



Scan to know paper details and author's profile

An Evaluation of Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa State, and Community Development

Ogun Ebisindor

Ignatius Ajuru University

ABSTRACT

Religious groups traditionally have played a major role in shaping communities. In modern civil societies, religious beliefs are still among the key factors that bond people together to form communities, both large and small. In other words, the church is often regarded as an institution itself, and this attitude is frequently passed onto the social institutions that the church creates and maintains. In many societies the church has a special place among the state's institutional partners, as a key provider of a long range of social services. As such, the role of Christian churches in fighting poverty through development activities cannot be overlooked.

Churches have come of age and collaborate with different organizations to improve the well-being of communities around their vicinity through social and economic community development programs. However, with the advancement of the welfare state, the continuing secularization of modern societies and the further separation between church and state, the institutional role of the church decreases.

Keywords: catholic diocese of bomadi, christianity, community, development.

Classification: DDC Code: 320.9409034 LCC Code: JN94.A58

Language: English



London
Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573327

Print ISSN: 2515-5784

Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences

Volume 22 | Issue 16 | Compilation 1.0



© 2022. Ogun Ebisindor, Yelenys Díaz González & Carlos Cristobal Martinez. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncom-mercial 4.0 Unported License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>, permitting all noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



An Evaluation of Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa State, and Community Development

Ogun Ebisindor

ABSTRACT

Religious groups traditionally have played a major role in shaping communities. In modern civil societies, religious beliefs are still among the key factors that bond people together to form communities, both large and small. In other words, the church is often regarded as an institution itself, and this attitude is frequently passed onto the social institutions that the church creates and maintains. In many societies the church has a special place among the state's institutional partners, as a key provider of a long range of social services. As such, the role of Christian churches in fighting poverty through development activities cannot be overlooked.

Churches have come of age and collaborate with different organizations to improve the well-being of communities around their vicinity through social and economic community development programs. However, with the advancement of the welfare state, the continuing secularization of modern societies and the further separation between church and state, the institutional role of the church decreases. This study examines the history of Catholic Diocese of Bomadi as well as its contribution to community development in Bayelsa state. The study employs the descriptive method. The study discovered that the contribution of Catholic Diocese of Bomadi to community development could be seen in the establishment of hospitals, and sustained schools, provision food and shelter for the less fortunate and cared for the oppressed and the abandoned, it also manifests in family life, community empowerment and livelihood. Of great concern however, is how sustainable these development activities are. The study therefore, calls on Christian church to seek more collaboration with other faith based organizations in community development activities.

Keywords: catholic diocese of bomadi, christianity, community, development.

Author: Department of Religious and Cultural Studies Faculty of Humanities, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to overestimate the value of history to any nation, culture, community, or people. This is because a thorough examination of the past can aid people in gaining a better understanding of their circumstances and inspiring them to change the present in order to achieve a better future. As a result, writing the history of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi in Bayelsa State has become a must-do task for any religious historian. Given the scarcity of data that has discouraged previous researchers, as well as the rapidly changing and technologically advancing age in which people are less concerned with the past and more concerned with the present and future, it is critical to leave a legacy of the past, as it has been stated that people who have no knowledge of their past are suffering from collective amnesia. Many people are losing their past as a result of modern trends, cultural contact, religious transformation, and technological growth. This is one of the problems that the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi in Bayelsa State is dealing with.

Furthermore, religious institutions must be recognized for their contribution to poverty alleviation through development efforts. These religious institutions can provide full-fledged social services of acceptable quality, but they can only compete for state or public backing with secular suppliers of equivalent services if all other factors are equal. These boundaries are the communal features of the church's social problem-solving method. Churches have matured

and now work with a variety of organizations to improve the well-being of their communities through social and economic community development programs. As a result, the history of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi, as well as its contribution to community development in Bayelsa state, will be examined in this paper. The descriptive method is used in this investigation. According to the study, the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi's contribution to community development can be seen in the establishment of hospitals and schools, the provision of food and shelter for the less fortunate, and the care for the oppressed and abandoned, as well as in family life, community empowerment, and livelihood.

However, the sustainability of these development operations is a major challenge. As a result, the study encourages Christian churches to collaborate more with other faith-based organizations in community development efforts.

1.1 Introduction of Christianity in Nigeria

Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries who accompanied traders and officials to the West African coast brought Christianity to Benin in the fifteenth century. Several churches were constructed to accommodate the Portuguese community as well as a few African converts.

When direct Portuguese contacts in the region were cut off, the Catholic missionaries' influence faded and eventually vanished by the eighteenth century. Despite the fact that churchmen in Britain were influential in the fight to prohibit the slave trade, considerable missionary work did not resume until the 1840s, and it was confined for a period to the Lagos-Ibadan region. The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England established the first missions there (CMS). Other Protestant denominations from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States followed them, as did Roman Catholic religious organizations in the 1860s. To minimize competition, Protestant missionaries divided the country into fields of activity, while Catholic missions did the same to avoid duplication of effort among the several religious organizations working there. The Igbo were particularly

well-served by Catholic missionaries, while the Yoruba were well-served by the CMS.

The CMS first pushed Africans to leadership roles in the mission field, with Samuel Ajayi Crowther being named the first Anglican Bishop of Niger as an exemplary example. Crowther, a freed Yoruba slave, had his education in Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom, where he was ordained, before returning to his hometown with the CMS's first batch of missionaries. This was part of an intentional "native church" policy pursued by Anglicans and others to establish indigenous ecclesiastical institutions that would eventually be free of European oversight.

However, the endeavor failed in part because church leaders grew to believe that religious discipline had become too slack during Crowther's episcopate, but more importantly because prejudice had risen. A British cleric succeeded Crowther as bishop. Nonetheless, the acceptance of Christianity by a considerable number of Nigerians was ultimately contingent on the various denominations coming to grips with local conditions, which necessitated the involvement of an increasing number of African clergy in the missions. European missionaries were mostly persuaded of the value of colonial control, strengthening colonial policy. As a result, several African Christian communities established their own churches.

1.2 History of Christianity in Ijaw Land

Several theories have been proposed as to why Europeans were interested in Africa and invaded it. Political and strategic factors, as well as psychological and cultural elements, were among the reasons. The cultural variables were the most closely tied to this discourse in all of them. Many Christian devotees and adventurers in the pre-colonial period, particularly during the age of European empire, wished to spread Christianity to other regions of the world as a means of advancing European/Christian civilisation to others. Christian missionaries were eager to propagate Christianity during the 19th century, and they also "encouraged" philanthropists and humanitarians who wished to eradicate

unchristian customs in parts of Africa. The Church Missionary Society, which was created in 1799 in England as the evangelical arm of the Church of England (Anglican Communion), made inroads throughout West Africa, utilizing Sierra Leone as a base and outreach station. An Oshogbo-Yoruba Samuel Ajayi Crowther was the arrowhead who spearheaded the CMS's work in this region.

Samuel A. Crowther's biography was directly linked to the inhumane slave trade on Africa's west coast. Crowther was kidnapped and sold to European slave traders as a slave. He was, however, "recaptured" by the British naval anti-slave squadron and brought to Sierra Leone by chance. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in Crowther's life. Before becoming a clergyman in the Anglican Church, he underwent extensive educational and theological studies.

Apart from being deeply religious, Samuel Ajayi Crowther was also passionate, committed, and energetic in his missionary work. He was the first African Bishop to serve as the pastor of the Niger Delta region.

The first Christian mission in the Niger Delta was started in Bonny in 1865 by the CMS of England under the leadership of Bishop Samuel Crowther.

It's worth noting that the first Christian mission stationed at Akassa, although it eventually went away due to demographic problems (Ama-ogbari, 2014). Bishop Samuel A. Crowther had a key role in the Twon-Brass station's creation. On September 29, 1867, the Bishop and his son Dandeson were sailing by boat from Ida after being freed from the clutches of chief Abokkho, when they came across King Josiah Constantine Ockiya, Amanyanabo of Nembe near Akassa.

"God-man the tory way you been to tell at Bonny come put for my country," King Ockiya is alleged to have stated to the Bishop (quoted in Eke-Spiff, 1990). This was an open call for him to start a Christian mission in his community. The Bishop agreed and put the plan in motion to return. He met Ockiya and his chiefs at Twon and reached an agreement with them. The chiefs donate £200, which is one-third of the total project cost. On the

25th of August 1868, a site was supplied and prepared along the riverbank, and the second station in the Niger Delta, and the first in the middle Niger Delta, was constructed at Twon Brass.

On the same day, the church established a school as an adjunct. The inauguration service was attended by seventy people, and seventeen pupils were enrolled in the school. J.R. Dewing and S.B.

Prided, residents of Akassa, alternately came to Twon-Brass to supervise the work every two weeks. Thomas Johnson was eventually appointed as the permanent superintendent. Rev. Thomas Johnson died on April 14, 1884, after serving the Brass mission for about sixteen years. He was buried in the mission yard at Twon-Brass (Eke-Spiff, 1990).

The church was initially planted in Twon-Brass, and the church building was made of bamboo poles with a thatch roof. Later, a wooden building with galvanized sheets was added. Bishop Crowther dedicated the structure on the 21st of October, 1869. A mission house was also built, with a portion of it used as a classroom for the students. The church needed to be expanded in 1875, and the new chapel was dedicated in 1877, with the same "Saint Barnabas" formally assigned to the church. 2007 (Ama-ogbari). The church imported a prefabricated iron church from England in 1886, which was installed and dedicated on October 10th, 1886.

This project was first limited to Twon, but it was later expanded to include Nembe and its environs, and it was long regarded as the most successful mission in the Niger Delta. King Ockiya burned his traditional icons, banished away all but one of his wives, and was baptized as Josiah Constantine in 1879, just before his death. At his coronation, however, William Fredrick Koko, who became king in 1889, openly rejected his old Christian religion. Brass chiefs explained the following developments in their religious attitude in 1895, around the time of the raid on the Royal Niger Company store at Akassa: "A few years ago, the Christians, including King Koko, returned to fetishism, the reason being that they had lost trust

in the white man's God, who had permitted them to be oppressed and their trades, their only means of living, to be taken away from them without good cause or explanation" (quoted in Isichei 1983). Aside from the founding of Christianity at Nembe, the church missionary society sailed to Okpoam, where a church was established, and then to Egwema-Amoagbo on the island of Cape Formosa in 1921. The church missionary society established a station in Egwema in 1922, and from there went to neighboring towns and communities on Cape Formosa Island and Akassa (Ama-Ogbari 2014).

1.3 *The Spread of Christianity outside Twon Brass*

The Ogbia and Ijaw territories were also evangelized when Christianity extended to Nembe-speaking communities. Itinerant traders carrying the word of God were known as Twon-Brass Christians. On service days, these traders established halls of worship in their host towns and worshipped, abstaining from any hard labor. Despite the fact that the Nembe Christians traders invited their Ogbia and Ijaw clients to participate in these worships, their losses did not.

From 1910, however, the acceptance of Christianity in these communities was unquestionable. In the Ogbia area, the spontaneous spread and acceptance of the Christian religion was wonderful and overpowering. Amos Ojoko, a Nembe trader, was the pioneer of missionary activity in the Kolo Creek area. In 1911, Rev. D.O Ockiya visited the towns of Okoroba, Idema, Opumatubu, and later the towns of Kolo Creek and Anyama after learning that Ogbia had accepted Christianity.

Later, Christianity spread to locations like Saka Kugbo, Epie Creek towns and villages like Opolo, Okutukutu, Agudama, Biogbolo, and others, as well as Okordia, Zarama, and Besani in the Taylor Creek region.

Christianity began to gain traction in the Ijaw area of the lower central Delta in 1912, when Rev. S.S Williams, the pastor in charge of the Twon-Brass station, went on missionary duty at Ekowe, which was overseen by Rev. James Claud Ikalamo (then

a layman). Because of the rapid establishment and growth of many stations in this area, a team of missionaries led by D.E. Spiff, George F. Sambo, and others was sent to this area on a regular basis to evangelize. It was authorized to have its parish church council (P.C.C) meetings, which were controlled by the Brass District, as a result of the rapid growth of the churches and the excitement displayed by the converts. This condition persisted until the district was united with the upper Central Niger-Delta Ijaw C.M.S to form its own district. The headquarters were established at Kaiama, and the first superintendent was Rev. G.I. Amangala. The European missionaries Rev. H Proctor and J.C.R Wilson evangelized in the upper Ijaw region from their headquarters at Brass.

Kaiama is a major town in Northern Izon and a center for Christianity in the region. Kaiama received the gospel in 1892, and she has served as the mother ecclesia in the Northern Izon axis in the gospel's spread ever since (Obuoforibo 1998).

Fetepigi Amaran, son of Kaiama's King Amaran Odo, was influential in bringing the gospel to Kaiama (1826-1900). Because of the horrible horrors of the Kaiama-Okoloba battle in the Royal House, his father sent him to Twon Brass. He was baptized, educated, and eventually married Timebi, a daughter of Twon-Brass, while he was there. Even after his father, the King, died in 1900, he refused to return.

In 1904, missionaries, including the Reverend H. Proctor, asked Fetepigi to take them up the Creeks and rivers to propagate Christianity and open schools after learning that he was from Kaiama.

Fetepigi Amaran declined the appeal, but he assisted them in drawing a map of the paths they should take up to Kaiama, identifying waterways, towns, and villages along the way. He also provided them the name and compound of Regent Okpobogha Amaran, with whom they might comfortably lodge in order to continue their mission's work.

Reverends H. Wilson, Williams (a Sierra Leonean), and Reeks were on Reverend Proctor's train. Reverends Garrards and Aitkin were two more CMS missionaries who eventually joined

them. These missionaries loaded their boat with Christian and primary education literature and began their trek up the creeks and rivers using the sketch as a guide. They visited practically all of the towns and villages along the lines shown on the map and explained their goal, but they were turned down. The Indians told them that they were not interested and that they could have received them if it had been a trade in liquor, gunpowder, textiles, and various foodstuffs. Until they reached Kaiama, they contacted each town and village and received the same response. The tribesmen who met them at the water's edge at Kaiama escorted them to Regent Okpobogha Amaran. Regent Okpobogha Amaran welcomed them with pleasure and ordered their luggage to be carried inside his palace after the proper introductions.

Okpobogha Amaran, sensing the severe curiosity that the arrival of the missionaries had aroused in the thoughts of all the people of Kaiama, gathered all the elders to his palace and explained the strangers' missions to them. Reverend Proctor spoke briefly to the elders about their mission before serving them biscuits, milk, corned beef, sardines, and other foods. They also served all of the interested children who were watching from outside the palace. The town's old and young alike were wowed. As one might expect, acquaintance had been developed. The missionaries invited both young and old people, and began teaching them the Bible as well as the essentials of reading and writing. The missionaries held such classes every day except Saturdays and Sundays, and on Sundays, they held church services at the King's palace.

When the missionaries saw that their work was benefiting the indigenous people and that the palace could no longer accommodate the expanding number of guests, they requested an open plot of land on which to construct a structure. When the missionaries saw that their mission was having a positive impact on the indigenous and that the palace could no longer accommodate the growing number of visitors, they requested an open plot of land on which to build a structure. Regent Okpobogha Amaran acted quickly, consulting his elders and granting

them property owned by the Amaran family on the south and the Ereweri family on the north.

It is the same plot of land that St. Mark's Anglican Church, Kaiama, is currently occupying. Without delay, a thatch-roofed structure with mud walls was constructed. On weekdays, normal school sessions were held in the same structure as church events on Sundays. In 1904, the church in Kaiama was founded on this foundation. Kaiama became the missionaries' headquarters for effective missionary operations. For the sake of their mission, they traveled from Kaiama to Odi, Opokuma North and South, Sampou (the subject of this study), and other towns and villages, where they constructed churches. They also proceeded to Patani from Kaiama and established a base there.

Kaiama eventually became the upper Ijaw mission's headquarters, while Patani was in charge of the Isoko District's headquarters (Ama-ogbari, 2014). From there, the gospel was spread to the majority of the Niger Delta's remaining Ijaw settlements. This is how Christianity expanded over the land, and it currently dominates all of Ijaw Land. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) built a bungalow and parsonage at Kaiama for the pioneer missionaries and educators before they finally left after laboring against all difficulties and hardship for the cause of humanity. When they left, Mark Lele, an Agent at the time, was assigned to Kaiama. He was a dedicated and hardworking individual.

Fetepigi Amaran, as an ordained Priest, fell ill during his second stint at Kaiama and died in July 1927. Fetepigi Amaran was buried in their mission grounds under the direction of Catechist Mark Lele (later Revd.).

1.4 A History of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi, Bayelsa State

The Dioceses of Warri and Port Harcourt were combined to form the Catholic Diocesan of Bomade, which encompasses the entire state of Bayelsa, four local government areas in Delta State, and two local government areas in Rivers State. It was established in 1991 as a "Missio Sui iuris" (Jurisdiction) under the pastoral care of the St. Patrick Society (Kiltegan, Ireland). It was

founded on March 19, 1992, with the Ecclesiastical Superior being the Very Rev. Msgr. Thomas V. Greenan SPS. The territory was upgraded to an Apostolic Vicariate after five years of rigorous missionary activity that yielded real results (Roman Catholic General Calendar, 2021).

On May 14, 1997, Rt. Revd. Msgr. Joseph O. Egerega, a retired Captain of the Nigerian Navy, was ordained Apostolic Vica of the Vicariate at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Warri, alongside Rt. Revd. Msgr. John Oke Afaregha, Auxiliary Bishop of Warri. Bishop Egerega was consecrated as the first Apostolic Vica (Bishop) of the Apostolic Vicariate of Bomadi on May 15, 1997, at Our Lady of the Waters Cathedral in Bomadi, by His Eminence Josef Cardinal Tomko, in the presence of His Excellency Carlo Maria Vigano, the then Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeira.

His Lordship, Most Revd. Joseph Egerega, made his contribution to the growth, development, and progress of the Vicariate upon assumption of office, despite serious environmental, financial, youth restiveness, and other related challenges.

Bishop Joseph Egerega retired in April 2009, died on the 3rd of February, 2013, and was buried on the 14th of March, 2013. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Hyacinth Oroko Egbebo, MSP, the Superior General of the Missionary Society of St. Paul MSP, was ordained as Auxiliary Bishop on February 2, 2008. When Bishop Egerega retired in April 2009, he became the Apostolic Vicar of the Vicariate. His Lordship recognized that considerable work remains to be done in order for the Vicariate to become a Diocese. Most Revd, Dr. Hyacinth Egbebo, MSP embarked on major developmental projects, particularly at the Cathedral, the Bishop House, strengthening existing educational and health institutions, and creating new ones in the various Parishes, with the goal of completing these massive responsibilities.

On the 21st of September, 2017, Holy Father Pope Francis elevated the Vicariate to the status of a Diocese through the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the Marian Year, and it was Canonically erected on the 15th of December, with the installation of Most Rev. Dr.

Hyacinth Oroko Egbebo, MSP as the first Diocesan Bishop of the Dioces of Bomadi.

Table 1: Parishes under the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi, Bayelsa State

S/NO.	NAMES OF PARISH	LOCATION/STATES
1.	Agbere:St. Peter Catholic Church	AgbereBayelsa State.
2.	Agudama: St. Joseph Catholic Church	Agudama town Bayelsa State
3.	Akinima: St. Benedict Catholic Church	Akinima, Ahoada West, Rivers State
4.	Akugbene: St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church	Akugbene, Bomadi LGA Delta State
5.	Aleibiri: Sacred Heart Catholic Church	Aleibiri, Bayelsa State
6.	Amarata: St. Mathias Catholic Church	Amarata, Bayelsa State
7.	Amassoma: Corpus Christ Catholic Church	Amassoma, Bayelsa State
8.	Ayakoromo: St. Stephen Catholic Church	Ayakoromo, Delta State
9.	Azikoro: Stella Maris Parish	Azikoro, Bayelsa State
10.	Bomadi: Our Lady of the Waters Cathedral	Bomadi, Delta State
11.	Brass: Holy Family Catholic Church	Brass, Bayelsa State
12.	Burutu: St. Anne Catholic Church	Burutu, Delta State
13.	Ekeremore: St. Paul Catholic Church	Ekeremor, Bayelsa State
14.	Elebele: St. Anthony Catholic Church	Elebele, Bayelsa State
15.	Famgbe: St. Paul Catholic Church	Famgbe, Bayelsa State
16.	Imiringi: Christ the King Catholic Church	Imiringi, Bayelsa State
17.	Igbogene: St. John Catholic Church	Igbogene, Bayelsa State
18.	Kalama: St. Joseph Catholic Church	Kaiama, Bayelsa State
19.	Kiagbodo: St. Michael Catholic Church	Kiagbodo, Delta State
20.	Kapkama: St. Mial Catholic Church	Kpakama, Bayelsa State
21.	Mbiama: St. Irenacus Catholic Church	Mbiama, TownAhoada West Rivers State
22.	Nembe: Holy Family Catholic Church	Nembe, Bayelsa State
23.	Odorubu: St. Joseph Catholic Church	Odorubu, Delta State
24.	Ofofi: St. Paul Catholic Church	Ofofi, Bayelsa State
25.	Ogbia: St. Mary Catholic Church	Ogbia, Bayelsa State
26.	Ogriagbene: St. Michael Catholic Church	Ogriagbene, Delta State
27.	Ojobo: St. Bernard Catholic Church	Ojobo, Delta State
28.	Okuturutu: St. May's Catholic Church	Okuturutu, Bayelsa State
29.	Oruma: Holy Ghost Catholic Church	Oruma, Bayelsa State
30.	Otuoke/Otuaba: St. Mary Catholic Church	Otuoke/Otuaba, Bayelsa State
31.	Ovom-Yenagoa: St. Patrick Catholic Church	Yenagoa, Bayelsa State
32.	Patani: Holy Rosary Catholic Church	Patani Delta State
33.	Sagbama: Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Catholic Church	Sagbama, Bayelsa State
34.	Tombia: St. Patrick Catholic Church	Tombia, Bayelsa State
35.	Tuomo: St. Joseph Catholic Church	tuomo, Bayelsa State
36.	Yenezue-Epie: St. Patrick Catholic Church	Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

1.5 The Impact of Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa State

The foundation of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Church on Bayelsa Communities had a significant positive impact on the community, resulting in significant development. The following are some of the Church's effects on the community:

1.6 Introduction of Education in the Community

The flowering of intellectual advancement in education at the primary, secondary, and postsecondary levels has been a strong feature of the Church's history. Modern education has its origins in the intellectual rebirth of the twelfth century, when Church schools, particularly in

France, sparked widespread interest in literature and aided the advancement of scientific and historical sciences. Christian missionaries brought modern education to Africa and created several excellent educational institutions despite their meager means. These schools supplied the mission with teachers, artisans, and other manpower, as well as junior workers for the colonial government.

Almost all of the political leaders and administrators who guided Africa from colonial rule to independence were graduates of mission schools and colleges in various African countries (Kinoti, 1996:51). Good mission schools aimed to produce Christians with intellectual or technical abilities as well as to shape the students' character to make them hardworking, honest, and caring.

With the establishment of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Church on Bayelsa Communities, education was introduced into the population.

The church and school came together because the missionary had to educate people how to read as well as teach them the Bible. As a result, a primary school was established in conjunction with the church. This primary has existed from the beginning of time. The mission's educational program was expanded to cover both primary and secondary education. Since colonial administrations were unwilling to invest money on education for their subjects, these institutions were extremely vital in the early days. The churches and the schools created the groundwork for education in the community. Patani had a catholic primary school in 1955, and the church grew from there. Priests from Asaka parish in Okwali used to visit Patani about this time.

Amarata was granted St. Jude's Girl's secondary school in 1963, which the government has since taken over. Almost every Catholic parish in the Diocese of Bomadi now offers either primary or secondary Scholl.

II. HEALTH WORK

Because it covers so many characteristics, health is a difficult phrase to define. Health was defined as a condition of total physical, mental, and social

well-being, not just the absence of disease or infirmity, when the World Health Organization was founded in 1948. (WHO, 1948). The same body defined health in 1986 as a resource for everyday life rather than the goal of living. Health is a positive term that emphasizes social and personal resources in addition to physical abilities.

Many authors have expressed their dissatisfaction with the WHO's definition of health, stating that any good definition of health must include all aspects of a person's physical, spiritual, moral, psychological, and social dimensions. Treatment and prevention of illness, as well as disease awareness campaigns, are all part of health care.

It is supplied by agents with backgrounds in medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, and other allied health institutions. Health care is frequently provided by a multidisciplinary group of agents and specialists. Several sectors make up the healthcare industry, all of which are dedicated to providing health-related services and products.

Health-care equipment and services, as well as pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and life sciences, health-care plan providers, and home health care, are all included (O'Donnel, 1996). In addition to their educational efforts, the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi has been active in the health sector, establishing hospitals and clinics in rural and often isolated places. Different catholic women's organizations also run various health programs in Bayelsa's various local government regions and localities.

2.1 Eradication of unhealthy customs

Another method Christianity has influenced the Ijaw people is via enlightenment, which has led to the abandonment of several harmful superstitious beliefs and behaviors. The number of superstitious beliefs held by the population has changed dramatically after the establishment of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi. Humans were seen as being susceptible to the whims of local gods in traditional animist religion. Many of these unhealthy beliefs and customs no longer hold sway over the people as a result of the establishment of the church and the

enlightenment introduced through the teaching of the word of God and education, but with the establishment of the church and the enlightenment introduced through the teaching of the word of God and education, many of these unhealthy beliefs and customs no longer hold sway over the people as a result of the establishment of the church and the enlightenment introduced through the teaching of the word. Some components of African culture have become civilized as a result of a puritanical contact with Christian principles.

Because of Christianity, twin babies are no longer destroyed, their mothers are no longer tabooed and ostracized, the local slave trade, child kidnapping, and human sacrifices are no longer practiced, and the frequent local community feuds and bloody clashes are greatly reduced or, in some cases, completely abandoned, as they were in the past. Slavery, human sacrifice, and the slaughter of twins were among the barbaric customs and institutions exposed by the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi, which led to the establishment of Christian settlements that eventually gave way to schools for formal education. The translation of the gospel into vernacular languages and the compilation of catechisms in vernacular languages demonstrated a good sense of recognizing native culture, as language is a primary vehicle of culture. Many local customs were outlawed as pagan, and inculturation is still needed today in terms of appreciating and recognizing excellent traditional values.

2.2 Catholic Diocese of Bomadi in Human Development and Poverty Alleviation

Human development is a concept that encompasses much more than the growth and fall of national incomes. The Catholic Diocese of Bomadi has started programs and created an environment in which people can reach their full potential and live productive, creative lives based on their own needs and interests, thus refocusing attention on people. Thus, development entails broadening people's options, allowing them to live lives they value, and improving the human condition so that people can live complete lives.

Building human capabilities—the spectrum of things that people can accomplish or be in life—is critical to expanding these options. Human development spreads out the distribution of commodities and services that poor people require, and it focuses on human decision-making. We facilitate growth and empower individuals through investing in people, and we develop human capacities as a result.

2.3 Challenges of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa

Since its inception, the church has faced a number of problems that have limited it to some extent.

The fact that the church is a living organism is well-known. It informs individuals about the truth. It depends on patronage for life and sustenance, unlike government agencies. When this is not available due to a variety of causes, it has a detrimental influence on the church. The following are some of the difficulties:

2.3.1 Development of Modern forms of entertainment

It is a fact that the emergence of various modern kinds of entertainment has had a negative impact on attendance in the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi, relegating some church services and activities to the background. Sporting activities and other activities are gradually displacing some of the basic church services, which were once the primary source of amusement and relaxation.

2.3.2 Multiplication of Churches in the Community

With the establishment and proliferation of several churches and denominations of various creeds, Christianity has become the predominant religious beliefs and lifestyle among the indigenes of the community, which has had a significant impact on their participation and attendance in the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa. This is because the current type of Christianity, such as Pentecostalism and other sects, perceive the church as feeble, weak, and compromised. As a result, most priests or pastors discourage their

congregations from engaging in actions that are opposed to their religious views.

2.3.3 Dearth of Dedicated Workers in the Church

Another key factor affecting the church and causing it to lose its attraction is a scarcity of dedicated personnel. This has had a detrimental impact on the church since there aren't enough people who are willing to make the necessary commitment to ensure that the church's goals and vision are pursued aggressively.

2.3.4 Financial Limitations

Preaching the gospel is a highly expensive endeavor. A key difficulty for the church in this time is the lack of appropriate financial resources to properly pursue the church's goals and mission.

These are ongoing obstacles that continue to limit most of the activities that the church would have been involved in in order to maintain its attractiveness and interest among community members and society at large.

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The rise and development of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi in Bayelsa State was investigated in this study. The researcher looked into the theme and concept of Christianity, as well as the origins of Christianity through Jesus Christ in Israel and the spread of Christianity from Twon-Brass to every part of Izon, starting with Kaiama, which became the missionaries' base from which they established churches in the surrounding towns and villages. The researcher also discussed the impact of Christianity on people's religious conversion from animism to worship of the Almighty God.

The church brought other changes and benefits to society, such as the adoption of western education. The researcher investigated the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa's history and origins. The significance and impact of the church's founding, as well as the numerous benefits the church provided to the community, were thoroughly examined. Some of the

significant difficulties that threatened the church's survival were examined in depth.

Changes in religious beliefs, a lack of continuation or survival strategies, a lack of financial and logistical support for the church's continued sustenance, the development of other forms of entertainment, and poor safety and accident strategies during dances are causing a loss of interest in such dances are some of the current issues affecting the church negatively. The Catholic Diocese of Bomadi Bayelsa is one of the most important historical and noteworthy landmarks in the history of the Niger Delta, according to the findings thus far. It's now ingrained in their culture, tradition, and recent history. Although the introduction of Christianity and Western education resulted in many changes to the pre-Christian era's customs and traditions, it is evident that the vast majority of these changes were beneficial to the people.

REFERENCES

1. Alagoa E.J. (1999). The land and people of Bayelsa State: Central Niger Delta., Choba Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications
2. Ama-Ogbari C.C.O. (2007). Introduction to the economic history of the Niger Delta, Port-Harcourt: Metroprint Publishers Limited.
3. Ama-Ogbari C.C.O. (2014). The Story of Bayelsa: A Documentary. El-Mercy Printing Press, OtioYenagoa.
4. Canon E.I. (1982). The Niger mission and Igbo cultural Life. *Daily News* P.5
5. Catholic Diocese of Bomadi (2021). Liturgical calendry/directory for 2020-2021. Office of the Bishop.
6. Charles J.O. (2005). Sociological theory: A historical analytical approach on man & society. Lagos: Serenity Printing and Publishing Co.
7. Collins (2003). Collins English Dictionary: Complete and Unabridged. HarperCollins Publishers. Dinesh D. (2008). What's so great about Christianity, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8. Eke-Spiff S.D. (1980).The founding of a community and church of Trown Brass in 1868.Aba:Jouke Standard Press.
9. Ezeanya S.N. (1976). The dignity of man in the Traditional Religion of Africa unpublished article, Nsukka.
10. Haralambos and Holborn (2004). Sociology: themes and perspectives, Seventh Edition. London:Harpercollins Publishers Limited, Hammersmith,
11. John O. (2008). Anthropology: general, practical, Christianity, social issues. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
12. Obuoforibo B. A. (1998).History of Christianity in Bayelsa State.Port Harcourt: CSS Press.
13. Timipere, O. M. (2018). History of the growth and development of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Sampou community, Bayelsa State. Port Harcourt.