

Original Research Article

RISK ASSESSMENT AND THE IMPACTS OF CULTISM CRISIS IN THE SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN GOKANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT.

Cultism irrespective of several actions at lessening it, emanated from Nigeria's communities. Cultism has projected despair over the peaceful and communal co-existence within our communities. It therefore became overbearing to thoroughly review the issue of cultism in our Communities where great moral values childhood should control over feeling. Without a doubt, the issue has expected sickening extent as cultic violence flourishes considerably more. The fundamental reason for this study is to evaluate the risk and the effect of cultism emergency in the selected Communities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State Nigeria. The aim of this study is to assess the risk and the impact of cultism crisis in the selected Communities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data sources were employed in this study. A descriptive statistics such as simple bar chart in percentages was used through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.2 and Microsoft Excel 2007 software to analyse the information generated. The instrument utilized were structured and closed ended questionnaire. Conclusively, we can say that there must be an improved facilities and improved living conditions in these selected communities so as to minimize perceived strain in the social system which underlines cultism crisis in the study area. The administrative authorities of these selected communities must show doggedness in their determination to stamp out cultism. They must brace up to the challenges of cultism, which has become one of the most potent evils of the recent time.

Keyword: Risk, Assessment, Cultism, Crisis, Impact.

1. INTRODUCTION.

Cultism and its associated impacts is one of the major sources of violence and causes of death among youths in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria. Youths join different cult groups to have more influence and power than their peers. Supremacy of a particular cult group in a community gives its members edge to take control of proceeds and royalties accruing from crude oil production in the area. As a result, many cult groups are at conflict to assume dominance and control. This rivalry among them triggered inter and intra cult violence such as assassination, abduction, clashes, and destruction of properties as well as insecurity and upsurge in criminal activities (Nwaogu *et al.*, 2019). In many parts of the world, cult groups makes a climate of negative harmony because of their impressions in the security market which works with arms multiplication. A few examinations on cultism have zeroed in on the

progress of religion related exercises in the nation from peacefulness to the multiplication of splinter secret factions in Nigeria (Akinpelu 2015, Nnajieta and Ahamefula 2015). A few investigations recognized how Nigeria's college framework and other tertiary organizations turned into the center of mystery religions which comprise a regular security danger to the colleges, networks and states where the foundations are found (Egbochukwu, 2009; Omobowale and Abimbola, 2015; Pemedede and Viavonu, 2010). The beginning of mystery religions in Nigeria's tertiary organizations is detectable to the Seadog confraternity (a.k.a Pirates), then, at that point, it was a quiet and peaceful gathering, established by Wole Soyinka and six others at the principal University of Ibadan in 1952, however later changed into a mysterious faction whose exercises have been portrayed by some odd and brutal exercises (Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi 2010).

It has been observed that contemporary Nigerian culture observers a circumstance where faction bunches in tertiary organizations viciously assault individuals in their bid to "disfigure, kill and complete numerous enemy of social exercises on grounds" (Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi, 2010). For a very long time, there have been endeavors made by the specialists of tertiary establishments to prohibit the exercises of religion gatherings. This drive made grounds awkward for such gatherings as they steadily withdrew to adjoining networks with their exercises compromising the wellbeing of individuals in different towns.

Cultism stays one of the violations in Nigeria. Proof from the Nigeria Watch information base from 2006-2011 uncovers that crime is one of the motives for brutality in Nigeria, as outfitted theft is intensely amassed in the South and Middle Belt locales, particularly in profoundly populated regions like Lagos and Port Harcourt. The spate of cultism in the nation has accepted a compromising aspect to the degree that we presently hear wordings like clique war, faction savagery and religion conflict. Cultism is a coordinated crime which energizes the utilization of brutality to assault targets. It takes on various procedures and utilizations mystery to plan and start assaults. More so, the humanitarian crisis occasioned by cult attacks is alarming yet has not received government attention as the nation's response body, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has failed to provide emergency services and the needed humanitarian assistance to ameliorate the suffering of the victims. With many residents being displaced and chased from their homes, families separated, youths killed and many incarcerated in prisons or police custody, houses burnt, and properties destroyed, the human cost of the menace is incalculable. The situation is impacting on social cohesion, availability of labour, social order, population growth of the youths as well as increasing immorality and crime rate, thereby threatening food sufficiency in the region (Nwaogu *et al.*, 2019 ; NEMA, 2021).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Both primary and secondary data sources were employed in this study, the primary data source are field observation, key informant interview and questionnaire administration while secondary data source include published works such as text books , journals , magazine , newspapers, National Population Commission gazette, unpublished but (documented) thesis works , university repository and internet material/search engines. The sample size formulas

for continuous data defined in this segment are appropriate. Cochran's (1977) sample size formula for continuous data is:

$$n_0 = \frac{t^2 * (s)^2}{(d)^2}$$

Where t = value for nominated primary level in each tail (the alpha level of .05 specifies the level of risk the scholar is eager to take that true margin of error may surpass the tolerable boundary of error.)

Where s = estimate of standard deviation in the population

Where d = tolerable boundary of error for mean being estimate (number of points on primary scale * acceptable margin of error)

Cochran's (1977) correction formula should be used to calculate the final sample size:

$$n_1 = \frac{n_0}{(1 + n_0 / P)}$$

Where P = population size

Where n₀ = essential return sample size according to Cochran's formula

Where n₁ = required return sample size because sample exceed required % of population.

Questionnaires was administered to 400 people from the selected Communities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State in a confidential manner within the major threat zones in the State. A descriptive statistics such as simple bar chart in percentages were employed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.2 and Microsoft Excel 2007 software to analyse the information generated.

Study Area

Gokana is a Local Government Area in Rivers State, South-South Nigeria. Its headquarters is at Kpor. It has an area of 126 square kilometers and population of 301, 828 going by the 2006 National Census. Gokana LGA was created on 23rd September 1991. It lies on the coastal low land of the Niger Delta in the south Eastern part of Rivers State. Gokana is about fifty-four (54) kilometres by road from Port Harcourt and is located between latitude 4.36° N and Longitude 7.21° E of the equator. It is bounded on the North by Tai and Khana communities, on the east by the Andoni people, on the west by the Bolo people of Okrika kingdom and the south by the Ibani (Bonny) and the Atlantic Ocean (See Fig.1 & 2).

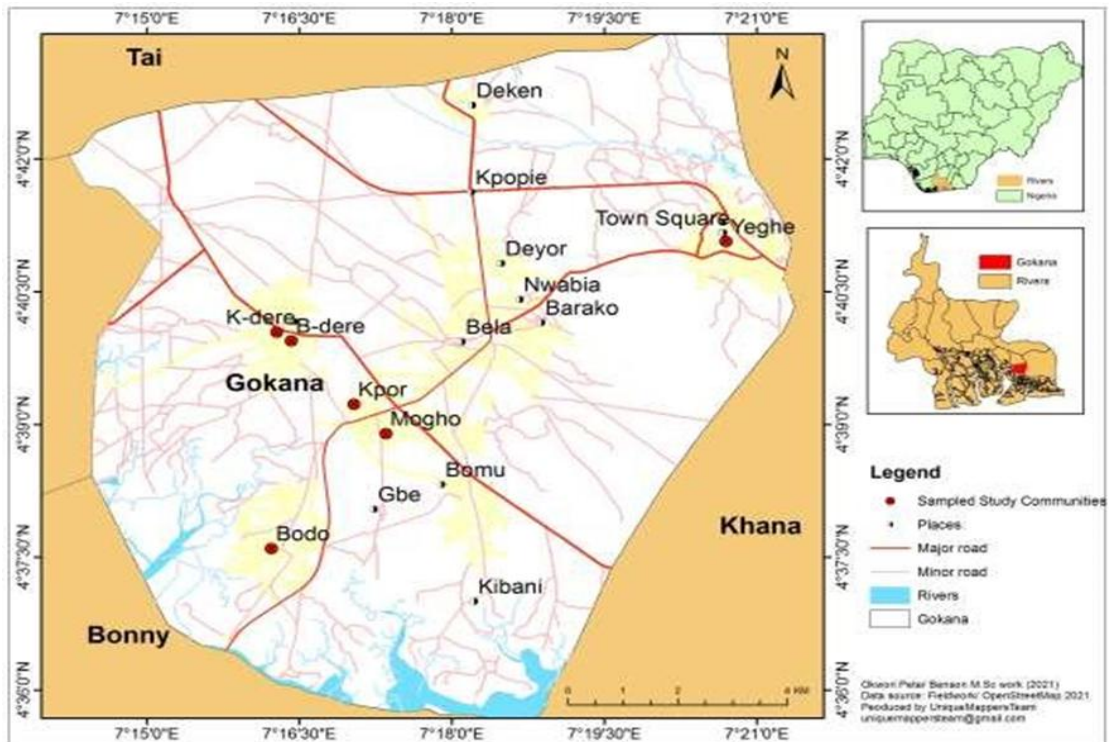


Fig 1: Study Area Map of Gokana LGA of Rivers State showing Sampled Communities
Source: Author's Presentation

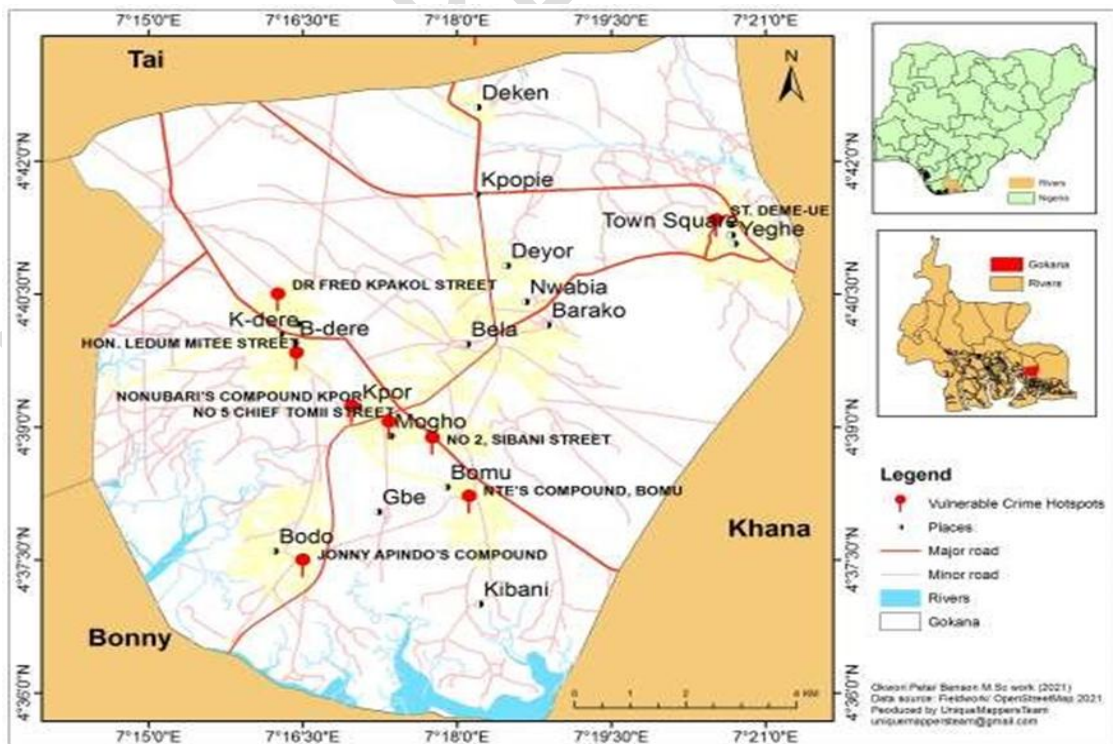


Fig 2: Map of physical location of the hot spots of the cultism crisis in the selected Communities

Source: Author's Presentation

The study area experience two season's annually, which include dry and the wet season. Gokana is located within the humid tropical climate region, with a mean annual temperature of 25oC and 28oC and rainfall of 2000 – 2500 mm per annum; and mean relative humidity of about 85% depending on the season of the year. According to Ikwoobodo (2014), Gokana records high precipitation of between 2,000mm to 2,700mm per annum. Tropical rainforest vegetation type length through the inland region however adjusted by steady subsistent rural practices. Vegetation and land use in Gokana is inside the tropical jungle zone and has sticky jungle rainforest vegetation. Critical monetary action in the space is farming as arable harvest creation on means premise catch fishery and raising of animals. The soils of the study area are derived from the coastal plain and alluvium of deltaic marine deposits Peter and Umweni (2019). It has an area of 126 km² and a population of 228,828 at the 2006 census.

3. RESULT

In this part the researcher presents the outcome is to investigation the Risk Assessment and the effects of cultism emergency in the selected communities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State Nigeria. Conduct a risk assessment to identify the sources of the hazards ,assess the degree of damages of the sources of livelihood in the selected Communities ,determine the level of impact on the study area due to the risk cultism crisis, examined the factors causing the cultism in the study area and discussion of findings.

3.1. DEMOGRAPHY ANALYSIS

3.1.1 Gender

A total of 400 questionnaires were circulated to the respondents in the selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State Nigeria, 62.8% of the total respondents were male, and 37.3% are female. From this statistical analysis it implies that the male gender are more active while the female gender are less active. See Fig. 3 Below.

Chart 1 : Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	251	62.8	62.8	62.8
	Female	149	37.2	37.2	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

UNDER PEER REVIEW

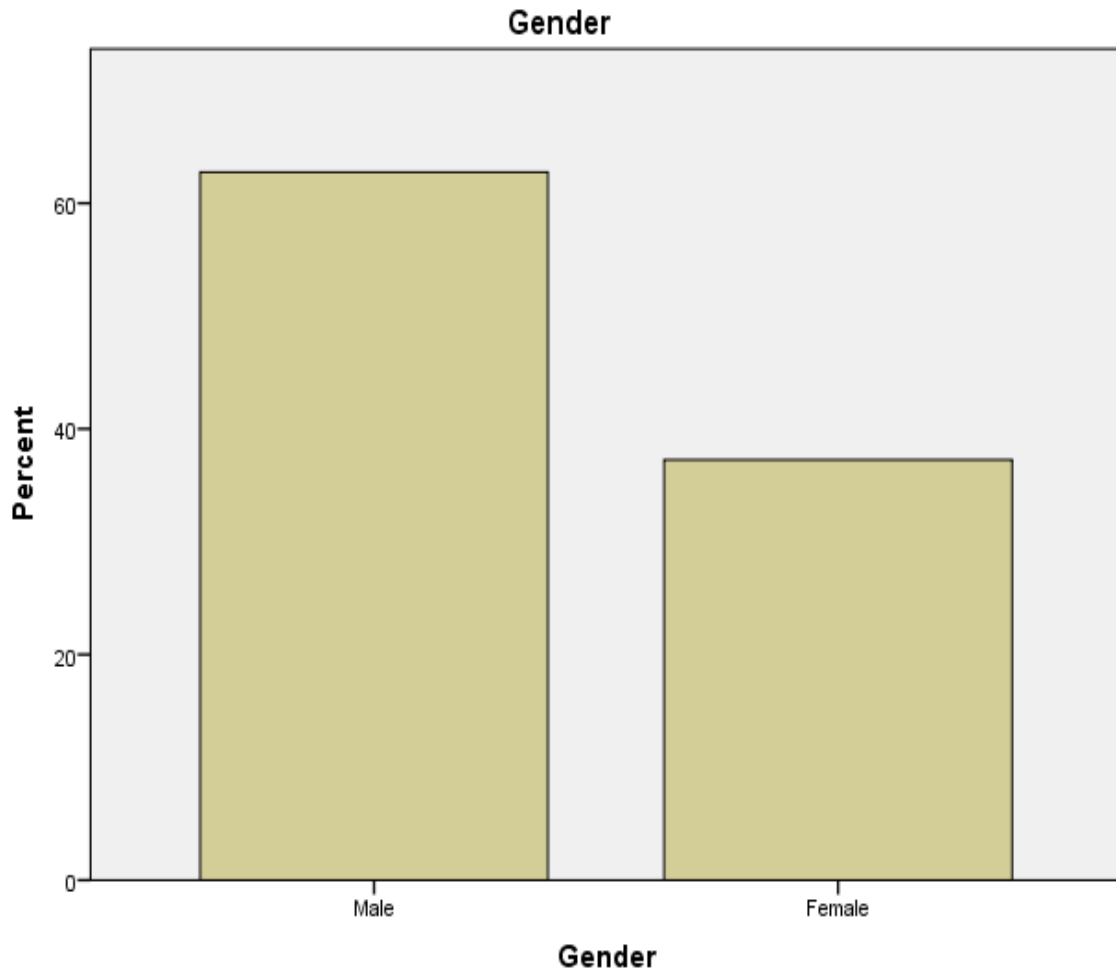


Fig 3 : Gender Analysis of Respondents in the selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State
Source: Author's Field work, 2021

4.1.2 Age Distribution

From the statistical interpretations of the respondents as regards their age, ranges between 18-25 is 6.3%, 25-30 is 31.3% while 30-35 is 37.8% ,then 30-45 is 24.8% respectively. This implies that the higher proportion of the respondents are matured adults. This also implies that a majority of the respondents in selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State Nigeria were born in the mid-80s and that they may not have experience such extensive devastating and overwhelming disaster in their life before. See Fig 4 below.

Chart 2 : Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-25	25	6.3	6.3	6.3
25-30	125	31.1	31.1	37.5
30-35	151	37.8	37.8	75.3
35-45	99	24.8	24.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

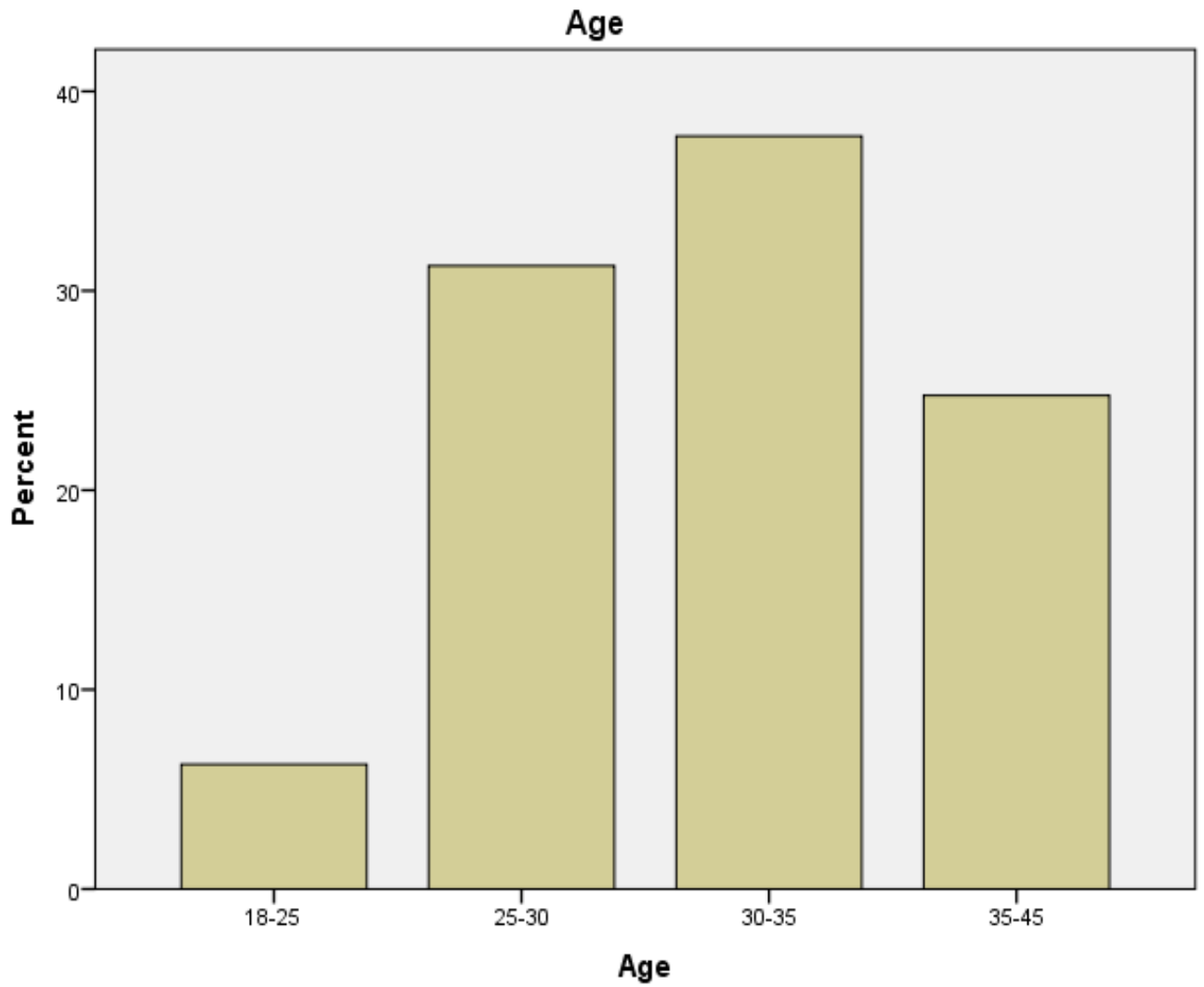


Fig 4. Age distribution of Respondents in the selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers state.

Source: Author's Field work, 2021

UNDER PEER REVIEW

3.1.3 Marital Status

Out of the 400 questionnaires were circulated to the respondents of in the selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State marital status, 6.3% of the respondent did not indicated whether they married or not, it could be due to cultism crisis, the proposed suitors most probably must have been killed or fled to an unknown destination, 62.5% are married, while 12.5.7% are single, 6% are Divorced due to the hardship from the cultism crisis. 6.5% are separated because of the inability to stay together due the Cultism crisis and 3.0% are widows .it is possible that as a result of the cultism crisis these women has lost their husbands. See Fig 5 below

Chart 3 : Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N/A	25	6.3	6.3	6.3
Married	250	62.5	62.5	68.8
Single	50	12.5	12.5	81.3
Divorced	24	6.0	6.0	87.3
Separated	26	3.5	3.5	93.8
Widow	25	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

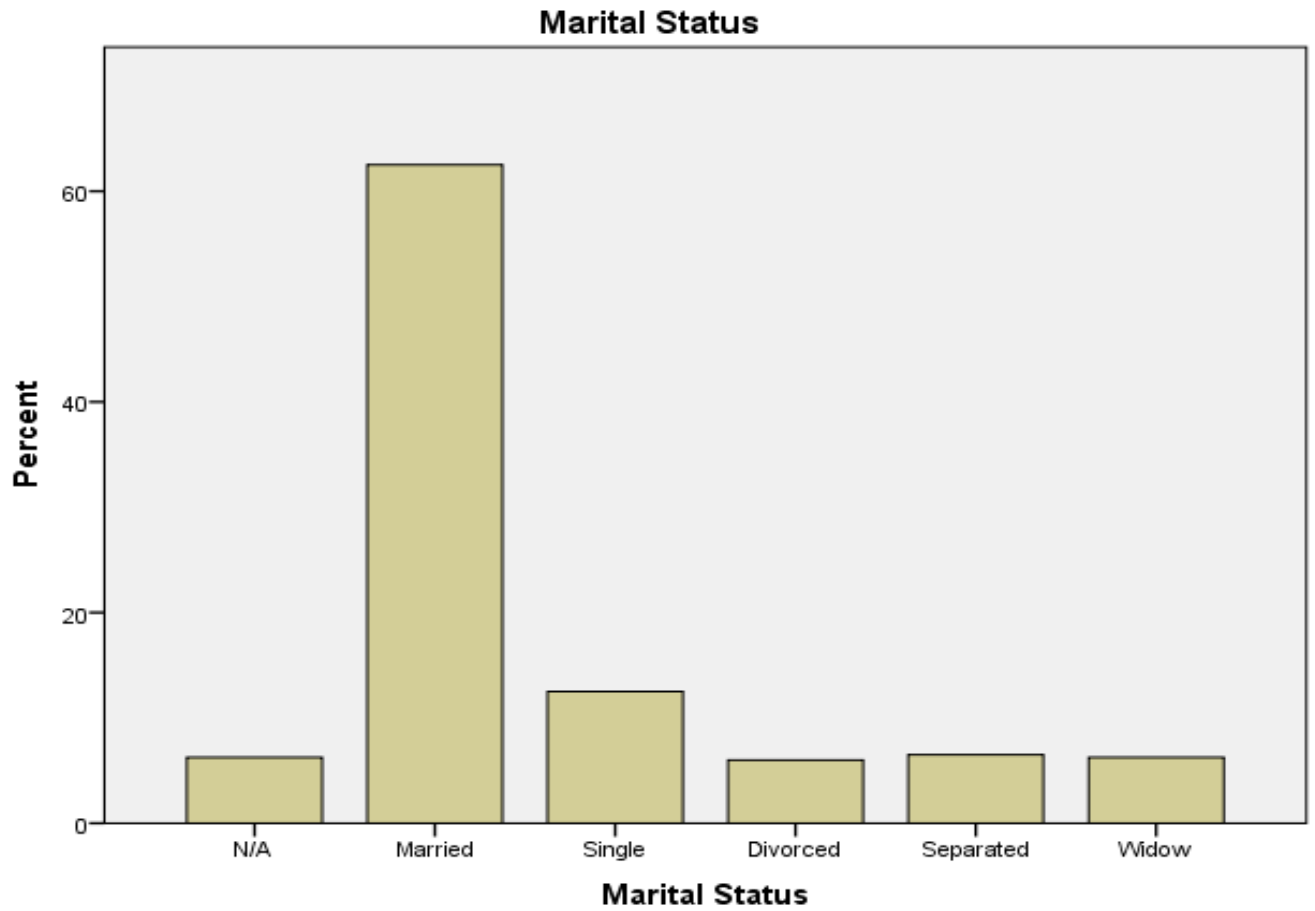


Fig 5: Marital status of Respondents in Selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers state.
Source: Author’s Field work, 2021

3.1.4 Academic Qualifications

The educational qualifications as shows from the respondents is that 37.5% of the respondent is educated to the point of ON/OND which is the highest in terms of percentage and 25.0% is educated to the level of BSC/HND which is the second highest , while MA/MSc IS 12.5% and SSCE is 25.3% respectively. This implies that if we can have these number of educated people within the study area at the time of the field data collection, it means that there are more educated people within the study area but most probably that have relocated to other parts of the Rivers State or Nigeria due to the cultism crisis that has bedevil these locations. See Fig 6 below.

Chart 4 : Academic Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	M.Sc/MA	50	12.5	12.5
	B.Sc/HND	100	25.0	37.5
	ND/OND	149	37.3	74.8
	SSCE	101	25.1	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	

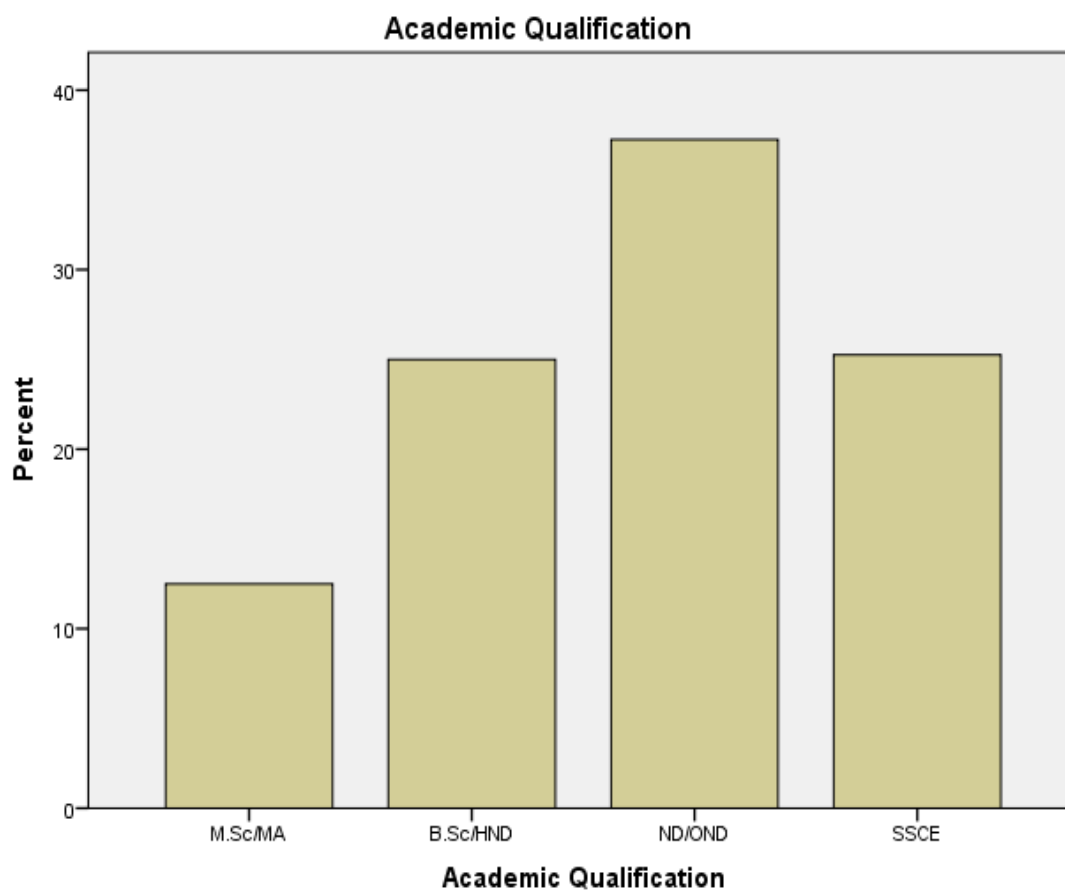


Fig 6: Educational qualifications of Respondents in the selected Communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers state.

Sources: Author's field work,2021

3.1.5 Occupation

The statistical analysis of the respondent from the selected communities shows that 37.5% of the people are self-employed, while 12.5% and 12.3% are unemployed and civil servants, farming is 6.5% and welders, students and Traders are 6.3%, each while unemployed is 12.5% respectively. This implies that more of the people within the study area are self-employed. The percentage of the self-employed people within the study area would have increase, possibly they may have relocated due to the cultism crisis. See Fig 7 below:

Chart 5 : Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Self employed	150	37.5	37.5	37.5
Unemployed	50	12.5	12.5	50.0
Fishing	26	6.5	6.5	56.5
Civil servant	50	12.5	12.5	69.0
Farmer	49	12.3	12.3	81.3
Welder	25	6.3	6.3	87.5
Student	25	6.3	6.3	93.8
Trader	25	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

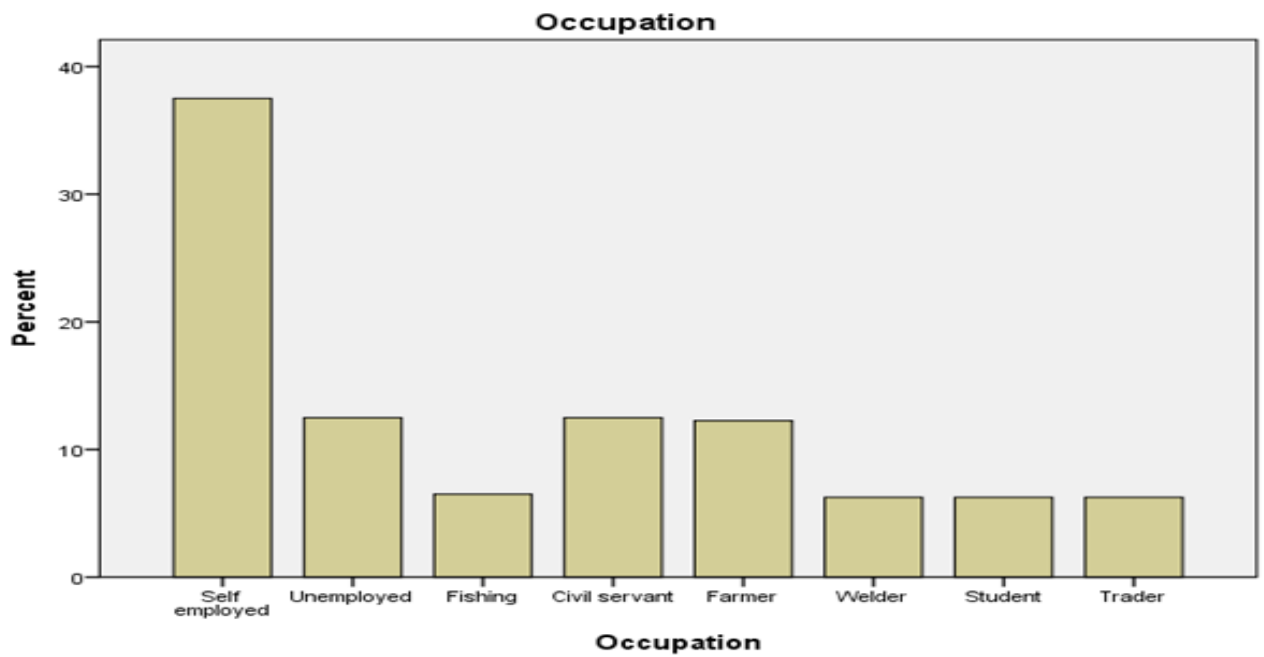


Fig 7: Occupation of Respondents in selected communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers state
Sources: Author's field work, 2021

UNDER PEER REVIEW

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1.1 Risk assessment to identify the sources/activities of the Cultist (hazards)

IDENTIFIED HAZARDOUS ACTIVITIES OF THE CULTIST

SN	Activities/Hazards	Consequences	Who And What To Be Harmed	Risk Level	Controls	Recovery Measure	Responsible Persons
01	Extortion	-Damage to Property - Abuse of Rights -Damage to economic activities -Loss of Money	-All inhabitants of selected Communities	7	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	- Relocation - Be alert to strangers or individuals	-Victims self help -Gov't Agencies
02	Armed Robbery	-Loss of Valuables -Abuse of Rights -loss of Money	-All inhabitants of selected Communities	8	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	-Be alert to strangers or individuals. -Secure all locks	-Victims self help -Gov't Agencies
03	Stealing	-Loss of Valuables -Abuse of Rights -loss of Money	-All inhabitants of selected Communities	7	-Report incident to relevant authorities	- Relocation - Be alert to strangers	-Victims self help -Gov't Agencies

					-Self-help Security	or individuals	
04	Rape	-Abuse of Rights -Loss of Dignity	-All females in selected communities	7	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	-Go to Hospital Relocation - Be alert to strangers or individuals	-Victims self help -Gov't Agencies
05	Use of Drugs	-Temporary insanity -Misbehaviors -Damage to health -	-All inhabitants of selected Communities	7	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	Relocation - Be alert to strangers or individuals	-Victims self help -Gov't Agencies
06	Vandalism	-Destruction of Properties -Damage to the Environment	-Property Owners. - All inhabitants of selected Communities	8	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	Be alert to strangers or individuals. -Secure all locks	Victims self help -Gov't Agencies
07	Arms Proliferation	-Destruction of life &	Property Owners.	8	-Report incident	-Be alert to	-Victims self help

		Properties -Damage to the Environment	- All inhabitants of selected Communities		to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	strangers or individuals. -Secure all locks	-Gov't Agencies
08	Disruption of elections/Malpractice	-Stolen Ballots Boxes -Shooting -Inconclusive elections	-All electorates of selected Communities. -All INEC officials	7	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	-Be alert to strangers	Victims self help -Gov't Agencies
09	Killings	Destruction of life & Properties -Damage to the Environment	-Property Owners. - All inhabitants of selected Communities	8	-Report incident to relevant authorities -Self-help Security	- Relocation - Be alert to strangers or individuals	Victims self help -Gov't Agencies

Table 1: Identified hazardous activities of the cultist

Risk Assessment Matrix

Potential Severity	Probability of Occurrence			
	Frequent	Occasional	Remote	Unlikely
Catastrophic	Extreme Risk (9)	Extreme Risk (8)	High Risk (7)	* High Risk (6)
Critical	Extreme Risk (8)	High Risk (7)	Medium Risk (5)	Medium Risk (5)
Moderate	High Risk (7)	Medium Risk (5)	Medium Risk (4)	Low Risk (3)
Minor	Medium Risk (4)	Low Risk (3)	Low Risk (2)	Low Risk (1)

Notes:

- * These high risks may be acceptable if the design, operations and management controls are consistent with industry practices. A more detailed score-based 'Risk Assessment Methodology' may be required.

If a risk falls between two or more categories, the selected risk ranking should reflect business sensitivity/priority and industry practice.

Numbers in brackets provide a method of rating risk on a 1-9 scale in order to prioritize mitigating activities/measures.

Table 2. Risk assessment matrix

4.1.2 The degree of damages of the sources of livelihood in the selected Communities

The degree of damages reflect the impacts of the cultism crisis as it affect the economic activities of the selected communities of Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (See Table 1 and 2 above). The statistical representation of the research show that 81.3% of the respondent strongly disagree, that the impact of the cultism crisis has no effect on the people and their economic activities, while 18.8 disagree with same assertion. This implies the cultism crisis really affects the economic activities of the people living in the selected communities at 100% level. See Fig.8

Chart 6 : The impact of cultism crisis has no effect on the people and their economic activities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	75	18.8	18.8	18.8
Strongly Disagree	325	81.3	81.3	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The impact of cultism crisis has no effect on the people and their economic activities

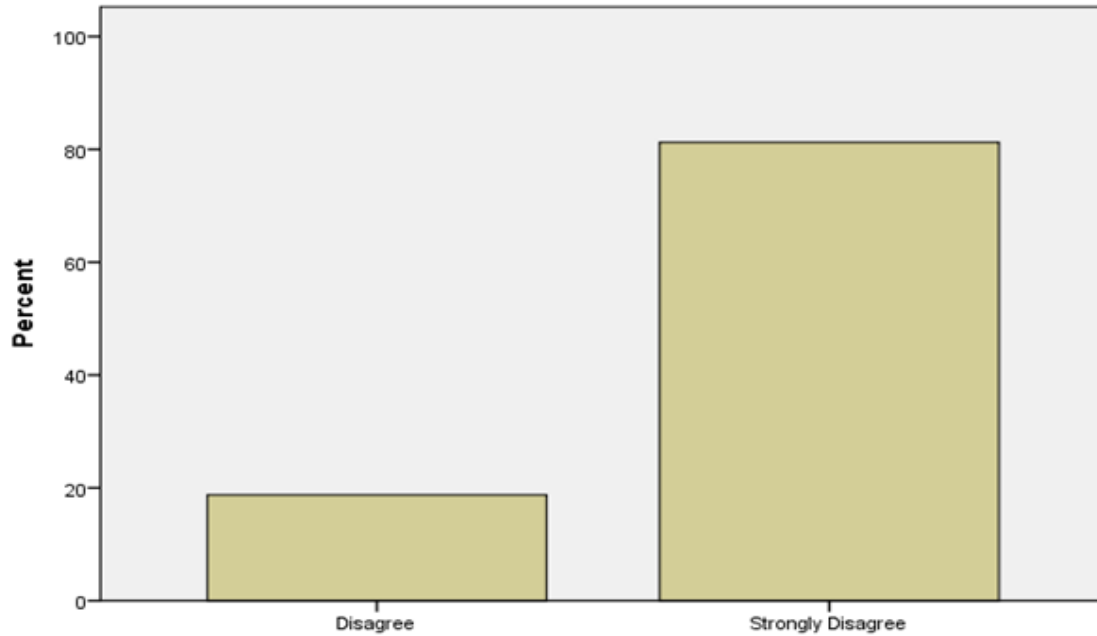


Fig 8: The impact of Cultism Crisis on the economic activities of the study Area.

Sources: Author's field work, 2021

4.2.1 The level of impact on the study area due to the risk cultism crisis

The statistical analysis from the respondents shows that the impact of cultism crisis within the selected communities in the study areas is highly negative. The Impact of cultism crisis has led to the loss of life and properties, displacement of inhabitants of the study area, Disruption of the selected communities' activities. This implies that during the periods of the cultism crisis, life in the selected communities is in a state of nature, where only the strong survive, it also means that the weak and the feeble are most vulnerable to the cultism crisis as victims. Fig 9 below shows the effect of the cultism crisis in the study area.

Chart 7: What are the effects of this cultism crisis in these areas?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1. Loss of life and properties, 2. Displacement of people, 3. Crime, 4. Disruption to the community activities	400	100.0	100.0	100.0

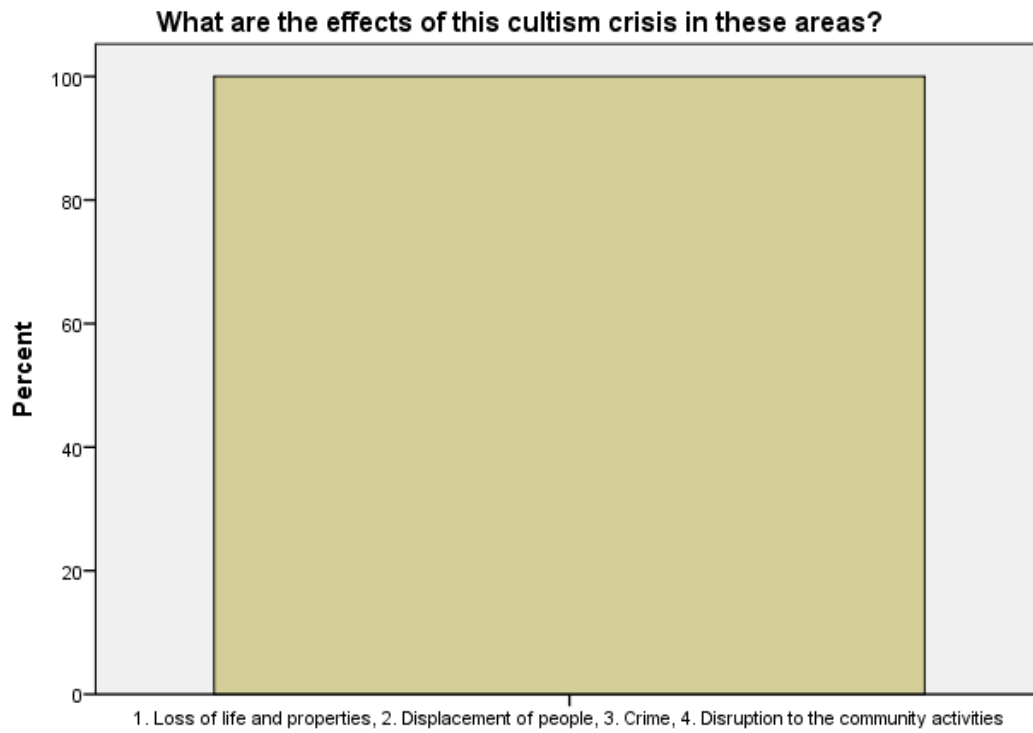


Fig 9: The effect of the Cultism Crisis in the Study Area

Sources: Author's field work, 2021

4.2.4 General factors causing the cultism Crisis.

There are various causes of cultism in the study area some of which are examined as follows:

1. Influence of Peer Group:

There is no question that peer group influence is a strong variable that urges youthful students to join secret cult. Ibeh (2005) placed that, the time of pre-adulthood is set apart by extreme social relationship in any climate he/she tracks down himself. At juvenile, there is a shift of accentuation on friendly relationship from the guardians to the companion bunch. As young adult breaks the complete dependence and contact with his/her folks, he/she moves same to the recently obtained group which by and large is any gathering nearby he/she embraces. Akinfolarin (2003) and Omoegun and Akanle (2007) additionally revealed in their investigations that peer group impact is one reason youngsters join cultism.

2. Parental Background:

Young people, who come from homes where codes of acceptable conduct and discipline are totally implemented, are demonstrated to cultism. Olajugbe (2001) announced that parental foundation, absence of moral guidance at home and the way in which the kid is brought could be a component in enrolment as an individual from a faction. The writer clarified that unreasonable control by guardians, an excessive number of rules could make individual tense and restless while a youngster whose opportunity realizes no bound might be a prepared contender for religion enrollment. As ascertain by Mgbekem (2004), a few guardians love their kids to the degree of spoiling them. At the point when they do an off-base thing as opposed to chiding them, they permit the kids go liberated from the offense. They grow up with such regrettable propensity and subsequently guzzle criminally-situated conduct which lead them to joining faction gatherings, Owoeye (1997) additionally settled an exceptionally solid connection among frail and blemished family foundation and impact and inclinations for understudies to join secret cliques. As per the creator, guardians themselves may be individuals from secret religions. Clique individuals might come from broken homes where youngster misuse and disregard are exceptionally uncontrolled. Ayodele and Ayodele (2002) likewise recognized family breakdown as one of the reasons for cultism in our general public. As per them, a kid who comes from broken home is presented to parental carelessness and

dissatisfaction. Such kid is effortlessly instigated into cultism. As cited from Ogunbameru (2004), Freud's disappointment – Aggression theory specified that dissatisfaction prompts hostility either towards the apparent wellsprings of obstruction or dislodged to another item. In this manner a few understudies joined faction to move past the dissatisfaction they experienced as a result of broken home.

3. Societal Decadence: Ogunbameru (1997) mourned that the Nigerian culture has eagerly or reluctantly gave an empowering climate to all types of violations among which is the issue of cultism emergency. The creator contended that Nigeria has supplanted honor with disrespect as a standard demeanor. Mgbekem (2005) additionally bemoaned that adolescents these days guzzled indecent qualities as opposed to instilling moral and nice qualities. The creator set that this records for why the adolescent see or feel no second thoughts in joining secret clique. Okeowo (1994) additionally connected adolescent's inclination to join clique to the overall condition of normlessness existing in Nigeria.

4. Erosion of Education Standards: The financial slump during the 1980s and mid 1990s in the nation empowered defilement and disintegration of principles in the instructive framework. Most understudies acquired induction into the colleges with questionable qualifications (Akinfolarin 2003). Such people, on account of their low mental self-view observe comfort in cultism to endure the afflictions of life at all expense. For such people, to endure the arrangement of life turns into a round of endurance at all expense and as such they join religion gatherings to threaten other person.

5. Militarization of the Nigerian Polity: Adewale (2005) commented that the way of life of savagery which has become an integral part of the Nigerian country has many appearances among which are military upsets, state supported brutality, political deaths, exercises of ethnic civilian army and collective conflicts. The creator contended that the rise of military upsets in the Nigerian body commonwealth denoted the authority presentation of savagery as a method of settling political struggles. Ibukun (1999) likewise featured militarization of the Nigerian commonwealth for quite a long time as a variable for cultism.

4.3.1 Specific Factors causing Cultism Crisis in the Study Area

Bomu

Struggle for chieftain's title/traditional stool of authority (Chief Charles Tenalo and Livinus Tenalo), Battle for cult supremacy, Peer influence (need to feel belong and for relevance) and

pressure (forceful initiation), Economic reason/survival (local/illegal refinery activities), Protection, Land dispute with Lewe, Inter-communal war with Lewe.

Bodo:

Political crisis/Political battle between Gabriel Pidomson and Kenneth Kobani,. Economic reason/survival, Peer influence and pressure, Inter-communal war with Mogho.

Kpor:

Battle for chieftaincy/traditional stool of authority, Economic reason/survival, Protection Peer influence and pressure.

Mogho:

Economic reason/survival, Inter-communal war with Bodo, Peer influence and pressure, Protection

Lewe:

Protection, Peer influence and pressure, Illegal refinery activities, Inter-communal war Bomu Land dispute with Bomu, Agitation for equitable distribution of resources.

K-Dere:

Peer influence and pressure, Illegal refinery activities, Inter-communal war with B-Dere

B-Dere:

Peer influence and pressure, Illegal refinery activities,. Inter-communal with K-Dere

Yeghe:

Peer influence and pressure, Illegal refinery activities, Land dispute, Protection.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that as impact of cultism crisis keep increasing due to need to protect themselves, peer group influence, quest for money, political connection, influence and power, the risk assessment of more attacks remains imminent in the Gokana local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The ruining influence of community cultism in the study area is a cause for serious worry and necessitates intensive efforts to contain in order to ensure peace, stability and safety of the people. The study recommend that.

- Cultic -related issues at all levels should be urgently addressed.
- Government Security personnel should work with the traditional rulers, social services agencies and community members in responding to issues pertaining to community cultism
- Sound parenting should be ensure through monitoring and supervision of their children
- Government at all level should ensure enforcement of bans and proscription of existence of cult groups to reduce the risk of emergence and membership of cult groups by youths
- Government at all level also should ensure enforcement of bans and proscription of existence of cult groups to reduce the risk of emergence and membership of cult groups by youths.
- Substantial orientation, re-orientation and sensitization programs should be carried out in the study area.

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