbanjo Joint hospital - jointly owned by old Mbanjo county council and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters established in 1950. Handmaid of the Holy Mother Hospital, Isuochi, Amatu Hospital at Alike and many others.

Through these hospitals, sick people are attended to. People receive medical attention of various types such as surgery, orthopaedic, gynaecology, pediatrics, general medical attention. These services and many more are for patients who are taken to these hospitals for medical attention.

Another method of medical attention is where the people are required to gather at an appointed time to receive medical attention. In Owerri Archdiocese for instance, C. Nze (personal communication on the 14th August, 2017), said that the sick indigents who cannot afford hospital bills gather at the podium quarterly to receive medical attention from the doctors and nurses who will be there. More complex issues that require more than the medical services rendered there are referred to Holy Rosary Hospital, Emekuku. M. Okoro (personal communication on the 6th September, 2017), remarks that from time to time medical teams visit different parishes to render medical attention free of charge, to the sick, through the approval and support of the Catholic Church.

The Owerri Archdiocesan health service unit exists to share and continue in the Lord's healing ministry, "when I was sick you cared for me, searching for kindness, you held out yours hands (Mtt 25:35)". Nze (2007) remarks that "medical care in the form of first aid is administered while serious cases are referred to Holy Rosary Hospital, Emekuku, owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri" (p.12). The JPDC/Caritas, the social welfare arm of Catholic Church is in-charge of the medical services offered. They attend to minor issues and refer more complex issues to Holy Rosary hospital Emekuku and pay the hospital bill for the patients.

Apart from gathering to receive medical services, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province engage in home visitations to the sick; both young and old. According to M. Okoro (personal communication on the 27th July, 2017), of St. Benedict Catholic Church Parish, Amaraku, his parish has a project for collection of money which is used to attend to the sick and the indigent. Free-will donations are organized by priests during their annual retreats, with which visits are made to sick priests and medically attended to.

The medical institutions in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province include Sacred Heart Catholic Maternity, Oguta, Holy Family Maternity, Izombe, Catholic Maternity Hospital Ogwa, Mercy Hospital Obosima, Holy Rosary Hospital Maternity, Mbutu-Okohia. The health unit according to Nze (2007) coordinates and facilitates the activities of the various parishes, dioceses and religious congregations in hospitals, mobile clinics and AIDS prevention and cure. At the national level, the health unit has the task of drawing up the health policy for the Catholic Church in the country.

From the different parishes and dioceses visited, it was gathered that apart from hospital medical care, the priests or even some members of the church in union with a medical doctor and

nurse visit sick people in their homes and give them medical treatment as the case may warrant or take them to hospitals for a more appropriate medical attention. They visit the prisons and give them free medical services.

The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is well organized in carrying out the duty of provision medical services and other social welfare services to the people. These services are not denominational bound. At times one seeking for a more complicated medical attention through the aid of the church is requested to get a letter from the priest where he worships or the traditional ruler of the person to check fraudulent acts. As much as they can, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province leave no stone unturned in ensuring adequate utilization of the available resources in providing medical attention to the people especially in this period of harsh economic situation where many are suffering the bizarre of economic crunch, leaving many vulnerable.

4.2.6 Relief Materials

Jesus fed the 5,000 (Jn 5). By this he has practically set the pace for his church. The early church in order to accommodate all levels and classes of people opted to communal live. They shared what they have and no one laid claim on any property. Had this continued and with the type of power welded by Catholic Church, the large gap between the rich and the poor would have been closed. Persecution and later agitations over doctrinal difference tore the church into shreds that it was toppled by Islamic faith mostly in Eastern Europe and North Africa.

This provision of relief materials like food and clothing formed part of the foundation upon which the planting of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province was made.

Nnabuife (1983) acknowledges that “the Spiritan’s missionary endeavours, works of charity featured prominently of winning the confidence and trust of the local people” (p.141).

The need for provision of relief materials saw its peak in the time of Nigeria-Biafra war. At this time, the Catholic Church showcased their ever glowing capacity and concern for the suffering masses. Caritas international quickly swung into action. With the other relief organization bodies, they formed Joint Christian Aid (JCA). The intensity of the war drastically narrowed down the territory that belonged to Biafra as people kept running away from their territories with the advancement of the Nigerian troops. Nwalo (2012) observes that:

The narrowing of the Biafra-held territory into areas comprised mostly now Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, also meant the concentration of Biafra personnel, government establishments, war industries as well as population density, hunger and enemy military targets. (p,.133).

This single situation created dense population concentration that there were many refuges scattered all over the area of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Nwalo (2012) therefore further stated that “the Catholic Church, mindful of her divine mission, would not fold her arms and watch the people starve to death. She must provide some immediate and effective response and this she did mainly through RELIEF AGENCIES” (p.133).

From Lisbon, Portugal and Sao Tome, the church mounted very heavy relief operations bringing in the most needed supplies of food and medication- a very risky operation that took tolls on lives. Uli airstrip was the air lifeline. The main depot for Caritas by 1968 was Regina Pacis parish compound, Ihioma, Orlu while Red Cross made use of St. Mary’s Muriel Seminary

Umuowa Orlu all of which are in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province the only viable safe territory as the war advanced.

Some other Rev Frs like Rev. Fr. Anthony and other catholic missionaries weighed in their effort to increase the relief materials supplied. Many Rev. Fathers dared the bombings going on at Uli airport by the Nigerian military force to supply more and more relief materials in order to save the hunger-stricken Biafrans. Their efforts are worth appending. Nwalo, (2012) affirms that Rev. Fr. Bill Butter, in company of experienced pilot, Count Carl Gustar Van Rosen from Sweden flew into Uli airport in a broad-day light. For the sake of starving Biafrans the Catholic Church priests such as Dermont Doran, Raymong Kennedy and Augustine Finucane, Mike and Dahony Brothers dared the devils to supply relief materials through the air to Biafra. (pp.135-136).

When the relief materials arrive at the main depots; Ihioma and Umuowa, they will be sent to various centres scattered all over the remaining territory of Biafra. From these centres parishes and communities and refugee camps got their ration. Feeding centres were established at various villages where the children were regularly fed. With this kwashiorkor was held in check. Nwalo (2012) therefore reassures that “we cannot be grateful enough to the Catholic Church and the Relief Agencies for providing both material and spiritual succor to the suffering Biafrans” (p,150).

By the time the time the war ended, the poverty status of the people was bemoaning. The Catholic Church of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province did not relent in the work of provision of relief materials to the hungry in as much as the church was equally faced with the problem of reconstruction of the devastated church environments. Some people who could not tell the way

to their house, especially children who have lost their parents, were kept with church in the Orphanages and were taken care of by the church.

Posed with the reality of the fact that poverty and lack of self-reliance seems to hover in the society persistently, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province devised a viable means to ensure that humanity is attended to, to avoid untold evil that may emanate from the abject poverty. During festivities like Christmas, Easter, Mothers' Day, Cathedricum and any other festive period, the members of the church collect food items, clothing, toiletries and some other household needs which they share to the indigents and the prison inmates to give them the opportunity to partake in the festivities of the moment. Information gathered on interviews held depicts that all the dioceses collect relief materials like food, clothing and cash from the members and distribute same to the poor people who gather at the church premises to collect the materials. In Owerri diocese for instance, under the organized programme of Eu-Care, any Parish assigned to, will collect donations of relief materials in cash and kind and bring the collections to the Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) office and every 3rd Friday. The indigents will gather at the podium in the Maria Assumpta Cathedral and receive the items either as cash or food items or clothing or all. It all depends on the availability of the relief materials supplied. The picture in fig.6 below shows the people listening to the address of Rev Fr. Nze Casmir prior to the sharing of the relief materials to them.

Fig. 6: shows Rev. Sr Terese Nwkoroku distributing relief materials to beneficiaries at Maria Assumpta Cathedral Podium, Owerri.



Source: Eu-Care handbook (2007) from JDPC office, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri.

Fig. 7: shows Eu-Care beneficiaries about to receive relief materials at Maria Assumpta Cathedral Podium, Owerri.



Source: Eu-Care handbook (2007) from JDPC office, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri.

In addition, during the day for Cathedraticum, all parishes of the dioceses are mandated to collect and bring to their relative deanery, relief materials to aid the bishops in taking care of the poor. Different dates are assigned to the deaneries for the Cathedraticum. The bishop is supposed to be in attendance to receive those items. From the deaneries, some of the relief materials are taken to the diocese where the indigents in their numerous presences are waiting to be attended to. From the proceeds of Cathedraticum, some of the relief materials are sent to the seminary schools. E. Ilo, M. Otogboro, A. Iwuagwu and many other people interviewed confirmed that the relief materials collected during the Cathedraticum are shared to the poor who fill the compound of the cathedral during the week of the Cathedraticum, some are taken to the prison for the prison inmates and some of the relief materials are sent to the seminary school to help in feeding the seminarians. A. Chikere, (personal communication on the 14th August, 2017), presently the project manager of JDPC/Caritas, Owerri Archdiocese that from the relief materials gotten from the Cathedraticum, that relief materials are given to the Motherless Babies'Homes, Ophanages, prison for prison inmates, school for deaf and dumb, Orodo, Mentally retarded school, Ngor-Okpala and other destitute homes. This is the main purpose for the Cathedraticum; to remember the poor and the needy in the agenda of efforts for well being for humanity.

Fig.8: Shows bags of food items ready for distribution to indigents at Maria Assumpta Cathedral Podium, Owerri.



Source: Eu-Care handbook (2007) from JDPC office, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri.

The means and ways of gathering relief materials to care for the indigents are many. E. Ilo (personal communication 22nd September, 2017) reiterates that at Our Lady of Lourds Parish, Aba, at regular intervals, about a week will be mapped out to collect free will donations of cash which will be used to attend to the financial needs of the poor. Okorondu (personal communication 5th September, 2017) of Orlu diocese, Onwuka (8th September, 2017) the elder of Aba diocese, J. Ibe (6th September, 2017), of Okigwe diocese, S. Obasi (4th September, 2017), assert that different collections are usually called for and are channeled towards taking care of the poor.

Paul VI (1967)

Opines that:

If someone who has the riches of this world sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17) It is well known how strong the words were used by the Fathers of the Church to describe the proper attitude of persons who possess anything towards persons in need. To quote Saint Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all and not only to the rich. (p.23).

It was only T. Igbokwe (personal communication 3rd September, 2017), who said that his parish is poor and could not do anything except during the mandatory Cathedraticum when they collect the much they can and give to the diocese. He used idioms in most of his speeches such as *'mmanya ju mbele, ya awufuwe n'ukwu ngwo'* and again *'onye gara na nke ntukwu acho oche, onwere nke ntukwu ji nuru'*. All his idiomatic expressions are indications that his parish is among

the poor parishes. Owerri Ecclesiastical Province through the JDPC has provision for the poor parishes.

The litany of social welfare services seem to be unending. M. Okoro (6th September, 2017) of St. Benedict Parish Amaraku stipulates that he instituted a welfare scheme to which people had to make contributions. It is used to cater for the welfare needs of members of the parish who are sick and the indigents especially those who are invalid. When the available fund is liquidated, the parish priest will organize for another contribution to ensure the work of mercy goes on.

It is worthy of note that a well organized social welfare service is eminent in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The first of its kind is the Eu-Care instituted by Archbishop Obinna A. J. V., the Metropolitan See of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and the Archbishop of Owerri Archdiocese. Describing the Eu-Care C. Nze (4th August, 2017) and G. Alaride (16th March, 2017) explain that Eu-Care is an abbreviation for Eucharistic Care. It is a Catholic Charity Agency in the Archdiocese of Owerri for extending Jesus' Eucharistic Love to the needy and the poor. It is a gospel challenge and opportunity to participate actively in the charity mission of the local and universal church and it is the second component of the Eucharistic Congress Outreach in Owerri Archdiocese, the first part of which is Eucharistic Worship and Adoration.

The Eu-Care began as a fruit of Second National Eucharistic Congress held in Owerri diocese from 23rd to 25th October, 1992. Archbishop Obinna, Anthony J. V., a priest at the time of the Eucharistic congress conceived the idea and programme of Eu-Care. When he was appointed as a bishop in 1993, and with the exhortation of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II to him to always remember the poor, he instituted and formally established the Eucharistic Care on

the 23rd October, 1993 when the first anniversary of the National Eucharistic Congress took place.

The Eu-Care was in answer to the growing need for welfare services to the poor, the indigents and the needy. As the day, months and years go by, things get tougher economically. More people are dropped on the line of the indigents. The church cannot fold her arms and let her children perish out of hunger, poverty, ignorance and depression of injustice. Rather than getting better, things get worse socially and economically with advent of time. Prices of goods and services escalate while means of survival degenerate. Through the Eu-Care more cogent styles are applied to tackle the problem of economic devaluation and depression which is launching new inmates into the gathering of poverty at geometric rate with no glimpse of possible remedy.

The Eu-Care through the strategies mapped out as enumerated by A. Chikere, (personal communication 14th August, 2017) the project manager, had to involve the parishes and it works like a network. Every parish in Owerri diocese is involved in the activities of the Eu-Care. The duties to the Eu-Care are distributed to all the parishes, hence supply of relief materials are allotted the parishes at different dates to ensure continuity. So each month a parish or two parishes combined as their financial strength could take are scheduled to supply the relief materials that will be shared to the indigents for that month. This way all parishes partake in the sustenance of the programme and contribute to maintenance of care for the poor. Every third Friday, the indigents gather at the podium of the Maria Assumpta Cathedral to get a share of the relief materials.

Vatican II Document, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) bears genuine concern for the poor in the following words:

Faced with a world today where so many people are suffering from want, the council asks individuals and governments to remember the saying of the Fathers: "Feed the people dying of hunger, because if you do not feed them you are killing them," and it urges them according to their ability to share and dispose of their goods to help others, above all by giving them aid which will enable them to help and develop themselves. (p.69).

At its core, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) asserts the fundamental dignity of each human being, and declares the Church's solidarity with both those who suffer, and those who would comfort the suffering: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this, age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. (p. 1).

Eu-Care and other sources of charity in Catholic Church has now grown to meet up with the incessant ever threatening economic depression which has depleted many businesses and lay-off many employed workers. Those already in service especially in Imo state are moaning over arrears of months of no salary while retired workers – the supposed pensioners, are neglected. Indigent situation is on the increase, creating more work for the social welfare service arm of the church. No matter the situation, it cannot be the same as at the time of Nigeria-Biafra war. All the same many are suffering the economic crunch. The Eu-Care has involved all who are willing to donate to the welfare services of the church to do so without delay. Many wealthy people are responding adequately to the call to combat hunger and sickness among the people of God. The relief material is shared to the poor irrespective of religious faith, tribe or ethnicity.

4.2.7 Women Empowerment

The women treated in this study include married and unmarried women. Some are mothers others are not. The societal influence affects the vulnerability of the women. They are held as second class citizens and even the women help to make such a status a reality. They accept it as the right thing to be subject to the male decisions and instructions; hence many women find it difficult to exercise or utilize their talents and ideas. Karen (2017),

Strongly believes that: The language we use and the stories we tell ourselves can be very powerful — for better and for worse. And the language of powerlessness, sacrifice and selflessness helps to keep women in a disempowered place. I agree wholeheartedly that there are not enough policies in our country to support those who can't afford it themselves. But I hoped that by shedding light on the language we use, it would contribute in some small way to forging better policies. This has further implications in a point I make below about artificial intelligence. (p.84).

Karen has a point in this statement. The women are living the way they are in most cases due to the societal norms and values. Women especially in Igbo society are trained and coded to hold tenaciously the value that the honour of a woman lies in being married and live under a man. This has affected some women socially, psychologically and economically, especially those whose husbands can't allow to freely express themselves. The small business ventures like sale of fruits, and other petty trade positions are mainly occupied by women. Though there are women who have enjoyed liberation of the modern era and are big-time business or politically engaged women. There are women who are still estranged in the wheels of poverty due to societal norms or ignorance. Karem (2017) further states that;

In my recent review piece, I addressed the question of whether motherhood is a sacrifice or a privilege, whether it is selfless or selfish. I made the argument that we would go a long way to empowering women and mothers by reframing the way we think and talk about mothers by refusing the badge of martyrdom and by heeding the language we use when we talk about motherhood. By insisting on calling motherhood a selfless sacrifice, we take agency away from her. (p.57).

Her insistence on the issue of societal values is a cogent point which the church in the wisdom of the duty of Christ places all as the same in the presence of God; hence women are made to hold leadership positions from the inception of the church in Igboland. Flora Nwakauche, Margret Ekpo are products of the church efforts who started the literacy training for both men and women. Acholonu (1995) noted that, “a rich woman, an educated woman, and enlightened women who is outspoken, hardworking and fearless can hardly expect to be looked down upon by any member of the society or her own immediate family” (p.44). Economically, reference is made to occupation and income earned by both men and women. It is clear that women in the urban areas contribute highly to household income unlike women in rural areas. Traditionally, whatever any woman owns is strictly under the control of the man. In affirmation to this point, Okorji (1983) remarks that:

However in most rural household, men are generally than their women, the situation arising from the fact that traditionally control household resources including women’s labour among other reasons. On the other hand, the contribution of urban women in household affair increases with rise in income status of the women relative to the men. Urban women’s contributions to

household labour requirements tend to decrease with their rising income while that of rural women has no significant change with income. (p.144).

In affirmation to this, Acholonu (1983) says that there is division of labour in agricultural production and economic activities of the families in Igbo society. To this the traditional women are known for their ability to combine several roles and to function in various capacities within their society. The society depends much upon their strength and resilience as the matrix of life in its varied dimensions. For it places on them the deep valleys that must take onto themselves the burden of supporting the rest of society while seeming to diminish in status in patrilineal societies. Accordingly, women's lives call for constant sacrifice. But at the same, they are the bedrock of the family.

Acholonu (1993) stipulates that motherhood and childbearing are central to the life of African/Igbo people. It is not an overstatement that motherhood is the anchor, the matrix and the foundation on which all rests in the African/Nigerian society and especially in Igboland. In line with this, Makinde (1998) affirms that women in traditional societies are often limited in conception typologies to the eyelike role of daughters, wives and mothers. Makinde, did not end here, he went further to state that tradition and culture attributes women's role to be that of daughter, wife and mother; it is more than that, for her other roles like nation builder, her role in social and cultural development, economic and industrial development and political development; all consist in her vital and noble role of being a daughter, wife and a mother as God's endowment. According to him, the attributes that are contributory factors of women in development all that it takes to make her a real help mate.

In Igboland, women are traditionally seen and regarded as weaker than men, less useful to the family and even less valuable to the community. Her primary and paramount role through which she could gain status, recognition and respect was being a dutiful wife and mother. She further contributes to the welfare of the family through farming and small scale trading on condiments and foodstuff. In the administration of the family, the village or clan, women are seldom consulted. Rarely are women included in decision-making on vital issues of the society. Although today women venture into politics, most Igbo women have no political rights except as permitted by their husbands. On the traditional level, women have little say in the governance of the clan. Their governmental powers are more on those issues that concern the women folk.

However, Acholonu (1993) saw this as a dangerous misrepresentation of the true state of affairs that negates the diversity and variety of issues surrounding her position and experience in the different cultures in which she finds herself. It is noteworthy to state that in traditional African/Nigerian society, women do not feel any need to imitate men in order to express their personality. It is believed that individuals in the family complement one another for the up-building of the entire family.

The concrete role played by women in African traditional context, to a great extent is determined by the inter-related factors that range from sociological, economical and environmental point of view. Sociologically reference is made to such factors as educational attainment, social status of men and women and their various roles in the household. Okorji (1983) states that:

Education which is related to employment and income affect women's contribution to decision making, provision of labour and contribution to

acquisition of household property and other welfare need. Illiterate wives of educated employed men contribute less to household decision making and household income, but more labour relative to educated wives of educated/employed men. Since the greater proportion of educated men and women are found in urban areas, in absolute terms, the contributions of urban women tend to be higher than those of rural women. (p.30).

In the recent times, with the harsh economic plight in the society, despite the values of modern era, some women are still threatened by poverty and ignorance as a result of their background or obedience to the societal norms. The church still active in the duties of welfare services, takes it as a duty to create opportunity for such women to see the light of the day through the proper utilization of their capabilities and ingenuity. The JDPC of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, the Catholic Women Organization and other good spirited individuals and organizations help to ensure that the women who are capable respond positively to acts of rehabilitation and improvement are given every possible assistance to stand on their own.

They are taught some trades, skills and services with which they earn a living, sustain themselves and the family, survive the uncompromising harsh economic situation and attend to other demands of day. Ifenkwe, (2012); Ezeano (2012); and Agumagu and Adesope (2012) have revealed that it was almost impossible to plan for any meaningful community development programmes in Nigeria, without the women and their groups. In the same token, Obinna and Chukwu (2013) reported that for groups to be involved in agricultural and rural development programmes, they must be well organized and empowered in order to pool available resources to achieve strength and counter-availing power which would inculcate manual and technical skills,

planning and managerial competence and analytical abilities in the people which will enable them fulfill their potentials and capabilities

The death of a husband brings some of the widows to pity situation. Some are being maltreated by their brother-in-laws in such ways as denying them the right to the husband's properties, denying the children the right to school education and many other ways. Such widows if incapacitated; have fallen to the group of the poor and needy. The church in most cases has taken it up to ensure that the woman receives adequate justice and been the source of liberation, sustenance and empowerment to these women. Mrs Ekeoma Nkiru from Ibeme is an example of such women, Veronica Nwachi, from Abaja, Obiukwu Geraldine from Ifakala and Margret Ekufu from Aba were all victims of such maltreated widows circumstances.

The church quite appreciates the place of motherhood in the sphere of societal survival, growth and development. To this the church provides for the women who are facing the threats of the societal language use. Men tend to be freer than women in admitting the responsibility to a cause or consequence. Therefore many women shy away from or are clothed in abject shame for a mistake they have made such as unwanted pregnancy. Earlier in the 1970s, many women's lives have been claimed in the curse of aborting unwanted pregnancies. This issue has been arrested by the church who now counsel, care and provide for the mothers of unwanted pregnancy to ensure safety of the foetus and the woman through the course of the pregnancy, delivery and post-natal periods. Karen (2017) therefore noted that, "understandably, for those mothers who became mothers not by choice, and for those who lack a support system to help them, the notion of mothering as a self-directed privilege would be far from their reality" (p.1). Such women who were faced with the fate of unexpected pregnancy, though not a welcome circumstance in the society, are saved by the care of the church who see it as a duty to save lives;

hence the incessant deaths of such women are curbed, they still maintain their sense of belonging and are rehabilitated for better empowerment to start life again.

4.2.8 Skill Acquisition Programme/Youth Empowerment

Acquisition of skill has to do with development one's ability to carry out a type of job to a satisfactory level. This acquisition of skill has been able to raise many to a level of self-reliance. Williams (1976) stated that, for a country to be self-reliant, they must necessarily diversify her economy as well as encourage her youths to embrace self-employment through appropriate favourably policy, environment and self-facilitated skills acquisition and self-employment. Engaging in practical production is safe means of development. It is a reliable means of eradicating poverty. According to Leo XIII (1891), it's the Church's desire that the poor should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in life; and for this it strives (no.23).

The aftermath of modernization, colonial impact and the bizarre effect of Nigeria- Biafra war that took its worst turn on the area of the study (Owerri Ecclesiastical Province), in 1968, has left the people and mostly the church in the struggle to return the society to an appreciable status from the devastation of the war experience and European white-collar job impact. The reality that dawned on many that waiting for white-collar job could only end up as a dream. Therefore many take to the skill acquisition programmes provided the by Catholic Church.

Apu and Leo (2015) reported that most rural areas in Abia State lacked infrastructural amenities. They further, asserted that unemployment, poverty and youth restiveness were on the increase in the area. As the diocese focuses on deepening the faith, it also focuses on improving the lot of the masses. The Bishop has built many secondary schools and numerous primary

schools. The diocese has one hospital, (St Joseph's Catholic Hospital, Ohabiam, Aba) and some Health Centres/Maternities. The diocese is committed to improving and developing her schools, the hospital and health centres so that they render the best of services to humanity, likewise every diocese in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Due to high unemployment rate many youths are not employed. This could a very dangerous situation the social, political and economic live of the society. An idle youth can be a devil's workshop. The Catholic Church to this situation engaged the youths in skill acquisition and poverty alleviation strategies in most cases through joint effort of the church and individuals or organizations. Some individual-organization/philanthropists donate motorcycle or tricycle which will be given to those who can use it for business. At times it is given to the youths as interest-free loan which they have to pay back to enable the church continue with more people for the poverty alleviation.

Fig.9: below shows a beneficiary of Eu-Care skills acquisition programme, Miss Ogechi Nwachukwu. She was equally given a sewing machine with which she is making a living.



Source: Eu-Care handbook (2007) from Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) office, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri.

At the end of the Nigeria Biafra by 1970s, many youths needed rehabilitation because every where was devastated and many were hopeless. The Catholic Church in then Umuahia diocese stood behind many that were maimed and instituted Hopeville institute for the maimed and deformed to rehabilitate them. Nze (2007) asserted that “there is skill acquisition programme in the church to assist indigent youths to learn a trade by funding their training. Also there is interest-free loan scheme to help those trained to start off and support themselves” (p.12).

4.2.9 Prison Apostolate

Prison is where people who are convicted of crime are kept to reprimand them for their offence. Those who are awaiting trial are kept there too. In some cases those kept in the prison custody may not be guilty of the offence they are accused of. It is a pity situation that some people are denied their right to freedom of expression by keeping them unjustly in prison custody in a society that is supposed to be just. Oblionu (2007) asserts that:

There are facts that the society should know about imprisonment in this part of the world: over eighty percent of the inmates are awaiting trial; many are unjustly detained and their cases framed; many have over-stayed on remand; some are truly guilty of their charges; society finds it difficult to welcome and reintegrate an ex-convict; victim – offender reconciliation is very difficult among the parties involved; family –prisoner ties should be cordially strengthened. (p.11).

The Catholic Church teaches or proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. The Catholic Social teaching affirms that all persons, even those on the margins of society, have basic human rights: the right to life and to those things that are necessary to the proper development of life, including faith and

family, work and education, housing and health care. Some Catholic Social teachings from her encyclicals in this regard will shed light on the subject matter.

Among the social welfare services rendered to prison inmates by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church include regular visits to the prisons. The dioceses in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province visit the different prisons such as Federal Prisons, Owerri, Aba, Umuahia and others to give them food, attend to the sick ones and give them, medical attention. The Catholic Church equally pray for them and with them, counsel them to give them reassurance to worth of existence and live. The Catholic Church also discuss their plights – the cause and the situation so far and make arrangement to handle the case and work towards setting the prisoner free as the case may demand. Mostly in unjustified reasons for imprisonment and especially the poor who cannot afford a lawyer or financial bill the church under Eu-Care lawyers will stand for the prisoner and work towards the release of the prisoner. Leo XIII (1891) submitted that: "when there is a question of protecting the rights of individuals, the poor and helpless have a claim to special consideration. The rich population has many ways of protecting themselves, and stands less in need of help" (p.29).

Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has chaplaincy situate in each of the prison premises. In their programme of activities, the church as obligation says Mass every Sunday in the different prison chaplaincies for the prisoners. The members of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) at this point take it as a duty to attend Mass in the prison chaplaincy to interact with the prisoners to give them sense of belonging. The secretary of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) of Aba diocese A Chika (personal communication 5th October, 2017) confirms that the Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC), other societies in the church, individuals, and organizations in affiliation to the Catholic Church, make

regular visits to the prison. The Catholic Church these visit to share food and toiletries to the prison inmates as well as share the stories of their plights. Agonizing as the prisoners stories may be, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province give them succor and offer them any other necessary welfare service possible as the need may arise.

The makeup of the Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) members who visit prison include medical doctors, nurses, lawyers, some members and executive of pious organizations, Rev. Frs and Rev. Sisters and others members of various professions. But most needed in their visits are the medical team and the legal team. The medical team attend to those who need medical attention while the legal team look into and verify some of the cases in the course of discussion with the prisoners. They find out where possible the viability of release of the prisoner. Some who are awaiting trial and seem to have been forgotten, their cases will be revived and charged to court with hope of granting them justice. The Priest says the Mass and leads in prayers, the Religious; the Rev. Sisters give counseling services to the aggrieved prisoner especially those whose stay in there is not justified.

The researcher found out that there are priests attached to JDPC whose duty it is to go to prison every Sunday to say the Mass. Where they are not disposed they can delegate another priest. But it is a duty to say Mass every Sunday in the prison for the inmates. The priests attached to JDPC in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province are Rev. Fr. Nze Casmir, - Owerri diocese, Rev. Fr. Jiwuba – Okigwe diocese, Rev. Monsignor Nwosu Raphael, - Aba diocese, Rev. Fr. Chinwuba Tony, - Ahiara diocese, Rev Fr. Ihebunike Thaddeus. These priests are in-charge of the activities and programmes of JDPC in the dioceses they are assigned to while Rev. Fr. Jiwuba is the Provincial Chairman of JDPC Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church.

The Prison Apostolate of the Catholic Church is obtained in other Catholic Provinces beyond Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The Prison Apostolate according to Oblionu (2007) is committed to humanitarian service, rule of law, justice and health care without regard to race, sex, religion or any form of discrimination. The outfit provides a social action machinery that ensures; promotion of human rights, advocacy for prisons inmates by providing access to justice and legal institutions, health care for prisoners, detainees and less privilege and career training and skills development for prisoners towards life after sentence. He further explains that prison inmates from poor families whose families cannot afford to get them a lawyer, are assisted to have access to attorney. The chaplaincy runs medical laboratory and takes care of the inmates free of charge. The chaplaincies primarily exist to provide the spiritual rejuvenation needed for the reformation of prisoners. This is the aim of the spiritual/pastoral care of the inmates. The spiritual needs of the prison inmates are taken care of. The sacraments are administered, their confessions are heard, communion are given to them and visitations in their cells.

Festive days are equally celebrated with the prison-inmates. O. Ajulonu, a volunteer to Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) service (21st August, 2017) states that, from different dioceses and parishes of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, the prison inmates are visited. The Catholic Women Organization, Catholic Men Organization, Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC), various societies in the church and other individuals and private organizations join the groups of the Catholic Church on the Easter and Christmas days to get the prisoners partake in the celebration though in the prison environment. On the Mothers' Day, the Catholic Women Organizations visit the prisons and give them food, toiletries and motherly care and attention. A. Iwuagwu (personal communication, 22nd September, 2017) of Umuahia diocese when confirms that the prison visitations on the festive periods are evident but the Catholic

Women Organization pay regular and intermittent visits to the prisons from the parishes while the Diocesan Catholic Women Organization visit once in a year in very big way.

Special attention is paid to female prisoners especially the pregnant ones. The church through the services of the health unit of the Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) offers them the necessary ante-natal attention till delivery. Among the services offered by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province through Prison Apostolate is the Career/skill acquisition. In this case the prisoners are taught some skills, given school education approved by the government, and are rehabilitated to enable them adjust to the society when they are free from prison.

4.2.10 Farm/Poverty Alleviation Apostolate

Farming has been the major source of sustenance for the Igbo. It was the desire for white-collar jobs that misdirected the people's attention from the God-given source of sustenance. The climate favours all the year round farming and is 75% of the land is suitable for farming. It is noteworthy that agriculture formed the main source of income for Nigeria before the oil boom of 1970s. Anyanwu (2009) remarks that through mainly subsistence farming, enough food was produced for local consumption. The main food crops grown include yams, maize, cassava, cocoyam, rice and vegetables; while poultry, goat, and sheep are reared (p.101). Apart from subsistence farming for food crops, there is commercial farming which involved production of food and cash crops in a large scale. The cash crops like palm trees and rubber. Agriculture formed the main source of livelihood in Igboland.

Among the many reasons that made Agriculture a subsidiary is the white-collar jobs created by the Europeans. Gradually the prestige attached to working for the Whiteman '*oluoyibo*', drifted people's attention away from farming. But with the Nigeria-Biafra war

devastation, apart from supply of relief materials, the people relied on farming; hence the 'Land Army' by which the people were sustained from hunger.

Unfortunately with the advent of oil boom in the 1970s, agriculture became increasingly neglected to the point that the government spend heavily on importation of food to feed the people. The successive governments of Nigeria in order to revive agriculture, have made series of feeble attempts which have remained largely unsuccessful and without continuity such as 'Operation Feed the Nation', by General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976, 'Green Revolution' by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, 1979, and 'Food for All by the year 2000' sponsored by General Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha in the late 1980s to 1990s. These failures mark the indication of the country's inability to cater for the wellbeing of the citizens, hence ravaging poverty poke in the face of the masses. Chikwe (2002) commenting on the situation, says that:

We know how much 'land army' was helpful to sustain the Biafrans during the Nigeria civil war. But since after the war we have been familiar with the slogans such as 'Green Revolution', 'Operation Feed the Nation', 'Food for All by 2000', etc. Yet we have seen neither green nor revolution. Operation Feed the Nation became operation starve the poor by the year 2000 that the cost of garri was the highest in the living memory of and history of our lives and nation. (p.12).

Articulating the causes of the sordid situation, Chikwe (2002) remarks that "the inability to continue from where others stopped was responsible for the failure of some, for others it was lack of proper planning. Still for some others, it was the political motive to starve others so that hunger continues to be permanent weapon of the rich to dominate the poor" (p.12).

This situation cannot be allowed to continue without any viable attempt to provide sustainable measure to curb the excesses of hunger. Anyanwu (2009) therefore notes that, “agriculture has to be embraced once again with vigor and commitment. The Christian Religion . . . given its support to this cause as one of the effective ways of addressing both hunger and unemployment” (p.102). The church has to set up farming projects of various systems to address the problem of hunger and unemployment.

The farms are established for the good purpose of alleviation of poverty and feeding of the indigents. These farms are located in different places in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The farms include the Eu-Care farm at Agbala, Mercy Cooperative farm, Etit-Ulo Bende, in Umuahia diocese, Mater Farm Complex, Ahiara, in Ahiara diocese, Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC)/Caritas farm, Asa Obehie in Ukwa L. G. A. in Aba diocese. Among the intentions for establishment of these farms is to create employment for the people, to alleviate poverty rate in the community, help the community economically, and to provide food, fund, and meat for the indigents and the seminary schools. According to Anyanwu (2009):

The society as seen from the above aims and objective is quite modest and interesting. Its goals are not only to cater for immediate needs like food and fund, but also to enhance agriculture, create jobs and to impart skills that make for self-reliance. Accordingly, directly or indirectly, each one of the listed aims and objectives is relevant to the reduction of poverty, the subject-matter under discussion. (p.102).

Mercy Cooperative farm, Etit-Ulo Bende, is highly organized that it comprises of all sections of agriculture. Some of the poor are employed to work there and they earn a living

through that. The food processing section also offers employment to the unemployed thereby alleviating poverty status.

The Mater Farm Complex is managed by Ahiara diocese in Mbaise. This farm complex has three different sites thus; Ekwereazu, Uvuru and Egberede Nguru. The administrative headquarter of this farm complex is at Egberede Nguru. This farm complex is the brain-child of late Bishop Victor Adibe Chikwe, the local ordinary of Ahiara diocese. It is his response to a burning desire to ensure that his people, especially the less privileged have food on their tables to eat. Chikwe (2002), states that:

Since I began the work of chief shepherd of Ahiara diocese... it has been uppermost in my mind to undertake an agricultural project, as a diocesan food apostolate for the production of food, especially for the poor among us. It is a desire to participate more actively in the apostolate of 'multiplication of loaves. (p.3).

For a successful execution of this project, he sent two priests Rev. Fr. Augustine Ibezimako and Rev. Fr. Roland Ugo to Rev. Fr. Nzeamujo O. P. in Porto Novo to receive adequate training. These two priests after the training on agricultural practices became the coordinators of the farm complex. The project touched many lives. People are employed, happy and better citizens are groomed out of the environment with less challenge of poverty and hunger, lives of individuals are improved out of the improved source of income through employment in the farm and there is food to feed the poor. It serves to create wealth for the community as they equally train people to become independent farmers. The use of human hands

provided more employment for the people and it implies more training for them to fulfill the aim of the farm complex.

Chikwe, (2002) reports that:

Mater Farm has served the people so well that the Imo state government had to identify with it and choose it to serve as the coordinating unit for the agro-allied and computer arms of the Imo state project which include other vocational careers like fashion and designing, carpentry, hairdressing and auto mechanics. (p.9).

The designation of the farm as a coordinating unit for Imo state government's poverty alleviation programme is an acknowledgement by the successes that the Mater Farm has made in poverty alleviation and feeding the indigents.

The farms located at Asa Obehie is managed by the Aba diocese Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC). According to A. Chika (personal communication 5th September, 2017), the secretary of the Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) in Aba diocese, the indigents from Aba urban city do not go there to the farm because of the distance, only the members of the JDPC go to the farm. This farm is not as complex as the Mater Farm and Mercy Farm. She said that they make use of tractors instead. They feed the ever flowing numbers of indigents with the proceeds of the farm. They give them the harvested food items in such quantity that they can sell to make up for their other needs. In this way they engage in poverty alleviation.

The Eu-Care Farms, Agbala is an arm of the Eu-Care charity apostolate programme of the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri. According to Iwuagwu (2007), the farm covers over eighty hectares of land with the Onumaraukwa River which forms its axis for irrigation. This asset

formally belonged to the Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority. The farm is involved in animal and crop production under the proprietorship of the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri. The farm has trained staff in agricultural production. The farm is aimed at alleviating poverty in the society by employing the poor unskilled workers to work with the trained staff, and provision of food for the indigents.

According to A. Chikere (personal communication, 14th August, 2017) the Project Manager of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC)/Caritas of Owerri archdiocese, some of the indigents who are capable, go to the Eu-Care Demonstration Farm every Tuesday and work. They equally harvest mature crops like cassava, maize and vegetables and take some for their needs while what is remaining will be shared to the other indigents. Some of the agricultural products like cassava are processed into garri which serves the purpose of giving food to the poor and employment for poverty alleviation for those who process the garri.

There is also pineapple orchard in the Maria Assumpta podium, Owerri. According to C. Nze, (personal communication, 14th August, 2017), this project is part of the strategies to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. The proceeds from the sale of the pineapples are plunged into Eu-Care to defray part of the expenses.

Fig 10: below shows the pineapple orchard and some of the poor people who are working there and who also derive their alleviation from the Eu-care



Source: Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC)/Caritas handbook, on Christian Social Teaching in Action.

There is no doubt that agriculture is the key to poverty alleviation with reference to the fact that agriculture has in the past been the source of internal sustenance and source of foreign income through export. In the recent time when many have neglected agriculture due to other seemingly easy means of acquiring wealth, the breed of poor population are reasonably sustained by the church through agriculture. The church does this by providing food for them from the agricultural products and provision of employment in the farms for poverty alleviation. Anyanwu (2009) remarks that the church has through agriculture been able to take care of not only the imperative of providing food which is necessary for all and sundry, but also for its ability to create multiple employment opportunities for the young and able bodied” (p.107).

Conclusively Anyanwu (2009) comments that:

Theologically and socio-ethically considered, agricultural activities of the type under discussion and enhancement of agriculture in general are in agreement with the mission and the apostolate of Christianity which can be summarized as glorification of God and human promotion. Involvement in agriculture is for upholding the legacy from the Lord Jesus Christ that our (Christian) pastoral care should be for both the body and soul. It should not be divided apostolate. Christ gave expression to this legacy, among other ways through his miracle of multiplication of loaves with the help of which he fed thousands of people that were hungry (Mtt 14:13-21; 15:32-39; Mk. 6: 34-44; 8: 1-10 Lk 9: 10-17; Jn 6: 1-13). The said legacy is, accordingly, “a big lesson” for the church that poverty alleviation, *inter alia*, by way of involvement in agriculture, is a step in the right direction that deserves to be fostered. Needless therefore to insist that the church

as a whole should invest more and more in agriculture to develop and standardize what has been achieved already. (pp. 107-108).

Apart from the major farms managed by the dioceses, there are other farms in different parishes. Though not large and elaborate like the farms discussed above, these farms are mainly established by the Catholic Women Organization (CWO), to help the poor and alleviate poverty. Such farms are found at St. Theresa Catholic Parish, Uli, which has garri processing unit and women are employed to manage the farm while the members of Catholic Women Organization (CWO) at regular intervals, go to the farm to work. Other parishes include St. Patricks Ogbo, St. Theresa Obollo, our Lady of Fatima Parish, Isuikwuato, St Anne's Parish, Eluama, Christ the King Parish, Umueze II Ehime and soon. Anyanwu (2006) notes that "some of the CWO branches in various parishes are doing it in terms of sustainable development to help themselves in respect of self-reliance and to contribute towards the realization of the needs of their various communities" (pp. 83-84).

The economic status of the society where the rich are getting richer and the poor get poorer has left many suffering in abject poverty with no hope of alleviation. The church as the mother of the society saw it as obligation especially with the duty to continue the legacy of Jesus Christ, to help the poor. This is a duty that calls for a serious and more demanding attention. But rather than let the poor perish in their penury, the catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province through the length of the history from the time of the first bishop, Bishop Whelan, through the period of Nigeria-Biafra war, the periods of various government feeble attempts to address the issue of hunger and poverty in the society, to present date of severe economic depression where many are rendered jobless, has been by the side of the poor. The period of the Nigeria-Biafra war was most tasking but with the available little resources, they battled the

horrifying situation. It has been noted that from the inception of Christianity and the advent of Christianity in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has seen it as a duty to cater for the needy as much as possible amidst all odds.

4.3 Challenges of Social Welfare Services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

This section of chapter four presents the findings on the challenges. It was found that the social welfare services provided by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is faced with some challenges. Such challenges include inadequate financial disposition towards the welfare demands of the area. This has given rise to many other problems such as inadequate provision of relief materials, medical services, scholarship, employment of staff and many other factors as enumerated in this section. Shortage of personnel has given rise to lack of continuity. Among other challenges are schism, institutionalization and many other behavioural attributes.

4.3.1 Inadequate Funding

In the course of provision of Social welfare services, the Ecclesiastical province encounters some problems such as inadequate financial capacity. Many need to be provided for but the resources for the provision are not adequate. On visits to parishes and dioceses, some people such as S. Anyanwu, (personal communication, 6th September, 2017), the Chancellor of Okigwe diocese, A. Iwuagwu (personal communication, 22nd September, 2017), of Mater Dei diocese, Umuahia, A. Chikere, (personal communication, 14th August, 2017), the project manager of Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC) of Owerri Archdiocese, M. Okoro, (personal communication, 6th September, 2017), of St. Benedict Parish, Amaraku, F. Okonkwo, (personal communication, 10th April, 2017), Iwuji (personal communication, 18th August, 2017) and Chukwu (personal communication, 6th February, 2017), of St. Patricks Parish, Ogbo and many others at different dates within the period of this study, were of the opinion that

the deficiency of fund is a major handicap to adequate provision of social welfare services of all levels and types.

Many are still hungry and still beg. A greater percentage of the population in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is poor. Many have lost their jobs due to the economic depression and their number adds up to the already teeming population of poverty stricken people without adequate means of catering for their needs. The farms would have been more developed to a higher standard to offer more jobs, produce enough foods and even sent workers to retraining for improvement but the financial capacity of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is incapacitated to move up to the dreams and plans.

The agricultural farms are supposed to be established in various parishes to aid the over-dependence on farms at the diocesan levels. Skilled workers cannot be employed due to financial restraint. The machineries for mechanized farming for increased yield are not enough. The ones available are getting out of use due to long age of use and bad state of the machineries; therefore it affects efficiency in farm production. The inadequate financial provision of the church is major determinant of many challenges facing the provision of social welfare services.

The efficacy, regularity and promptness to provision of social welfare services depends heavily on the financial capacity of the office of the Church that takes care those in need. This financial efficiency may be lacking when needed and as such has dragged some of the welfare services offered by the Church to close either momentarily or permanent. According to Nze (2007):

Weekly, about fifty patients are treated including those referred to Holy Rosary Hospital. Some psychological cases have also been referred to the psychiatric

clinic at Owerri Municipal Council. Thanks to the volunteer staff nurses from the Owerri Municipal Council who came regularly to administer medical aid to our clients. From January to December 2004, the charity service sent forty patients to the Holy Rosary Hospital and took care of the bills. As at January 31st 2007, hospital bills owed Holy Rosary Hospital, Emekuku came up to N115,930.00. The EU-Care has since stopped sending patients to the hospital for lack of funds to pay the hospital. Lack of fund is a very great handicap to the medical scheme. (p.5).

Anyanwu (personal communication 6th October, 2017) acknowledges that there are no steady resources, no Foundation or fund set aside for social welfare services. Social welfare services rely on adhoc raising of funds or donations from time to time amidst other donations for other equally important projects. The secretary to Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC), Aba diocese also stated that there no steady source of fund for the social welfare services rendered. They depend on donations. There is no laid down strategy or programme for money yielding venture for the Catholic Church to be financially sustainable to cater for the teeming welfare needs of the poor and the needy.

4.3.2 Shortage of Manpower

The mission of the Church does not seem to pay adequate attention to special apostolate. When they do they will make adequate preparation for the funding and skilled personnel to ensure continuity and sustained welfare services. The main arm of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province that take care of those in need (Justice Development and Peace Committee (JDPC)/Caritas) is hardly staffed with people trained for the duty of welfare services.

They are volunteers and can drop out of the duty at will for whatever reason viable to them. S. Anyanwu (personal communication, 6th September, 2017), reports that they lack both adequate and trained staff. In Aba diocese the only staff employed is the Secretary of Justice Development and Peace Committee, (JDPC), A. Chika. The rest of the people who come to render the welfare services with her are volunteers. Nze (2007) affirms that, "the staff of EU-Care is volunteers" (p.12). In a situation where the staffs are volunteers, services though may be available but there is no serious commitment to it. The motherless babies' homes, the orphanages and the homes for the elderly are managed by the Rev. Sisters with the aid of some unskilled labourers in some cases. Some of these Rev. Sisters are not trained in the skill.

Many people who need help - the indigents - who sometime in the past were members of the church but cannot move out of the house are hardly attended to adequately due to shortage of man power to carry out this duty. This group of elderly and sick are left entirely in the hands of the family members whether they are capable or not to care for the person's condition. It does not mean that the Catholic Church does not care for them but the care through visitation is far from being adequate.

4.3.3 Lack of Adequate Commitment

The society and the church are guilty of this offence of lack of commitment. Though there are evidences of caring for the poor, there does not seem to be sign of total commitment to it as a duty because there is no adequate plan for the social welfare provision by the Ecclesiastical province of Catholic Church. A situation where the staff of a whole organization is made up of volunteers is a good indication of lack of commitment to the duty of provision of social welfare services. The rich in the society are not encouraging in the business of social

welfare services. Most often when some of them do engage in provision of welfare services do so to attract some favour from the society especially political approval/intention.

The politicians go round the churches in the period of campaign and make kind-like gestures to social welfare provision to the poor. Some of these promises are not accomplished especially if the political candidate did not succeed in his political contest. Such welfare services of political campaign include offering of scholarship to the poor, provision of relief materials like food to the church and the community and donation of large sum of money. There is no definite plan for the welfare services to be solidly founded. A situation where medical services provided to the indigents had to stop indicates lack of adequate plan for a successful provision of social welfare services.

4.3.4 Poor Condition of Services

Some of the people employed to work experience poor condition of service, hence they render poor service. The staff of the schools for the physically challenged, and the Church hospitals tend leave for a more favourable condition of service leaving the institutions to seek for replacements which may take some time while the vacuum lasts. This is a serious challenge because it breaches smooth continuity. Nwankwo Rachel and Ekweoba John who are staff of one of the institutions of the church complain about poor income. J. Ekweoba (personal communication, 10th August, 2017), argues that the church should not look far for the poor they will take care of, that most of the workers fall in the range of poor class. In this case, with this type of complaint, it is possible that in the absence of strict supervision, no meaningful duty will be carried out.

4.3.5 Institutionalization

This situation may have arisen out of the fact that the Catholic Church holds the priests in high esteem. The magnanimity of the respect accorded the priests, the way the society rates them with impeccability could be a contributory factor to the state of affairs in the administration of the church institutions. Heavily institutionalized to the order of things the church has been surviving on this level. Ojo (1982) remarks that:

It is no gainsaying that the Catholic Church in this country is heavily institutionalized, with the members of the clergy more or less 'above' and the laity 'below'. The result of this position of things in the Church is imbalance in favour of the clergy who are in the minority and to the disfavour of the majority - the laity. The latter, not unreasonably, feel distrusted by the former who are said to regard them as either "ill-informed" or as a "burden". (p.81).

This state of affairs has created the gap in the regard for a priest and that of the laity. The laity majority in total acceptance of reverence to the status of the priest, accepts as normal the subordinate position to the priest irrespective of age. This has paved way to excessive gestures of attention to the priests as people whose condition should be impeccable while the laity especially the poor can go and manage whatever is available like it is a right for the priests to live big while the congregation, apart from those who are already wealthy, can go on and manage live. A comparison of the residence of the priests and their employed staff explains it all. This situation does not help in closing/reducing the gap between the affluent and the indigent.

4.3.6 Village Politics/Schism

A large number of people in the church are going more social than religious. This has in many ways affected the church in such a way that many are towing the way of social gathering in issues that concern spiritual matters. Many are more interested in recognition and social status and wealth even in the church affairs. This ideology has gone deep in the church that M. Okoro (personal communication, 6th September, 2017), of St. Benedict Parish, Amaraku in Okigwe diocese and A. Njoku (personal communication, 22nd August, 2017) of St. Joseph Chaplaincy, Imo State University, remarks that schism among the members of the congregation is a threat to efficient services in the church, social welfare services inclusive. Therefore in the need of contribution for some important projects, some social benefits are considered along the line of who are the beneficiaries and why not the candidate of their choice. Suggestions that can be detrimental to such social welfare benefits could be sponsored by the aggrieved opposing party. This can create serious problem to the success of such welfare service.

4.3.7 Lack of Adequate Continuity Process

This is a product of many laxities. S. Anyanwu (personal communication, 6th October, 2017), comments that lack of continuity is another challenge facing the provision of social welfare services. C. Nze (personal communication, 14th August, 2017), reports that they stopped taking indigent patients to Holy Rosary Hospital because of lack of fund. A definite point of lack of continuity as a result of lack of adequate provision of fund and no solid plan for resources. According to S. Anyanwu, (personal communication, 6th October, 2017), observes that lack of trained/skilled and employed staff has mainly attributed to lack of continuity in the provision of social welfare services. He therefore acknowledged that this is as a result of lack of appropriate attention to special apostolate

4.3.8 Lack of Government Subvention

The Catholic Church in Nigeria is taking care of the citizens of Nigeria single-handedly without commensurate help from the government to who the citizen pay tax. No matter how rich the Catholic Church may be the teaming population of the poor that keeps increasing at geometric rate outstands the capability of the church. The government of Nigeria does not seem to realize the need to encourage such good works of the church especially in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province who even from the time of Bishop Whelan has been outstanding in offering social welfare services to the poor.

The indigenes of Imo State who fall within the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Province are facing the threat of lack of salary for months. The low income earners among the civil servants are forced by the devastating economic condition created by owing them salaries for months to be among the needy of the society thereby increasing the number of the indigents rather than giving subvention to alleviate their situation. A medical doctor; (name withheld), reported that for the past four months, he has not been paid salary. Ukwu Nkemka (2007). Interviewed in her residence at Shell Camp, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. She explained that for failing to pay her off after retirement, she and the other colleagues decided not to pack out of the residence because they cannot afford to pay for any house rent as they are left in penury after retirement. Recently the governor of Imo State, Owelle Rochas Okorochoa, de-roofed the houses in the Shell camp leading to forceful ejection of the already impoverished retirees. A very pitiful situation. What will be the situation of such old people some of who are already feeble in health.

4.3.9 Lack of Adequate Pastoral Strategy

From the study conducted it was found out that though in one and same Ecclesiastical Province, there is no laid down rule guiding the provision of the social welfare services. The services though share some features in common like no definite source of income, they do not seem very prepared for the sustainability of the social welfare services; hence no uniformity in standard and style. Each parish engages in any social welfare service that appeals to them, the way they deem it best. According to Anyanwu (2009), the Churches of East and Central Africa are waxing strong with their strategy of small Christian communities (S. C. C.), and their human development projects. What about the church in West Africa and in Nigeria in particular? What strategy is the pastoral ministry following? One is yet to evolve if there is an established strategy, some of the problem of continuity would have been curbed.

4.3.10 Miscellaneous

In some cases the provision of welfare services to the people has erupted some display of insincerity from the recipients who will often feign to be in dire need when they are not. It has equally encouraged laziness in some people who could have been productive. According to S. Anyanwu (personal communication, 6th September, 2017), affirms some of the indigents they do not seem to see any need to engage themselves in any meaningful job but solely rely on receiving relief materials from the church. He gave instance of one woman who said she comes from Abagana and another one from Ehime Mbano who persistently come the Cathedral Church of St. Mary Okigwe.

The effort of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province Cannot be over-taken. There is evidence of viable duties towards ensuring adequate provision of social welfare services

by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The farms, the scholarships, the medical attentions the prison apostolate and many others are sources of proof of the relentless efforts of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province to provide social welfare services to the poor and the needy. But the church here is hindered by a lot of challenges as enumerated above. No stable plan or programme is instituted to ensure the stability and fortification of the welfare services. They depend on available resources and donations. There is no viable establishment to sustain the financial responsibilities of the Church especially the social welfare services.

This may account for the inability of those who receive the welfare services to rise above poverty level. Though some are lazy and cannot make out any viable development or progress from whatever is given to him/her for empowerment.

The fact that volunteer workers are used challenges the strength and purpose of the social welfare services.

In all, the mission of the Church does not seem to pay adequate attention to special apostolate. When they do they will make adequate preparation for the funding and skilled personnel to ensure continuity and sustained welfare services.

This study therefore makes some viable suggestions to make the social welfare services provided by Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, a purposeful and worthwhile venture.

4.4 Solutions to the challenges of social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

What can the Church with its strengths and weaknesses - as have been described previously - do in the social welfare situation of the society which leaves a lot to be desired? As a point of departure it pays to recall what Okolo (1988) calls "one clear lesson for the Nigerian

Church" namely, "the peoples' concrete needs and historical situation ... should determine and shape, the course of action and reflection of the Church itself" (p.180). Again too, to be borne in mind in approaching the role of the Church in social welfare services, is the Church's self-understanding of the nature of her social responsibility.

As it is presented by John Paul II (1982), "the Church does not have direct competence for proposing technical solutions of an economic-political nature. However, she calls for a constant revision of all the systems according to the criterion of the dignity of the human person" (p.8). Following this view, the role of the Church is primarily to be sought neither in the control of technology nor in financial resources nor in control of market - domestic and foreign alike. It consists rather in calling the people as asserted by John Paul II (1975) to "an objective examination of social reality and operative decision aimed at the achievement of just solutions" (p.86)

To convince oneself that the contribution envisaged by the said call to objective examination of social reality is a *sine qua non* for social welfare services, (as important as technology, and material resources). The following observation by Sarr, (1983) is very enlightening:

To make radical change, it is also necessary to have clear perceptions of socio-economic development... In addition to giving high priority to the production of goods and services for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the people, development should equally be based on the values, cultures, goals, aspirations and preferences of the African people. (p.30).

As a step forward, let us see how the said role of the Church applies to Nigeria's concrete needs and historical situation.

4.4.1 Some Internal Adjustments to Make the Church a more Effective agent of Social Welfare Service

Before looking outwards in terms of concrete things the Church can do to enhance social welfare services, it is desirable to point out a few things from inside the Church that have to be attended to in order to enhance the efficacy and productivity of the Church in social welfare service.

Firstly, the Church has to embark on efforts to make itself a self-reliant or self-supporting Church. To do so entails, among other things, investing heavily on revenue yielding enterprises. Such a measure is obliged to reduce the present dependence of the Church on both overseas material resources and on the contributions of poor local people, as well as create job opportunities.

Secondly, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has to strive to become more and more a Church in the world. This entails being on the path to what Blomjous (1970) calls "the search for its own way of expressing the church-world relationship in the secularized world of today, of integrating the Church into the total life of the community" (p. 287).

Thirdly, the Church has to come up with a purposeful definition of its policy on social welfare service in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church and beyond. This requires imagination, courage and being forward-looking. Such a policy whose aim should be awakening the church and the society to the need for institutional reform demands that the Church and her personnel should be duly instructed at every stage about the problems of the society and Nigerians -economic, social, political and cultural status. Such a policy should make a clear distinction between social problems: especially between matters of charity and those of social justice.

Fourthly, the Church must have its Kettlers, Tutus, Oscar Romeros, Helder Camaras, Donald Laments, and their likes, in large numbers: "intrepid champions of justice and proponents of the gospel message". Although the Church's involvement in social problems and questions is not a matter to be reserved to only an enlightened few the enlightened, vocal and active few must be around to lead the others. The following observations about Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Kettler can help to put the point at stake in perspective: Aubert (1978) explains that, "Kettler ... protested at the suffering inflicted on the poor by the social system of his day ... (hence) his importance as an influence on the social Catholicism of the 19th century to which he made an especially valuable contribution through his book *Die Arbeiterfrage und das Christentum*, 1864 (p.148).

Such people must be ready to protest, cry out aloud, act and contribute constructive ideas for a better solution of social problems. They must be prepared to suffer, if need be. If not mistaken, presently there are very few Church leaders who are long-suffering and painstaking enough to stick out their heads in the said manner.

Fifthly, lay Christians also must join the battle. This is particularly true of influential and rich lay Christians. The necessity for the active involvement of lay members of the Church in works of the kind under discussion is well underscored by the following conviction which informed the enlightened contributions. Oldham (1874 - 1969), as enumerated by Vidler (1961) is a veteran of the 1910 Edinburgh International Missionary conference and chief organizer of the Oxford (1937) Conference of Life and Work Vidler (1961) expresses that:

Oldham had realized, and was bringing others to realize that, if the Christian faith was to bear creativity upon the life of the world, it was not enough for clerics and theologians and ecclesiastical assemblies to pass resolutions about

what ought to be done. Theologians were not qualified by their training, nor were ecclesiastics by their interests, to say how politics or industry or international relations should be conducted. (pp. 262-263).

All these secular spheres had in modern times become exceedingly technical and complicated and only men who had an expert, inside knowledge of them, gained from experience, could say what it was possible to do and what ought to be done. Beneficial changes in society must be brought about by lay people who were in responsible positions of power and whose words could be made flesh.

This elaborate citation leaves nobody in doubt about the indispensable need for involving lay people who are experts, professionals, or in positions of policy-making if the Church's efforts in social welfare services are to yield exquisite results. To underline the fact that the contributions of lay people in this regard as adopted here cannot be over-emphasized, Kalilombe (1981) remarks that "any Church is worth what its laity is" This is because the laity are the greater majority people of God, The clergy are a small minority. Taking care of the five points enumerated will make the Church a much more effective contributor to social welfare services than it currently is. And that brings the discussion to the active arena.

The church should call the wealthier members to come to their aid to supply to a reasonable status the requirements for the adequate social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical province. Faced with a world today where so many people are suffering from want, the council asks individuals and governments to remember the saying of the Fathers: "Feed the people dying of hunger, because if you do not feed them you are killing them," and it urges

them according to their ability to share and dispose of their goods to help others, above all by giving them aid which will enable them to help and develop themselves.

The priests should engage the services of the indigenes for rural churches and the leaders of the church in the township for closer monitoring of the distribution of the welfare services to the proper persons. Some of the poor who are healthy to work should be employed so that they will rather earn salary rather than beg for arms. By way of proffering solution, Paul VI says that the superfluous wealth of rich countries should be placed at the service of poor nations. John Paul II (1987) taught that, “a consistent theme of Catholic social teaching is the option or love of preference for the poor. Today, this preference has to be expressed in worldwide dimensions, embracing the immense numbers of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care, and those without hope” (p.42).

The church can buy land large enough for production of reasonable quantity of food and get the poor members engaged in farming there so that at harvest, they take a portion of the products and the remaining can be used to feed the physically challenged who may not be able to work. This will reduce dependence on the church. The Church as agent of social welfare service should educate those on business of surrogate mothers on the dangers thereof and help to stop it. John Paul II (1998) taught as well:

The Church continually combats all forms of poverty, because as Mother, she is concerned that each and every person be able to live fully in dignity as a child of God. He exhorts every Christian, in this Lenten season, to evidence his personal conversion through a concrete sign of love towards those in need,

recognizing in this person the face of Christ and repeating, as if almost face to face: "I was poor, I was marginalized and you welcomed me. (p.38).

Again, Francis (2013) goes beyond expressing genuine concern to proffering practical and concrete solution to the plight of the poor thus, "a way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being" (p. 3).

The teaching of the catholic Bishops of England and Wales (1996) is very thoughtful, inspiring and revealing. They maintained that people who are poor and vulnerable have a special place in Catholic teaching. According to them, this is what is meant by the preferential option for the poor. According to *The Ten Themes of Catholic Social Teaching*, (2016), the teaching of the Magisterium on the poor and poverty can be summarized thus:

the moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members;

the poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation.

The "option for the poor," is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. The option for the poor is an essential part of society's effort to achieve the common good. A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special attention to those with special needs, to those who are poor and on the margins of society.

4.4.2 Creation of Christian Academies and Research Centres for Church social welfare services.

This is to enhance the social welfare services of the Church in Nigeria, the establishing of Christian academies where courses, seminars, symposia are organised to educate Christians on how their faith should be made to bear on their jobs and their social life. Such academies function also as centres of research in church-oriented social welfare services as well as documentation centres. The Catholic Institute of Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP), in Owerri is a step in the right direction. It should expand to include research and documentary facilities.

For the Church to be a credible protagonist of social welfare services in Nigeria society, it must do more than talking and writing. Memoranda like "The Church and Nigerian Social Problems" should be backed up with necessary action. An example of such necessary action is the formation of co-operative associations, e.g for tailors, builders, printers, and so on. Only through such practical programmes can the Church be true to its Master, Jesus Christ, who enjoins both word and action on his followers (cf. Lk. 6:46; Mtt.7:21). Talking about the success of such cooperative associations as employed by English "Christian Societies" in 19th century England, Vidler (1961) notes that "these associations never met with more than a small measure of success, but they played a significant part in the origin of the cooperative movement" (p.97).

Parishes, dioceses and Church establishments can enhance social welfare service through the organization of Christian social development guilds whose apostolate should be solely concerned with social problems. An example of what I mean can be illustrated with the Church of England's "Guild of St. Matthew" (GSM) founded in 1877. The main thrust of the

activities of the nineteenth century English Christian social movement is the social implications of the faith. Vidler (1961) summarizes their activities as follows:

The members of G. S. M. attacked injustices wherever they detected it, and were seldom at a loss to suggest how abuses should be remedied.... The guild was never a body: it was a ginger-group in the Church, which deliberately adopted shock tactics in order to arouse the Christian conscience to its responsibility for the well-being of the workers. It pressed for government legislation about such matters as hours of work, housing, taxation and free education. (p.99).

The guilds being advocated for in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church and the Nigerian context can have more than enough to do along similar lines, taking local conditions into consideration.

Professional and Technical Training and Re-training of Members of Such Guilds: Members of the said guilds who are not yet trained in professional or technical skills should be helped to afford themselves such training. Parishes, dioceses, organizations like the CIDJAP, can help them to that effect through giving them professional or technical education. This is also applicable to skilled members in the sense of continuing education/refresher courses grants to help them be able to update their knowledge and skills. The Social Welfare Fund already advocated can help parishes, dioceses and organizations to shoulder the responsibilities.

Having discussed at length about things to be done by the Church and the members of the Church in order to fulfill its expected role in the social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, there is something which goes together with action; which informs and fructifies actions; which is proper to the Church and which can, if time is not taken, be easily lost sight of when talking about the role of the Church in social welfare services in any society. This is

"contemplation" that should always go together with 'action'. This is prayer. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world. Such is more than a myth. Attempts at social welfare services without God are obliged to lead to what Lewis (1955), may be termed "The Abolition of Man" that is, a bid to control nature by man, which ironically turns out eventually to be the conquest of human nature (p.52). Without God being given his proper place, actions for social welfare services will become a monster, a Leviathan, an extinction of the human.

The Church and the Christians should, therefore, in Working for social development, never lose sight of God. The Church and her members should steadfastly pray that God Himself directs and inspires the course of social welfare services in the society; that those who guide it be God-fearing people who go about their work in the spirit of God who created the world good, and wishes that people be happy and prosper by their work (Ps. 128:2), and "have the earth for their heritage" (Mtt.5:4). The Church should always remind social welfare workers of this dimension which can very easily escape one. Byrne, (1993) emphasizes that it is only when development work is related to God, that it can cater for the development of the whole person, that is, integrated development and not alone for men's material progress (p.1).

Good enough, the Church and most especially the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has a whole lot to adopt prayers which very well relate the true sense of development to God. At the same prayers time are very apt to inspire people to work relentlessly for development. Such prayers are Come O Holy Spirit ... Send forth your Spirit and they shall be recreated and renew the face of the earth ..." In the spirit of this prayer, all are to be reminded in the words of St. Paul that "only God ... makes things grow" (1 Cor. 3:7). Social welfare workers, including the Church and her members, have to do their best and wait patiently and confidently for the harvest or increase which God alone can give.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

A project of this magnitude bears with it a remarkable effect on the people, the church and the society in many ways as may be discussed in this chapter. The effect or the impacts addressed in this chapter are in the enumerated areas of social implication, religious implications, ethical implications, cultural implications, economic implications and implications for Christianity. These will portray the extent of effect of social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in its totality.

5.1 Social Implications

The depressed, the relegated because of their social status and, the deprived are attended to the much the church can which goes a long way to alleviate their emotional and psychological depression. It equally gives them sense of belonging. The hopeless becomes hopeful. The Nigeria – Biafra war left many hopeless depressed, orphans, sick and motherless. The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province plunged into action to salvage the situation, giving them hope. Social life was a mirage. The orphans and the motherless had no parents for their existence. The church provided solace for them. After the war, the church continued to cater for such sorry situations as they arise in the society. This brings the church to the status of a mother to the society, trying to carry all along. Apart from war effects catered for, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province continued on prison apostolate. Some of those in the prison are those deprived justice. Some are innocent while to some, their cases have not been charged to court and they have served years in the prison without any attention to their plight. These are socially deprived. The church does not keep quiet to this plight. The lawyers attached to the

Justice Development and Peace Committee undertake such cases and in source cases succeed in setting them free from such severe social deprivation.

The cast system in Igboland has set many homes in social disarray. The church has been tackling it to end it, to give the culprits sense of belonging. The economic depression of the recent time has given rise to social depression but for the church, many people would have been in a perpetual hopeless state. The social status of many in the society have been raised by equipping them economically through skill acquisition scholarships and empowerment.

In all these, there exists inadequacy due to shortage of resources. This have left some yet to receive adequate attention. It has led to struggle and lobby for favouritism, hence falsehood on the part of the receivers crept in. Many have decided to tow the live of poverty and laziness to get attention from the church welfare service.

It is obvious that the church takes it as a motherly duty to attend to the social needs of the people, but all the church can do is limited by the available resources and the attitude of those who work in social welfare service centres and the receivers of the social welfare services. Many have received alleviation on their social predicaments while some are yet to. Some people rely on it solely. Life is saved by keeping the mothers with unexpected pregnancy and the foetus safe. The gap created by individualism of urban cities is closed by the church in interacting with the needy and equally providing for them. Nmah (2012) enumerates the life in urban areas as characterized by individualism which counters the communal life of the rural areas. He describes it as a shift from community to lonely devastating life.

5.2 Religious Implications

It is a duty unto the church from inception to cater for the needs of the people; physical and spiritual needs. This has attracted many to the church. When Jesus the five thousand, the people flocked more around him. For healing the sick, people flocked around Peter and the Apostles. The early Church took care of the less privilege in their communal living. The European missionaries capitalized on provision of social welfares service to reap success in their work of evangelization. So the church apart from caring for the physical needs of the people call the people to spiritual life through caring for their physical needs. Many therefore flood the church with hope of what they will get from the church. Desire to get benefit overrides spiritual desire. At times the spiritual desire will not be there. Materialism has partially taken toll in the church as attention to material desires has become criteria for God's blessings. J. Milton Yniger quoted in Nmah, (2012) defines religions as "a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problems of human life" (p.188). This goes a long way to authenticate/buttruss the place of religion in the provision of social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and around the world.

The people therefore see religion as a means to an end. The end being more of what can be touched or perceived. This has led many astray from the true nature and practice of religion. Dependency on material success has led to unending vices one of which is religious prostitution; changing from one church to another in search of answer to material success. It also involves changing of religion.

Among the early church members in Acts 6: 1 – 6, the hellenists complained of the neglect of their widows. To this some people among whom were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus and others were elected to take care of the welfare of the hellenstic widows. This points to the fact

that social welfare services can be for good in the church and can be source of distraction. The social welfare service need of the period of the Nigeria-Biafra war was enormous that the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province that equally suffered the same level of the brunt of devastation and need attention equally. Despite their pitiful state, the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province still embarked on the enormous duty of catering for the people devastated by war. Many members of the Catholic Church left for prayer houses and healing homes in search of solace to their predicament. Karl Max describes religion as opium of the people. It becomes obvious that since the Catholic Church who were very prominent in provision of social welfare services to the needy seems to be unable/incapable of taking care of the needs of the adequately, they resorted to visit of prayer houses. So religion promiscuity is promoted because people have identified the church as source of solution to their welfare needs else they look elsewhere.

The life of Igbo is hinged on religion as source of all. The religion of the people is their life. As noted by Leonard quoted in Achunike (2002) “the religion of the natives as I have all along endeavoured to point out, is their existence and their existence is their religion” (p.5). This implies that even before the arrival of European missionaries, the people already cling to their religion as source of existence. Once this fails, their loyalty will be weakened. So it becomes obvious that the people of the contemporary era, with all that religion has meant to them from inception expects from religious faith, the answer to their welfare needs especially when it becomes obvious that they as humans are incapacitated.

Social welfare services in providing the needs of the people, alleviate their problems. This presents the religious duty of catering for the needy as good venture, it converts souls to God and presents the religious faith in a good track. It equally has made many to believe that

worship of God is mainly to get solution to problems hence the desire for material acquisition turns to be optimum and materials acquisition the basis for God's blessings. Many equally present falsehood in order to receive welfare service.

5.3 Ethical Implications

Ethics has to do with the moral principles that control someone's behaviour. Ethical is the principles of what is right and wrong. When applied to social welfare service, it is ethical to cater for fellow humans especially the incapacitated. James 2:14-26 describes the essence of good work as the strength of faith. Faith without work is dead. In other words it is faithlessness. Nmah (2012) describes ethics as "a systematic study of the principles governing human conduct by human reasoning from the point of view of the right and the wrong, the ought and ought not" (p.11).

The Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province deserves a pat on the back for such a good venture. The church is living by the teachings of care and love for humanity. The strength and source of the materials, time and energy spent for welfare of the vulnerable is of the congregation. By this action of the church as a body, the members are urged to participate and contribute for the welfare of the poor and others in various other needs.

The ethical implication is that the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province has planted seed of love in the people both the recipients and the donors. Some, who ordinarily may not have called to mind, such duty that may appear odious to them are drawn along to pay attention to the plight of the needy. People are awakened to the ultimate duty to human welfare. It wards off to some extent the strength of development of vices in the society as some of those who may be lured to such criminal vices like prostitution, robbery have their attention focused on

development of self-worth through skill acquisition, scholarship and empowerment. The sordid site of abandoned babies have been taken care of by giving adequate care to both the mother and the foetus to ensure safety of their lives. It is unethical to deny life to a harmless baby.

Laziness and falsehood are vices that people developed in the course of reception of social welfare service. This may be because they do not belong to the class of the vulnerable but out of laziness they fake sick in order to receive the welfare services. The ethical implications of the social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province portrays the fact that it helps in control social vices as much as possible while indignantly deceitful people may still roam to partake in the benefits of thereof, though they may not be truly vulnerable.

5.4 Cultural Implications

With reference to the cultural background of the people of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, they are known to be hard working and self-reliant. Even with the advent of European missionaries, and the devastating war-effects of Nigeria-Biafra war, that drastically altered the cultural settings of the people, they are not known to live on welfare service or begging. But culture be it as may be is prone to change on interaction. The inadequate white-collar jobs, the war-effects and abject taste for the provision of social welfare services by the church to curb the excesses of needy situations have drastically affected the cultural setting of the people. Some cultural values have gone with the winds. Some of the people now live on alms. The dignity thereof for self-reliant is gone. Test of manhood through hardwork and self-reliance has been eroded. *“Eji ahuhu anya isi?”* is now the order of the day. People are not ready to undertake any task that is demanding.

5.5 Economic Implications

The traditional economy of the people lacks much gap between the rich and the poor. The modern urban and industrialized society is laden with unimaginable gap between the rich and the poor. Nmah (2012) states that “the problem of unemployment can be very frustrating. Some literally get lost while others become slaves of their desires” (p.131). The state of needy created by the modern era have left many vulnerable. But with the church’s intercession, some people are brought back to their feet through empowerment, skill acquisition, grants and many other ways. The lives that would have been lost through abortion or discarding of the baby are saved. They live to contribute their quota to economic development. Those empowered improve their lot and contribute to the economic development of the society rather than being dependent. Those wasting in the prison are liberated to contribute their economic quota to the society. Job opportunities are created for people who work in the welfare institutions like the hospitals, farms, motherless babies’ houses and so on.

5.6 Implications for Christianity

Christianity is a religion that takes provision of social welfare service as a duty that makes up its existence. The Christian faith upholds people to mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who rejoice. So identifying with the vulnerable is an obligation and natural phenomenon. The provision of social welfare services by the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province testifies to the caring nature of Catholic Church to humanity. Through this services the value for human life as preached by Catholic Church is preserved. Abandoning of babies now lives only in history. Like Christ the master, lives are saved.

In the presence of God all are equal. This applied to the sense of belonging which the indigents among them receive. The rejected find cause to rejoice and associate freely with others. This attracts more people to the Church adding to the numerical strength.

Realizing the demands of the welfare services, there is need for Christians to join hands together, disregard their doctrinal differences and develop a concrete plan and implementation strategies to achieve a better stable attention to fellow humans who are undergoing various levels of trauma. Christ is one and indivisible. The Christian church is called to a duty bound service; to be the brother's keeper.

It is with dismay the congregation are fed with freighting statements that keep them bound to the duty of providing to the pastors unending. The people now sow different seeds with money. Private jets are parts of decorations of the pastor while the masses go to bed hungry. Jesus fed the 5,000. Christianity should follow the foot-steps of the master.

The gap between the rich and the poor is getting progressively alarming and the church is not left out of this accusation. Especially the recently instituted Pentecostal churches who are going more aesthetic and materialistic than the initial spiritual purpose for which it claim to have come for. The level of social welfare services offered in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province of Catholic Church, though it many face some challenges, is a rich effort in the right direction. It serves as a light to the whole Christian body to make adequate provision for the vulnerable. It draws the attention (of all and mostly the Christians) to need to provide for needy especially with the geometrically dwindling economy that launches more people to the numbers of the indigents.

It is duty bound for Christianity to bring the people back to their footing by gradually bringing them embark on jobs and trade that make tem self-reliant. The white-collar jobs introduced by

the European Christian Missionaries has proved to be far from adequate and is contrary to the Africans; the Igbo, Christian leaders, even if they cannot come together, are expected from their different churches to make definite specified term (number of years) of development which will follow specified steps to redress the issue of servant job to self-reliant job. This goes a long way to keep the people away from the misery of unemployment.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

The essence of social welfare services to humanity especially in a society where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer is inevitable. The nature of the society with many poor people and beggars spurred the researcher to embark on the study. It is evident that this study is of high significance to the society in that the churches and the society that has been too busy to put a definite plan on course to attend to the problem of poverty and the indigents will appreciate the need to focus on some reasonable attention to curb the increasing number of the poor people and reduce if not completely eradicate poverty. The literature reviewed on conceptual and theoretical framework and on empirical studies, indicates that studies have been carried out in related areas to the concept of welfare, church, Ecclesiastical Province. Theories propounded on human relations and relative deprivation and equity were adopted for the study. Empirical studies carried out on fiscal capacity on provision of welfare services, the need for welfare services, political and institutional determinants of the provision of welfare services, and economic well-being of kin and non-kin caregivers in relation to government fiscal capacity, the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province during the Civil war, Help to Self-help by women and social development were reviewed. The studies show that though the studies are related to the study, social welfare services in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province is yet to be given a scholarship historic documentation, it is yet to be X-rayed on its efficacy and shortcomings. This is the lacuna which this study addresses.

This study looked into the geographical location of the place of study, the historical setting which indicated that the area of this study has high vegetative environment which favoured

agricultural practices. The main occupation of the Igbo therefore is agriculture, though they equally engage in trade and industry. But they were self-reliant. Historical development of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province which ex-rayed the trend of the development of Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province from the time of earliest Holy Ghost priests from France, Rev. Fr. Joseph Lutz to the time of the incumbent Metropolitan See, Archbishop Obinna A. J. V. C.

The presence of the missionaries with the combined effort of the colonialists made way for white-collar jobs which led the people astray from self-reliance through native occupations; hence unemployment crept in hatching poverty that became aggravated during the Nigerian-Biafra war making the church to expand the bound of welfare services

Whatever legacy that was laid down by the European missionaries was gravely affected by Nigeria-Biafra war of 1966–1970. People devised many means of survival; hence corruption crept in. Many church buildings were destroyed while the expatriate priests of Catholic Church were expelled. The Catholic Church at this point was saddled with more than is manageable. The church had the war-devasted people and the war-devasted church compounds to work on to reinstitute the church to an acceptable standard. The war did not favour the Igbo and neither the church. Amidst the ruins of the war, the indigenous priests set out to work for the survival of the Catholic Church which stand today as a tower of pride of the race. The churches are now self-sustaining and even support the church outside Nigeria.

The study indicated that social welfare service is not a contemporary issue. It is there even in the time of Abraham and many other records of Old and New Testaments. There are different types of welfare services rendered depending on the need and the demand. All centre on giving

adequate attention to problems of people ranging from the most basic needs according to Maslow's need hierarchy; food to provision of justice to the oppressed and victimized. It is worthy of note that the features of social welfare services include accountability to the service rendered and it is provided through institutions or individuals according to the area or type of needs.

Social welfare service is a life-long issue in Owerri Ecclesiastical province. It was discovered that from the time of the establishment of the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, social welfare service has been part of the history and development of the Ecclesiastical Province. The Missionaries used provision of welfare services to attract converts. The Nigeria-Biafra war affected whatever mission the Catholic Church has at hand in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and the entire Igboland. By 1968, the gravity of the war effect was too heavy on the people as many were dying of malnutrition, and strange illnesses creating a heavily challenging duty of welfare services of the time. Notwithstanding the inexplicable demand of the war period, the Catholic Church combated the terror of the moment with all agility with some members even sacrificing their lives. The church even after the war continued on the good work they know how to, providing rehabilitation for the refugees, feeding the hungry and caring for the sick, the orphans and the motherless. Till date, these services are still alive as the church reach out to many especially the hopeless and restoring their hope.

The welfare services offered by the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province have no bound to human services. From the study conducted, it was found out that they provide food, medical services, justice to the oppressed, home for the destitute and agricultural establishments. An organized arm of the church; Justice Development Peace Committee

(JDPC)/Caritas are in charge of welfare services. In addition to this body, Owerri diocese instituted Eu-Care to give a more desired approach to reduce poverty.

In all these efforts to provide for the poor and the needy, the church does not seem well prepared for a well established attention to the provision of welfare services as their workers are volunteers. This deserves to be addressed. There is still the problem of inadequate financial provision and lack of continuity. It is therefore very important that the Catholic Church should reorganize the social welfare schemes in place, overhaul them and employ trained staff for the purpose, who they will have to pay commensurately to ensure continuity

6.2 Conclusion

Social welfare services which are concerned with provision of the necessary basic requirements for human survival and self worth have been part of the church from inception. The spread of Christianity through the efforts of the missionary priests saw to the success of the evangelization efforts through provision of social welfare services to the people. The Social Welfare Services instituted by the European missionaries laid the foundation for the social welfare services of the contemporary period. Their schools and hospitals stand out as the best in the contemporary era. Schools serve as a social welfare agency but in addition, schools for the physically challenged have been instituted by the church to add to the number of schools in existence. The Igbo Catholics continued on what they have learnt, improved on it with the demand of the ever-changing/developing society. Today many people have derived solace from the social welfare service offered by the Catholics of Owerri Ecclesiastical province.

This brief study has attempted in various ways to make it clear that, for the Church, commitment to social welfare services work is a part and parcel of her mission. It is one of the

essential ways of bringing about the abundance of life which Christ's coming into the world promised the human family (Jn. 10:10). Accordingly, for the Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and in Nigeria -or elsewhere - working for social welfare development is not only a pastoral but also an ethical imperative which deserves to be given maximum attention. This is obvious because social welfare services could be considered in today's world as one of the signs of the times on which depends the weal or woe of a given society.

It is understandable, therefore, that the Church in Nigeria is expected to be fully involved in the country's social welfare services. Only by so doing will the Church prove herself a neighbour to the socially brutalized people of Igboland, like the biblical 'Good Samaritan' did to the Jew brutalized by armed robbers on his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho (Lk 10: 29-37) An effort has been made to diagnose some of the social malaise of the society and to prescribe some remedies that the church is in the position to administer.

This study insists that the local Church in Nigeria both as a community and through the services of her leaders, members and sympathizers avails this country without reservations, of some of its resources, to help the citizens to get the brutal effects of transition from underdevelopment to development behind them. Given a good number of practical tips and recommendations that this study has proffered, it is worthwhile to end on a note of reminding all who are members of the Church, especially pastoral agents, that the taste of the pudding lies in the eating. A trial of one recommendation or the other could make a whole lot of difference.

6.3 Recommendations

This research work has delved into the historical discourse of social welfare services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province and has been able to find out some facts about

provision of social welfare services in the church. On this basis the researcher makes the following recommendations:

The church should establish as a matter of necessity a viable means of fund to cater for the welfare services. The wealthy members of the society should contribute meaningfully for the welfare of their fellow human beings who are suffering. The youths should be encouraged to be self-reliant. The government policies should be made to allow for ease of development of talents to ensure fulfilled live of the citizens. The government should look into the plight of the citizens and make policies that can make for job creation. The church and the government should establish a joint venture that will work towards eradication of poverty by a specific date and work to achieve it. National Orientation Agency should be revived to its duty of re-orienting the citizens to right form of live as some of the people who depend solely on welfare services do so out of laziness. The church and the government should engage the healthy poor people in viable works such as farming from where they will feed themselves. The traditional rulers have to work with the people to ensure that no one is left to beg. This will give the vulnerable of the society the sense of belonging and elevation of status which will enable the poor people to value and protect their integrity rather than relegate themselves to mere beggars.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research work can be carried out on

- 1) The socio-economic impact of poverty on the development of the Church and the Society
- 2) Appraisal of the contributions of the Government towards poverty eradication
- 3) The socio-religious implications of materialism on the economic development of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in particular and Igboland in general.

- 4) The impact of religious-politics on the economic development of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in particular and Nigeria in general.
- 5) Social welfare services in Anglican Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.
- 6) Evaluation of Social welfare Services in other Ecclesiastical Province in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX I



**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN RELATIONS
FACULTY OF ARTS
NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA
P. M. B. 5025, AWKA
ANAMBRA STATE**

4th December, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter is intended to introduce my supervisee, Mrs Udeolisa Urewuchi Emeka, a Doctorate degree research student with Registration number 2013097002F, from the Department of Religion and Human Relations, Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awla. Her research is entitled: Historical Discourse on Social Welfare Services in Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province; 1968 – 2016. The research is purely academic exercise and your anonymity is guaranteed.

We solicit for your sincere co-operation.

Remain blessed.

Dr Uche O. O. C.

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Date _____

Name of Interviewee _____

Occupation _____

Place of the interview _____

What social welfare services are available in your diocese/parish?

How many social welfare institutions of Catholic Church are located in your diocese?

Who instituted the social welfare institutions?

Does Eu-Care operate in your area?

How does Eu-Care operate in your diocese?

Apart from Eu-Care, what other means of social welfare services do you have in your diocese/parish?

What resources are available for the provision of social welfare services in Catholic Church in your parish and the diocese?

What social welfare programmes does the Catholic Church in your diocese have for poor/

Who are the beneficiaries?

Are there requirements for one to qualify to receive the social welfare services?

What impact has social welfare services in your diocese created in the society?

What problems does the Catholic Church encounter in the course of rendering the social welfare services?

Is there any special development in social welfare services in your Parish, diocese or Owerri Ecclesiastical Province in the past thirty years?

What possible measures can the Catholic Church in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province adopt to improve on the status of the social welfare services in the Catholic Province?

APPENDIX III

LIST OF THE INTERVIEWEES

S/N	Names	Date	Place	Occupation	Age
1	Rev. Fr. Agu C.	08/02/17	Our Lady of Assumption Umuariam, Obowo	Parish Priest	60
2	Rev. Fr. Alaribe G.	20/08/16, 16/03/17	Alvan Ikoku College of Education Chaplaincy	Chaplain/Lecturer	54
3	Mr Chikere A. E..	14/08/17	JDPC Office, Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri Archdiocese	Project Manager JDPC	57
4	Prince Ofueze C.	06/10/17	Christ the King Cathedral Aba.	Catechist	49
5	Dr Ariole. K.	09/05/17	St .Camillus Catholic Chaplaincy, Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu.	Medical Doctor	36
6	Mrs Otogboro N.	11/08/17	Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Aba.	House wife	42
7	Mrs Agu C. N.	05/06/17	St. Mulumba Parish Owerri.	Parishioner/trader	47
8	Rev. Fr. Anyanwu S.	06/10/17	Christ the King Parish, Aba.	Priest	35
9	Monsignor Anyanwu S. O.	06/09/17 & 05/10/17	St. Mary Cathedral, Okigwe Diocese	Chancellor of the Diocese/Lecturer	59
10	Rev. Fr. Okoro M.	06/09/17	St. Benedict Catholic Church, Amaraku	Parish Priest	42
11	Mr Eke J.	16/05/17	St. Michael's Catholic Parish Amakohia, Urrata.	Driver	65
12	Mrs Uzoukwu W.	10/07/17	Holy Trinity Cathedral, Orlu	Trader	50
13	Mrs Iwuji E.	21/04/17	Mater Ecclesiae Ahiara	Civil Servant	38
14	Rev. Fr. Chinweuba T.	21/04/ 17	Seat of Wisdom Parish Ahiara.	Priest	45
15	Mr Otuonye J.	10/02/17	St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Uli	Teacher	55
16	Rev. Fr. Nze Casmir	14/08/17	Maria Assumpta Cathedral, Owerri	Priest/Archdiocesan coordinator of JDPC/Caritas	57
17	Rev. Fr. Njoku A	22/08/17	St. Joseph Chaplaincy Imo State University, Owerri.	Chaplain/Lecturer	41

18	Mr Igbokwe T.	03/09/17	St. Aloysius Parish Agbaja, Nwangele L. G. A.	CMO President	68
19	Mr Obasi S.	04/09/17	Corpus Christi Parish Dimneze, Ihite-Uboma	Member, CMO	72
20	Mrs Korienta M.	04/09/17	Corpus Christi Dimneze Ihite-Uboma	Member, CWO	54
21	Rev. Sr. Okorundu M.J.	05/09/17	Sisters of Immaculate Heart Orlu.	Religious/Teacher	45
22	Rev. Sr. Onwuka M. H.	08/09/17	Sisters of Immaculate Heart Aba	Religious	74
23	Monsignor Nwosu R.	06/10/17	Blessed Iwene Tansi Chaplaincy MCC, Aba	Priest/Diocesan Coordinator JDPC/ Caritas, Aba	68
24	Mrs Enwerem G.	09/05/17	St. Camillus Catholic Chaplaincy, Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu.	Student	32
25	Mr Enereji P.	09/05/17	St. Michael's Catholic Parish Amakohia, Urrata.	Retired Civil Servant	56
26	Mr Ike H.	08/02/17	Our Lady of Assumption Umuariam, Obowo	Maison	62
27	Mr Anyanwu G.	21/04/1717	Mater Ecclesiae, Ahiara	Mechanic	52
28	Mr Nwabueze F.	05/09/17	Holy Trinity Cathedral Orlu	Trader	64
29	Mrs Ukwu N.	04/05/17 23/08/17	Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri	Retired Teacher	69
30	Mr Nkwoji F.	21/04/1717	St. Anthony Catholic Church, Mpam Ishieke	Civil Servant	65
31	Mrs Ezeji, G.	19/08/17	St. Paul's Catholic Church, Ezeoke, Nsu	Retired civil- Servant	84
32	Mr. Nnawike, J.	19/08/17	St. Paul's Catholic Church, Ezeoke, Nsu	Teacher	50
33	Rev. Fr. Iwuagwu, A.	22/09/17	Mater Dei Cathedral, Umuahia	Priest	35
34.	Mrs. Oji, C	22/09/17	Mater Dei Cathedral, Umuahia	Trader	60
35	Mr. Enwenanna, O.	02/09/17	St. Theresa Catholic Parish, Uli	Security	71

36	Mr. Obi, E.	02/09/17	St. Patrick's Catholic Parish, Uli	Retired Teacher/CMO President	70
37	Mrs. Iloakasi R.	25/04/17	St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Uli	Petty trader/Farmer	69
38	Mr. Njoku, C.	04/04/17	St. Michael's Catholic Church, Umuebie, Ugiri	Teacher	50
39	Mrs Ekeji E.	08/02/17	Our Lady of Assumption Umuariam, Obowo	Trader	67
40	Miss Onyakazi V.	16/05/17	St. Michael's Catholic Parish Amakohia, Urrata.	Pharmacist	24
41	Mrs Ekwe, B.	05/06/17	St. Mulumba Parish Owerri.	Civil Servant	58
42	Mrs Duru J.	05/06/17	St. Paul Catholic Parish, Douglas Rd, Owerri	Trader on Sacramentals	53
43	Rev. Fr. Nwokoh, N	04/09/17	Holy Trinity Cathedral, Orlu	Lecturer; Peace and Conflict Studies, Ebonyi State	45
44	Mr Okoronnu, F.	14/04/17	St. Jude Catholic Parish, Ihiagwa	Lecturer	57
45	Mrs Nkwazema, L.	14/04/17	St. Michael Catholic Parish, Nnekede	Farmer	62
46	Mrs Nwosu E.	20/05/17	St. Michael Catholic Parish, Akabo	Teacher	47
47	Mr Nwigwe K.	20/05/17	St. Peter's Catholic Parish, Inyishi	Trader	45
48	Mrs Nwankwo R.	16/05/17	St. Peter's Catholic Parish, Inyishi	Cook/Cleaner	56
49	Mr Ekweoba J.	16/05/17	St. Peter's Catholic Parish, Inyishi	Security	55
50	Mrs Uzoukwu Angela	14/05/17	St. Paul's Catholic Parish, Owerri	Retired Teacher	71
51	Miss Njoku Nwakaego	14/05/17	St. Mulumba Catholic Parish Owerri	JDPC Volunteer worker/ trader	47
52.	Mrs Ilo Emelda	11/8/17	Christ the King Cathedral, Aba	Teacher	58
53.	Mrs Ofoegbu Rose	14/05/17	Maria Assumpta Cathedral Owerri	Teacher	56
54.	Mrs Ilo Emelda	22/09/17	Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Aba.	Nusre	42
55.	Miss. Ibe Jannet	06/09/17	St. Mary Cathedral, Okigwe	Teacher	36