UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES HUMAINES, SOCIALES ET EDUCATIVES *******



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POST GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES DOCTORAL *******

UNITE DE RECHERCHE ET DE FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES HUMAINES ET SOCIALES ******* DOCTORAL RESEARCH UNIT FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES *******

THE DYNAMISM OF TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP IN OSHIE CHIEFDOM, CAMEROON ca , 1918-2009

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To my late parents, Simon Ngri and Grace Keng

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the dynamism of traditional rulers in the governance of the chiefdom of Oshie during the period 1918 to 2009. Oshie is located within the administrative unit of Njikwa Sub-division in Momo division, the North West Region of Cameroon. It begins with a presentation of the political structure, the organisation and functioning of the traditional governing institutions of Oshie. It further focuses on an overview of European colonial influences on traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie. The central argument of this study is that, Oshie Polity had since 1918 witnessed a very dynamic system of rulership. The corollaries of this argument are that, the Oshie traditional rulers show great dynamism in regional diplomacy as seen in the way they collaborated with their neighbouring Polities. We also contend that, Oshie traditional rulers displayed great initiatives in economic development of the chiefdom. We further argue that Oshie traditional rulers played an enormous role in socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. By exploring the concepts, themes, theories and facts related to the central argument, the key findings are that, Oshie chiefdom grew to prominence to the envy of her neighbours, indeed, marking the golden age of traditional governance of its rulers. The study affirms that, the development of formal education in the chiefdom was promoted by the rulers through their collaboration with the Basel Mission. It equally reveals that, the uplifting of the economic and socio-cultural activities provided the basic needs of the people. Lastly the study reveals that, although there were challenges, the rulers still attained a lot in the Polity. In data collection, we borrowed the methodology used in Anthropology and Sociology which include secondary and primary sources especially in the collection of oral material through interviews. Through these interviews, oral information was obtained from informants, based in Oshie and Bamenda, who are knowledgeable on the subject. The data collected was analysed using both the thematic and chronological approaches. This was to ensure that the entire discourse follows a historical logic. The analytical, narrative and descriptive methods were variably used in the write-up. We also illustrated the work with maps, plates and tables in different chapters.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude examine le dynamisme des dirigeants traditionnels dans la gouvernance du chiefdom d' Oshie pendant la période qui court de 1918 à 2009. Oshie est située au sein de l' unité administrative de l'arrondissement de Njikwa, dans le Département de la Momo, au cœur de la Région du Nord Ouest Cameroun. L'étude commence par une présentation de la structure politique et l'organisation de même que le fonctionnement des institutions traditionnelles régissant le peuple d'Oshie. Elle insiste davantage sur un survol des influences coloniales européennes sur les dirigeants traditionnels de cette chefferie. Le principal argument de cette réflexion est que l' entité nommée Oshie aura, depuis 1918, vécu un système de gouvernance extrêmement dynamique. Les points corollaires soutiennent que les gouvernants traditionnnels d' Oshie ont démontré un fort dynamisme dans la diplomatie régionale comme cela peut se voir dans la façon dont ils ont telle que perçu dans la façon qui' 1 se sont collaboré avec leurs voisins. Nous tenons également à affirmer que les dirigeants d' Oshie ont fait montre d' un grand esprit d' initiative dans le développement économique de leur royaume. Nous insistons d'ailleurs sur le fait que ces chefs ont exercé un rôle important dans le développement socio-culturel de leur royaume. De la sorte, par l'explroation de concepts, de thèmes, de théories et de faits en rapport avec notre point principal, nous parvenons aux conclusions essentielles selon lesquelles le chiefdom d' Oshie a crû en prééminence au point de susciter la jalousie de ses voisins, marquant de la sorte, en toute vérité, l' âge d' or de la gouvernance traditionelle de ses dirigeants. L' étude montre que le développement d' une éducation formelle dans ce royaume fut promu par ces mêmes dirigeants par l'entremise dune étrite collaboration avec la Mission Bassel. L'étude révèle en plus que le relèvement des activités économiques et socio-culturelles ont pourvu aux besoins de base des populations. Elle insiste de même sur le fait que, quoiqu' ils se fussent trouvées des difficultés, ces dirigeants purent néanmoins parvenir à bien des résultats dans l'entité d' Oshie. À partir de la collecte de données, nous avons puisé à la méthodologie utilisée en anthropologie et en sociologie, telle que des sources secondaires et primaires surtout en ce qui concerne le recueillement du matériau oral par interviewes. À parti justement de ces entretiens, nous avons disopsé d'informations de première main d'informateurs localisés tant à Bamenda qu'à Oshie même ; informateurs au fait de la question. Les données collectées furent analysées à partir d'une méthode double utilisant à la fois l'approche thématique et diachronique. Ceci avait pour but in fine de s'assurer que le propos discuté suive une pleine logique historique. Les techniques analytiques, narrative et descriptive furent diversement employées dans la rédaction. Pour finir, nous avons tenu à illustrtrer le travail de cartes, de figures et d' illustrations dans les differents chapitres.

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English Language
Name of quarter in Oshie where the Germans had their station
A type of skirt worn by Oshie women in the past
Honorific titles given to the Fon of Oshie
Regulatory Secret Society in Oshie
Warlike masquerade
Palace feathery masquerade
Oshie Annual festival
Spiritual malevolence
Royal Seat in Oshie
German flag in Oshie dialect
Wedikum ethnic group
Oshie Main Market day
War like dance
Singular appellation of traditional doctor
A forbidden day to work in Oshie
Oshie Market arena
Sass wood deadly portion drank by defaulters at the village shrine
Aken Masquerade Shrine
Vocal method of passing message
Traditonal blessing horn
Elephant Tusk
Children of Okum who led the Oshie people out of their cradle land
Ancestral Stones
Punitive warfare
Elder of the knife
Elder of the road
Traditional Surgeon

GLOSSARY

Kwifuh	Palace Institution
Mafor	Fons mother
Njebei	Oshie Traditional Market day
Ngyeh	Assistant traditional Elders
Nyanyang	Black painted masquerade
Ngunu	Njikwa area during the German and British era
Nndek	Oshie Traditional Drum
Nwegekoh	Supreme God
Ongiekum	Children of Okum who led the Oshie people out of their cradle land
Okum	Traditional Elders in Oshie
Ofuh	Fon
Ofuh bei	Traditional Fon
Oshum	Immediate origin of the Oshie people
Ozip	Shrines
Ongang	Traditional doctors
Ojeng	Secret Village Shrine
Ofuh Kara	White man Fon
Otugojugo	Medicinal herbs placed on the neck of the Fon during enthronement
Tadkon	Market of tails
Toh	Palace
Tchanghandei	Palace steward
Togho	Grassfields traditional out fit

ACRONYMS OF WORDS

ACADA:	Abebung Development and Cultural Association
B C A	Bamenda Co-operative Association
BCMA	Bamenda Co-operative Marketing Association
B M:	Basel Mission
C C C:	City College of Commerce
C D C:	Cameroon Development Cooperation
C P D M:	Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement
C P C:	Cameroon Protestant College
C P M S	Co-operative Produce Marketing Society
C N U:	Cameron National Union
D O:	Divisional Officer
FSLC:	First School Leaving Certificate
HELVETAS:	Swiss Association for Local Development
LBA	Liberalization of Bamenda Association
L C C:	Longla Comprehensive College
MASCUDA:	Mankon Cultural and Development Association
NAA:	Native Authority Area
NA:	Native Authority
NAB:	National Archives Buea
NAC:	Native Authority Court
NCAST:	Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology
N C:	Native Court
N W C A	North West Co-operative Association
NJICUDA:	Njikom Cultural and Development Association
OCDA:	Oshie Cultural and Development Association
O S T U :	Oshie Students and Teachers Union
OSID:	Oshie Sisters in Development

O V C :	Oshie Village Council
PDO:	Pinyin Development Organisation
P C C :	Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
PCWC:	Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon
P S:	Presbyterian School
RICS:	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and Photogrammetry
SATA:	Swiss Association for Technical Assistance
SDO:	Senior Divisional Officer
UNDP:	United Nation Development Programme
UN.WHO:	United Nation World Health Organization

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background

The purpose of this study is to examine the dynamism of traditional rulership in the local governance of the chiefdom of Oshie in Njikwa Sub-division, Momo division, the North West region of Cameroon. In the past, chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields set up and adopted traditional institutions for political power, social welfare, and the maintenance of law and order, which were almost without exemption. These chiefdoms and fondoms were guided by the regulatory society known as *Kwifon* in Kom, *Ngumba* in Mankon, *Aken* in Oshie, *Nwerong* in Nso and *Nkwifor* in Bafut¹. These regulatory institutions had the duty of maintaining law and order, determining policies and pronouncing decisions. The strength of the traditional governing institution depended on its authority and rights. Their ethical and legal spirit were derived from their description of power and authority.

There existed no society without the political organisation. No matter how small that society was, it exercised, in one way or the other, a minimal system of governance.² Among most chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields, traditional rulership was a combination of offices of the king and priest hood. In the chiefdom of Oshie, the Fon³ was at the head of the political system. The Fon had sacred attributes and was responsible for the performing of important rites in the community since he was the custodian of traditions and customs, guardian of the land and was the intermediary between the ancestors and the people. The Fon was at the helm of the political structure or set up of the land, vested with powers and takes final decisions concerning important political matters in the chiefdom. He had the prerogatives to be in consultation with the quarter-heads in the palace concerning important matters in the community, since they represent his interest in their various areas.

¹ During the colonial era in the Chiefdom and Fondoms of the Grassfields, regulatory societies were part and parcel of the chiefdoms. They control the chiefdom and work hand in gloves with the Fon to maintain justice and welfare among the subjects. In the Chiefdom of Oshie the *Aken* Secret society acted as the main disciplinary organ that maintain justice and execute sanctions on defaulters as directed by the Fon. They was also the *Kwefu* although it was more of a palace secret society in contrast to other regulatory societies of the Grassfields chiefdoms and Fondoms.

² Aletum, T. A., *Bafut Institutions in Modern Politics in Cameroon*, Yaounde; Sopecam, 1990, p.16.

³ In the context of our study and as applied in the Grassfields chiefdom and Fondoms. The notion of Chief and Fon is used interchangeably to refer to natural rulers embedded with divine authority. Their chieftainship was and is hereditary. Fons rule over larger Fondoms alongside other subchiefs whereas chiefs rule over smaller chiefdoms with appointed quarter heads. We shall be using the word Fon to denote chief since all of them falls under divine or natural rulers for the convenient of our study.

In Oshie polity,⁴ the Fon was the main actor of diplomacy and co-operative agreements with neighbouring Polities. Men and women responded to the authority of the Fon by stooping and clapping of hands and the Fon could not be, slapped, insulted or ill-treated by any of his subjects. Moreover, he was not talked to by any one directly, except other notables and title holders. He could not share a seat with anyone and he was the only one who sat on the throne as manifest authority.⁵ In Oshie, the palace known as *Toh* was the religious, cultural and administrative centre of the chiefdom. Decisions which affected the village community emanated from the palace. Those who officiated in the palace during the absence of the Fon, were the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. In this direction, the study will be focus on the local administration of the traditional rulers of Oshie. This will be predominantly in the domain of economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. But before we proceed the concepts of traditional rulership and dynamism will be examined to set the issues within the context of our study.

Explanation of key Concepts

Traditional rulership as used in our study is a form of leadership in which the authority of the leader depended on the traditions and customs of the people and in most cases the rulership position is hereditary. According to Amaazee;

"Traditional ruler" means the traditional head of an ethnic unit or clan who is for the time being the holder of the highest traditional authority within the ethnic unit or clan and whose title recognised as traditional ruler...by the Government of the state.⁶

A traditional ruler in many cases was the spiritual ruler and custodian of all traditions and customs of his people.⁷ He was endowed with powers justified mostly on moral values or religious beliefs. As a representative of the gods, he rule under the direct supervision of the spirits of the ancestors. He was respected and feared by everybody in the community and was considered to be infallible and immortal, his throne was instilled with mystical and mythical accessories of charms. In fact, Kofi Busia uphold that,

⁴ The word"chiefdom" is used in the work because the people of Widekum ethnic group which Oshie is subset were organized in independent village chiefdoms during the colonial days. The authority of their chiefs or Fons was higher than that of their counterparts in the forest zone, but lesser than that of the Fons in the larger fondoms of the Grassfields.

⁵ Nkwi, P.N., *Traditional Government and Social Change*: University Press, Fribourg.1976, p.8.

⁶ Victor Bong Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History*, Press Universitaire de Yaoundé, 2002 p. 1.

⁷ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change, University Press, Fribourg, 1976, p. 9.

Among the Bantu, the political system was based on the Kinship structures of the tribes. The Chief was the head of a community held together by bonds of Kindship. His office combined executive, judicial and ritual functions performed on behalf of the tribe.⁸

In Africa, traditional rulers were representatives of traditional states ruling for more than one generation such as Fons and Sultans.⁹ Prior to the advent of colonialism, their role encompassed numerous functions, which revolved around the cardinal theme of guiding, protecting, defending and providing for the needs of the people. These involved religious, military, legislative, executive, judicial, social and cultural features. Rulership was however predicated on a set of well articulated norms and mechanisms. Sometimes these were elders or councillors, or communal groups or judicial institutions. Each ruler performed its assigned role in accordance with the customs and traditions of the people. The military role of the ruler was accentuated in issues of inter-ethnic wars and any ignorance of this, forfeited the trust of his people and was liable to deposition.

African societies in the past, differed in magnitude, inhabitants and land, each consisted of its own political organisation and system of government. Meyer and Pritchard claims that African studies in political organisation have classified societies into two main groups.¹⁰ That is centralised and non-centralised political systems. They further argues that traditional rulers in African states varied in power and authority depending on whether the society was centralised or non-centralised.¹¹ According to Le Vine, among the forest peoples of Cameroon, traditional ruler was a lineage head rather than a supreme decision maker.¹² In the centralised societies, the concept of traditional rulership and supreme power rested upon a single person derived from the traditions and customs of the people.

Upon the death of the ruler, power was wielded to his son who was of the royal blood, delivered on the "leopard skin" when the father was on the throne.¹³ Most traditional rulers of the centralised societies were classified as such. These comprised of larger fondoms such as Kom, Nso, Bali and Bafut. Moreover, the appellation "Fon" differs from one fondom to another such as *foyn* in Kom, *Nfor* in Bafut, *Ofuh* in Oshie, *Fo* or *Mfo* in Mankon and *Mfon* in Bali. These Fondoms differed in sizes ranging from about a few hundreds to over three

⁸ K.B Busia, Africa in Search of Democracy, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p.30.

⁹ Traditional authorities in Ethiopia http://www.Wikipedia the free encyclopedia.htm (last visited 15/09/2015)

¹⁰ Meyer Fortes and E.E. Evans Pritchard 9eds.), *African Political system* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) pp.5-75.

¹¹ Ardener Edwin, Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons, West Africa, Part XI(London: International African Institute,1956) pp.71-80.

¹² Victor.T. Le Vine, *The Cameroon from Mandate to Independence* (Berkeley) Los Angeles. University of California Press, 1964) p.47.

¹³ Interview with Angono Lucas Angu, 76, Oshie, October 2015.

hundred inhabitants. Traditional rulers in these communities were look upon as being mythical and spiritual.¹⁴ They were venerated by all and commanded loyalty from their subjects and governed them along side with some revered institutions and notables.

The second category of rulers were those with lower authorities such as those who collaborated with the political officer only through the agent of their superior chief.¹⁵ Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, the term "chief" refers to a title-holder who has received his title from the superior ruler known as Oba.¹⁶ Nowadays the designation of a chief has become so common in the society in a way that many people manoeuvre to acquire for themselves the title "chief." According to Aboubakar Njiassé-Njoya, a true traditional ruler was a king, no matter how diminutive was his territory of jurisdiction. He was the commander-in-chief of the universe maître de la terre and derived his authority from the ancestors of the land, anointed with mythical and spiritual powers from the Supreme Being.¹⁷ The Western Grassfields traditional rulers falls under Max Weber's first category of rulers known as traditional authorities.¹⁸ Here, ascendancy to the throne was based on tradition and custom. The position of such chiefs were hereditary because they ruled by virtue of birth. In Cameroon other rulers who belonged to this category include the Bamileke chiefs, the Bamum sultans and lamidoes of the northern regions.¹⁹ Traditional rulers in the context of our study will be examined in the same light as the indigenous traditional rulers such as the Fons of the Western Grassfields. They were classified as traditional or natural rulers, because their positions were deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of the people.

On the other hand, the word "Dynamism" as used in the work is a term that describes the creative initiatives of Oshie rulers in their quest to effect development in the chiefdom. Infact, change is a general characteristic of all societies, even the most primitive societies

¹⁴ Chilver E, M and P.M Kaberry, "Traditional Government in Bafut, west Cameroon" An outline of the Traditional Political System of Bali-Nyonga, Southern Cameroons", Africa 31, 4(1961):355-71.

¹⁵ Michael Crowder and Obaro Ikime (eds,) *West African chiefs*: Their Changing status under colonial Rule and Independence (New York: African Publishing Company Co, 1970 pp.9-10.

¹⁶Nolte Insa, "Negotiating Party Politics and Traditional Authority: Obafemi Awolowo in Ijebu-Remo, Nigeria, 1949-1955" in wim van Binsbergen(ed), The dynamics of Power and the Rule of law: Essays on Africa and Beyond (Munster: Hamburg: London: LIT Verlag, 2003), p.51.

¹⁷ AboubakarNjiassé-Njoya, "Njimoluh Seidou Mbombo-Njoya dans l'action Politique au cameroun (1948-1998)" in Claude-Hélène Perrot and François-xavier Fauvelle-Aymar(eds.), Le retour des rois: Les autorités traditionelles et l'Etat en Afrique contemporaine(Paris:Karthala,2003), p.308.

¹⁸ Max Weber., The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation (Glencie: Free Press, 1969), pp.358-9.He distinguishes three sources of authority: The traditional authority, derived from tradition and charismatic authority derived from personal character and legal rational authority derived from election.

¹⁹ Philipe Gaillard, Ahmadou Ahidjo : Patriote et despote, bâtisseur de l'Etat Camerounais (Paris: JALIVES,1994), p.96.

transform to meet their fundamental needs for progress. Social change refers to the modifications which occur in the life patterns of a people to bring progress in the society. According to Aletum, change is a characteristic of all societies.²⁰ Societies are not static and therefore are bound to change according to the changing world. However, dynamism is applied in our study to portray the creative development policies that were deployed by the traditional rulers of Oshie in the economic and socio-cultural domain from the year 1918 to 2009.

Reasons for Choice of Topic

The motivations for this study are rooted in the historical events that characterised colonial and post colonial Oshie. A lot has been written on the activities of (Fons) of the Western Grassfields. However, these studies have exclusively focused on the traditional rulers of Fondoms such as Bali, Mankon, Nso and Bafut. Traditional rulers of other chiefdoms at the periphery of the Bamenda Grassfields such as Oshie have received little or no attention. What has motivated the researcher to choose this topic is that, being an indigene of the area of study, we would like to have the rich cultural and historical heritage of my people documented. According to Oshie oral history, the people were led by some leaders during migration and settlement at their present territorial grounds. Emamba was one of the spiritual leader of the people during this period. When the British colonialists arrived the area by the year 1918, Emamba escaped into the forest with some of the people. This situation created an avenue for Adang Engu Anyangwe because of his courageous nature to assume the leadership position of the people of Oshie. The phenomenon has motivated the researcher to throw more light on the transition of traditional rulership position among the people of Oshie. The researcher also wishes to create an insight on the dynamic policies of the rulers in Oshie and their contributions towards nation building. Moreover, the researcher aims to portray an insight on the chieftaincy dissension that occurred in the Chiefdom during the transition of leadership rule from Emamba to the Anyangwe dynasty in 1918 and during the reign of Fon Anyangwe Ericsyrol Yande in 2009. Such a situation has motivated the researcher as a whole to share his testimony through writing and to fill the gaps in the historiography of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie.

²⁰ Aletum, M. T., Introduction to General Sociology, GRAPHICAM PRESS, Yaounde 2008 p. 207.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on some basic theories such as structural functionalism, symbolic interaction, conflict and the basic needs. The structural functionalism theory came into the lime light of social sciences through the work of pioneer French Sociologist Emile Durkheim (1855-1917).²¹ This theory views all human societies to be like organisms constituted by distinct structures known as social institutions. These institutions (structures) are well tailored to perform special functions necessary for the entire society. It asserts that human societies no matter their forms and sizes operate in a pattern of division of labour where each part is completely assigned a particular function. The theory further opines that such a system has a principle known as social solidarity as its yard stick. In this way, Durkheim goes further to assert that two types of societies do appear to practically justify this theory. These are the mechanic and organic societies. Within societies in which social solidarity is high, group and duty consciousness is high and in organic states, the level of division of labour prevails.

The categorization in Durkheim's theory was further developed by Samuel Koenig. He distinguished mechanical and organic states and human societies classing them within the realms of social solidarity. He asserted that the first type prevailed in societies with simple structures where division of labour was restricted to family, village or smaller region. In this types of polities, the different units were almost self sufficient and were bound together by ties and kinship strings. In a sense, Koenig was referring to segmented societies which had relatively smaller and less complex structures. On the other hand, within the inorganic states, the different components are held together by a variety of networks of inter-reliant structures imposed by an elaborate framework of extensive division of labour. Within this inorganic framework, co-operation of all the members running the different structures is both urgent and indispensable. They were usually large and composite human societies like states. The strong bonds between the different components of the society necessitated fast expansion and development.²² This theory is important because, it attempts to put the concepts of state building into a focalized functional pattern thereby, explaining why some states are more functional than others.²³ The theory clearly fits in the context of our study in that it portrays an exact image of the various components of peoples that constitutes Oshie society and their functions thus influencing an understanding of the study.

²¹ Donald Kissilu Kombo and Delno L.A.Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis writing, An Introduction* Makayu _Paulinus Publication, 2006 p.5.

²² Aletum, Introduction to General Sociology, GRAPHICAM PRESS, Yaounde 2008 p. 24.

²³ *Ibid*.

The second theory is the symbolic interaction theory. This theory explains how individuals relate with each other. It was propounded by Max Weber (1864-1920) who was a German Scholar of high repute. The theory sought to assert that the world is made up of symbols which the members of the society do use in their relations and interaction with each other. This theory does not see these symbols as silent structures placed at the disposal of all the members of the society but as outstanding embodiment of the peoples' way of life which helps to direct and re-channel their material well being. The people do not act in isolation but react to situations following an established ethical code of conduct. Personal action according to this theory were moderated by groups' opinion and beliefs. The reactions and functions of traditional leaders and their representatives were all reflected in this theory in that they functions in accordance to the norms set forth by tradition and custom of the people.²⁴ It was this theory that presupposes that, authority and legitimacy were supernatural elements of societies necessitating a keen redefinition in the present dispensation of change and varied responsibilities. The behaviour of the traditional rulers and their provincial representatives were all reflected in this theory in that their power mechanism were depicted here. Since behaviour of all human societal organization was a matter of choice and adaptation, this at times result in conflict. In this view, it became necessary for us to present Karl Marx theory which was centered on conflict. There was constant competition for rulership, such as the case of Emamba and Adang Engu Anyangwe during the period of colonial influence in Oshie rulership.

William Zartman, a specialist in conflict perceives conflicts to be indispensable in all human societies. He argues that conflicts help to measure cost, commitment and equally guides choices. There exist opposing forces in the life of individuals, groups, social structures and societies in general. This was seen in the case of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe during his reign when he abandons the chiefdom and such situation degenerated in a conflict within the royal family and the entire elites. It was from these opposing forces and constant competition between individuals and groups that the conflict theory takes its foundation. In this view Karl Marx's theory on conflict argues that, in all human societies, political, social and economic relations were based on common interest, understanding and trust. Karl Marx saw mostly economic factors and competition to be the root cause of all conflicts hampering human societies. The ideas he put forth were that, societies can only function well on the

²⁴ Max Weber's, Sources of Legitimate Authority in the Field of Politics in Aletum, *Introduction to General Sociology*, 2008 p.24.

bases of common understanding and trust. In such a situation of disagreements, divergences in thought, ideas and interest, situations of friction in approaches, will be avoided. He holds that it was lack of common concord on a single or multi-dimensional stream of thought that conflicts were so widespread.²⁵ In this way, it sounds reasonably convincing that once there was lost of common interest, understanding and trust between groups of individuals, there was bound to be conflict.

One outstanding aspect in human societies such as that of the chiefdom of Oshie was the quest for basic needs. All societies observed either in the ancient medieval, modern and contemporary period, desired a certain degree of physiological needs. These needs can be classified on four main domains being, food, shelter health and clothing. This pushes us to present the Basic Need Theory propounded by Abraham Maslow in 1943. The theory states that food, health, shelter represent the basic primary physiological needs of every human society. These needs according to the proponence of this theory were supposed to be catered for before any other needs like security, sense of belonging and self esteem. These needs sometimes push the society to adopt different survival scheme. These strategies may bring about cross cultural material interaction between individuals within the same polities and even beyond. Accordingly, each society had the responsibility of designing its specific method on how these basic needs could be procured.²⁶

This study is based on the dynamism of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie. Their essence was justified by the dualist theory which argues that, traditional rulers remain important elements of administration within this new dispensation of change and adaptation. This school of thought opines that, the survival of traditional authorities in the present age must be based on a principle of social contract. In this kind of contract, the modern system of administration needs to recognize, understand, tolerate and harness them for dual governance. This theory equally objects the notion that traditional rulers have outlived their usefulness and as such, were expected to be relegated to traditions and customs of the people. Infact, the traditional rulers of Oshie needs to be liberal in its approach and cognizant of the changing patterns of time.

We have borrowed the elements of progress in structural functionalism and symbolic interactions theories of Durkheim and Weber respectively. We have contented that, the Oshie

²⁵ Max Weber's, Sources of Legitimate Authority in the Field of Politics p. 57.

²⁶ Aletum, Introduction to General Sociology, 2008 p.20.

traditional governance institutions within the traditional setting was structured to perform precise functions. We have identified some of those traditional governance institutions such as the traditional elders (*Okum*), assistant traditional elders (*Ngyeh*), *Aken* secret cults and the Kwifuh Society. We have treated Oshie and her neigbouring communities to be some sorts of organic states where group and class consciousness was very common. As a chiefdom we have agued that unity came as a result of amicable social interaction and tactfulness of the dynamics of traditional rulers despite some conflicting situations with her neighbours.

In order to sustain our thesis on conflict and needs which combined to dictate the tune of events in the historical evolution of traditional rulership in Oshie, we have borrowed the conflict theory to show that, not only economic considerations and class consciousness fanned conflicts between Oshie and her neighbours. We assert that, a complex conflagration of factors some of them purely political and social equally helped to engineer persistent conflicts within the Oshie polity. We went further to opine that, the glory of Oshie began fading away because of the ineffective administration of its present leaders and internal strife especially among members of the royal family and other institutions. Without necessarily finding much confidence in agreements put foreword by Thomas Malthus and Charles Darwin, we have argued that for the state or individual to be leading and surviving, there was need for well defined policies. These policies have been viewed to be reflected on the quality of the center and the respect of the social contract by both parties. At this juncture, we have perceived the collapse of Oshie traditional rulership rule to have emanated from two sources of conflicts. These were the conflict of approaches to basic needs and that of redefinition and application of concepts.

Literature Review

A study of this nature requires the exploitation of the works of other researchers so as to acquaint ourselves with the different methodologies, approaches and conclusions arrived at on their different subjects. Our main concern in this section was to review the general and specific works that have handled in part or in whole some of the main and subsidiary themes discussed in this study. We have made an attempt to begin with general documents which have some bearing on our study in a direct and indirect form. From the general approach we have narrowed down to particular documents that were focused on traditional rulership and governance among societies in Cameroon and the Western Grassfields chiefdoms in order to examine the case of Oshie in its regional setting.

The history of traditional rulers has often occupied an important place in African historiography, attracting a broad array of scholars and from varied disciplines such as Political Science, Ethnology, Sociology, Anthropology and History. The contributions made by various scholars towards African traditional rulers in power has put the study of chieftaincy on a large academic platform. A review of the works of other researchers on traditional rulers will throw more light and bring out the different approaches to the subject and will also go a long way to enable the author to have a good mastery of his study. The first scholars were the Anthropologists and Ethnologists who have written much on the origins and historical development of chieftaincy. Their publications have highlighted the strucuture of traditional institutions during their encounter with the colonial governments.²⁷ They portraved the centrality and paramountcy of traditional rulers in their polities. The main objectives of the Western scholars were that; Africans had developed with their own system of governance. Jean Pierre Warnier uses an image to portray the paramount position of Grassfields traditional rulers. According to him, the chief was like a container that brings the people together, seal them from malicious forces and discharged blessings to them.²⁸ The chief was also seen as a provider of important real life meaning through his breath and consequently a symbol of life and continuity.

Another group of authors' stresses on the transformation traditional rulers underwent during the colonial and post colonial periods. Such authors include Jacques Lombard, Michael Crowder, Jean Suret Canale, Peter Geschiere and Pierre Alexandre.²⁹ Crowder has been keenly interested in exploring how the office of the traditional rulers were transformed during the British and French rule. As for him the French policy of direct rule paid little attention to legitimacy and thus created people who would have had no right to rule the people as Chiefs. Such Chiefs were designated on the basis of administrative prowess, and loyalty to France. Looking on the part of British Africa, Crowder posit that, the British were sympathetic to African traditional rulers and accorded much respect to legitimacy, although in some areas

²⁷ Obaro Ikime and S.O. Osobo *Government in pre-colonial Africa* Tarikh 4,2, (London: Longman, 1977).

Claude Tardits (ed.), The Contribution of Ethnological Research to the History of Cameroon Cultures (Paris: Centre National de la Recherches Scientifiquse,1981), Cheikh Ifemesia, Traditional Human Living among the Igbo: An Historical Perspective (Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers 1979); Robert and Pat Ritwenthaler, Cameroons Village; An Ethnography of the Bafut (Milwaukee; Milwaukee Public Museum; Publications 1962).²⁸Jean Pierre Warnier, "*The king as a Container in the Cameroon Grassfields*" Paideuma 39(1993) pp.307-8.

²⁹ Crowder, *Colonial West Africa*; Crowder and Ikime (eds.) *West African Chiefs*; Jacques Lombard, Autorites traditionnelles et pouvoirs Européens en Afriques noire: le declin d'un aristocratie sous le regime colonial (Paris: Armand Colin,1967); Pierre Alexandre, "The Problems of Chieftaincy in French-Speaking Africa" in Crowder and Ikime (eds.), *West African Chiefs*:24-78; Jean Sûret Canale, "La fin de la Chefferie en Guinée", Journal of African History 7,3 (1966): 455-93.

they appointed common men as chiefs. He concluded by saying that colonial rule meant that the power and authority of African traditional rulers were limited by the presence of the colonial masters because they no longer acted independently.

M. Fortes and Evans E. Pritchard,³⁰ established a succinct study presenting all the different facets of politics in an African traditional systems. They argue that, there is a system of an African type which is capable of controlling and influencing all socio-political and economic domains of human societies. They see traditional politics to be mostly based on the whims and caprices of traditional rulers and their colleges of administrators. To them, traditional rulership, power and authority were rooted in the quality of the person who incarnated the society which in our case is the Fon. They also argue that traditional politics operates effectively in states with well organized and respected traditional institutions. The rulers and their subjects are seen by these authors to be those responsible for both the success and failures of traditional politics. This equally sets the pace for the understanding of traditional institutions as used in the study.

This not withstanding, they classified human societies under two broad headings, that was the centralized and the non-centralized systems each with its own distinct characteristics. They equally refer to decentralized societies and segmentary societies where power does not revolve around a single hereditary ruler but is diffused among a class of clan heads and lineages. In this kind of society, Fortes and Pritchard continue to argue that, the control of people and resources is done by a council of selected notables whereas in the centralized system, power is entrusted in the hands of a single individual known as Fon, Chief or Lamido which shows power control in a traditional setting thereby providing us an insights in our study. Their studies are reflected in any society given the same or similar circumstances. Indeed, pertinent issues of traditional state administration raised in their works have helped in the elaboration of themes like role of the regulatory society, the village and quarter heads which we have attempted to handle in our study.

Emile A.B, Van Rouveroy and Van Nieuwaal provides a concrete setting of the position of African traditional rulers prior to independence. In their study on the French policy patterning to African chiefs, they asserted that it was implausible on the part of the French to have thought of a chief acting independently given that they viewed African traditional rulers as instruments in their system of administration. This to them, was why at independence the

³⁰ M. Fortes and E. Pritchard, African Political System (London Oxford University Press, Ely house 1969).

political elite in Francophone Africa regarded chiefs as a colonial inheritance having no sovereign role in modern governance.³¹ They further portrays a contrasting image of traditional rulers in British Africa whereby the policy of Indirect Rule sheltered the chiefs and strengthened their influence over their subjects. Due to the different levels of sovereignty entrusted to the chiefs under the British administration, traditional rulers appeared as a political force to reckon with. In the French administration, traditional rulers were made dependent on the colonial state with little powers. This work is also relevant to the study in that it enables us to understand the French administration towards traditional leaders as compared to those of the centralised states.

Another remarkable work that dealt with duality in government and flexibility of traditional rulership is that of Barbara Oomen. Commenting on South African traditional rulers, she argues that with the introduction of democracy, and fall of Apartheid, people expected that chieftaincy rule will be abolished. According to him, the powers of chief's having control over resources have failed.³² The result was that the government was obliged to discuss with Chiefs. This led to the constitutional recognition of the status and role of traditional rulers. He argues that anti-chiefs have been scrapped away to give way for protraditional ministers. As such South African traditional rulers have become powerful that some critics are pointing acusing fingers on the state and demanding why a democratically elected government official should be permitted to address issues of traditional rulers. This is relevant to our study in that it states the status and qualities of a ruler.

Olufemi Vaughan in his article examines the dimensions of indigenous political structures that sustained local governance in colonial Yoruba land. Legitimated by reconstructed traditional political authorities and modern concepts of development, he argues that Yoruba indigenous political structures were distorted by the system of British Indirect rule. Conversely, head chiefs, chiefs, Western educated Christian elite and Muslim merchants embraced contending interpretations of traditional authorities to reinforce and expand their power in a rapidly shifting colonial context. According to him, development and governance, collective political action entailed the struggle over the distributive resources of the colonial state. Traditional and modern political leaders deployed strong communal ideologies and

³¹ Emile, A. B., Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, "Chiefs and African States: Introductory Notes and an Extensive Bibliography on African Chieftaincy" Journal of Legal Pluralism 25-26(1987):1-45.

³² Barbara Oomen., "Chiefs, Law, Power and Culture in Contemporary South Africa" (PhD thesis, Faculty of Law, Leiden University, 2002.

traditional themes that defined competing Yoruba communities as natives and outsiders.³³ This has also provided valuable insights to our study in that it portrays the way traditional and modern rulers' designs policies to foster development which is a picture of the dynamic policies of Oshie traditional rulers.

Markus V. HÖhne in his article portrays the ways in which the positions and powers of traditional authorities in the Somalia context have changed over the last 150 years. He argues that in analysing these developments the concept of traditional authority has remained useful. By examining its components 'traditional' and 'authority' against their wider historical and social background, transformations of this institution of power became obvious. Viewing changes over time leads to a better understanding of the roles traditional authorities play in contemporary Somali politics, as well as other cases of resurgence of traditional institutions in Africa and else where.³⁴ This work is equally relevant to our study since it handles issues of transformation in traditional leadership role as used in our study.

These are the same thoughts expressed in *Which Way Africa*. Interestingly, Davidson in his two books under review has touched important aspects like state formation and the comportments of traditional leadership in the current dispensation of colonialism. Though not specific on Oshie traditional leadership, these works have handled important elements like states and traditional leadership of the pre-colonial society easing understanding of our subsidiary themes. This equally sets the pace for the understanding of the evolution of traditional administration vis -a-vis the changing patterns of time.

In a related domain, Fanon sees the Third World problems, including Africa, Asia and parts of the Caribbean have to be handiwork of colonial manipulative tendencies. The adaptation and accommodation to these problems affected regional balances which necessitated the reconceptualization and redefinition of concepts. These same currents are vividly expressed in the works of scholars like Anta Diop Cheikh, Joseph Ki-serbo and J. Herbert Spiro. They confronted biased notions on African past with new truths and concentrated on African methodology to demonstrate that African history is not only important but equally worth knowing. These ideas have provoked studies in many areas in African historiography and our study falls in this cast.

³³Olufemi Vaughan., "Chieftaincy Politics and Communal Identity in Western Nigeria", 1893-1951. Journal of African History, 44(2003), pp.283-302 Cambridge University press printed in the United Kingdom.

³⁴ Markus, V..HÖhne, "Traditional Authorities in Northern Somalia: Transformation of positions and

powers".Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology working paper No.82,2014

p.1.Source,http://www.eth.mpg.de/pubs/wps/pdf/mpi-eth-working-paper-0082.pdf.

However, our concern in this section was simply to see how general Africanized perceptions have created gaps which our study is out to fill. These scholars have established firm foundations upon which, traditional states and the quest for hegemony can be examined. A more revealing motivation for this study can be made if we examine some literature handling the precise issues raised and discussed by our study. In this category, we have M. Fortes and Evans E. Pritchard.³⁵ They have established a succinct study which presents all the different facets of politics in an African traditional style. They argue that, there is a system of an African genre which is capable of controlling and influencing all socio-political and economic domains of human societies. They see traditional politics to be mostly based on the whims and caprices of traditional rulers and their colleges of administrators. To them, traditional leadership, power and authority were rooted in the quality of the person who incarnated the society which in our case is the Fon.

They also argue that traditional politics operates effectively in states with well organized and respected traditional institutions. The rulers and their subjects are seen by these authors to be those responsible for both the success and failures of traditional politics. This notwithstanding, they classify human societies under two broad headings which are the centralized and the decentralized systems each with its own distinct characteristics. They equally refer to decentralized societies and segmentary societies where power does not revolve around a single hereditary ruler but is diffused among a class of clan heads and lineages. In this kind of society, Fortes and Pritchard continue to argue that, the control of people and resources is done by a council of selected notables whereas in the centralized system, power is entrusted in the hands of a single individual who can be called *Fon*, Chief or Lamido which shows strands of power dynamics in a traditional setting thereby giving us insights in this study.

Besides Fortes and Pritchard who projected concepts and broad themes of African historiography, Cameroon in general and the Bamenda Western Grassfields in particular has attracted a tremendous scholarly attention in the last five decades. This has been useful in explaining many features of state crafting and leadership which is our prime concern. In this area, we have studies like those of Ngoh³⁶, Le Vine³⁷, Ruddin³⁸, Fanso³⁹, Eyongeta and Brain

³⁵ M. Fortes and E. Pritchard. African Political System (London Oxford University Press, Ely house 1969).

³⁶ Victor Julius Ngoh. Cameroon since 1800 (Limbe Pressbook, 1996).

Robert⁴⁰Ngoh have done interesting studies within which, they have handled the peopling of the different ethnic patterns of pre colonial Cameroon. They have both treated the causes, directions of movement and the implantation of the different pre colonial ethnic entities in both the forest region and the grassfields. They all identify the Chamba Raids and the Islamic jihads to have occasioned a major imbalance in Northern Cameroon during the early part of the ninetieth century. This imbalance was demonstrated in the displacement of ethnic groups and societies down south. While emphasizing that early pre colonial Cameroon was characterized by constant movements, they equally assert that intertribal wars and succession disputes were a common feature among these groups.

Chilver,⁴¹ and Kabbery.⁴² Operating and establishing facts mostly from an anthropological perspective, have covered a wide extensive area of the Grassfields. They treated issues of economic, political and social developments within this area. These documents either in a single or combined, handled broad and specific topics like states and chiefdoms, pre-colonial economy, land tenure and the way Grasslands traditional leaders related with each other. In their *West African States of the 19th Century*, they identified and studied each of the states that existed in the pre-colonial era. Indeed, the traditional institutions like the (Kwifoyn, Ngumba, Kwifor and Nwerong) were well handled by these authors. They asserted that the region of the Bamenda Western Grassfields had specific traditional institutions responsible for the administration of the society. Though these works are useful in providing important hints in the understanding of our study, their studies are limited to events in the pre-colonial era with some sort of superficial treatment of the colonial period.

Chilver and Kabbery have equally written many articles that are focused on the Grassfields.⁴³All of these articles have handled pertinent aspects of the Bamenda Grassfields

³⁷ Victor, le Vine and Roger Nye. *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964).

³⁸ Harry Ruddins H. Germans in Cameroon 1884-1914 (New York 1969).

³⁹ V.G. Fanso Cameroon *History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol 2. The Colonial and Post colonial Periods* (London and Basingstoke Macmillan education limited 1989).

⁴⁰ Eyongetah Tambi and Brain Robert *History of the Cameroon* (London 1974).

⁴¹ Elizabeth Chilver and Philis M. Kaberry *West African States in the Nineteenth century* (London: 1967) also see *Traditional Bamenda, the Precolonial History and Earthgroup of the_Grassfields_*(Buea SI 1967).

⁴³ These include "From Tribute to Tax in a Tikar Chiefdom in *Africa Journal vol* xxx No 1, pp. 1-19, 1966) Source of 19th century slave trade in the Cameroon highlands in Journal of African History vol vi/I pp. 144-19, 1965)," Traditional Bamenda" (Ministry of Primary Education and social welfare and West Cameroon Antiquities Commission Buea 1967)," Chronology of the Bamenda Grassfields" in *Journal of African History*, *vol* x1,2 pp. 249-260, "The tikar problem ;A non problem in Journal of African History Vol.II,pp56--76 "Land Tenure among the Nsaw of the British Cameroon" in Africa vol xx No 4 PP 307-23."Traditional Politics

during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. In a way, they addressed some key elements and equally helped in the formulation of some of the basic concepts developed by our work. Grassfields history. Similarly R.Lardziers⁴⁴, H.S Lewis⁴⁵ J Lombard⁴⁶ M.D Jeffreys⁴⁷. These documents have treated the main tenets of traditional administration and institutions either in the Grassfields or other related areas. Most of them only helped to justify the fact that all the elements of African historiography have been of immense focus especially after independence.

Similarly, Warnier after treating the modes, forms and principles of exchange in and around the pre-colionial Bamenda uses this as a base to argue that the Fons of the Grasslands share common features. One of such features was the commonality of competition for scarce resources, fame and power. From his angle of investigation, he sees this competition to have been spear-headed by Fons who represented large and small societies. He further asserts that this competition most of the time ended up with Fons with the strongest power of competition conquering and submerging the weaker ones. The consequence of this was usually the emergence of a society with stronger and powerful states lording over the weaker ones. Though largely focused on areas around the present Bamenda region, and having few references on Oshie this work is important in the sense that, it provides beams of reflections upon which the current study has been carved out.

Quite of interesting magnitude, Nkwi in the first three chapters present the preface and the background material necessary for the understanding of the entire political, economic and social structures of the Grassfields. By presenting the basic elements of ethnic composition, political organization and the colonial history Nkwi leaves a background to the understanding of Grasslands traditional diplomacy. He goes further in chapter three to argue that the network of peaceful alliances and diplomatic ties were sustained and made possible through marriages, the bags of the palace, military organization and ritual dances. He equally presents how wars came about, were prepared and fought and their impact on the traditional setting. Chapter five captioned 'the Dynamics of inter Chiefdoms Relations, goes further to argue that conquest

Nsaw" *Ibid* no 4 pp. 366-85, Retainer and royal households in the Cameroons in CAHIERS D'ETUDE AFRICAINES. Vol 3 No 2 pp 2882-98. NB: the list is still not exhaustives.

⁴⁴ R.Lardziers institution Politique et socials des Populations dites Bamileke in <u>(ETUDE S_CAMEROUNAIS</u>, No 25-26,27-8), 1949 PP.127-175. He discusses the different traditional institution that are found among the Bamileke who share a common history and culture with the Bamenda Grasslands states and States.

⁴⁵ HS Lewis "The Origins of African States in *CAHIERS D'ETUDES AFRICAINES*, vol VI No 4 1966 " pp. 402-7. He traces the way most traditional African States came into existence.

⁴⁶ "Autorites Traditionelles et Pouvoir Europeen en Afrique Noir (Paris : Armand Coin 1967).

⁴⁷ M.D Jeffrey "Who are the Tkars" in African studies vol 23 1964 pp141-53.

and competition, treaties and alliances were the common parings among traditional Grassfields states and chiefdoms. Infact, a deeper understanding of the lines of competitions that most often extended to competitions not only for control of the resources, race for regional hierarchy but equally a struggle for the control of trade routes can be seen when he argues that, there was keen competition in the Menchum valley among groups who were interested in the resources. By late 19th century the Aghem Federation had taken full possession of virtually all the polities in the valley and set up triangular trade. The valley became its area of influence. Through trade and tributes, Aghem received oil from the following polities, Bangwi, Ngo, Befang, Aku, Ide, Esimbi and Muntung. This oil was converted into raffia palm wine in Oshie that was produce in large quantity and other areas.⁴⁸

Indeed, without necessarily concentrating on pre-colonial Cameroon or the grasslands, W. Irwin Graham basing his study on Asante puts this more graphically when he opined that, In Africa before the imperial period, moreover, the subject matter of international relationswhat was discussed and decided-seems to have been much the same in other areas of work. Treaties were negotiated, frontiers of trade and authority more than of territory were delimited, past disputes were settled and potential crises argued away. The means employed to achieve these results included the sending of emissaries, both adhoc and semi permanent, presenting, giving and receiving gifts and people and the use of regular courier services.

These are a few tacit indications that Nkwi's work on states relations falls in a key area of pertinent research in African historical studies. Though different in scope and purpose, it bears resemblances with the case of pre-colonial Asante, Western Sudan and Gold Coast. However, this study can be replicated not only in areas of Cameroon with centralized traditional system of administration but almost everywhere in Africa given the same conditions and circumstances. We have seen that bilateral and multi lateral relations were maintained by traditionally trained and initiated individuals who carried different titles and portfolios. The training and initiation of these high profiled individuals was usually coordinate at the center. These centers were the seats of traditional governments which were ruled by Fons, chiefs, sultans, Lamido or any other titled depending on the society preferred parlance. This brings into mind the need to review how these leaders have been put on scientific focus. What ever the appellation, the role, the essence and legitimate powers of

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.p.97.

these leaders has also been a subject of intense research. This will help in the understanding of the basic dynamics of our study.

We have already reviewed pertinent aspects of this category developed by Warnier, Aleutum and Nkwi. However, there still exists a great deal of literature on chieftaincy in the published or unpublished form that has attracted our attention here. In this category, we have sorted out the works of Amaazee,⁴⁹ Kaptue,⁵⁰Foupossi,⁵¹ Reyher,⁵² Samah⁵³ Njeuma⁵⁴and Nzefa.⁵⁵In examining the comportment of chiefs in modern politics in Cameroonn, Amaazee emphasizes the importance of Chieftaincy as an institution of traditional governance in Cameroon. He argues that the Chiefs have conducted a guided role in modern politics and that Fons who benefited from the colonial Policies of indirect rule had most of their powers maintained and even sustained. He went further to opine that traditional rulers (chiefs) need not to be scraped away but adjust to new live styles in order to cope with the evolving political trends in Cameron.

These very reflections were corroborated and further developed by Walters T. Samah who after exploring the zero-sum, pessimist and dualists or partnership schools of thought argued that the fate of traditional ruler s in Anglophone Cameroon stands in a shaky balance. He however, asserted that, the fons and chiefs especially after the independence needed to adjust for a new order. This order by the strength of his arguments, rested on sound, genuinely negotiated partnership (dualist theory) whereby, the traditional rulers and the agents of the modern systems of government needed to agree. This agreement needed to take into account all the little figments of the traditional political system vis- a- vis that of the modern system. Though without special focus on Oshie Amaazi and Samah have indicated some areas of pertinent challenges to traditional leadership which are developed in the last chapter of our study.

Similarly, Foupossi in a comparative study, exposed a rhetorical question which was whether given the inherent prejudices and clashes between tradition and modern forms of

⁵³Walters Tonji Samah 'Tradotional rulers (Chiefs)in Anglophone Politics.

⁴⁹ Victor Bong Amaazee. *Traditional Ruler s(Chiefs) and politics in Cameroon History*. (Yaounde SOPECAM. 2002).

⁵⁰ Leon Kaptue. Rois et chefs dans les Etats africains de la veille des indépendences à la fin du XX siècle (Paris Sorbonne, colloque –internationale, Novembre 8-10, 1995) also see 'Pris entre martau et enclume, le pouvoir traditional choisit-il de se prostituer au Cameroun' Endoscopie de la situation de 1884 à 1992) pp 1-2.

⁵¹ Evariste Fotso Foupossi, 'Faut-il brûler les chefferies traditionnelles (Yaounde : SOPECAM 1991).

⁵² Rebecca Reyher *The Fon and His Hundred Wives* (London: Victor Galanc, 1953).

⁵⁴ Martin Z. Njeuma Fulani Hegemony in Yola (old Adama) 1809-1902 (Buea: 1978).

⁵⁵ Sylvain Djache Nzefa Les chefferies Bamileke dans l'enfer et le modernisme, une chefferie de demain (s.m.E, 1994).

government, there is need to burn down or completely destroy chieftaincy?. He argued with convincing evidences that Chieftaincy holds an important place in all African traditions and that such institutions and the people who incarnate them (traditional leaders need to be protected and respected by their subjects). In this direction, Leon Kaptue goes further to assert that within the new era of multi-party dispensation and politics of deceit, the chiefs are caught up within two fragile extremes. These extremes are whether they should remain as pure and diehard custodian of African tradition as the assembly of chief demanded or, whether they should actively participate in partian politics, relegate the ideals of its people to the background and gain the booty that comes with such participations. He further stressed that traditional rulers in Cameroon have been victims of triple colonial evils. These are colonialism, national unity and democracy. All of these according to his argument have brought repeated pressures on the modus operandi of traditional ruler s. The result of all this has been a fragmentation of the powers of traditional ruler s and in some cases, empowering some against their subjects.

The same views have been elaborately expressed by Nzefa who stressed in palpable evidences that Grassfields chiefs especially in the Bamileke area, are at odd ends of modernism (*L'enfer du modernisme*). He went further to show that Chieftaincy as a traditional institution is seriously threatened by new functional equivalences and power sharing equation designed by the social modernist agents to suit their whims and caprices. Like Samah, Kaptue, Foupossi, he stressed that, the traditional rulers with their entire collolaries of administration needed to stand strong and redefine their principles and concepts in this new dispensation or risqué being swallowed up by the forces of modernism.

All these documents have one idea in common. This is the fact that traditional rulers especially of centralized societies are repeatedly being threatened (challenged) by the offerings of colonialism, modernism or Europeanization. Though with emphasis on spotted examples on the Grassfields, they are vital for the understanding of the current trends of the challenges faced by Oshie leadership developed in details in the last chapter of our study. Their focus on colonial and post colonial era has helped in the understanding of influences meted on Oshie leadership within her regional sub setting.

By studying the functions of leadership of traditional societies in the Grassfields, we have equally gained some inspirations from unpublished sources distinguished in this

category are the works of Funwi,⁵⁶ Amabo,⁵⁷ Takor,⁵⁸J.Penbaga,⁵⁹ Mbiba⁶⁰ and Cheo.⁶¹ Ngwa; Che and Nchangwi have sustained the studies of Aleutum in examining the various segments of Bafut traditional administration. While Ngwa argues that, there are sporadic themes and areas of conflict between the Fon and the people, he asserts that such conflicts came about as a result of miscalculations and poor conceptualism of roles, duties and responsibilities. He affirms that such an atmosphere breeds consistent suspicion which is a strong impediment to growth and sustainable development. Che and Nchangwi while observing relations between the Bafut and subertain states both argue that personality conflicts between the Fon and his sub chiefs have helped to fan confusion and conflicts both between the Fon and his subjects and equally, among the sub chiefs. They go further to argue that this confusion and greed have been generated most of the time by the colonialists and all its different legacies. These legacies most often referred to as modernism have continued to trigger discord between the various sub chiefs who are exploring every means to claim their autonomy from the Bafut central Fon. Accordingly, these are clear evidences that colonialists in all its forms altered the social, economic and political balance in the policy of centralized grassfileds fondoms. This helped in weakening the powers of the paramount Fon. These documents are useful because they cover some of the aspects that equally contributed to Oshie traditional leadership.

Jean Claude Williame in his article portrays that in the literature of African politics, the status and position of traditional rulers in developing societies are conceived as key issues in the process of modernisation. He argues that paramount chiefs, headmen and clanic leaders are said to represent custom and tradition of the people and to provide a vital linkage between government and the subjects. According to him they influence the success of economic and social change by acting as translators, interpreters and mediators of government policies. This work provides us with valuable insight on the role of traditional rulers in bringing development as is the case with our study.

⁵⁶ Devine Funwi Ngwa ' The Fon , Chiefs and People of Bafut in Conflict from the Pre-colonial Period to 1968' (DEA project in history university of YaondeI 2003).

⁵⁷ Philip Amabo Che 'Relations Between the Central Administration of Bafut and its sub Chiefdoms from Colonial Era to the year 2000' DIPES II Dissertation in History. YaoundeI , 2001.

 ⁵⁸ Nixon Kharjum Taikor 'Bum Leadership in the Bum Fondom, ca 1870-1999 A Case study of intra-village diplomacy in the Bamenda grassfileds (Cameroon) (M.A. Dissertation in history University of Yaounde I, 2005).
⁵⁹ Jerome Penbaga ' Balis and Neighbours: a study of the political relations of the Balis and Wedikum from precolonial times to 1961' (Maitrise dissertation in history Yaounde 1988).

⁶⁰ Roland Mbiba 'Nso and her Neighbours; A study of Intergroup Relations in the Ninteenth and Twentieth Century' Maitrise Dissertation 1991.

⁶¹ Fidelis Makwondo Cheo 'Bambili and her Neighbours: Intervillage Relations Since 1961' (M.A Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, 1996).

Besides, chiefs fail to serve as successful intermediaries in that they are caught in severe conflicts between the requirements of customs and modernizing goals. As for Jean Claude Williame his article seeks to question two basic points which underlie this kind of argument. First of all, the political elite does not necessarily represent "modernising forces," neither do traditional authorities represent intermediaries between backward people and enlightened politicians. He argues that in order to be fruitful, any discussion on the role and relationship between traditional and modernist elite should be appraised in the context of historical materialism and class structure rather than in the perspective of acculturation and the modernity-tradition continuum.⁶² This work equally provides some beats and pieces on the relationship between traditional rulership and modernity thereby help in the understanding of our study.

Steve Tonah in his work examines the chieftaincy succession conflict in Dagbon, Northern Ghana. The work traces the history of the struggle for the kingship that tilted between the two feuding clans, the Abudu and Andani clans, and analyzes in detail the clashes of March 2002 which resulted in the death of the incumbent king of Dagbon and several of his surporters. He argues that the conflict has been highly politicised because chiefs, royals and the educated elite in Dagbon have a tradition of being involved in national politics and have often used their influence in government to attain high traditional office.⁶³ The work also handles issues of chieftaincy succession dispute as used in our study.

William F.S Mile in his work argues that the paramountcy of chiefs was undone by colonial rule. According to him traditional rulers have served as important adjuncts in the administration of post-colonial government in both Africa and Oceania. He examines the evolution of chieftaincy, particularly as an agent of administration in West Africa (Niger and Nigeria) and Melansia (Vanuatu). Although French and British colonial regimes had distinctive policies regarding the use of "their" chiefs, post-colonial Nigerian and Ni-Vanuatu governments have all come to rely on traditional rulers to aid in development activities. As for him the degree of autonomy retained by traditional rulers varies.⁶⁴ This work is relevant to our

⁶² Jean Claude Williame; "Patriarchal Structures and Factional Politics Toward and understanding of the Dualist society in Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, vol.13, Cahier 50(1973), pp.326-355 published by: EHESS.

⁶³ Steve Tonah, "The Politicisation of a Chieftaincy Conflict: The case of Dagbon, Northern Ghana.Nordic Journal of African studies 21(1):1-20(2012) University of Ghana, Ghana.

⁶⁴ William, F.S. Miles; "Traditional rulers and development administration: Chieftaincy in Niger, Nigeria and Vanuatu" African studies Review.University of Boston Press, 2012.
study because it handles issues of traditional leadership and development as our study have done.

Senayon Olaoluwa in his article argues that in some African societies the pre-colonial institution of governance with judicial, legislative and executive powers, did not survive colonial and post-colonial rule. According to him a transition of power was for almost a period of one hundred years of colonial occupation. He also argues that in East Africa particularly Uganda, there were serious tensions and the post-colonial leadership. In the South of Africa, especially South Africa settler societies uprooted the traditional governance institutions through the resistance mounted by warrior tribes like the Zulu. According to him, there is still some room for chieftaincy, particularly in local government. Equally in West Africa, where the British policy of indirect rule (using traditional institutions to sustain domination) held sway, the institutions of chieftaincy have survived. The same with the story of chieftaincy in Ghana, especially under Kwame Nkrumah and the military regime of Jerry John Rawlings.⁶⁵ This work has enabled us to understand the survival and functions of African traditional institutions in our study and their functions.

Focusing on the Centralised societies of Cameroon's Grassfields, Michael Mbapndah Ndobegang has thrown more light on the conversion of two Grassfields traditional rulers, that is, the Fon of Bali-Nyonga and Foreke of Dschang, who operated under two opposing colonial periods.⁶⁶According to him the different treatment of traditional rulers by the British and the French, and the out come and behaviour of traditional rulers during the post-colonial period was bound to be different. He argues that at the eve of independence, Foreke of Dschang and Bamileke traditional rulers were not as authoritative as the Bali or Bamenda Grassfields chiefs or traditional rulers. According to him, they were not state inclined as their peers in the Grassfields.⁶⁷ The relevant aspect in this work is that it portrays explanations as to why traditional rulers with comparable cultural traits, occupying the same geographical region acted differently after passing through two distinct colonial periods.

Comparably, Stephen E. Fomin and Emmanuel M. Chiabi have argued how by acting together, traditional rulers have done well to secure for themselves a constitutional

⁶⁵ Senayou, S. Olaoluwa edited by Irene K. Odotei and Albert K. Awedoba "*Chieftaincy in Ghana*: Culture, governance and development, Accra: Sub Saharan Publishers, 2006.700 pp. 12

⁶⁶ Ibid. ⁶⁷ Ibid.

recognition, materialised through the establishment of a House of Chiefs. Chiabi on his part implemented the example of two pioneer Southern Cameroons chiefs, Manga Williams of Victoria and Fon Galega of Bali to demonstrate how British colonial policy of Native Authority empowered and prepared Southern Cameroons traditional rulers for the future role in national politics and state building.⁶⁸ In spite of their influence during the colonial period, the traditional rulers could not avert the modern politicians from assuming political leadership patterning to the fall of colonial rule. This work gives us a deeper insight in handling issues of traditional rulership as used in our study. This is due to the fact that it has delt with traditional rulers during colonial and post colonial period.

Tata Simon in his article, put forward that Cameroon is made up of many ethnic groups. These ethnic groups fall under two categories as identified by their cultural heritage. There are the centralised states of the Western Grassfields where kingdoms or Fondoms from pre-colonial times were governed by powerful kings or Fons. The enthroned king commands a lot of respect as the custodian of the culture, values and dignity of the people. He rule his people assisted by a college of notables, heirs of the family lineages with background clan honour.⁶⁹ This work has help to throw more insight in our study as it stresses on the status and functions of traditional rulers in the Bamenda Grassfields as compared to those in the Coastal region.

Chilver and Kabbery, perspective in their work, have covered a wide extensive area of the Grassfields. They treated issues of economic, political and social developments within this area. These documents handled broad and specific topics like states and chiefdoms, precolonial economy, land tenure and the way Grassfields traditional rulers are related with each other. In their *West African States of the 19th Century*, they identified and studied each of the states that existed in the pre-colonial era. Indeed, the traditional institutions like the *Kwifoyn*, *Ngumba*, *Kwifor* and *Nwerong* were well handled by these authors. They asserted that the region of the Bamenda Western Grassfields had specific traditional institutions responsible for the conduct of diplomacy.⁷⁰ Though these works are useful in providing important hints in the understanding of the migration and settlement of the Oshie people, they do not handle the

 ⁶⁸Chiabi, M. Emmanuel, "Chieftaincy: Traditional Rulers in National Politics" Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, University of Yaounde 1-2(1990):23-44; Stephen-Denis Effuetnkeng Fomin, "The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs,1960-1972" (Maitrise dissertation, University of Yaounde,1979).
⁶⁹ Tata, N. Simon Cameroon Traditional Rulers in Multiparty Politics since 1990, for the Codesria 10th General Assembly Kampala 2002, Department of History, University of Yaounde I.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Chilver and Philis M. Kaberry, *West African States in the Nineteenth century*, London, 1967 also see *Traditional Bamenda, the Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields*, Buea SI 1967.

different aspects of inter- state relations as covered by our study. Also, their studies are limited to events in the pre-colonial era with some sort of superficial treatment of the colonial period. Without necessarily concentrating on pre-colonial Cameroon or the Grassfields, these authors have handled various forms of diplomacy of African states. They in turn do agree that all established African states did share much in the domain of diplomacy. This work has also throw more light on the way issues of traditional diplomacy are handled in our study.

W. Irwin Graham basing his study on Asante argues that, in Africa before the period of imperialism, the practice of international relations was the same in other areas. According to him treaties were negotiated, frontiers and territories were delimited, disputes were settled and potential crises argued away. The method employed to achieve these results included the sending of emissaries, presenting and receiving gifts thus enabling the understanding of chiefdoms relations within the Western Grassfields. This work directly reflects and creates an insight on the relation between Oshie and her neighbouring communities during the colonial period.⁷¹

There still exists a great deal of literature on chieftaincy in the published or unpublished form that has attracted our attention here. In this view, we have sorted out the works of Amaazee, Kaptue, Foupossi, Reyher, Samah, Njeuma and Nzefa. In examining the comportment of chiefs in modern politics in Cameroonn. Amaazee emphasizes on the importance of Chieftaincy as an institution of traditional governance in Cameroon. He argues that the Chiefs have conducted a guided role in modern politics and that Fons who benefited from the colonial Policies of indirect rule had most of their powers maintained and even sustained. He went further to reiterate that traditional rulers need not to be scraped away but adjust to new live styles in order to cope with the evolving political trends in Cameroon.⁷²

Amaazee's reflections were corroborated and further developed by Walters T. Samah who after building on the zero-sum, pessimist and dualists or partnership schools of thought argues that the fate of traditional rulers in Anglophone Cameroon stands in a shaky balance. He asserts that, the Fons and chiefs especially after the independence needed to adjust for a new order. This order according to him rested on sound, genuinely negotiated partnership (dualist theory) whereby, the traditional rulers and the agents of the modern systems of

⁷¹ Irwim, W. Graham, Pre-colonial African Diplomacy: The example of Asante, in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *VIII*, *I*, 1975.

⁷² Victor Bong Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and politics in Cameroon History*, Yaounde SOPECAM 2002 p. 7.

government needed to agree.⁷³ This agreement needed to take into account all the little figments of the traditional political system Vis a Vis that of the modern system.

Similarly, Foupossi in a comparative study, exposed a rhetorical question which was: whether given the inherent prejudices and clashes between tradition and modern forms of government, there is need to burn down or completely destroy chieftaincy? He argues with convincing evidences that Chieftaincy occupies an important place in all African traditions and that such institutions and the people who incarnated them need to be protected and respected by their subjects). In this direction, Leon Kaptue goes further to assert that within the new era of multi-party dispensation and politics of deceit, the chiefs were caught up within two fragile extremes. These extremes depended on whether they should remain as pure and diehard custodian of African tradition as the assembly of chief demanded or, whether they should actively participate in partisan politics, relegate the ideals of its people to the background and gain the booty that comes with such participations. He further stressed that traditional rulers in Cameroon have been victims of triple colonial evils. These were colonialism, national unity and democracy. All these according to his argument have brought repeated pressures on the modus operandi of traditional institutions. The result of all these has been a fragmentation of the powers of traditional rulers and in some cases, empowering some against their subjects.⁷⁴

The same views have been elaborately expressed by Nzefa who stressed in clear evidences that Grassfields chiefs especially in the Bamileke area, were at odd ends of modernism (*L'enfer du modernisme*). He went further to show that Chieftaincy as a traditional institution was seriously threatened by new functional equivalences and power sharing equation designed by the social modernist agents to suit their whims and caprices. Like Samah, Kaptue, Foupossi, he stressed that, the traditional institutions with their entire corollaries of administration needed to stand strong and redefine their principles and concepts in this new dispensation or risk being absorbed by the forces of modernism.⁷⁵ The present study equally intend to portray that, the traditional rulers of Oshie needed to redefine their functions and work in accordance with the demands of traditions and customs of the people during this modern era

⁷³ Walters Tonji Samah, "Traditional rulers (Chiefs) in Anglophone Politics," PhD Thesis, University of Yaounde, 2006 p.46.

⁷⁴ Evariste Fotso Foupossi, *Faut-il brûler les chefferies traditionnelles*, Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1991.

⁷⁵ Sylvain Djache Nzefa, *Les chefferies Bamileke dans l'enfer et le modernisme*, une chefferie de demain, S.M.E, 1994.

Cosma Cheka in his article, portrays that traditional authority was indeed at the crossroads of governance in republican Cameroon. He argues that the citizen was bounded by both modern law and traditional values; even if political leaders of Republican institutions protest against certain traditional values. Traditional authority according to him incarnates a reassuring institutional stability and certainty to the masses which elected them. The wide majority of the population feels distant from the concept of "*republic*" at grassroots level, where traditional authority remains the *de facto* institution of local governance. Based on the important role that traditional authorities play in local development, he concludes that traditional authorities should be formally integrated into the republican institutional setting by effectively constituting the first level of decentralized institutions of governance.⁷⁶ The work gives us deeper insight in addressing issues of local development by traditional rulers in our study.

Fissiy and Chungong in their work focuses on the unequal relationship between the traditional rulers and the modern state. These two scholars observe chiefs and state relationship as antagonistic due to attempts by each to out step the other in the control of resources and people.⁷⁷ Basing their analysis on the North West province, they illustrate how by confiscating the economic base of chiefs, such as their control over land, the state has weakened their powers. To Fissiy, the control and management of land is at the heart of control over the people.⁷⁸ He contended that inspite of the constant menace by the state, the traditional rulers have continued to display a strong sense of dynamism and flexibility. According to him chieftaincy will continue to face an ever increasing threat from the state. Its survival in the future will depend largely on the skills and handiness of individual chiefs. Arguing on a related domain by drawing facts from the North West province, Natang Ben jua portrays how the state has done away with chieftaincy. This work handles some subsidiary themes that have been used in our study and provides detailed clues on traditional leadership and land.

Ambe. J. Njoh in his work argues that traditional politico-administrative institutions, as opposed to those of Western origin, appear to be regaining their lost allure in Africa. Yet, it

⁷⁶ Cosmas Cheka, "Traditional Authority at the Crossroads of Governance in Republican Cameroon". Africa Development, vol, xxxiii, No.2, 2008, pp.67-89.

 ⁷⁷Fisiy, F. Cyprian, "*Chieftaincy in the Modern State*: An Institution at the Crossroad of Democratic Change"
Paideuma 14 (1995):49-62, John Neba Chungong, "Le pouvoir traditionnelle et le pouvoir d'Etat: Cas de province de Nord Ouest du Cameroun" (Doctorat de 3eme Cycle thesis, University of Nice-France,1977),p.235.
⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

was not enough to simply advocate a return to tradition. He further argues that, traditional institutions were capable of making a positive contribution to ongoing efforts to promote good governance and ultimately, development in Africa. He concludes by analysing the traditional system of Meta, a centralised polity with a tradition of autonomous chiefdoms relations in the North West Region of Cameroon. This study provides some empirical justification for recommending the incorporation of traditional institutions in the modern governance process in Cameroon in particular and Africa in general.⁷⁹This work was relevant to our study in that it handles subsidiary themes such as traditional institutions, as used in our work.

Ngam in his theses examines the origin, growth and role played by Kom leadership and her diplomatic tactics of relating and maintaining her subunits together. He argues that Kom like many states in the Grassfields grew to eminence in her regional sub setting through a number of planned and accidental factors. These factors include Western education, Christianity, foreign values of governance and party politics. Internal factors include poor conceptualization of sovereignty and rights, naivety, irresponsibility and insensibility of the Fons to changes and demands meted on their traditional leadership. According to him, the position of regional leadership, gave the Fon an appreciable control of people, space and resources within this sphere during the pre-colonial period. Furthermore, he asserts that leadership and traditional diplomacy was standing on the ashes of its pre-colonial glories. Thus, he blamees the declining pattern of Kom leadership and power diplomacy on a number of factors. Lastly, he states that leadership and power diplomacy in a traditional African state given the same conditions needs to be handled in a careful manner.⁸⁰ All selected sources reviewed handles subsidiary themes, elements and components which have been examined in this study.

Ambang Evelyn in her dissertation argues that the writing of the history of Cameroon will not be complete if the history of peripheral chiefdoms such as Oshie is not studied. She also stresses that some books have treated the history of many larger chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields, smaller chiefdoms such as Oshie have not received the same attention. According to her colonial Oshie had a history worth studying. She further argues that the people of Oshie originated from Widekum at a place called Tadkon. The Oshie oral history

⁷⁹ Njoh, J. Ambe, "The Meta Indigenous Politico-Administrative System, Good Governance, and the modern Republican state in Cameroon" University of South Florida USA, Journal of Asian and African Studies April 17,2014.

⁸⁰ Ngam Confidence, "Kom Hegemony within its Regional Subsetting and Power Diplomacy", PhD Theses, University of Yaounde 2013.

holds that the people of Oshie migrated under rulers with whom they identified themselves. The Oshie people settled among groups of people that they had no common ancestors. After consolidating settlement, the local society was stratified into a centralised political organisation, headed by the Fon and the traditional institutions known as traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*.⁸¹ This work was quite relevant to our study in that it provides a formidable ground on which traditional rulership was construed in Oshie. It was from the above literature on traditional rulers in Cameroon and the Western Grassfields chiefdoms in particular that little or nothing was realised in the domain of traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie. Thus, the scarcity of issues on traditional institutions in the chiefdom of Oshie in the literature of traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields have become fundamental in our study. Infact, the gap provided by the vaccum has prompted us to embark on this study.

Statement of Research Problem

The political and administrative set up of the chiefdom of Oshie prior to the year 1918 and after, was well structured with a considerable degree of local governance excercised by its traditional rulers. This was fashioned through the dynamic policies deployed by its rulers, in economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. The central issue that characterise this study rests on the fact that, Oshie Polity from the year 1918 had witnessed a certain level of development through the economic and socio-cultural policies in the chiefdom led by the rulers. The development enterprises realized by the rulers were almost plunged into a state of anarchy, this was largely blamed on the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV during the year 1998 to 2009. This situation sowed a seed of discord between; the Fon and the members of the royal family, the Fon and the members of the Oshie cultural and development association. The rulership position and priviliges enjoyed by the Fon became contested by the princes of the royal family because of his absent from the throne for a period of almost ten years which later triggered chieftaincy dissension in chiefdom. These challenges constituted a threat to traditional rulership status in Oshie as well as an impediment to development in the chiefdom. The research questions that guided this study are; 1) what was the nature and dynamics of traditional rulerships in Oshie? 2) How was the hereditary succession of rulership canon as seen from the year 1918 to 2009? 3) Has this Oshie traditional rulership been

⁸¹Andigema Evelyn "The Oshie of Njikwa Subdivision: An Historical perspective" Post Graduate Diploma in Education (DIPES II) ENS Yaounde 1998. P.36.

capable of surviving the threats imposed on its status? 4) If the traditional rulership in Oshie was collapsing as our findings may suggests, what were the reasons and solutions to the challenges?

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study were to gather material from various sources that will enable us to

A) Creat an insight on colonial influence on traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie from the 1913 to 1918.

B) Examine the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership in economic development matters in the chiefdom from the year 1918 to 2009

C) Show the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership in socio-cultural development issues in the chiefdom from the year 1918 to 2009

D) Portray an overview of challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership from the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe to Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study are hinged on the arguments that; Oshie Polity has since 1918 to 1997 witnessed a very dynamic system of rulership. The corollaries of these arguments are that; Oshie traditional rulers show great dynamism in regional diplomacy as seen in the way they collaborated with their neighbouring Polities. Secondly, the study claims that Oshie traditional rulers portrayed great dynamism in economic development of the chiefdom, and thirdly Oshie traditional rulers demonstrated great dynamism in socio-cultural development of the chiefdom.

Significance of the Study

The study of the dynamism of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie is of great relevance in many respects to the academic world. This is because it will contribute enormously to the historiography of traditional rulers in the Western Grassfields and Cameroon at large. Taking into consideration that studies around Fons or natural rulers have been minimised in favour of western oriented administrative authorities in the scholarly map in the last few decades since independence. This study is equally vital for our administrative authorities to perceive indigenous authority as decentralised organs of successful administration in their areas of jurisdiction. It equally submits that Fons can and do play a vital role in mobilizing their people towards the execution of development projects, promoting education, encouraging various economic and socio-cultural enterprises, enhances democracy and sustains good governance. The work will also serve as a reference document to future researchers in different parts of Cameroon on the necessity to document and understand traditional authorities and governance in Africa at large. The study in its modest sense goes further to enrich the global studies of African traditional rulership in Nation building during the early twentieth and twenty first century.

Scope and Delimitation

This study begins from the year 1918 and ends in 2009. The first period represents the colonial intrusion in Oshie chiefdom after the migration and settlement of the people at their present site during the early nineteenth century. The next period marked the transition of traditional rulership from the reign of Emamba to that of the Anyangwe dynasty in the year 1918. We have equally examined the traditional governing institutions that were put in place by the rulers according to the traditions and customs of the people. The periodization of our subsidiary themes have however followed a broader trend on the dynamism of traditional rulership in the local administration of the chiefdom, notably in the domain of economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. 2009 has been taken to be the limit of this study because it was the year that the chiefdom witnessed numerous challenges that attempted to disrupt the serene succession line and the dynamic policies of its rulers.

Sources and Methodology

This work was realized through the use of primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources embodied the identification of data from books, articles and journals which had a bearing on some of the aspects in our topic. We began with a critical review of secondary sources handling broader themes of traditional rulership and governance in African traditional states including Cameroon and the Grassfields chiefdoms. We equally identified a good number of secondary material dealing with Grassfields state relations in the University of Yaounde I, Central library, *Circle d'Histoire Geographie et Archeologie* and the British Council Libraries where we were able to sort out valuable articles having bearing on the topic. Our secondary sources were complemented with a number of unpublished materials in form of Theses, Dissertations, Long Essays and unpublished manuscripts. There was a rich deal of this material in the librairies of the Department of History and the Faculty of Arts, Letters and

Social Sciences of the University of Yaounde I. We also got pertinent issues on some of the aspects developed in our work from the Library of the University of Bamenda.

The above sources were buttressed with primary sources obtained from the National Achives in Buea and the Regional Archives Bamenda respectively. We equally obtained some facts from the Oshie palace museum and private archives of members of the Oshie royal family. This was further supported by a number of oral information collected through a wide range of interviews. Our choice of informants was based on seniority in age, title and position within the traditional hierarchy in Oshie. Though we attempted to maintain a balance in the informant age, a good number of our informants were identified and interviewed in Oshie and Bamenda and a few were interviewed in Yaounde. Our interview approach was qualitative with keen attention paid on in-depth interviews. We introduced broad themes to guide the informants and proceeded by constant probing for emphasis and clarification.

We have adopted a blend of thematic and chronological approaches in the study. The thematic approach is used to describe themes and issues of dynamism of traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie. In the chronological approach, we have situated the issues on discourse according to the historical time frame. We employed the analytic, narrative and descriptive approaches. We also made an attempt to assure that each of these approaches employed, suited the theme or themes developed. In certain sections, the approaches were used interchangeably with the overall aim of assuring clarity in our expressions in the interpretation of our evidences. The sources we exploited have been variedly acknowledged in the footnotes and bibliographical references. Where the explanation or description of some issues warranted a detailed comprehension of the text, we tried as much as possible, to provide explanatory footnotes. We have throughout the construction phase, a varied use of direct quotations with the hope of sustaining our arguments with empirical evidences. This not withstanding, in the course of our research and construction, we encountered a number of problems.

Problems Encountered

In the collection of data for the study, we encountered several problems like any other researchers will do. It was not all that easy for me to travel from Yaoundé to Oshie. The road from Bamenda to Oshie was almost impassable during the period since it was the rainy season when many people were at home. We had to trek on foot across areas where the vehicle could not go through. Published information on traditional rulership in this area was limited and

poorly organized. This made the selection of sources and the identification of informants difficult. This was the major problem we faced during our data collection and analyses. Some of our resourcesful informants were traditional elders (*Okum*), the king makers in Oshie whom as tradition demands required to be lobbied or courted before they released informations on traditional rulership in Oshie. It requires tact and patience to meet some of the traditional elders. They sometimes reschedule our request to other sessions. Few of them due to their responsibilities never respected the appointments thereby retarding the advancement of the research in the field. We suffered the effect of secrecy of information regarding traditional rulership transition in Oshie and the *Aken* secret cult. In spite of all these set backs, we employed tact and serenity to obtained information from these persons on traditional rulership and governance institutions in Oshie. Furthermore, documented information on chieftaincy dispute in Oshie was little and scarcely available hence we depended largely on oral interviews. Our mastery of the Oshie local dialect provided us a wider access to our key informants. We were able to make use of our historical mindedness and research expertise to the various forms of information to cross examine our evidences.

Lay Out of the Study

The work is divided into five chapters with a general introduction and conclusion. The general introduction handles the research protocol including the review of general and specific literature and the conceptual and theoretical considerations. Chapter one presents the Oshie traditional society and its set up, it equally presents the geographical background and the physical environment of the study area. It examines the historical setting from the perspective of environment of the people of Oshie during migration and settlement. It has also throw light on the socio-political organisation, economic pre-occupation of the people and the traditional governance institutions in Oshie.

Chapter two is focus on the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers that created an accommodation for European colonialists' intrusion in the chiefdom. It examines the transition of traditional rulership from the reign of Emamba to the Anyangwe dynasty during the year 1918. It further treats relation between Oshie and her neighbouring Polities to portray the dynamic diplomatic interest of the rulers. The chapter ends with issues of land and boundary disputes between Oshie and her neighbours.

Chapter three presents the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in the economic development of the chiefdom. It treats the economic initiatives put in place by the various traditional rulers of Oshie to enhance development in the chiefdom.

Chapter four focuses on the strength of Oshie traditional rulership in the socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. This begins from the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe in 1918 to that of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe during the year 2009.

Chapter five presents the challenges that were faced by the traditional rulers of Oshie as a result of European intrusion in the chiefdom of Oshie from the year 1918. It further examines challenges to the dynamism of Oshie rulership during the year 1998 to 2009 such as the succession dispute to Oshie royal throne, its ramifications within the chiefdom and Njikwa sub-division at large and other external challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership.

CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND: OSHIE TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND ITS SET UP

1.0 Introduction

This chapter begins with a presentation of the study milieu, location, physical features which appear to have fashioned the dynamic rulers of the chiefdom and the early history of origin, migration and settlement of the people of Oshie at their present site. It further presents the economic pre-occupation, political organisation and the traditional governance institutions that the dynamic rulers of Oshie put in place during the period.

1.1 The Study Milieu

This section of the study is focused on the geographical location of Oshie. It asserts that, the physical environment provides favourable grounds on which traditional rulership was construed in the chiefdom of Oshie. For the fact that geography and history are linked together, they correlate and influence the way people live in the society. In fact, human behaviour over the years has a direct bearing on the environments. Cohen elucidated the validity of the bond between humanity and environment by commenting that;

[...] We mortals (human being) have an irresistable tendency to yield to climatic influence [and other geographical elements] and to the course and no other, may be traced physical formation and complexion in most of our habits with [...] wide local separation.⁸²

The topography of the area and the historical setting of the people are therefore capital because, it was one of the medium through which traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie was construed. The general layout of the area consists of high grassy plateau with irregular dotted forested areas. The area falls within what was commonly refered to as the Western Grassfields during the colonial years. Consequently, the geographical features and historical setting have had an impact on the events that have taken place in the chiefdom.

⁸² Moris Cohen, *The Meaning of Human History* (La Salle, Winois, the Open Court Publishing Company, 1961) p. 137.

1.1.1 Location

Oshie is located in the North West Region of Cameroon. It falls at the periphery of the chiefdoms of Bamenda region, particularly in Momo division within the administrative unit of Njikwa Sub-division. From Bamenda, this area is covered by dramatic long stretching irregular, corrugated and mountainous landscape. Although the boundaries are not well marked out or demarcated and agreed upon by the neighbours. Oshie is bounded by seven villages. Oshie is a junction town and shares boundary with nine villages. On the west and North West by Ekweri Banya, to the west by Ngwo village. Konda village is located in the north of Oshie, Beba in the north east, Mundum 1 and 11 in the east. Meta occupies the east of south and the Ngie villages are found to the south and south west. Oshie has one main road that connects the Bamenda area of the North West Region and is also the main entry into Njikwa sub-division.

In fact, Njikwa was the appellation adopted by the administration for the entire subdivision located at the boundary between the chiefdom of Oshie and Ngwo. Oshie lies above latitude 6° N of the equator and a few metres from longitude 9° E of the Greenwich meridian. Oshie is spread out at the foot of hills that surround the chiefdom. The hills or highlands cover about two third of the territory with average height of about 700m. The main peaks are the Fun hills, the Azani hills, the Togobeiku hills, the Edek hills, the Togokweni hills and Togeku hills. These hills bear the names of the quarters located below them and appears greenish especially during the rainy season. Human settlement is basically in the valleys and along the elevated slopes.⁸³ The 2004 population survey placed Oshie at 10,822 inhabitants. Although most of the indigenes reside out of the chiefdom. The CDC plantations alone harbour about 3000 families. At Eba quarter, the people of Oshie were easily identified as having been born out of two principal families, Andek and Oyemi, the two known patriarch of the land. The subsequent subgroups identified themselves with the prefix Bu meaning children of. Hence, Bukobi refers to the children of Kobi, Buwed the children of Wed and Bughen the children of Ghen. The Andek and Oyemi family comprised of 19 sub-groups. The location of the chiefdom of Oshie in Momo division and its neighbouring Polities in Njikwa sub-division can be seen as illustrated on maps 1, 2 and 3.

⁸³ An Annual Publication Magazine, Oshie, 1984 p.4



Map 1: Location of the Chiefdom of Oshie in Cameroon





Map 2: Location of the Chiefdom of Oshie in Momo Division

Source: Adapted from the Map of Cameroon NB-32-IV, I.G.N., Yaounde.



Map 3: Njikwa Sub-division Showing the Chiefdom of Oshie and her Neighbouring Polities

Source: Adapted from the Map of Cameroon NB-32-IV, I.G.N., Yaounde.

1.1.2 Physical Environment

The chiefdom of Oshie as well as other of the Western Grassfields is characterised of two main climatic conditions, the wet and the dry season. This is because Oshie lies within the inter-tropical zone with temperature that vary according to the changing seasons. There is no major sea or river but there are high and low altitudes that bring climatic changes in Oshie. Wet areas are found around the Mbei-chi, Nyebai and Barimbong quarter. Nyebai is located at a high altitude and has hot and wet climate whereas Barimbong is located in a lowland and forested region, having wet and hot climate due to its proximity to the Menchum valleys. The rainy season begins from the middle of the month of March and ends in October bringing along the south west trade winds with moisture from the Atlantic Ocean in the form of convectional and relief rainfall. The dry season begins in October and ends in March; during this period Oshie is dominated by the north east trade winds that come from the Sahara Desert. Here we have very hot days and very cold nights; little streams reduces in volumes and dry off with chunks of dry dust flying every where.⁸⁴

Farming activities in the chiefdom vary according to the changing seasons. This is due to the fact that, the vegetation in Oshie is characterised by savannah type with green grass on top of hills and valleys during the wet season because of heavy rainfall. At the approached of the dry season, the green grass on the valleys and hills change to brownish outlook. This is because of the hot weather during the day and intense sunlight. The variations in vegetation enables hunters and cattle rearers to set fire on the old species of brown grass in preparation for new species of green grass for grazing. The forested areas of Oshie are the *Togokweni* forest bordering the Konda village, while the *Mbei Okah* forest borders the Ekweri Banya and Ngwo villages. The forested areas are located among the hills mostly and the slopes. Little gallery forest located on the hilly slopes at Edek also serves as farming areas.

The valleys and hill tops serves the purpose of cultivation and at times for hunting activities by the male folk. In fact, the general landscape is hilly from all the directions except the low lands that are made up of valleys. These valleys comprise of streams that course down from the hilly slopes into the valleys. Notably, the Bereje, Fum, Wako and the Nyebai streams. Torrential rainfall in July, August and September often cause flood in the valleys. In the northern sector, the relief pattern are well arranged. The main peaks are the Fum, Nyebai, Nyekob-Fun, Bereje-Barimbong and the Ekeh-Bemban hills. The average altitude of these high slopes ranges between 1500m to 2000m above sea level.⁸⁵Other little hills resembles inselbergs. These hills comprised of steep slopes that render cultivation difficult. Most of the hilly slopes are used for the cultivation of economic crops by the women folk of Oshie. The

⁸⁴ Martin Anyangwe, "Oshie, People, Events and Places", Corus, Molyko Buea2010 p .2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid* p .2.

lower valleys are cultivated while the high slopes are meant for grazing. The Oshie people settled in the lowland areas along the streams to have access to sources of drinking water and to carry out farming activities in the fertile valleys to maintain the community together for subsistence life style. The foregoing geographical panorama of the chiefdom of Oshie portrays the area as affording most of the climatic conditions favourable for settlement.

1.2 Historical Setting

The historical setting of the people of Oshie according to evidences of oral history occured within the Western Grassfields societies. This appellation refers to the current administrative unit of the North West region that was changed to regions on 12 November 2008 through a presidential decree.⁸⁶ This area was highly populated during the Bantu migration in the nineteenth century by five main ethnic groups. These include the Widekum ethnic group, the Tikari ethnic group, the Chamba ethnic group, the Akum ethnic group and the Fulani ethnic group. According to primary and secondary sources, the Widekum ethnic group in the nineteenth century was the autochton of the Western Grassfields and was comparatively smaller in size than the Tikar ethnic group which was the largest in size. The historical origin of the Oshie people cannot be examined without making reference to the origin of the Wedikum ethnic group in which Oshie is a subset. This will provide us with an insight on the origin of traditional leadership in the chiefdom of Oshie, when they migrated from their place of origin during the mid 19th century.

1.2.1 Origin and Migration

The people of Oshie migrated from the Wedikum ethnic group, in other words, the Dudum ethnic group in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon. According to oral history, the group was made up of a composite of seven clans with varied sizes, in population and legitimate claimants of similar cultural roots and traits. These seven legitimate claimants of the Wedikum ethnic group of origin include Oshie, Menemo, Moghamo, Ngie, Mbu Baforchu, Baforkum and the Wedikum-Fumbe clans. Most of these clans are found in Momo division and others were dotted in Mezam and Tubah sub-divisions of the Western Grassfields region.⁸⁷ In the same vein, the seven clans that make up the Wedikum ethnic group owed allegiance to Wedikum. These clans were tied together with some inseparable ties of fraternity and legendary characteristics. They had a common ancestral site at Dudum which was the first

⁸⁶ Henry Kam Kay, Women's Resistance in Cameroon's Western Grassfields: The Power of Symbols, Organization, and leadership 1957-1961 in *African Studies Quarterly*, *Volume 12, Issues 3, Summer 2011* p. 68.

⁸⁷ Ndambi Isaac Akenjo, A Research Paper presented at OCA Convention Fako Chapter at Pendamboko 14 April 2006 p.3

generation site and also the site of great grand ancestors, the *Ongiekum* and *Iyirikum*. They possess a common linguistic affinity, the Mö suffix or language roots with some geographical proximities to each other alongside similar cultural traits. Any group of people in Momo division or other divisions of the Western Grassfields of Cameroon who do not possess the aforementioned attributes does not belong to the Wedikum ethnic group or Dudum people.⁸⁸

The Wedikum ethnic group of which Oshie was a subset, originated from the fringes of the forest region of the Congo basin in the central African region. This was during the migrations of the Bantus in the 19th century that was about some three hundred years ago. They immigrated into the region led by their great grand patriarch known as Kum and sought solace at a place called Dudum.⁸⁹ Dudum site was an ecotone settlement site near Teze village in the present Ngie clan and the Wedikum Fumbe clan in the south western edge of Momo division. According to oral tradition, at the Dudum settlement site, the patriarch and founder *Kum* had two sons called *Ongiekum* and *Iyirikum.*⁹⁰

These two sons lived amicably and successfully for long with their parents but one day a succession dispute broke out between them as to who was to succeed the ageing father kum. Unfortunately, the ageing father *Kum* could not accommodate their incessant quarrels and this apparently led to the separation of the two sons from Dudum site. Furiously, *Ongiekum* the first son left with his followers and migrated northwesterly and formed the Ngie clan, though still maintaining the same linguinstic ties with the other son. On the other hand, *Iyirikum* the second son also migrated southwesterly and founded the Wedikum-Fumbe clan located at the vicinity of river Momo. This explains why the languages of Wedikum are inter-related despite the separation of the children of Kum. Their father *Kum* and mother were abandoned to die at Dudum site when they left the area to other areas to seek for peaceful settlement and to conquer other territories. The Wedikum-Fumbe clan whose headquarters was Boffe was the classic clan in Menka sub-division today stands out as the second generation site of the Wedikum ethnic group and also as the point of dispersion of the Wedikum people as illustrated on map 4 below.

⁸⁸ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Places, Events, p.4.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*.



Map 4: Location of Oshie Chiefdom and Oshum Site in Momo Division

Source; Adapted from the Administrative Map of Cameroon, NIC Yaounde 1999

At the Wedikum-Fumbe clan, which was the second generation site of the Wedikum ethnic group, *Iyirikum* had many children. Some of the children voluntarily migrated northwesterly and settled at a place called Tadkon in Moghamo clan of present day Batibo. It was the great

grand ancestor called Mbekah or Tembekah and wife Akumakah who effectively occupied this Tadkon site. At Tadkon site, Mbekah gave birth to several children namely Ateh, Ijeaka, Achu, Tebugsa (Teboh), Teghennicho, Tembeng, Tewidikum, Oshie and Njidah. These children became mature and migrated from Tadkon site to form the various people of North West Region such as Oshie, Menemo, Moghamo, Mbu (Baforchu) and Baforkum in Bambui. The derivation of the Tadkon settlement site stands for market of tails, an appellation in Momo family language groupings. The Tadkon site is located some 2.5 km south of the present day Batibo town along the Bamenda Mamfe road. Relics of ancient historical settlement of the Wedikum ethnic group are found at the site with seven erected granitic rocks, symbolising the seven sons of Mbekah and Akumakah.⁹¹ In the mid 19th century, the descent of the nomenclature Tadkon was associated with some legend which held that;

Great grand ancestors of an ancient market established around the area of Wumugi valley in Batibo Town possessed very long tails. This ancient market place was made up of indigenous population and Mbekah and Akumakah were always found to be the first people seated on one permanent spot and the last to leave the market square. Many ancient market buyers and sellers doubted the nature of the couples and questioned why they never moved about in the market square like others for economic transactions and interactions. However, one day when the ancient market was in full session, there erupted a fight in the market and exchange of cutlasses for self defense. Women were heard screaming for mercy and the whole market population was stampeded. Long shouts of shoot! shoot! were heard and re-echoed everywhere in the market. In that moment of great confusion and fright in the faces of the market population, Mbekah and Akumakah were terrified. They quickly jumped up from their permanent seats with very long tails and escaped into the nearby forest to the amazement of the buyers and sellers. It was this ancient market incident and what observers saw that the market was renamed as "Tadkon" which means "a market of Tails.⁹²

From the Tadkon settlement site, some children of Mbekah and Akumakah namely Tembeng, Tebugsah, Teghennicho, Oshie, Njidah and Tewidikum voluntarily migrated northwards and settled at a place called Oshum. This was the fourth generation settlement site of the Wedikum ethnic group situated to the North of Nyenjei in Batibo sub-division. The Oshie people are said to have originated from Oshum according to historical evidences from Tadkon site of the Wedikum ethnic group or Dudum people. At Oshum settlement site, Tembeng, Tebugsah (Teboh) and Tegehennicho represented the ancestors of the Meta clan, while Oshie, Tewidikum and Njidah represented the people of Oshie. Both people lived amicably as migrants from Tadkon site of the Wedikum ethnic group. The Oshum site was a depression, highly forested, less populated and highly infested with myriads of large bats that were killed and consumed as food within the environment. Oshie, Njidah and Tewidikum who

⁹¹ Ndambi Isaac, A research paper presentation at OCA Convention, 2006 p.6.

⁹² Ibid.

represented the Oshie people at this site became skilful in the killing of these large bats for food. They named the Oshum site Mbeitong meaning in Oshie lexicon forest of bats.⁹³

The Oshum neighbours nowadays became known as the Nyenjei and Anong villages located in the south and east of Moghamo clan. Gwofon and Zang-Tabi villages of Meta clan are found in the west, while the north of Oshum is bordered by Nyen-Muwah in Moghamo clan. Oshum or *Mbeitong* comprised of savannah vegetation. Some areas in Oshum are locally called *Ogunoseh* meaning Oshie land occupied by the Meta people. This was the hunting grounds of the Oshie lineages when they lived together at *Mbeitong* with the Meta lineage groups. According to oral tradition and ethnographic interviews, a dispute arose one day between the Oshie and Meta clan leaders over a celebrated animal killed locally called Njuaw or hyna.⁹⁴ This animal was chased during a hunting expedition organised by the Oshie lineage group and was killed by the Meta lineage group. This phenomenon resulted to heated arguments and physical confrontations that led to the death of a Meta lineage brother. Hence in responsed to such calamity, the Oshie lineage decided to quit Oshum or *Mbeitong* settlement site for security reasons and to seek for a peaceful settlement area. They migrated from Oshum led by Oshie, Njidah and Tewidikum to new found lands.⁹⁵

Furthermore, during the nineteenth century, the Western Grassfields societies play host to many population movements. These movements involved major and minor groups moving from regions of insecurity to regions of safety. The Oshie people migrated from their Meta brothers during the last quarter of the nineteenth century to settle in peaceful lands as earlier mentioned. From Oshum they were led by Oshie, Njidah and Tewidikum to other new found lands for security and peaceful settlement as earlier mentioned. According to historical accounts, rulership was held by a strong and able personalities. During such movements of people, there was no election of rulers. A leader was identified through his outstanding qualities and strength. Nobody bothered much about who was leading a group if only an individual could distinguish himself as physically powerful. Others who manifested similar strength collaborated with the leader. According to oral history, during the migration of the

⁹³Mbeitong as used in the study symbolise the mythical ancestral site of origin of the Oshie people. The appellation Oshie was derived from the word Oshum and the leader of the people was known as Oshie.

⁹⁴ Ndambi, A Research paper presentation at OCA convention, 2006 p.7.

⁹⁵ *Ibid* p. 9.

Oshie people, some individuals due to their physical and spiritual strength outrightly distinguished themselves as rulers. These leaders included Njidah, Oshie and Tewidikum.⁹⁶

In this trend, the Oshie lineage from Oshum migrated towards Gwofon and settled temporarily on a small plain in Ngie clan, present day Angong village known as Mbang-Osege. The name was given as a result of the stopover settlement of the Oshie people at the site. It is the only place in the southern sector of Ngie that consist of raffia palm bushes. There was the notion that the Oshie people planted raffia palm bushes where ever they settled during migration. Due to the hostile nature of the Ngie people, the people of Oshie moved and climbed the hills and settled at Ajei in Ngie. They further moved away from Ajei because there was no forest for cultivation and the soils were infertile. Their next settlement was between Acha-Tugi village and the Tinechong village of upper Ngie, a forest area adjacent the present Acha-Tugi hospital. From Acha-Tugi, they descended the hills to the village of Tugi.⁹⁷ Movement was only on the hill tops because the valleys had thick bushes and tall trees. Arriving the Tugi village, the people of Oshie were irresolute on where to settle as they compared the greenery of Nyebai valley and that of Tugi.⁹⁸ They split into two factions, some continued and settled at the forest along the Barimbong quarter bordering the Menchum valleys while another group went further and settled at present day Fringyeng village. The Oshie people took many years to reach their present site and to consolidate their settlement.

1.2.2 Consolidation of Settlement

According to historical accounts, the migration and settlement of the people of Oshie at their present territorial site occurred within the last quarter of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century. According to evidence from oral information, the leader or ruler of the Oshie people was Emamba. A warrior who fought many wars along their migratory routes. The people of Oshie met a small group of people at their present site around Bereje and Eba quarters known as the Okies. According to oral information, this group of people though small in number were so rebellious in that, they defeated the people of Oshie led by Emamba where they moved and settled momentarily at *Mbei-Ndom* (Mundum forest). They later descended towards Barimbong quarter and settled on top of a hill.⁹⁹ But the worrior Emamba later

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Interview with Atambele Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie, July 2015.

⁹⁸ Idem.

⁹⁹Anjoneck, C. O, "Changing Settlement Patterns in Oshie Njikwa Sub-Division". Research Project, University of Buea, 1996 p.10.

fortified his people and pushed out the Okies at Eba and Bereje quarters. This created latitude for the people of Oshie to resettle on the land they had occupied because of its moderate climate and fertile soils.¹⁰⁰

In addition, the people of Oshie were victorious in all the wars they fought at their present site. To accredit themselves for their victory, they chanted heroic songs to praise themselves. Emamba and his descendants were good at local tribal wars, in that he made his people to understand that a leader or ruler must be brave or courageous to lead his people. For this reason, he was looked upon as the guidance of the people of Oshie. His house was built at Eba quarter that serves temporarily as the seat of royalty to the people. In order to establish the local administration that governs the people, he appointed certain individuals as his personal advisers. These people were accorded noble titles known as *Okum Obeg* and *Okum Nding*. These title men together with Emamba administered the people according to the norms laid down by tradition and custom.¹⁰¹

Moreover, in order to maintain adequate security, the people spread out from Eba area to Togobei and Fun areas.¹⁰² This was to impede any form of perilous intrusion into the land. From Eba quarter at the historical site known as (Oshumugwari) some people moved and settled at Nyebai and Togobeiku quarters while others moved to Nyikob quarters. Others moved to Bemban and Fum quarters. Those who settled at Togekuh later moved to Azani, Bereje, Baiku and Barimbong quarters. The movements were due to increase in population and the search for farmlands which later became permanent settlement areas.¹⁰³

1.2.3 Their Economic Pre-occupations

The economic pre-occupation of the people of Oshie during the period of settlement at their present site and after was dominated by agriculture with farming representing about 80% of the total population. The natural and human factors intermixed to produce a complex network of activities such as farming, carving, hunting and blacksmithing. The natural factors include topography, climate, vegetation, relief and drainage including the nature of soil. The soils in Oshie presents a variety of types as earlier mentioned at the beginning of the study. There are the fertile soils that were often washed by rain water and other agents of erosions. The black soil or alluvium located in the valleys and forested areas was used for cultivation by the

¹⁰⁰ Ndambi, A Research paper presentation p. 24.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰² *Ibid* p.18.

¹⁰³ Interview with Simon Tayong, 68, Retired Teacher and traditional elder *OKum*, Oshie, July 2017.

women folk. The economic life of the people was largely based on subsistence method. Parcels of lands were cultivated seasonally following the variation of the seasons and respecting the traditional calendar. At the beginning of each farming season paddocks of land were chopped out by the male folk for cultivation. There was the royal farm reserved for the royal family known as *Ekuh Ofuh* by the commoners. The royal planting season was believed to have blessings from the gods and ancestors of the land.¹⁰⁴

The process of cultivation involved the selection of site, the cutting down of the grass or forest growth, the arrangement of the grass into ridges, tilling of the earth using the hoe that was common in agriculture than the use of cutlass. Sometimes grass was gathered on ridges forming a semi circle with fire set on it to burnt known as *Akat*. Farming season followed the rythm of the dry and wet season pattern before planting, weeding and harvesting. Sometimes a fence was built round the farm to guard against animal incursion. Cultivation depended heavily on physical strength. Harvesting especially when it concerns stapple food like maize and beans was done in the month of June and July. Each house hold was expected to produce enough food to feed its occupants.¹⁰⁵

In this light, farming and harvesting activities were organised according to the weekly calendar which had eight days rotative which were *Koimbi, Yiche, Eba, Njebei, Yizang, Yingweki, Yishe* and *Njid.* Within these eight days, a day known as *Njebei* was set aside as traditional holiday during which it was prohibited for any kin and kith of the Oshie land to carry out farming activities.¹⁰⁶ The Oshie economy was considered as self sufficient although the variety of food items created problems. Moreover, it was not only farming that determined the welfare of the society, activities of the male folk helped to diversify the economy as well.¹⁰⁷

The men formed such working parties whose main objective was to clear the farms for the women to cultivate. Such activities constituted aspects like building houses and also to cut grass for the thatching of such houses during the dry season. It differed from that of the women in that membership did not necessarily require one to be a close neighbour. Rather,

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Atambele Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ *Idem*.

¹⁰⁶ This however portrays that; the notion of public holidays was not only limited to the Europeans system of administration. Grassfields colonial communities had their own holidays which varies according to tradition of the various chiefdoms. There was also the prompt holiday that could come up as a result of a ritual celebration or the death of a titled or traditional ruler.

the determining factor was one's ability, as hardworking people often formed such groups while lazy ones were eschewed. Generally, the crops grown included maize, yams, beans, cassava and cocoyams. The raffia palm, also constituted part of the wealth of the people of Oshie and could be considered among the most important crops. Maize was arguably the most widely, and perhaps most intensively cultivated of the food crops. It was one of the most preferred food crops for a number of reasons. Foremost, it took a shorter period to mature and needed relatively less labour input than most of the other crops. Secondly, it could be prepared in many ways and could also be easily preserved for a year or two.¹⁰⁸

Another crop of great importance and prevalence was the cocoyam. According to P.N. Nkwi and J. P. Warnier, this crop was introduced into West Africa from Southeast Asia as early as 1500 A. D. The crop appears to have had an early entry into the economy of Oshie as evidenced by its prevalence by 1930.¹⁰⁹ Oral evidence all point to the fact that, this crop had been well established in Oshie by the early twenties. It constituted a major staple food in other communities of the Wedikum ethnic group such as Ngie, Meta and Mogamo. Also of pre-eminence was plantain. This was one of the most cultivated crops by the early part of the 20th century and was unique for a number of reasons. Firstly, of all the food crops, it was the only one that was considered as a man's crop in Oshie was cultivated exclusively by men. In a society where farming in general and food crop production in particular was the preserve of women, this made the crop unique and special. Secondly, it was used in funeral and birth ceremonies, and by most secret organisations. This crop enjoyed the special advantage of being cultivated very close to the homes.¹¹⁰

Moreover, sweet potatoes and yams also constituted a major source of food for most of the people of Oshie. These crops were planted in farms alongside other crops like beans, maize and pumpkin. The crop was amongst the oldest or traditional crops of the people of Oshie said to have been introduced in the area by the Germans. In addition to these food crops, were a variety of vegetables. In sum, so many different types of food crops were cultivated in Oshie. In addition to the generally cultivated food crops, were a number of tree crops. As was the case with some food crops, their cultivation was subject to the dictates of ecology. Consequently, their cultivation was better emphasised in areas that possessed the appropriate natural conditions. The major difference between these crops and other crops lay

¹⁰⁸ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.18.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

in the fact that their cultivation or control was mainly in the hands of the men in contrast to the other food crops, which were in the hands of the women.¹¹¹

Weaving constituted the main activities of the people such as weaving of basket made from local materials from raffia palms and bags. Weaving was one of the most popular and widespread of the traditional industries of the Oshie people. It was as diversified as it was popular and the main articles woven included bags, baskets and caps. The type of weaving adapted in an area was in response to the material needs of the people as dictated by the natural environment. Weaving was also a reflection of man's interaction with his material environment, as the people used mostly the material that was available in their local environment. Every craftsman tried to make his or her article unique by giving it beauty and style. For, a craftsman who distinguished himself in his field earned honour, admiration and respect from the community.¹¹² Every quarter had its weavers of one genre or the other. The raffia palm provided the raw material for a variety of crafts. Beautiful bags were made and coloured red with a camwood dye, or many coloured by the numerous native vegetable dye. Most of the baskets produced were reserved to the women folk. While the men mostly used bags, the women predominantly used baskets for carrying crops from the farms. Special baskets were designed for the headloading of piglets, fowls over long distances for sale.¹¹³

Hunting equally constituted an old human pursuit that was commonly practiced by the people of Western Grassfields. It was a major means by which many families obtained meat while domestic animals were preserved mostly for special occasions and for trade. In Oshie, hunting was carried out for economic reasons, both fresh and smoked animals could be found being sold in the local market. While animals were generally hunted for food, some parts of certain animals constituted an important socio-cultural attraction. The skins of certain animals were used for amulets. Some animals were of a special importance in the society and their body parts served different purposes such as decorative identification.¹¹⁴

In addition, only the Fon or person of great achievements were allowed to use the tail of a buffalo or drink from its horn while the skin of animals such as tiger, hyena and leopard

¹¹¹ In Oshie there was and still exist seasons of cultivation of certain food crops. For instance many of the food crops are cultivated during the wet season as there is a mark different between the seasons.

¹¹² Local craft such as the weaving of bags and baskets was common in Oshie during the early 1980s. Men and women earn their living from such economic enterprises.

¹¹³ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁴ Hunting also constitute part of the economic activities of the Oshie people during the colonial period. The enterprise was commonly practice among the people up to when cows were introduced in Oshie by the Hausas normads.

were used by titled men and brave hunters for decoration. Such animals were highly prized and it required much courage and skill to kill them and as such, high quality was placed on them. Hunters who killed such animals were highly praised and decorated by the Fon with red plume and porcupine quil. According to Warnier and P.N. Nkwi, hunters who killed a leopard were rewarded by being feasted like courageous warriors. They were allowed to stick a red primary feather of the turaco bird in their cap. It was believed that, only the Fons could transform themselves into leopards, and so they had an exclusive right on slain leopards and on leopard pelts.¹¹⁵

Infact, the hunting season was performed during the royal annual hunt within which lawful important animals caught were sent to the palace.¹¹⁶ *Abuem Ofuh* referring to the royal hunting ground at Togochi,¹¹⁷ there were equally other hunting expedition carried out by the people of Oshie during the 1953, such as Abungwo,s hunting groung at Mbei-Andongma (*Abuem Abungwo*), *Abuem Egwei* at Edek, *Abuem Anyenibaa* at Edome-okob Angwengha-Ambu and *Abuem Otschad* at Atum. Hunting characterised the main activity of the Oshie people during the colonial period.¹¹⁸ For this reason the Fon encouraged people to engage in hunting activities because those who return from the hunting grounds with games were rewarded and honoured by their families. This type of hunting was associated to the Olympic sporting activities because the entire population of the male folk in the community were involved. Games killed on organized hunting grounds on hunting days were shared into two parts.¹¹⁹ The owner of the hunting ground owned the abdomen and the two hind legs as tradition demands.¹²⁰

The hunting activities were influenced by the growth of locally manufactured weapons such as Dane guns and traps by black smith firms located in Nyekob and Fumebei quarters. Such implements however encouraged the men to continue to diversify the Oshie colonial economy in the domain of hunting. The hunting expeditions died down during the year 1954 when cows were introduced into Oshie by the Fulani normadic settlers. However, livestock

¹¹⁵ Interview with Andongkobi Moses, 65, Traditional herbalist, Oshie, 12 May, 2017.

¹¹⁶ Idem.

¹¹⁷ This was the Fons of Oshie hunting ground at a place known as *Togochi*. It was often headed by notables during hunting expeditions, any game caught was reserved for the Fon and the royal family. ¹¹⁸ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.36.

¹¹⁹ Ngam Confidence. C, "Kom Leadership in its Regional Sub Setting1865-2005: A Study in Power Diplomacy within a Traditional State in the Cameroon Grassfields" Ph. D Thesis University of Yaounde I 2013 p.45.

such as cattle, sheep and goats rearing remains the major economic pre-occupation of Oshie indigenes¹²¹

The Oshie economy was largely subsistence and most of the products that were consumed within the house hold and the community were obtained through the exchange by barter. Exchange transaction was made from house to house between close and familiar people. The economy of Oshie during this period was largely tired down to the cultivation of local crops for consumption such as local carrots known *Osaah*, peanuts (*injock*), varieties of beans and egusi, yams and cocoyams as well. The barter system developed a circuit of network activities that were well tailored to ensure a vibrant economy. Trade was an integral and indispensable economic activity, which influenced production beyond limited requirements of the house hold or community. The local market known as *Ewing Njid* for the community was located at a place called Edom where the indigenes met to trade and exchange their produce. Local markets were therefore markets within the ethnic territory where people could travelled to and fro in the same day.¹²²

The economic pre-occupation of the people of Oshie was equally centred within long distance trade with their close as well as distant chiefdoms. The people of Oshie traded with the people of Beba in Menchum valley and Bako markets in items such as palm wine within the same day. Distant markets were those beyond the community territory and where the distance between the home and the market could be covered by foot in more than a single day. Precious commodities in Oshie such as palm wine and pigs were obtained through enterprising men (Traders) from neighbouring communities. It was through these traders that great number of foreign articles freely entered Oshie. Long distance trade was also carried out in items like pottery pots by some of these traders as far as reaching the neighbouring Nigeria, where manufactured products like kitchen utencils such as aluminium dishes, plates, clothes and gun powder were brought to Oshie.¹²³ Some of the storage of palm oil. By the middle of the twentieth century, female traders from Oshie started exchanging rare items with palm

¹²¹ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.8.

¹²² Interview with Anjonek Joshua, 70, Farmer, Oshie, July 2015.

¹²³ Interview with Ndika Stephen, 70, Assistant traditional elder *Ngyeh*, a wealthy trader who used to trade with the Nigeria markets of Ekom and Onitcha, Oshie, 13 May, 2016.

oil from Menka (Wedikum), Ngie and the Meta markets (Tad). Infact this was the method in which Oshie commercial economy during the colonial period was organised.¹²⁴

Another characteristic of Oshie colonial economy was slavery and slave dealing known as *Ishum* meaning raids among the neighbouring communities. Slavery was a system under which people were treated as property to be bought and sold, and were forced to work. Slaves were people held against their wills from the time of their capture, and deprived of human rights. Historical evidence holds that; slavery was institutionally recognized by many societies. Slavery and slave trade was an age old institutions practiced in almost every continent in the world as remarked by Orlando Patterson;

There is nothing notably peculiar about the institution of slavery. It has existed from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilized. There is no region on earth that has not at some time harboured the institution. Probably there is no group of people whose ancestors were not at one time slaves or slave traders or holders. Slavery was firmly established in all the great early centres of human civilization.¹²⁵

What can be said with some certainty is that slavery was commonly practiced in Cameroon as in other black African countries although it varied from community to community.¹²⁶ Slavery was a social phenomenon in the Western Grassfields societies of Cameroon. Populations here were usually classified into royals, commoners, and slaves. Commoners were the freeborn and the descendants of the founding ancestors. The royals were those who belonged to the ruling lineage. Slaves were people who were captured in isolated raids or were people bought from neighbouring communities. They could also be marginal individuals sold by notables or held as debt pawns or penal subjugates or persons considered as witches that were sold away.¹²⁷ Finley captured the circumstances of obtaining slaves when he remarked that warfare also maintain the general supply of slaves;

Even war, furthermore produces captives, not slaves; captives are transformed into slaves by the consumers, who obtain them through the agency of slave traders. In some, war and conquest were no doubt important contributing factors to the establishment and preservation of a slave Society.¹²⁸

The people of Oshie got involved in the practiced of indigenous slavery when they had settle at their present site during the first quarter of the twentieth century. This was provoked by the prevalence of inter-tribal wars whereby captives from neighbouring communities were

¹²⁴ *Idem*.

¹²⁵Akosua Perbi, *Slavery and the Slave trade in Pre-colonial Africa*, Fulbright scholar in Residence, Manchester College Indiana, U.S.A, 1982 p.4.

¹²⁶*Ibid*..

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ Nkwi, Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields p.120.

subdued and rendered as slaves. According to Oshie oral history, the people of Oshie captured people from neighbouring communities during inter-tribal warfares and made them as slaves. This was basically to add their numbers in other to subdue other groups of people.¹²⁹ Captives from the tribal wars were owned by the Fon and titlemen such as the traditional elders *Okum* who were his closed associates. The act of capturing people and rendering them as slaves in Oshie became prominent through the regional and long distance trade, as a result it became a common practice among the people.¹³⁰ Punitive attacks known as *Ishum* were often organised during the night by able men and raided captives from neighbouring communities.¹³¹ The appellation *Ojub* in Oshie was refered to a slave or persons captured during such practices.¹³²

The medium of exchange for enslaved individuals was by barter but it later changes to the used of cowries. Cowries were used in the purchase of slaves; a male slave was worth one hundred cowries while a female slave was exchanged for two hundred cowries. The value system was socially determined by the need, social significance and importance.¹³³ The cowry was an advanced type of currency used in West Africa and in the Western Grassfields chiefdoms in regional trade. Cowries were usually one hundred on a string. Several strings could obtain a slave. By the year 1924, iron bracellets were used as money but later replaced by pounds and shillings depending on the age and healthy nature of the slave.¹³⁴

In addition, some of the male slaves performed economic activities like clearing of farms, rearing of domestic animals such as goats, pigs, fowls, hunting, and tapping of palm wine and carrying out errand transactions for their owners.¹³⁵ During this period also, some people acquired slaves for personal reasons. These include prestige, power and procreation. The more slaves one had, reflected one's prestige, power and status in the society. Men who were not married or those whose wives could not give birth obtained slave women from

¹²⁹Interview with Pa Owachege, 89, Patriarch, Oshie, 13 September, 2015.

¹³⁰ *Idem*.

¹³¹ Ngri walter Slavery and Slave Dealing among the Oshie people of Njikwa Subdivision North West Region1902-1930 p.41.

¹³² *Ibid*.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Interview with Simon Tayong, 70, Farmer, Oshie, 13 September2017.

¹³⁵ *Idem*.

neighbouring communities as their wives. Others acquired many women for procreation that was why the practice of polygamy was rampant in Oshie during the era.¹³⁶

Beside, individuals who constituted the Oshie economy at the time included slave dealers and title men such as the traditional elders *Okum as* earlier mentioned, wealthy individuals and warriors who had distinguished themselves in inter-tribal wars also acquired slaves to work for them. The Fon also possessed slaves that were brought into the royal family through wars with neighbouring communities. Voluntary persons with no means of livelihood subjugated themselves and worked in the Palace as Palace retainers.¹³⁷ The Fon henceforth acted as their protector, housed and fed them and in some situations provided them with women in marriage and a piece of land to cultivate their crops on.¹³⁸

The slaves acted as vectors in the economy of Oshie because most of the domestic and farming activities was left in their care. It was not common for the Fon to dispose a freeborn indigene of Oshie into Slavery. This only occurred when the individual was suspected of witchcraft, adultery with any of the Fons wife. As a matter of fact among the societies of the Western Grassfields and Oshie in particular, slaves were being purchased and owned by wealthy persons to work for them. Nkwi corroborated such act by asserting that, most of the slave dealers were chiefs, princes, wealthy notables, great warriors and lineage heads. They did not only have authority over things and people but they also controlled and manipulated the destiny of many dependents.¹³⁹

1.3 Political Organisation

Political organization was the structure through which a society was organized following the traditional institutions found in it. They had the capacity of enforcing law and order in the society by making use of sanctions authorised by the customs and traditions of the people over whom the authority was exercised.¹⁴⁰ The political organization of the people of the Western Grassfields societies were categorized under two main types, that is, the segmentary and centralized political systems. Pritchard and Fortes in their publication paints an image of African political organisation when they remarked that;

It will be noted that the political systems described in this book fall into two main categories. One group, which we refer to as group A consists of those societies which have centralized authority,

¹³⁶Interview with Fondeh Mathew, 80, Farmer, Oshie, 17 September2017.

¹³⁷ Idem.

¹³⁸ Interview with Atambere Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie, 13 September 2015.

¹³⁹ Nkwi, Slavery and Slave Trade in the Kom kingdom, p. 245.

¹⁴⁰ Aletum, Introduction to General Sociology, p.134.

administrative machinery and judicial institutions-in short a government and in which cleavages of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority. The other group which we refer to as group B,consists of those societies which lack centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, in which there are no sharp divisions of rank, status or wealth.¹⁴¹

The political organisation of the chiefdom of Oshie was categorized under the centralized system where the Fon was at the top and wielded power to the other local organs in the society. Western Grassfields Fondoms and chiefdoms as sovereign political groups were headed by a single ruler who delegated authority to representatives of the decentralised units. The Fon was at the top embedded with special supernatural powers to which were linked the welfare of his fondom. The functions and prosperity of the Fondom depended largely on the authority of the Fon. These supernatural powers were sometimes thought to be inherent in the kingship or they were bestowed upon him by appropriate doctoring.¹⁴²

In addition, the Fon was the kingdom and as such, all the land belonged to him. He had ultimate control over the land, all the people belonged to him and was the supreme judge who could command their labour. The delegation of authority such as in the chiefdom of Oshie trickles from the Fon down to the quarter heads. Among most societies of the Western Grassfields, the organization and co-ordination of the chiefdom was done in the palace known in Oshie as *Toh* or head quarter. The administrative structure began with the family units at the base and runs through the quarter heads to the Fon at the top. The Fon was at the top of the administration aided at that level by a battery of traditional governance institutions known as traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*.¹⁴³ He was also aided in his administration by the judiciary institutions such as the *Aken* which was the body that rendered justice in the chiefdom in collaboration with other administrative units. Thus the first administrative structure in Oshie was the chiefdom.¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, it was within the chiefdom that all the traditional institutions were found. The ruler of the chiefdom was said to originate from a royal family. He was referred to as the Fon and the title in which he was addressed has meaning only within a given culturally defined group although changes from one ethnic group to another. The administrative set up of the chiefdom consisted of many quarters and family units. The political and administrative

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁴¹ Ngri Walter. A., "Slavery and slave dealing among the Oshie people of Njikwa sub division North West region 1902-1930", M.A dissertation University of Yaounde 1, 2014 p.32.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*.

organization of the chiefdom was basically the same throughout the Western Grassfields societies.¹⁴⁵

Most chiefdoms and Fondoms were formed as a result of increase in population as well as conquest over other communities and land acquisition. Some were peopled forcefully or peacefully and some were submerged and rendered as vassal states. The Fon or head of the political organization went by different appellations in the different traditional African states as earlier mentioned. Although there were all regarded as decentralized structures with same or similar functions. The political and social position of every given Fon such as the case of Oshie polity, depended on different but common variables. This was usually because as heads of the political unit, they mastered or were expected to master customs and traditions to be able to handle matters within the society with ease.¹⁴⁶

In addition, they were the first to talk during traditional gatherings and their decision were always scrutinised with caution. Within the chiefdom of Oshie, the Polity constituted of key areas where power was systematically diffused. The chiefdom was made up of a good number of quarters with quarter heads who were all answerable to the Fon in all political, social, economic and cultural matters. The chiefdom was structured into thirty-two quarters, which were further divided into sub quarters each under a quarter head, with two renowned family units, the Andek and the Oyemi. There were nineteen family units and sub-units that make up the various families in the chiefdom of Oshie.¹⁴⁷ The political organisation of the chiefdom constituted of a number of traditional institutions with almost similar functions. The battery of traditional administration emanated from the family heads (Angokie) and move through the quarter heads (Atoyoguobei) to the traditional council (Ecorobei) headed by the Fon. The Fon had no position in the council of traditional elders, he often invites them for discussion in the palace. The traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* worked in conjunction with the Fon to maintain peace and smooth functioning of the chiefdom.¹⁴⁸ They had the privilege to attend important ceremonies in the community as earlier mentioned. This can be seen as depicted on Figure 1 below.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁶ Ngri Walter. A., "Slavery and Slave Dealing among the Oshie people of Njikwa sub-division North West region 1902-1930", 2014 p.32.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Andigema Peter 75 Farmer, Oshie 17 September 2015.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*.



Figure 1: The Political Organisation in Oshie

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Field Work, Initiative, Oshie, March 2015.

Note: The figure above, represents the political organisation in the chiefdom of Oshie. The administrative organs began with the family units at the bottom and runs through the quarter heads and the traditional council to the Fon at the top. The administration of justice begins from the family heads and runs through the quarter heads to the traditional council headed by the Fon at the top as indicated by the arrows on the left side of the figure. The Fon was at the
top of the political organisation, aided in the administration of the chiefdom by the traditional governance institutions known as, the traditional elders *Okum* that consist of the judiciary arm *Aken* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* as indicated by the arrows on the right hand side of the figure. Information from the Fon to the indigenes moved, through the traditional elders *Okum* to the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* before it was dessiminated to the various family units in the chiefdom by the quarter heads as indicated by the arrows.¹⁴⁹

As a centralised entity, the traditional palace in Oshie was referred to as Toh as earlier mentioned. It was traditionally held to be the capital of the chiefdom and the cradle of all powers. The palace was renowned in that it was not only the seat and home of the highest ruler but also the seat of the traditional council. It was well tailored to handle law, order and prosperity. The royal compounds were peopled with many wives, princes and princesses, pages and palace retainers. Enshrined with the duty of protecting traditional seals, the palace had many houses that were divided into many departments.¹⁵⁰ The size and the general paraphernalia of the palace replicated the status and extent of its relations with neighbouring communities. Societies with larger palaces were Fondoms such as Mankon, Bafut, Nso and Kom chiefdoms to name a few. Oshie chiefdom also constituted of a well organised palace or Toh. According to Chilver and Kaberry, the Fon resided in his palace at the capital and was assisted in administration by his hereditary councillors and the queen mother. His pages were recruited from boys of retainer status. His palace, property and his wives were supervised by palace stewards who were also of retainer status.¹⁵¹ The housing architecture as seen on the the picture below represents just a tiny segment of the different departments. The Palace was segmented into many department and each of these departments has a precise role to play in the internal heirachy as earlier mentioned. In the pre colonial days, building was done with purely local material that consist of bamboo, mud and thatch as oppose to the sun dried and corrugated zinc as found in the picture below. Plate 1 depicts a cross sectional view of Oshie palace *Toh* with the grass house at the centre.

¹⁴⁹ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.81

¹⁵⁰ Ngri., "Slavery and slave dealing among the Oshie people of Njikwa Subdivision North West region 1902-1930", 2014 p.32.

¹⁵¹ E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry, From Tribute to Tax in a Tikar chiefdom. Africa Journal of the International African Institute volxxx No 1 January 1960 p.2.

Plate 1: Cross Sectional View of Oshie Palace (Toh)



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection, Oshie Palace, March 2016.

The Oshie palace consist of both modern and colonial structures. Some houses were richly decorated with arts objects of various kinds. At the centre of the palace was the traditional grass house known as the Fon 's house. This house was constructed with bamboos, sticks, plastered with mud and roof with thatched grass. It was in the grass house that the Fon and the traditional elders *Okum* met for important discussions regarding the chiefdom. The traditional ancestral stones known as *Ifoung*, were also kept in the grass house.¹⁵² This was also where the deceased Fons of Oshie were buried following the tradition and custom of the people. The palace was the rallying point especially during annual celebrations where the Fon divulge his mystical personality by appearing in the public. The palace was equally the incarnation of the secret societies of the chiefdom like the *Kwifuh* cult which was housed in the palace and was forbidden to every kith and kindred in Oshie. It was generally in the palace that the traditional council met to arbitrate disputes and crimes committed by members of the community and to take decisions on development policies. The second administrative unit in the political organisation in Oshie was the quarters.

The quarters as an administrative unit also played an eminent role as far as traditional politics is concerned. The quarter was made up of all the lineages in the political unit and the political leader was the quarter head though not heretable as in some Tikar Fondoms. The appellation of this political leader changes according to the culture of the group. It is a

¹⁵² Interview with Anyanwe Lawrence, 44, Prince of the Royal Family, Oshie, 15 June, 2017.

conventional title that has meaning only within the ethnic group. His functions are similar to those of the lineage head, but more demanding because he has to co-ordinate the activities of many lineages. The quarter head had institutions such as the quarter council made up of the heads of the various lineages. This council was presided over by the quarter head. The chiefdom was made up of twenty-eight quarters each headed by a quarter head. At first the position of the quarter head was in the hands of the traditional elders (*Okum*) but due to increase in population, quarter heads were appointed by members of each quarter and preference accorded to individuals who could read and write.¹⁵³

Moreover, the quarter heads were all answerable to the Fon. Every quarter in the past was organized into what was known as *Komiti*.¹⁵⁴ The quarter head was so powerful and authoritative that no body opposes him. He instituted a Trouble Fund and a Development Fund. There was also a sanitary inspector appointed by the Fon who went round every Sunday which was a local public holiday to make sure that all compounds were swept and that no pig was vagrant. He also made sure that each compound had a pit latrine. The Fon relied so much on the quarter heads and the activities of the *Komitis*. It was through the *Komitis* that the road from Acha to Oshie was dug between the year 1953 and 1959.¹⁵⁵ These *Komitis* encompassed every member of the quarter. During the *Komiti* meetings, the quarter heads informed the people on the new decision taken in the traditional council. These community development meetings inculcated the spirit of unity and hard work into every member in the chiefdom. Nowadays in Oshie, the quarter heads still act as the link between the people and the Fon. The last administrative unit in the political structure in oshie were the family units.¹⁵⁶

Furthermore, the composition of each quarter in Oshie was made up of lineages headed by the family heads. The family head or paterfamilias in most cases was the senior person in the family. The family sub units in Oshie was made up of father, mother, children, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces. The extended family was often traced from the female lineage. The family head presided over the immediate family meetings.¹⁵⁷ In matters such as giving daughters out for marriage, cleansing of the family ancestral stones *Ifoung*, pouring of libation and appeasing the ancestors during family meetings was carried out by the family

¹⁵³ Interview with Egute Jonas, 39, Quarter head, Oshie, 21October, 2015.

¹⁵⁴ In the colonial days in Oshie, quarter heads often organised communal labour known as *Komitis*, to built bridges and clean routes paths in the entire community.

¹⁵⁵ An Annual Publication Magazine, Oshie 1984 p.15.

¹⁵⁶¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Andigema Evelyn, The Oshie of Njikwa Sub-division 2008 p.38.

head.¹⁵⁸ The family ancestral stones *Ifoung* were always two in number, the male and female kept in the family head compound. The ancestral stones were believed to be alive and maintained vigil over all members of the chiefdom just like the ancestral stones kept at the grass house. They were cleansed annually with special herbs by the family head together with other family members. The blood of a fowl was spilled over the stones during rituals. It was believed that, the stones guides the family members against evil attacks reserved solely for the responsibility of the family head.¹⁵⁹ Sacrifices in the form of libations were poured on the stones to expiate any curse in the family by the family head. The family head was both master of the family unit, father and conciliator between petty thievery commited by members of the family.¹⁶⁰

1.4 Traditional Governance Institutions

Traditional governance institutions were the assembly of traditional organs, bodies, agents and personalities whose source of strength emanated directly from a system of government which had as goal; the maintenance of law and order, the wellbeing of the society and its people.¹⁶¹ These institutions sustained the Fon in the local administration of the chiefdom. One common characteristic of traditional institutions are that, most of their moral principles and legal authority was enveloped in mystical and religious connotations. With regards to the role played by African traditional institutions Brown emphasized that:

Legal authority [legitimate power] was commonly held by heads of African lineages and clans [..] they settled disputes between members, mainly by arbitration and punish some offences committed by members. Small fines were usually imposed in such cases but some lineage or clan heads had the extensive right to pawn, enslave, expel and dispossess members.¹⁶²

The traditional governance institutions in the context of our study, aided in the local administration of the chiefdom of Oshie together with the Fon. We also claim that, these decentralized structures work together with the Fon to maintain unity and development in the chiefdom. The main institutions here are the Fon and his royal paraphernalia, traditional elders *Okum*, assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, the village traditional council and the Judiciary society known as the *Aken* secret society. The palace institutions include the *Kwifuh* society, no matter the size was tailored to handle the mortuary celebrations of notables, princes and other title men in the chiefdom.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Tayong simon, 67, Retired Teacher and Traditional elder Okum, Oshie, 17 June, 2015

¹⁵⁹ Binda Kinyam, Tilly Light in Oshie, 2008 p.37

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Traditional institutions are the pillars of every society.

¹⁶² Leonard Markovis in African Politics and society (the free press New York, 1970) p.14.

1.4.1 The Fonship

The word "Fon" as used in our study was the connotation for the English word "chief" as used by the people of the Western Grassfields. Chief was a colonial creation which has nothing to do with tradition. ¹⁶³The choice (selection) and enthronement of the Fon differed from one society to the other. Upon initiation the Fon was said to have been accorded mystical politico religious powers which could not be compared even to the leaders of the most powerful states today. Nkwi describes the Fon or traditional ruler better when he emphasizes that;

.....He [the Fon once enthroned] became a recognised ruler of all his people who saw him not merely as a person who could enforce his will on them and get services, but he was also the axis of the political relations, the symbol of their unity and exclusiveness and the embodiment of their essential values. His palace was an epicentre for the distribution of wealth offices and specific duties.¹⁶⁴

This was how Fonship or supreme rulers were esteemed in African societies. They incarnated all the different echelons of the classes of people within their areas of jurisdiction. With the help of socio-political and economic institutions, the Fon had the right of life over his subjects. In the chiefdom of Oshie, traditional supreme rulers were questioned by no one else but the gods and the spirits of ancestors.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, the Fon had the absolute right of declaring war, making peace and signing alliances of all sorts with distant and close neighbours. As divine appointees answerable only to the gods of the land and to the spirits of the ancestors, they were equally the supreme commanders in traditional councils of their Chiefdoms and Fondoms.

Their missions over their subjects were define both by necessities and priorities. They are venerated, feared and respected by all. This was seen in the way they were held and venerated by every body in the society. In fact, they sat on special thrones in palaces placing their feet on leopard skins. They also had the right to command and ratify all decisions of the communities. The effectiveness of the Fon's decision over his people depended to a large extent on his legitimate authority. Legitimacy is derived from the general acceptability of his subjects. Indeed, four Fons from the Anyangwe dynasty have ruled in Oshie chiefdom and were accorded many appellations such as *Ata'ah*, *Azap*, *Ofuh* and *Ngi-nyam* all referring to the Fon. *Ngi-nyam* carried some charismatic connotation of a leader referring to the Fon as an undisputed ruler of the people. *Azap* symbolises the ceiling and sky that provides shelter to its

¹⁶³ Supreme rulers were named according to local dialectic implications but they shared similar tasks over their subjects.

¹⁶⁴ Nkwi, Traditional Governmet and Social Change p.34.

¹⁶⁵ It was a taboo in traditional African Relations for subjects to question the action of their leaders for they were believed to be acting in the interest of their subjects. This attitude changed with the coming of colonization and its various effects on traditional institutions and belief system.

subjects. These two forms of salutations were presented to the Fon when he was addressing a gathering, a council session or the entire community. These salutations were signs of respect and honour bestowed on the highest authority in Oshie. The Fon was greeted upon by the subjects by stooping down and claping both hands twice.¹⁶⁶

According to the superior calibre of office of the Fon of Oshie, his personality was not under rated, such as to be touched, challenged or insulted by his subjects. His sacred nature projected him like a demi-god esteemed and obeyed in the public. The office of the Fon comprised of many duties, as head of the traditional government, he was the chief executive, judge and army as well as a high priest in the Oshie community.¹⁶⁷ As a custodian of the traditions and customs of his people, the Fon of Oshie is bearer of the highest authority in the community. This provided him with the enthusiasm to command and ensure the political life of his subjects in the society. He enacted laws and guaranteed the dominion of his community. He also had the responsibility of appointing quarter heads and is the unique possessor of titles, awards and honour.¹⁶⁸ The Fon also exercised dynamic qualities in that, he could declare war and mediate for peace after consultation with the secret society *Aken*.

As supreme judge, every outcome of impartiality in the community was pronounced by him. He served as the tribunal and arbitrated in matters that warranted summary punishment. The Fon was the spiritual emblem of his people, a representative of the ancestor and the gods of the earth. He appeased the spirits of the land by offering sacrifices to the gods and ancestors during the *Anangkobi* dance festivals. The sacrifices and rituals he offered are overtly believed to offer blessing and strengthen the people's relations with the gods of the land. In the main, the Fon possessed numerous rights, trait and privileges that distinguished him from his subjects. He was praise-worthy and a celebrity with a mystical office while his person-hood was sacrosanct. This type of spiritualism of the Fon 's office reinforced his power.

He also ordered free labour from his people on his farms and the construction of the palace. In return, he received from his subjects gifts of honour and produce.¹⁶⁹ This rated him the wealthiest person in the community. As the owner of the land, the Fon of Oshie also had the responsibility to feed his subjects. Warnier captured this colonial role of traditional rulers

¹⁶⁶ Andigema Evelyn "The Oshie of Njikwa Subdivision p.36.

¹⁶⁷ Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systemp.xxi.

¹⁶⁸ Chilver, E.M. and Kaberry "From Tribute to Tax in Tikar Chiefdom" Africa 30:1(1960) pp.1-19.

¹⁶⁹ Tohnji Walters Samah.T., "Chiefs (Traditional Rulers in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance 1961-2000, 2006p.76.

when he remarked that; The chief or Fon was like a "container" or a "vessel" that bound the people together, united and protected them, sealed the land from malevolent forces and poured out vital life-semen and assured continuity.¹⁷⁰ Ascending to the office of a Fon represented accepting to bestow oneself to the service of the people. This assertion was confirmed by Miaffo Dieudouné when he remarked that;

Etre chef, c'est s'engager à s'investir au service des habitants de son village et de ses intéreets. Cet engagement doit se lire dans sa résistance aux menaces, aux chantages et aux expressions de toutes sortes. Il doit se lire dans la défense acharnée de sa population.¹⁷¹

According to him the chief was not an exclusive authority. He shared his authority and responsibilities with other institutions and personalities of renown and integrity such as the notables whose main duty was to enforce and regulate his power. The organisation of the office of the chief maintained a fair balance in the distribution of power and ensured checks and balances. There was a strict code of manner that was abound to. This however restrained his activities within the palace vicinity. Despite all these checks and balances of his powers, the position of the Western Grassfields traditional rulers and Oshie in particular during the colonial period was not contestable.¹⁷² He was circumscribed only within his chiefdom but the situation was reversed during the post-colonial era.

In addition, in the local administration of the chiefdom of Oshie, the Fon executed supreme powers and was assisted in his royal authority by the traditional governance institutions known as the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* and the appointed quarter heads. The Fon was equally assisted in the local administration of the chiefdom by the regulatory societies known as the *Aken* and *Kwifuh* secret societies which will be discussed as the study unfolds. The Fon also had access to confer with Oshie cultural and development association and heads of development committees to design development projects in Oshie. It was therefore obvious that, the amount of success of an African traditional ruler depended largely on the magnitude of compliance the subjects accorded him.¹⁷³

The succession rite to the royal throne in the chiefdom of Oshie according to tradition was hereditary and derived from the same ancestral origin as established during the reign of

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid* p.77.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid* p.76.

¹⁷² Andigema Evelyn "The Oshie of Njikwa Subdivision p.42.

¹⁷³ Ngam., "Kom Leadership in its Regional Sub Setting 1865-2005: A Study in power Diplomacy within a Traditional State in the Cameroon Grassfields", 2013 p.106

Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe. As a matter of fact, the designation of traditional rulers in the Anyangwe dynasty followed an old time pattern whereby the deceased ruler proposed and the royal family alongside the traditional elders *Okum* scrutinized for eventual enthronement. In fact, the enthronement of traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie was invariably carried out together with the appointment of palace attendance known as *Tsangndei*. The selection was done by the traditional elders *Okum*, but most often by the Fon. The four Fons from the Anyangwe dynasty have administered Oshie chiefdom alongside with Notables. Each of them played a significant role in facilitating the errand activities of the Fons in the palace and the chiefdom at large. Table 1 below depicts the four Fons of the Anyangwe dynasty alongside their palace attendance.

	Fons	Reign	Duration	(Notables)
1	Adang Anyangwe Engu I	1918-1924	6 years	-Traditional elders(<i>Okum</i>) Assistant traditional elders (<i>Ngeh</i>)
2	Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe II	1925-1974	49 years	(Notables) -Angwe Adoh -Ananghadi Angonondu -Ewala Mbakwa
3	Adi Lucas Anyangwe III	1975-1997	22 years	(Notables) -Adang Moses -Abuh Ewala -Fokala John
4	Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV	1998-2009	11 years	(Notables) -Anyangwe Lawrence -Anyangwe Francis -Anyangwe George -Anyangwe Mathew

 Table 1: The Anyangwe Dynasty of Oshie from 1918-2009

Source: Interview with Adi Richard, Member of Kwifuh Society, Oshie, 25 August 2015.

The royal paraphernalia of the Fons of Oshie consisted of the royal stool, elephant tusk, leopard skin, the royal bag, embroidered calabashes and carved objects of persons. The power politics of the Fons of Oshie in the local administration of the chiefdom and his royalty rested on these assemblage of objects. Every established organization, chiefdom and fondom was not only recognized by her name but equally by an embodiment of symbols, ornaments and emblems that differentiate them from each other. In the entire Western Grassfield chiefdoms and fondoms, each palace was organized by a body of insignias that distinguishes the palace from other houses in the community. To act against the people's wishes means going against the sacred stool. The royal stool was a carved wooden chair dyed with special designs representing important personalities, ancestors and notables who had influenced the chiefdom. The stool was decorated with cowries that had special connotation in the Western Grassfields traditional politics.¹⁷⁴ In most circumstances, these decorations symbolized both office and authority. The royal stool was also regarded by every body to be sacrosanct and sacred emblems believed to have sanctity of all the deceased rulers. The royal stool according to the Western Grassfields traditional politics was the embodiment of traditional authority upon which the Fon executed sound judgements over his subjects. Commenting on the value of the royal stool Aletum Michael remarked that;

When a ruler assumes office, he is given the chietaincy's stool which is the symbol of office and sacred emblem. The stool represented the community, their solidarity, their permanence and continuity. The ruler is the link between the living and the dead and his highest role is when he officiates at the public religious rites with expression of the community's values. To act against the people's wishes means going against the sacred stool.¹⁷⁵

Empowered with the spirits of the ancestors, the Fon sat on the royal stool and placed his feet on the leopard pelt. Each Fon had the reserve of owning and using the royal stool, leopard skin and elephant tusks. It was these elements alongside other considerations that made the Fon as the ruler and father of the people feared and respected. The same as the sacred stool, the royal bag and royal cup, known in Oshie as *Ndong ofuh* was a sacred emblem. It was used for the offering of libation to the ancestors by the Fon. The sacred cup was also used by the Fon at rituals performance in the community especially during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival. In fact, every fondom in the Western Grassfields was identified through an embodiment of signs, ornaments and emblems that distinguished them from each other.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁵ M.T. Aletum, "African Politics, Yesterday and Today"in science and Technology review vo-w p.3-4(July-December 1985 p.30

There exist some special implications between the Fon and the leopard in the chiefdom of Oshie as well as those of the Western Grassfields. The Leopard pelt was believed to have the status of a human being, in fact killing and eating a Leopard was tantamount to killing a human. It was through the leopard pelt that the traditional rulers of Oshie sat to exercise authority over their people. Among the royal emblems in Oshie, the Leopard pelt was not seen or used ordinarily by anybody in the community. It was a special instrument of power used only by the traditional rulers. The laying of feet on a leopard skin during public ceremonies was the exclusive prerogative of the ruler. The various traditional rulers in Oshie chiefdom had the privileges to own and use the leopard pelt and the elephant tusks. It was these elements along side other traditional symbols that marked out the ruler as the custodian of traditions and customs of the people. Plate 2 portrays a collection of the royal paraphernalia of the Fons of Oshie.



Plate 2: The Royal Paraphernalias of the Fons of Oshie

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection, Oshie Palace Archive, March 2016

The elephant tusk also constituted one of the component of royal paraphernalia of the traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie. It was often laid on the leopard pelt for the traditional ruler to place his feet on. The elephant tusk equally played an eminent role in that, it acted as the Palace's trumpet that announced the visits of the Fon. It notified the entire community on the present of the Fon at important ceremonies notably during the *Anangkobi* dance festival. The Fon was accompanied from the palace to the village ceremonial ground by

the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*.¹⁷⁷ He was accompanied in a royal convoy by special men known as *Agwee* or *Nyanyang* and *Abuh* a feathery masquerade, blowing the elephant tusk. In this regard, the Fon was closely followed by the palace princes and princesses carrying the royal throne, leopard pelt, royal bag, fly whisk which were all symbols of power. The fly whisk was used by the palace princesses to wave it over the Fon to project his high majesty during the *Anangkobi* dance festival. The embroidered calabashes also constituted elements of authority in the chiefdom of Oshie. The embroidered calabashes exercised authority of the Fon when placed beside the royal throne together with other royal ornaments.

1.4.2 The Traditional Council

The traditional council was a council made up of elders and it operated at highest level of the traditional political system. It constituted the ruling assembly of the people. The nature and composition of the traditional council had a stabilizing influence on the entire framework of the traditional political system.¹⁷⁸ According to Aletum, the members of a Fon's council were in one aspect, representatives of the people. They and the Fon constituted the government. As representatives of the various sections of the chiefdom, they had to protect the interest of those they represented and to see to it that the Fon did not abuse his authority,¹⁷⁹ as members of the traditional council who had responsibility for the affairs of the entire community. They also ensured the welfare of all and to see that the people obeyed and supported the constituted authority. The traditional council was often met in the palace arena with the Fon at the helm alongside the quarter heads and traditional elders *Okum*. In Oshie, the traditional council acted as the court of arbitration where issues in the chiefdom were settled by the councillors alongside the Fon who presided over the council.

Moreover, from the establishment of Oshie traditional council, the Fon undertook the appointment of councilors from all the quarters, the criteria for appointment was based on intelligence, aptitude and strength.¹⁸⁰ His aim was that, they should act as decentralised structures in the chiefdom, and report matters of development to him. The Fon often appointed councillors from families in Oshie in order for them to express sound judgement

¹⁷⁷ M.T. Aletum, "African Politics, Yesterday and Today"in science and Technology review vo-w p.3-4(July-December 1985 p.31.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid* p.28.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid* p.28.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Angono Robert, 58, Teacher and member of Oshie Village Council, Oshie, 14 October, 2017.

during council sessions. The entire composition of the council embodied the Fon, traditional elders *Okum*, quarter heads and other high witted and intelligent individuals in the community.¹⁸¹ The major objectives of the councilors was to draft development programs in the chiefdom. The council session met once or twice a month at the Oshie palace hall following the traditional calendar days. During such council sessions any important decisions or reforms to be undertaken in the chiefdom were deliberated upon and endorsed by the councilors.¹⁸² The Oshie traditional council also represented the court of law where by cases of all categories were settled. He was assisted by other venerated elders and notables who were title holders and palace retainers. Deliberations during council sessions were carried out through the use of local dialect and much respect was accorded to elderly and title men. Plate 3 portrays a partial view of the Oshie traditional council hall.





Source; Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Oshie Palace, 16 October 2016

1.4.3 The Traditional Elders (Okum)

The traditional elders *Okum* in the chiefdom of Oshie were created by the pioneer traditional ruler Emamba during the settlement of the people of Oshie at their present territorial site, in the last quarter of the nineteeth century. The ruler at the time instituted a centralised political organisation where power structure was centred within the traditional elders *Okum* and the Fon. According to Oshie oral history, the ruler created the traditional elders *Okum* and the

¹⁸¹ Interview with Simon Ozimba, 60, Councillor and traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie. 15 October, 2016.

¹⁸² Interview with Anyangwe Robert, 62, Member of the royal family and Councillor, Oshie, 16 October, 2017.

assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* to assist him in the local governance of the chiefdom. They were people chosen from every family unit in Oshie with some to act as advisers to the Fon. These traditional elders *Okum* were headed by Awanayah, assisted in the administration of the chiefdom by two traditional authoritative elders known as Ozimba and Eprika. The traditional elders *Okum* were often seen together with the Fon in matters of culture and tradition in Oshie.¹⁸³ In order for the Fon to maintain an effective administration of the chiefdom together with the traditional elders *Okum*, he appointed many of them from the royal family and few from other families.

In the chiefdom of Oshie, the traditional elders *Okum* assisted the traditional ruler in the local administration of the chiefdom. The traditional ruler was answerable to the Fon in all matters regarding the smooth functioning of the chiefdom. They acted as carriers of messages from the Fon to the various quarters in Oshie. The traditional elders *Okum* equally communed together with the Fon in the palace on issues of development regarding the community. They were also responsible for all matters concerning culture and tradition in the chiefdom. The traditional elders *Okum* also took decisions on matters concerning security in the chiefdom and submited them to the Chief Priest for action to be taken.¹⁸⁴

They were equally responsible for the maintenance of peace and security in the chiefdom through the assistance of the *Aken* secret society.¹⁸⁵ The *Aken* was the traditional masquerade which enforced law and justice in the chiefdom. It was an important pillar of administration in Oshie headed by its descendants the traditional elders *Okum*. Its function was to protect the community against any evil incursion and make sure that no body of ill omen enters the chiefdom with evil portion. The *Aken* also places an injunction which constitutes of a fresh palm front in the household of evildoers through a decision from the Fon. The traditional elders were equally the king makers in that they can dethrone an incompetent ruler. In the absence of the Fon, the most elderly traditional elder *Okum* ensured the administration of the chiefdom until a new Fon was enthroned.¹⁸⁶

In addition, in the governance of the chiefdom, some of the traditional elders *Okum* also collaborated with the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* in matters of tradition and custom. They receive information on economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom from

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸³ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, 2008 p.26.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid* p.27.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

the Fon and disseminate it to the lower organs of the community through the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. The seat of the traditional elders *Okum* known as Egwobei also acted as the chiefdom secret shrine that maintains protection over the entire community. It was supervised and cleansed during important events and also during sinister situations in the chiefdom by the traditional elders *Okum*.¹⁸⁷ Plate 4 shows a cross section view of traditional elders *Okum* in Oshie. This photograph was taken during the early 1980s when the elderly generation of traditional elders *Okum* were still in majority. The traditional elders *Okum* were in large number depending on the initiated members from the various families in Oshie.

Plate 4: Cross Section View of Traditional Elders Okum in Oshie (1980)





The institution of traditional governance was equally carried out by the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. In the hierarchy of administration, they were next to the traditional elders *Okum*. They represent the traditional elders *Okum* where ever necessary and in most cases, they were directly answerable to the Fon who was in turn answerable to them. They were appointed by the Fon from all the families in Oshie and their role, was to lead at the war front. The position of the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* like that of the traditional elders *Okum* was heritable.¹⁸⁸ The administration of the chiefdom was in the hands of the Fon, the traditional elders *Okum* and assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. Their role was mostly felt during cultural manifestations in the chiefdom, and in most cases as tradition demands they

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Ngwaku Mathew, 58, Teacher Oshie, 15july 2016.

sat and share together with the traditional elders *Okum*. The assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* also act as the traditional defense forces in Oshie, since they were always at the forefront of all cultural festivities. They protect and work together with the Fon during the performances of cultural rite, alongside the war like masquerade known as *Agwee*. They were identified with Dane guns ready for firing during cultural festivities in Oshie. ¹⁸⁹

Moreover, the administration of the chiefdom was designed by the traditional rulers in a way that, the royal family was led to the ceremonial ground during the *Anang kobi* dance festival by the traditional elders *Okum*, the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* and the *Agwee* carrying the white and black flag.¹⁹⁰ The *Agwee* masquerade has a dreadful appearance in their traditional out fit. It was the chiefdom traditional mourners in that they put on a sorrowful posture during cultural celebrations. In the chiefdom of Oshie, any important person who lived up to seventy years and above was given a spectacular burial when he passed on by the traditional elders *Ngyeh* led by the *Agwee*. During such occasions, the *Agwee* were very active because, they lead the population in a warlike dance procession up the hill known as *Ebid*. All these cultural manifestations are set forth by the Fon to maintain tradition and custom of the people. The assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* were further divided into three categories; the *OKum Ndze*, *OKum Obeg* and the *OKum Nding* to ensure an effective administration and protection of the Polity.¹⁹¹

The *OKum Ndze* were known in Oshie as elders of the road. These are the traditional spiritual men responsible for the protection of the entire community from calamities such as landslides, floods, wild fire, hailstones, strong winds and thunder strikes. They also protect the community from epidemics such as cholera, chicken pox, small pox and counteract witchcraft or any external evil incursion in the community. In the process of protecting the entire community, they construct protective shrines known as *Ozip*, at all the main entrance into the chiefdom.¹⁹² To render their power more effective, a life dog was buried at the Oshie market at a spot known as *Ojeng*, the main shrine of the chiefdom which symbolise the unanimity of the people. This was done alongside the Fon, assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* and the traditional medicine men.

¹⁸⁹ Idem.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Eprika Andongma, 72, Traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie, 25 June 2015.

¹⁹¹ Idem.

¹⁹² Interview with Ndika Stephen, 71, Assistant traditional elder Ngyeh, Oshie, 15 October 2016.

Also, the OKum Ndze equally acts as the chiefdom crier and fore runner of the Fon. He was the mouth piece of the Fon in that he disseminates messages from the Fon on chiefdom market days to the entire community.¹⁹³ The Okum Ndze functions as well as supervises communal works and punishes culprits and absentees. In the administration of the chiefdom, he was the founder and custodian of all the markets in the community and was in charge of all missing and stolen articles. In all, he inaugurates important traditional celebrations in the chiefdom. The Kum Obeg on the other hand was also an important arm of the administration known as the elders of the knife. They were responsible for the slaughtering of all animals in the community. They slaughter the sacrificial lamb during the Anang kobi dance festival, as instructed by the Fon and the blood was used for the cleansing of the entire community. In the hierarchy of the administration, they were identified with a white and black flag during important occasions in Oshie. These distinct colours symbolise the main colours of the chiefdom. When the Fon was going out of the palace, his outing was notified through the white colour flag.¹⁹⁴ Such situations was common during the Anangkobi annual dance festival that unites the entire community together. The black colour on the other hand signifies mourning and was used to mourn the death of important persons in the chiefdom.

At the bottom of the hierarchy of traditional governance institutions in Oshie was the *OKum Nding*. This was an individual with special talents capable of averting evil and could perform cleansing rituals. According to Oshie tradition, such an individual was a traditional surgeon in the community. His function was to dissect suicide corpses in the community before they were buried.¹⁹⁵ The *Okum Nding*, works together with the traditional medicine men and diviners. The belief in misfortune affecting wrong doers in the chiefdom was in their control. They also act as protectors of the community and at times nipped off ailments affecting people in the chiefdom through the use of traditional herbs. In certain situations, that warrants the protection of the chiefdom, the Fon often work together with the *Okum Nding* especially in issues concerning purification of the entire community during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival. The *Okum Nding* also acts as a chief priest in the immediate family, in that he performs libation, offers sacrifices and cleanse the family shrine.¹⁹⁶

The traditional doctors and medicine men equally plays an important role in the administration of the chiefdom. They make use of leaves, stems, bark of trees, roots of plants

¹⁹³ Idem.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Onari Stanley, 55, Teacher and traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie, 26 June 2015.

¹⁹⁵ Idem.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Ambele Peter, 76, Traditional doctor, Oshie, 27 June 2015.

and other items like mites, lizards, snakes, chameleons, spiders, peace plant *Nkeng* and camwood, all blended together to ensure protection in the chiefdom. The rites of protection in Oshie are accorded only to medicine men during the enthronement rite of new Fons. Their function was to fortify the Fon mystically and spiritually on the day prior to his investiture before presentation in the public.¹⁹⁷ They also work together with the Fon in purification rituals to make sure that the entire community was safeguarded against evil attack.

1.5 The Judiciary Institution

Judiciary institution in the chiefdom of Oshie was piloted by the traditional governance institution known as *Aken* secret society. This body was the main institution that administers justice to defaulters, evildoers, witchcraft suspects in the entire community. The mechanism for the settlement of disputes was that, whenever they arose were arbitrated by the Fon depending on their gravity and an injunction imposed on them by him through the use of the *Aken* secret society.¹⁹⁸ Other legal institutions and bodies in Oshie include the household (Family head), the quarter head and the village council. The judicial system was centred within the chiefdom's political hierarchy. Justice was administered emanating from the jurisdiction of the family head of each household. He mediates in internal family matters such as petty thievery within the family household as earlier mentioned, obligation owed by a family member towards the other, family property succession, sorcery within the family, marriage and divorce, filiation and paternity. The family head also chastises juveniles guilty of issues of disrespect to their seniors and parents.¹⁹⁹

Besides, the institutions of justice in the chiefdom of Oshie were different from those of other fondoms of the Western Grassfields. In many fondoms, justice was administered by the regulatory societies known as *Ngumba* in Mankon *Kwifor in Bafut* and *Nwerong* in Nso.²⁰⁰ There was no sovereign fondom without a full fledged regulatory society no matter the size. Some of these institutions played multidimensional functions. It was not common to determine the nature and functions of regulatory societies. They played an important role in maintaining justice in the community. In the chiefdom of Oshie, the *Aken* secret society which was an equivalent of the Kwifon society in other Fondoms of the Western Grassfields

¹⁹⁷ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.36.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Carlson Anyangwe, The Cameroon Judicial System, Yaounde, 1982 p.11

²⁰⁰ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.36.

exercises judicial powers as directed by the Fon. This regulatory society was, the embodiment of the palace administrative, judicial and social function placed at the service of the Fon.²⁰¹

Indeed, cases of sexual behaviour and incest were considered as a curse on the family. Those that were above the family head were chanelled to the quarter head for justice to be rendered. Criminal offenses and disputes, though at times few within the quarter, were settled by a mediator or umpire. Such offenses were reported to the quarter head for his intercession. The quarter head could fine the party at fault or may required him to make restitutions. The fine was equal to a goat or pig with calabash of palm wine inclusive.²⁰² When the issue was above his jurisdiction, he submits it to the traditional council headed by the Fon. The quarter head had no powers to ostracize or condemn a person to death. The traditional council represents the court of law where offenses and disputes of all categories in the households, quarters and entire chiefdom were arbitrated.²⁰³

Also, issues that requires arbitration were referred and settled in the Oshie traditional council headed by the Fon. Adultery with any of the Fon's wives was unravelled by the *Aken* secret cult. According to the traditional legal system, it was the highest court of appeal in the chiefdom.²⁰⁴ The *Aken* cult worked together with the traditional elders *Okum* to maintain justice in Oshie. During the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, the *Aken* acted as the institution of justice in that, it enforced the laws of the land on to defaulters. It was an important arm of administration in Oshie that worked together with the Fon to maintain justice in the community. The *Aken* and their descendants, the traditional elders *Okum* protect the entire community against evil incursion.²⁰⁵

Lastly, the *Aken* secret society as an arm of justice, also exercises judicial, executive and legislative functions. According to Carlson Anyangwe,²⁰⁶the *Aken* acts as a police force, a tribunal and bailiffs. It was and is still an important pillar of the administration of justice in Oshie. The *Aken* secret society appears in the public on very rare occasions especially when a serious offense has been committed through the decision of the Fon. Such offenses could be withcraft malevolence, suicide and cases of murder. It apprehends the defaulters and inflicts

²⁰¹ Ngam., Kom Leadership in its Regional Sub Setting 1865-2005: A Study in power Diplomacy within a Traditional State in the Cameroon Grassfields 2013 p.104.

²⁰² Interview with Aweneg Lucas, 72, Farmer, Oshie, 12 July 2016.

²⁰³ *Idem*.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Aweneg Lucas, 72, Farmer, Oshie, 12 July 2017.

²⁰⁵ *Idem*.

²⁰⁶ Carlson Anyangwe, *The Cameroon Judicial System*, Yaounde, 1982 p.42.

punishment imposed by the Fon and his council on them.²⁰⁷ In the past the *Aken* cult had possess supernatural powers that could killed witches, nowadays it has powers to exile wrongdoers and ban cases of suicide funerals in Oshie. When defaulters prove intractable to their judgement, the Fon litigates them to the forces of law and order for justice to be administered. Another judicial institution that was regarded in the realms of traditional governance institutions in Oshie is the *Kwifuh* society but it is considered as more of a palace institution.²⁰⁸

1.6 The *Kwifuh* Society

One of the traditional governance institutions in the chiefdom of Oshie was the *kwifuh* society. The *Kwifuh* society was more of a palace institution and a royal masculine dance instituted in the palace by the Fon. In order to empower the palace, the traditional rulers of Oshie introduced the *kwifuh* which was a palace dance and equally a secret society to enhance culture in the chiefdom. The composition of the dance was made up of initiated members from all the quarters played solely in the palace. None or uninitiated members were prohibited to get in contact with the dance. As an institution of traditional governance, the *Kwifuh* dance mourns the death of important personalities in the chiefdom. According to Oshie oral history, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, as a traditionalist, created the *Kwifuh* dance in the palace. The Oshie people never had this institution and thus repudiated it, when it was first introduced in Oshie by the Fon. It was performed only during the night, most often in the palace and during the death of one of their members and titled persons in the chiefdom.²⁰⁹ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also used the *kwifuh* dance to carry out aspects of administration in the chiefdom. He provided a lodge that house the dance and its members and also made it possible for the dance to perform during the night prior to and after the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival.²¹⁰

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe according to tradition instructed the *kwifuh* dance to mourn the death of neighbouring Fons such as the case of the chiefdom of Bako when the traditional ruler passed on. This diplomatic tendency was largely practised by the traditional rulers of Njikwa sub-division and beyond. This trend was affirmed by Nkwi, when he posit that, regulatory societies were much involved in inter-chiefdom relations. At the death of a Fon, neighbouring chiefdom delegated their palace regulatory society to the funeral celebration.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ Interview with Abongwo Lucas, 71, Councillor, Oshie, 20 September 2015.

²⁰⁸ Idem.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Anjang Henry, 55, Farmer, Oshie,18 October 2017.

²¹⁰ *Idem*.

²¹¹ Nkwi, Traditional Diplomacy 1982 p.58.

Among the members of the *Kwifuh* dance, was *Adebere* and *Onang* that performed mystical and spiritual powers. Membership into the *Kwifuh* dance was carried out through special initiation feast and hereditary rite.²¹² The *kwifuh* palace dance in Oshie stands out as the main dance that was held with high esteem and remains a mystery to the Oshie people because of its secret nature.

1.7 Conclusion

The essence of this chapter was to present the geographical melieu of the study area. This was to portray how human behaviour from the earliest migration and settlement of the Oshie people was influence by its geography. The historical setting and the physical environment equally provided a formidable background upon which Oshie traditional rulership rest. The chapter further presents the socio-political organization and economic pre-occupations of the people and how the traditional governance institutions were structured by the traditional rulers to administer the Polity. The chapter upholds that, the traditional rulers of Oshie work together with the traditional governance institutions such as the traditional elders *Okum* the descendants of the *Aken* secret society, the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, the *OKum Ndze*, *OKum Obeg* and the *OKum Nding*, the *Kwifuh* society, the traditional council and the quarter heads to carry out an effective administration of the chiefdom. However, the European colonialists influence in the Oshie traditional governance will be our focus in the next chapter.

²¹² Interview with Awah Rubben, 52, Carpenter, Oshie, November 2017.

CHAPTER TWO

EUROPEAN COLONIALISTS AND OSHIE TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP

2.0 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to show the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers that created accommodation for European colonialists' intrusion in the chiefdom of Oshie. The chapter examines the transition of rulership from the reign of Emamba to the Anyangwe dynasty. The chapter intends to throw light on the succession and investiture of traditional rulers in Oshie during the period which enhanced this dynamism. It further treats relations between Oshie and her neighbouring Poltities to emphasize on the dynamic diplomatic interest of its rulers during the colonial period. The chapter ends with issues of land and boundary disputes between Oshie and her neighbours.

2.1 European Colonialists in the Western Grassfields

European colonialists influence in the Western Grassfields and Oshie in particular had a profound effect on traditional institutions during the colonial period. The traditional rulers were valued in the same way as the early European kings. Fortes and Pritchard justified the strength of African rulers and kings' best when they remarked that,

An African ruler is not only to his people a mere person who can enforce his will, he was the axis of the political relation, the symbol of their unity and the embodiment of their ancestral values. He is more than a circular ruler in that, his records were spiritual and was derived from the distant past; the balanced segments which composed of the political structures were guided by values expressed in supernatural symbols. In accordance to these revered grounds the European Aristocrat can never venture, they have no spiritual or ritual guarantee for their authority.²¹³

Traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields were conformist to the model described by Fortes and Pritchard above. They were bestowed with special powers justified mostly on moral principles and religious beliefs. As the representatives of the gods, land and ruling under the direct supervision of the spirits of the ancestors, they were not only regarded with high esteem but equally feared. They were considered to be perfect and immortal. Their thrones in palaces were instilled with mystical and mythical accessories of charms. But the colonialists could not accept a situation that would place an African ruler on a par with a European Monarch. Thus, they settled for the word "chief" which serves the same purpose as

²¹³ M. Fortes and Evans Pritchard (eds.), *African Political System*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 16. These views have been firmly supported by almost all Grassfields researchers. The Fons, kings or chiefs as they were variously known, were believed to be supernatural beings with rights and judgments far beyond the ordinary people.

"ruler." According to Nkwi, the Chief was a singular figure and the incarnation of the customs and traditions of the group. He was powerful and enjoyed a number of prerogatives.²¹⁴ The chiefdoms over which the traditional rulers presided were mini-states which were administratively sovereign. Busia supported this view when he affirms that;

When a chief was selected and initiated into his office, he became at once a judge, a commander-inchief, a legislator, and the executive and administrative head of his community. It was not many offices, but a single composite to which various duties and activities, rights and obligations were attached.²¹⁵

Their councillors were administrative agents who served as the eyes and ears of the ruler. The councillors were responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the mobilization of human resources of their respective sub-sections for the realization of the communal goals as envisaged by the traditional rulers.²¹⁶ This was the general tendency of traditional politics that the first European colonialists met in the Western Grassfields societies during the colonial period.

The colonial era had a profound impact on traditional institutions and rulership. The perception that chiefs derived their power from the colonial authority eventually undermined the authorities of the rulers. In some African countries, the colonial authorities appointed chiefs directly thereby underscoring the fact that, they were colonial creation. The Germans were the first Europeans to institute colonial administration in Cameroon. The approach they employed to take over control of the territory and govern the people was to conspire with the traditional rulers. Their administrative policy in the Western Grassfields was designed to bolster favoured village groups that collaborated with German colonial administration. Those that did not were subjugated and placed under the suzerainty of friendlier states as vassals. The most remarkable was the co-operation between Dr. Eugen Zintgraff and Fon Galega of Bali that was concluded in the signing of a treaty and blood pact in 1891.²¹⁷

Besides, some traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields resisted against colonial influence. The protracted resistance was due to the fact that, the people united behind their chiefs and Fons who more or less were looked upon as symbols of unity. As long as the Germans did not protect the chiefs, the people continued fighting. This took the Germans a long time to over come these resistances. When the indigenous people were defeated, the

²¹⁴ P.N Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy*: A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields, North West Province of Cameroon; (Yaounde; SOPECAM, 1987 p. 39.

²¹⁵ K.A Busia, African in Search of Democracy, p.23.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*.

²¹⁷ Rudin.R. Harry, *Germans in the Cameroons* 1884-1914, A case study in Modern Imperialism, Green wood Press, Publishers New York (1938.) p.23.

traditional rulers were subjugated under German control.²¹⁸ The immediate consequences of colonial penetration was the loss of sovereignty by the traditional rulers. As a result, chiefs had to be honest and submitted themselves to German colonial administration because they were afraid to killed. The Germans thus implemented the Indirect Rule system to administer the people. Although German colonial rule was described as harsh, brutal and repressive,²¹⁹ it was however subtle to the traditional rulers and their institutions.²²⁰ According to a 1913 German decree, no chief was to be removed from his post and no native was to be appointed chief. ²²¹

2.1.1 Germans and Traditional Rulership in Oshie

According to historical evidence, European colonial interaction with Africa had a great influence on traditional institutions. This was the case with several chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields societies. In the Bamenda Grassfields region in particular, the Germans adopted a system of Indirect Rule mainly for practical reasons. They signed treaties with local chiefs and relied upon them to support the administration. German control and influence was very unique in a way that the chiefs were made to recognise German hegemony over them. In the case of Oshie according to oral evidence, the Germans arrived the area when the people were already settled at their present territorial site at the beginning of the twentieth century. They came on horse back while their luggages were transported on headload by their Cameroonian employees from Bali.²²² When the Germans arrived Oshie by the early 1913, according to information obtained from our informants, Emamba was the spiritual ruler assisted by the traditional elders Okum and the assistant traditional elders Ngyeh in the local administration of the people. The people of Oshie could not seat back to welcome their administration since they had not seen the Whiteman. Emamba, the spiritual leader due to fear of the whitemen whom he had never seen, retreated with his descendants to their forest hide out to escape from the Germans which he thought their administration was cruel and brutal. Infact, this was a fault on his personality because a leader was to be courageous and able to defend his people against any danger. The panic caused by the Germans made some of the

²¹⁸ Rudin. R. Harry, *Germans in the Cameroons* 1884-1914, A case study in Modern Imperialism, 1938 p.24.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²²⁰ Ibid p.213.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² The notion held by the people of Oshie about the whiteman was that they were wicked and subjected indigenous people to hard labour and brutality.

Oshie families to momentarily seek refuge in the forest hide out at Togoku, Oshumugwari and Mbei-Tufih at Togobeiku.²²³

Also, Emamba escape from the German approached was to maintain his supremacy as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. Being the spiritual ruler who led the people to their settlement site, he could not let the colonialists to impose their administration on him. That explain why he took refuge in the forest hide out with his descendants to come back to his throne when the Germans had gone, but it was an fault on his part because his royalty was later usurp by those who did not ecsape as will be seen as the study unfold. In spite of the Indirect Rule system of administration where indigenous traditional rulers were protected to maintain friendly ties with the Germans, their administration was welcome by some of the people of Oshie who stood the grounds.²²⁴ One of those people whom the Germans met was Adang Engu Anyangwe who was courageous to welcome the German administration. In order to fill the vacuum created by Emamba, he momentarily assume the leadership position of the people of Oshie during the German period in Oshie.

For the fact that, the Germans were assigned to explore inland territory, study the climate and geography, examine the mode of social behaviour of the indigenes and try as much as possible to win the confidence of the traditional rulers, by taking over the control of native trade through which exports were channelled to the coast. The Germans established cordial relations with Adang Engu Anyangwe and offered him a flag, documents and other symbols recognising him as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. They also gave him a book (*Hauptingsbuch*) eventhough he could not read but he pledged to recognise German hegemony. It was common within the Western Grassfields societies and elsewhere that German colonialists going into the interior made treaties with natives and gave the chiefs a flag or some other symbols of German authority, to demonstrate that the chiefs were part of the new dispensation. In these treaties, native chiefs pledged themselves to recognise German rule.²²⁵ In this way, Adang Engu Anyangwe provided a locus at Azani quarter where the Germans built their administrative station. They wanted to transform the station into a Native Court Area but the people of Oshie were so resolute on the idea.

The Native Court, was henceforth built at the boundary between Oshie and neighbouring Ngwo at an area known today as Njikwa. This locale became the administrative

²²³ An Annual Publication Magazine, Oshie 1984 p.10.

²²⁴ *Ibid*.

²²⁵ Rudin, Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914 p.183.

district area of Njikwa in the Ngunu area. The administrative map of Oshie which the Germans had drawn indicating that Oshie was their station in the Ngunu area was handed to Adang Engu Anyangwe to preserve.²²⁶ Adang Engu Anyangwe being ignorant of its significance took it for a loin of cloth, due to it fragile state, the map was damaged.²²⁷ During their period in Oshie, Adang Engu Anyangwe collaborated with them and provided land where they introduced many agricultural activities such as the cultivation of sweet potatoes and other food crops to the indigenes which they were used to. Through their administration Adang Engu Anyangwe encouraged the people of Oshie to emulate their method and be hardworking.²²⁸ The Oshie named their settlement area at Azani as *Banek* referring to barrack though with a lot of resentment because their traditional way of life was under threat. Their station at Azani quarter was commanded by heads of stations mostly natives recruited by the Germans, who used force labour to ensure effective application of their administration and recruitment of plantation labourers for the German plantation in the coastal region.

The labourers also comprised of sweepers and messengers in the station offices as well as the recruitment of young natives into the German army and the police force. When the Germans were defeated during the First World War in 1914 and ousted from Cameroon in 1916 by the British and French forces, France and Britain then partitioned the territory as war booty, following their respective combat zones. During the German occupation of the territory, they built their administrative station at Azani quarter in Bereje Oshie, but when they were defeated and ousted in Cameroon. According information obtained from our informants their station area was abandoned and later used by the people of Bereje quarter for the burial of their deaths, since it was located away from the settlement areas. The area today known as Mbei-Awaza serves as a link way between the chiefdom of Oshie and Konda though the German relics are not visible there. Some sections of the area had been transformed into farming plots by the women folk of Azani quarter and moreover a check point has been built at the area by the administration of Njikwa sub-division. Plate 5a and 5b below portrays the German settlement area in Azani quarter Oshie covered with grass and shrubs with the iron bar in red and white colours indicating the check point.

²²⁶ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.30.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ This information was reconstructed from oral interviews conducted with Adi Richard Kumba, member of the *kwifuh* cult in Oshie.During such period there were no written documents, we had to relied on oral history from informants.

2014/02/05 07.13

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Field Work Collection, Oshie, October 2017

Plate 5b: The German Settlement Area at Azani Quarter with the Road Linking the Konda Village



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Field Work Collection, Oshie, October 2017.

Note, they were no evidences left behind by the Germans here to portray their present in Oshie particularly at their station area in Azani quarter. The only remnant was the administrative map of Oshie which according to oral history, the Germans drew and indicated that Oshie was their station in that area. The map would have been in the palace archive to portray their hegemony in the area but according to oral history, it was given to Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe of Oshie to keep who misidentified it for a piece of cloth due to his ignorant and used it as a loin.

2.1.2 British and Traditional Rulership in Oshie

When the Germans were defeated and ousted from Cameroon by the year 1916, the territory was divided into two unequal parts administered by France and Britain as mentioned above. The British compared to the Germans had a more docile and pragmatic approach to the traditional rulers of the region. The first British Divisional Officer to Bamenda known as Podevin was aware of the delicacy of avoiding traditional rulers in the administration of the Western Grassfields. He thought it wise to co-operate with them on the basis of functional interaction approach that preached dualism as a record tool. In this direction, the British implemented the same policy of Indirect Rule like the Germans to administer the Western Grassfields.²²⁹ By the year 1918, the traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields preferred British administration to that of the Germans, because they realised that fairness was the British watchword. This was due to the fact that, the British never punished an individual without trial as compared to the German administration.²³⁰

In the case of Oshie, the British arrived the area during the same year 1918. They occupied the German station but never stayed there for a long period of time. According to oral account, Emamba who had regained his throne from Adang Engu Anyangwe following the defeat of the Germans during the First World War in 1914, retreated to the forest hide out thinking that the Germans were back in Oshie. The British colonialists still met Adang Engu Anyangwe who had welcome and collaborated with the Germans. According to the Indirect Rule policy, whereby chiefs were integrated into the colonial administration. Adang Engu Anyangwe who could not escape still welcome and acommodated and established cordial ties with them. In the course of time, as they looked upon Adang as the ruler of the people of Oshie, they exchanged friendly gifts with him and collaborated together, thus identifying him as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. Adang Engu Anyangwe due to his courageous nature used the talking drum and communicated to Emamba in the forest hide out that, the whitemen were peaceful and friendly.²³¹

Emamba and his descendants later came out from their refuge and that was how royalty and sovereignty of traditional rulership position among the people of Oshie change

²²⁹ According to this evidence, the reasons which motivated Britain to apply the same policy like the Germans were motivated by the same factors. This ranged from lack of funds and personnel's as well as the existence of traditional semi autonomous states with frontline leaders who could be used and assigned to carry precise tasks. For a detailed understanding of the reasons for the application of the indirect rule in Cameroon.see Ngoh. *A Hundred Years of History* p.23, Fanso, *Cameroon History* vol II, p.25 and Rudins *The Cameroun Mandate* p.45. ²³⁰ V.B. Amaazee, Traditional Rulers(Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History, 2002 p.28.

²³¹ An Annual publication Magazine, Oshie p.12.

hands to the Anyangwe dynasty. Though Emamba escape into the forest hide out for the second time was that, he would come back and regain his throne as he did when the Germans arrived the area. Adang Engu Anyangwe without respecting the norms of tradition, use his intelligence or astuteness to convince the traditional elders *Okum* who were Emamba, s close associate at the time to recognise and uphold him as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. The British colonialists thus looked upon him as the only courageous person capable to be at the helm of Oshie. In this direction, the people feared and respected the Whiteman and looked upon Adang Engu Anyangwe as their ruler. He was thereafter referred to as *Ofuh Kara* meaning a Fon who welcome the Whiteman by the entire community because of his courageous nature in Oshie. From the transition of sovereignty from Emamba to Adang Engu Anyangwe, it became difficult for Emamba to assume his royalty as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. The situation degenerated into a conflict between the two families because Adang Engu Anyangwe was not the rightful person traditionally to assume the traditional rulership position of the people of Oshie in the absent of Emamba, thus the consequences became disastrous in the chiefdom as will be seen as the study progress²³²

The original appellation of the traditional ruler of the people Oshie who welcome the British was Adang Anyangwe but as a sign of great honour and respect Engu meaning father was added to the surname, to signify an honourable way of addressing the Fon. In the course of time, Engu stuck in the mouths of the people and was used as his proper name.²³³ For the fact that, the transition of traditional rulership position created a lot of problems between Emamba and Adang Engu Anyangwe. The bone of contention was that each of them wanted to be the custodian of *Iku*, a demi god that was ordain by tradition to protect the entire community. According to Oshie oral history, Emamba went to Adang Engu Anyangwe's palace one day and insisted on collecting the *Iku*, which of course was not supposed to be in his custody according to the traditions and customs of the people. But since Adang Engu Anyangwe had already usurp the throne and sovereignty bequeathed in the Anyangwe dynasty, nothing could be done. When he did not succeed to convince Adang Engu Anyangwe was not the rightful custodian of tradition in Oshie. Plate 6 depicts *Iku*, a traditional demi god of the people of Oshie during the colonial day

²³² Interview with Solomon Ozughen, 82, retired Catechist, Oshie, December 2004.

²³³ Interview with Ozughen Solomon, 81, Patriarch who witnessed the days of Chief Adang Engu Anyangwe of Oshie, he was among the first ordain catechist in Oshie. This information was collected by the year 2004 in a write up of a monograph I intended to publish during that year but was not realised.



Plate 6: The Portrait of Iku the god of Protection in Oshie

Source: Adapted from the Oshie Palace Archive, 15 September 2015

The aim of Adang Engu Anyangwe's refusal to grant Emamba's request was because he wanted to take full authority over the Oshie traditional religion. He wanted to be the custodian of the guiding gods of truth and sincerity *efoung* which were ancestral stones that maintain vigil and protection over everybody in the community. According to Oshie oral history, Emamba mysteriously invoked witchcraft malevolence which resulted to metaphysical black magic war-fare between the two families. As a consequence, to this act, many heads rolled in the Anyangwe's family and to put an end to such calamity, Emamba was killed by a strong medicine man in Oshie. The phenomenon was momentary because the traditional rulership tuzzle was resolved through a unanimous agreement organised by Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and the family of Emamba²³⁴ In this regard, the British hoisted their flag as a sign of recognition of traditional authority of the people of Oshie in Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe's palace in Bereje quarter which became the seat of royalty in Oshie up to present.²³⁵

Adang Engu Anyangwe's suspicion of an impending danger in his rulership position, used his wisdom to cajole the traditional elders *Okum* and they instituted a hereditary traditional rulership in the Anyangwe royal family. From that inception, Oshie was henceforth

²³⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.25.

²³⁵ The pioneer traditional ruler of Oshie was Adang Anyangwe, but as a symbol of honor and respect,the appellation Engu referring to papa was accorded to his first name to be an honorific form of calling the Fon.But Engu got adapted to the order of the names of the Fon.

ruled by the Anyangwe dynasty.²³⁶ In the course of time, Amayi Awanayah succeeded Emamba as traditional chief, *Okum* and head of king makers. The transition of traditional rulership irritated the Nyebai people where Awanayah's family was residing. Many prosperous young men from this quarter refused to pay taxes to the British colonial administration. Inter-marriage between the Bereje and Nyebai quarter became too stringent, leading to a lot of animosity. Adang Engu Anyangwe could not contain such circumstances. He organised a concerted meeting alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and sought for lasting solution to the conflict.

Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe further organized consultative talks with the two families alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and the British colonial administrators to strengthen friendly ties between the people of Bereje and Nyebai quarter.²³⁷ During the meeting, it was unanimously agreed that Awanayah should be the kingmaker and in charge of matters concerning tradition while Adang Engu Anyangwe was in charge of the administration.²³⁸ The enthronement rite of rulers in the chiefdom were to be executed exclusively by Awanayah and the only person to present the Fon to the public on the day of investiture. To overcome future dispute, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe ceded the custodianship of the god of *Iku* to Awanayah. The traditional rulership dispute was resolved eventhough Awanayah attended palace meetings in very rare occasions.²³⁹ However, the descendants of Awanayah still had prominent administrative supremacy in Oshie from that time up to present day. They were the head of traditional elders *Okum* and the *Aken* secret cult in Oshie.²⁴⁰ The ancestors of Awanayah were deemed to be present at *Igwobei*, the secret shrine of the *Aken* secret cult.

The traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie was henceforth required to name his successor before his death. According to the norms set forth by the tradition of Oshie, the heir to the royal throne was solely to be from the royal family, son of one of the deceased Fon born on a Tiger skin when the father was on the throne. In the case where the Fon failed to name his successor, the traditional elders *Okum* together with the royal family chose and enthrone another Fon.²⁴¹ A new Fon was enthroned one year after the death of the father.²⁴² From the

²³⁶ The notion of chief never existed in Oshie. The people were organized and headed by the Okum, who earned these positions or titles through their bravery in warfare, the only criteria for rulership.

²³⁷*Ibid*. ²³⁸*Ibid*

²³⁹Clementine Ekanya Ambang, "The Chieftaincy crisis in Oshie Fondom,1889-2009: An historical Apraisal, post graduate Teacher diploma (Dipes II) ENS Bambili 2014 p.56.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Slyvester Anjang, 57, farmer, Oshie, June 2016.

²⁴¹ Interview with Ozimba Simon, 60, traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie, June 2017.

transition of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie from Emamba royalty to the Anyangwe family, three successive legitimate traditional rulers from the Anyangwe dynasty have administrated the chiefdom with an exception of the fourth where the chiefdom witnessed chieftaincy crisis.²⁴³

2.1.3 Enthronement of Traditional Rulers and Administration in Oshie

The enthronement of traditional rulers in the Anyangwe dynasty was hereditary. It therefore implies that when a ruling Fon dies, he was succeeded by his son born on the "Tiger skin" when the father was still on the throne. The same situation exists with the chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields According to the traditions and customs of the people chieftaincy succession was hereditary and centre mostly within the ruling dynasty. However, the enthronement of the pioneer traditional ruler in the chiefdom of Oshie from the Anyangwe dynasty was masterminded by the British colonialists though their influence in issues of enthronement within the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, they continued with their administration in the area.²⁴⁴ In this regard, when a traditional ruler of the Anyangwe dynasty passes on, he is succeeded by his son. This was the more reason why Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe was succeeded by his son Etunyi Anyangwe when he passed on by the year 1923. The Fon never dies, he is said to be missing.

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe ascended to the throne of Oshie by the year 1925 through the enthronement rites carried out by the kingmakers a year after the exit of his father Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe from the throne. According to the tradition of the people of Oshie a deceased Fon was replaced after a year. The enthronement rite were carried out by the traditional elders *Okum* and the king maker Amayi Awanayah. The enthronement ceremony of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe was attended by the traditional rulers (Chiefs) of the Ngunu Native Authority Area that constituted of the Fon of Ngwo, Ekweri Banya, Konda and Bako.²⁴⁵ During his reign at the helm of Oshie, due to the underdeveloped nature of the society, he implemented a very open policy in his administration and collaborated with his closest associates in order to transform the society. ²⁴⁶

After the departure of the Germans, they continued with the same administrative policy laid down by the Germans. The new system of administration that was put in place

²⁴² Idem.

²⁴³ Idem.

²⁴⁴File No Cb 1932/1 Annual Report on Bamenda Division to the league of Nations 1937.

²⁴⁵File No Ja 9/1922/23 attributions of Native Authorities.

²⁴⁶ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Places, Events p.35.

when Southern Cameroons was already a geopolitical entity was known as Native Administration (NA). After a pilot and proper examination into the traditional societies, to ascertain the local authorities and institutions on which Native Administration could be anchored, the British wisely demarcated each of the four divisions into several administrative Sub-Units symbolized by Native Court Areas. The administration of the courts was in the hands of Native Authority assisted by an advisory council comprised of the Fons of the area and some village or family and traditional authorities.²⁴⁷

According to the Indirect Rule system of administration, a Chief was designated as the President of the court, followed by two or more others as co-presidents and the rest were simply members. The Native Authorities performed the executive and judicial functions of Native Administration.²⁴⁸ The first act of the British administration in the Bamenda Division was to secure the confidence, loyalty and support of the most influential and powerful chiefs,²⁴⁹ and constructed the system of Indirect Rule around them. On the basis of assessments and intelligence reports, relations of domination between prominent and less prominent groups were sought. Moreover, prominent chiefs were elevated to positions of paramount chiefs over less prominent ones, depending on whatever historical ties had been reconstructed from the ethnographic and administrative reports.²⁵⁰

During the assessment reports of 1922 and 1948, British administration in the Southern Cameroons was re-organised, the Bamenda Division comprised of a variety of Native Authority Areas within which five of these had a single Fon as Native Authority. It was in this dispensation that, the chiefdom of Oshie that was found within the Ngunu Native Authority Area, was classified under the Ngunu Native Court Area.²⁵¹ Although prior to this period, the Germans had made Ngunu the head-quarter of the Ngunu Native Authority Area with a Native Court in Njikwa. The Native Authority in the area was headed by the traditional ruler of Ngwo assisted by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie. Through the influence of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, the first court clerk to serve in the Native Authority Area was from Oshie. The chiefs that represented the Native Authority Area in the Ngunu Native Court, were the

²⁴⁷ Regional Archive Bamenda File No Cb 1932/2 Annual Report to the UN 1940.

²⁴⁸ National Archive Buea, File No Cb 1932/2 Annual Report to the UN 1940.

²⁴⁹ Che Mfombong W. Bamenda Division under British Administration,1916-1961, From Administration to

Local Government, M.A Thesis, University of Yaounde I 1980 p.58.

²⁵⁰ Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo et George A. Ngwa, Changing intercommunity relations and the politics of identity in the Northern Mezam area, Cameroon*, *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 161, 2001 p.6.

²⁵¹National Archive Buea File No Ab/32(a)1924: Ngunu Tribal Area (Bamenda Division Assessment Report;1924.

Village heads of Ikweri Banya, Bakwa, Konda, Bako, Ngwo and Oshie inclusive and the Court Mesenger.²⁵²

In the same vein, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in his capacity as one of the Ngunu Native Authority appointed a Mesenger who was from the chiefdom of Oshie. As instrument of Government having responsibility for the management of their own affairs and promotion of development at the local level, taxation and maintenance of Native treasury was introduced. Native Authorities were endowed with executive, judicial, fiscal and partly legislative powers, as well as granted statutory authority. A number of selected chiefs received stipend to develop their area. Court fees and fines as well as Native taxes were paid into Native treasury.²⁵³ Tax quotas were fixed at a percentage of an estimate of the gross income of Villages based on yields per acre. The annual value ranges from livestock, wage income and the disposal of crop surpluses. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe being one of the Native Authority member collected taxes in Oshie and delivered the tax revenue to the Divisional Officer in Bamenda. He also ensured that his people did not pay tax income to neighbouring communities. In an eventuality of his subjects paying taxes to other neighbouring communities, this resulted to issues of disloyalty.²⁵⁴

There was no major disparity from the system employed by the Germans in the collection of tax revenue, the financial and fiscal regime of direct taxation promoted by Lord Lugard eventually took away the Fons' rights to tribute, where he received a regular income. Assessement reports were conducted between 1922 and 1930 on the economic situation of the Western Grassfields chiefdoms. The reports were aimed at establishing the annual income of each family and household in order to establish a just and an equitable tax rate.²⁵⁵ In this regard, the German records, in order to establish a new tax rate, were changed and re-adjusted. He insisted that the natives should be given a fair deal now that the exchange rate was low, the Resident had the official rate of seven pence per person instead of nine pence fixed. This new system of direct tax collection was designed to prevent evasion and extortion. By the year 1925 tax disc were issued from Bamenda to the Fons of the Grassfields chiefdoms and the

²⁵² National Archive Buea, File No Ab/32(a) /1924: Ngunu Tribal Area (Bamenda Division). Assessment Report;1924.

²⁵³ National Archive Buea, File No Ab/32(a) /1924: Ngunu Tribal Area (Bamenda Division). Assessment Report;1924.

²⁵⁴ National Archives Buea: Ngwo Native court civil suit No.36/42 see J.S.10666 of 5th.August 1943 Chief Anyangwe of Oshie vs. Three others.

²⁵⁵ Anthony Ndi, Southern West Cameroon Revisited 1950-1972, Paul's Press, Bamenda 2013 p. 9.

head retainers used to come in to collect them.²⁵⁶The chiefs would call the sub-chiefs or quarter heads and give them the tax discs according to the number of taxable male.

In the case of Oshie, the collection of taxes was paid through the quarter heads to Fon Etunyi Anyangwe. The quarter heads collected taxes in the various quarters of Oshie and handed the lump-sum to the Fon. He in turn delivered the tax revenue to the Divisional Officer in Bamenda in the company of some of his notables.²⁵⁷ Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also contributed enormously in the maintenance of law and order in Oshie in his capacity as one of the Native Authority members of the Ngunu Authority Area. For the fact that Fon Etunyi Anyangwe had not acquired formal education, he employed the services of an interpreter in order to collaborate with the British Officials in Bamenda. His association with them help to facilitate many development projects such as the construction of bridges and created avenues for many Oshie indigenes to foster their education. It was equally through his collaboration with the British that, the pioneer playing ground and stadium in Oshie was initiated by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe from funds donated by the British administrators who visited Oshie at the time. In his local administration in the chiefdom of Oshie, he held the people together in harmony and they lived without any internal strife.

A characteristic feature of the customs and traditions of the people of Oshie was that, during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, due to his fatherly nature in harnessing Oshie indigenes together, was accorded some honorific titles known as *Ataah* and *Ngeu-Nyam*.²⁵⁸ The entire Oshie indigenes at the time addressed him as *Ataah*. The name almost eclipsed his actual names but with the arrival of the Basel Mission in Oshie five years after, his names were properly documented as Mathew Etunyi Anyangwe. Due to the absent of western education in Oshie and Ngunu area at large, through his collaboration with the Basel Mission by providing a piece of land for the construction of Basel Mission School in Oshie, formal education was established in the entire area. For the fact that, he was a traditionalist and had not acquired formal education, he knew its importance and encouraged many indigenes to attend school.²⁵⁹ His animated attitude was quite remarkable in the administration of the chiefdom during the period of Basel Mission activities in Oshie. His reign lasted from 1925 to

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Anjonek Joshua, 75, Farmer, Oshie, 22 october 2015.

²⁵⁸ These were honorific titles bestowed to Fon Etunyi Anyangwe by the entire Oshie community. They carried such connotations as father, protector and provider.

²⁵⁹File No Ab/32(a) 1924: Ngunu Traibal Area (Bamenda Division) Assessment Report 1924.

1974 when he passed on and was succeeded by his son Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. Plate 7 is a portrait of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe during his heydays at the helm of Oshie.



Plate 7: Portrait of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe II

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedicts Private Archive, Oshie, September 2015

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III generally referred to as the Duke was the third traditional ruler in the line of the Anyangwe dynasty. He ascended to the throne of Oshie by the time his father Fon Etunyi Anyangwe II passed on in 1974. His investiture at the royal throne of Oshie was deemed necessary by the indigenes because he was a knowledgeable personality who had served in the West Cameroon government with talented skills that could bring development in the chiefdom. The enthronement ceremony was carried out by the traditional elders *Okum* and the kingmakers led by Ananghadi Angonondu. According to our source, Ananghadi Angonondu participated in the enthronement ceremony of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe.²⁶⁰ It was common within the Western Grassfields chiefdoms that the enthronement ceremonies of Fons were often attended by neighbouring Fons.²⁶¹ In this regard, the investiture ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was attended by the Fons of neighbouring Polities of Njikwa subdivision, accompanied by their respective palace dance or masquerade known as *Abuh*. Plate 8

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁶¹ Interview with Ndika Stephen, 71, Assistant traditional elder Ngyeh, Oshie, October 2015.

is a depiction of one of the palace dance of a neighbouring chiefdom during the investiture ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe.

Plate 8: The Masquerade(Abuh) of Neighbouring Chiefs during the Enthronement Ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III in 1975



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016

It was common among chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields and Oshie in particular that during the enthronement ceremony of a traditional ruler, the religious aspect was performed to distinguish him from other persons in the community. Prior to the enthronement day, there was the religious aspects that was performed by the traditional herbalists to empower the Fon mystically as earlier mentioned.²⁶² The derivation and nature of sacred king was that the Fon secular authority was not only based on the dogma of descent, but the mystical and symbolic values attached to him. This gave him more authority that strengthened the ideological superstructure of his fonship.

Moreover, the Fon represents the symbol of unity, the personification of kingdom, the mediator between ancestors, the gods and the people after the traditional rites. He was regarded as the protector of the essential values of his subjects, Nkwi captures such a situation when he affirms that, the beneficent and protective aspect of the ruler was manifested in his priestly and ceremonial role, which was held to bring peace, fertility and prosperity to the

²⁶² Idem.
chiefdom.²⁶³ In Oshie the traditional rite performed on the body of the Fon, renders him a sacred person and portrays his unique position as a priest and mediator in the chiefdom. Wherever sacred kingship was found, the king was seen as representing and performing a variety of ritual functions which were essential for the survival of the group as a symbol of unity.²⁶⁴The enthronement rite of the Fon was also seen as a symbol that was meant to express reality. Nkwi remarked that, ritual was essentially symbolic, like other kinds of ritual, royal ritual was an institutionalized way of saying something that was important. The Fon's spiritual authority or the conferring of a sacred character on his person was effected by rites of installation and his role as the high priest of his people. He occupies a mediator position in the political set up of the chiefdom, at the pinnacle of which was God and the ancestors.²⁶⁵

In the Western Grassfields chiefdoms, the secular authority of the Fon was his spiritual attributes In Oshie, prior to the enthronement rite of the Fon, he was considered an ordinary person before his choice. He was like a prince in the chiefdom responsible to the Fon. Once the ardornments of traditional rites were performed on his body, he assumes the title and posture of a Tiger which symbolize that he was the Tiger of the chiefdom.²⁶⁶ His attire during the enthronement rites was made up of the Ndobo cloth tied round the waist with bare body and the Ndoroe leaves known as *Utugchugo* tied round his neck.²⁶⁷ This spiritual fortification prevents the Fon from greeting the ordinary citizens of the chiefdom, failure to respect this role may render him powerless. Only his wives, children and a few trustworthy palace retainers could have physical contact with him. One of the gifts bestowed on Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe during and after the enthronement rites was the capacity to communicate with his subjects in an authoritative and commanding manner. In fact, he was a charismatic ruler who was to exercise sound judgement in his administration as will be seen during his reign at the helm of Oshie. Plate 9a, 9 b portrays the enthronement rites of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III of Oshie.²⁶⁸

²⁶³ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.48.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ The Ndobo cloth generally referred to in the entire Western Grassfields as the traditional cloths was brought from Ndobo, a locality in North Cameroon from where most people of the Western Grassfields were said to have originated. The Ndobo cloth was mostly wone by the traditional rulers and title men of the Western Grassfields societies.

²⁶⁸File No NW/Sale.1975/5/Pt The Installation of Fon Anyangwe of Oshie on 11-12-1975.

Plate 9a: Traditional Rite during the Enthronement Ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

Plate 9b: Traditional Rite during the Enthronement of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

Note; The enthronement rites of the Fon was seen as symbols, meant to express reality and fame. The Fon was distinguished from ordinary people through the enactment of such traditional rites on his body. This was meant to strengthen relations between the Fon and his predeccessors. The Ndoroe leaves known in Oshie as *Utugojugo* worn round the neck of Fon

Adi Lucas Anyangwe during the enthronement ceremony symbolised peace and other traditional connotations indicating that the new Fon would rule his people in a peaceful manner. This plant was obtained from the forest and woven into a wreath of leaves then placed round the neck of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe by a chief priest whose function was to fortify the Fon spiritualy and mystically during the enthronement ceremony. It was done in the presence of other members of the herbalists. He was presented to the public by the traditional herbalists alongside the traditional elders *Okum* after the enthronement rites. Plate 10 depicts Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe led by the herbalists and the traditional elders *Okum* to the palace plaza after the enthronement rites.





Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

Note, the appearance of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe at the palace plaza or court yard and background of the area where he sat was decorated with traditional cloth or a tapestry. Noboy was allowed to approach the decorated area reserved for the Fon. Plate 11 portrays Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe sited at the palace plaza.

Plate 11: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe at the Palace Plaza after the Enthronement Rite in





Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

When the traditional rites were over Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe then reappeared in public wearing the *Otugojugo* leaves with bare body alongside a large Ndobo loincloth flanked on the waist generally referred to as the Grassfields traditional attire. The attire of Fons during enthronement ceremonies in the Western Grassfields were and are similar within the chiefdoms and fondoms. According to the decree of 1977 which states that, chiefs were in principle chosen from the royal family to exercise traditional customary authority, such candidates were to be able to read and write.²⁶⁹ These were exactly the qualities of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. Infact, he was the rightful leader to ascend at the helm of Oshie because he could implement his ideas to transform the society. His enthronement as the traditional ruler of Oshie was just appropriate in that, most of the chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields during that period were under the process of chieftaincy transition from non literate to literate rulers. The ceremony was presided over by the Senior Divisional Officer in Momo representing the Minister of Territorial Administration. Although prior to the enthronement period, the traditional elders Okum and the king makers had played their role by chosing and carried out the spiritual fortification of the Fon before the enthronement ceremony which was a process common among the chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields. Plate 12 portrays the Senior Divisional Officer of Momo presiding over the enthronement ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Plate 12: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III, Standing with the Traditional Elders (Okum) and the Senior Divisional Officer of Momo during the Enthronement Ceremony.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in public view alongside the entire population led by the royal family and the king Makers. The enthronement process was completed by placing the Fon on the royal throne by the king maker with his legs placed on the leopard skin. His feet were placed as well on the elephant tusk alongside other royal accessories such as decorated calabashes. The royal throne as earlier mentioned was different from other stools and was carved in a special design bearing the images of animals and the ancestors of the land. It was decorated with cowries just like the royal throne of the Fons of the Western Grassfields. The Ndobo cloth on the body of the Fon were replaced with the North West traditional fabric largely known as *Togho* alongside a traditional cap with distinctive marks affixed on it a red feather and porcupine quil. From that day his name was inscribed in the register of Western Grassfileds traditional rulers. He was henceforth looked upon by every body in the community and beyond as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. Plate 13a and 13 b is a depiction of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III during the last phase of enthronement ceremony in 1975 as he was placed on the royal throne by King Maker Ananghadi Angonondu. This was performed alongside the traditional elders Okum and members of the royal family at the Oshie palace plaza.²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

Plate 13a: Placing Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III on the Royal Throne by one of the King Maker in 1975.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.



Plate 13 b: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe Sitting on the Royal Throne at the Palace Plaza.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was to be placed on the royal throne by the king maker, he concluded with the following words as tradition demands; "Adi Lucas, sit on this Royal Stool! It is Ananghadi talking" on those solemn and authoritative instructions, Adi Lucas Anyangwe

sat on the royal stool.²⁷¹ From that moment of final enthronement, he became a new man different from the rest. Ananghadi Angonondu in his capacity as assistant traditional elder *Kumndzi* and as king maker had done it. He further instructed Amayi Awanayah who was head of the king makers *Okum* to continue his duties as tradition demands.²⁷²External guests who were present in Oshie during the enthronement ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe included H. E. Solomon T. Muna, the then President of the National Assembly. The Governor of North West province, the Gwofon administration of Momo division and other important dignitaries.²⁷³ Plate 14 is a cross section of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III sitting at the palace plaza together with the royal family, traditional elders *Okum* and other dignitaries after the final phase of the enthronement ceremony.



Plate 14: Final Enthronement Phase of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III of Oshie.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, NW/ sale, 1975/5/ pt, October 2016.

There was also the presence of the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* and their subordinates. The ceremony was graced by the women dance known as the *Esong-ku* dance generally known in Oshie as the elephant tusk upon which the Fon of Oshie

²⁷¹ Ananghadi Angonondu according to Oshie oral history was neither a traditional Okum nor an assistant traditional elder Ngyeh. In the Oshie traditional and political set up, he was a Kumndzi meaning village crier.He was a palace notable during the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe I and continued as notable during the reign of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe II. He outlive the period and was very dynamic and authoritative in traditional matters during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III.

²⁷²Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People-Places-Events 2010 p.40

²⁷³ Ibid

places his feet when sited on his royal throne during important ceremonies. The women folk of Oshie fine-tuned many songs and dances during the investiture of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III in other to express their happiness and praises to honour the dynamic initiatives of the Fon. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe later modified the *Esong-ku* dance and it became solely the main dance of the women folk of Bereje quarter of Oshie.²⁷⁴

When the final enthronement phase was over, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was secluded in the palace for some days. His activities were confined to the palace where his private life was kept a secret. He was not or rarely seen in the public, and never called by his name but by praise name, only the traditional elders *Okum* talk to him directly. Ordinary people talked to him through an intermediary. Every thing about him was special and did not eat in the public. People did not talk openly about his body but only indirectly or by metaphors. People talked to him by stooping with hands cupped over their mouth.²⁷⁵ He sat only on a royal stool accompanied by palace stewards when ever he moves out of the palace. As remarked by Tata, once a Fon has been crowned and has gone through all the enthronement rites, he was immediately transformed into an extra ordinary person. It was believed that the life force of his ancestors has been automatically transmitted to him and everything about him was special, his life as well as his death.²⁷⁶

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III of Oshie was held with a lot of reverence by his subjects due to his academic status. He was generally refered to as a despotic ruler of the age of enlightenment in Oshie by some of the elites. To maintain his fame as a dynamic ruler in Oshie at the time, he became envious and resentful towards other Oshie elite who had attended his level of education in order to avoid any criticism that may arose during his administration. As for Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, he wanted to gain repute as the only Oshie indigene to have served in the government services during that period. Despite the attitude of self aggrandizement, he was still held with high esteem by the Oshie people because his main objectives were focused towards the economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom.²⁷⁷ Plate 15 is the portrait of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III during his heydays at the helm of Oshie.

²⁷⁴ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social change p.60.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Tata Simon Ngenge, Cameroon Traditional rulers in Multiparty Politics since 1990, the CODESRIA 10th General Assembly Kampala 2002 p.2.

²⁷⁷ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.130.



Plate 15: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III During his Heyday at the Helm of Oshie (1985).

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Field Work Collection from, Oshie Palace traditional Council Hall, March 2015.

Chieftaincy succession in Oshie was hereditary as earlier mentioned. The Fon before his death was required to choose among his sons the most competent son to succeed him. After choosing among his children, the Fon informs nobody except the kingmakers who kept the secret until the right time comes, but in situation where the Fon fails to choose his successor, the selection was done by the kingmakers. If the deceased Fon had only one son, the selection was easy but in the case of many sons, the selection was complicated. They have to select the most competent son among the princes of the royal family. This was the situation in Oshie when Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III passed on in 1997 or was declared missing or lost. A dispute erupted among the princes of the royal family on he that was to succeed the deceased father.²⁷⁸

This was because it was alledged that, the father passed on without designating his successor for reasons known within the royal family. After series of *ad hoc* meetings held

²⁷⁸ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.110.

both in Douala and Oshie by the princes and princeses of the royal family to chose who was to succeed the deceased father. Amongst a lot of peril and coercion from other princes of the royal family who also were aspiring to be enthroned as Fon. Due to some intricacies masterminded by the first wife of the Fon alongside some members of the traditional elders *Okum*, the decision to enthrone Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe as traditional ruler of Oshie was agreed upon. The traditional elders *Okum* who were against the decision were lobbied by the princes and princesses of the deceased Fon to accept the choice of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. Meanwhile the designated choice of traditional ruler by the Oshie elite put in place in what was known as the Bafoussam Declaration was largely rejected.²⁷⁹

According to the norms laid down by the traditions and customs of the people of Oshie, a Fon was supposed to be humble and had a good mastery of the Oshie dialect.²⁸⁰ He was obliged to have a good knowledge of the traditional institutions and be available all the times in the chiefdom to carry out his duties. In all, he was to be physically and mentally fit and capable of expressing some unifying influences within the royal family and the entire community. The choice of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, thus posed a lot of controversies within the royal family cycle because according to them, he did not have the above qualities. There was also disagreement on what was presented as the father's "will" on he that the deceased father had designated to succeed him. According to information obtained from informants, the fathers "will" did not reflect on the choice of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. The royal throne succession dispute within the royal family members led to a division amongst the princes.²⁸¹

During the enthronement ceremony of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe as traditional ruler of Oshie, divergent opinions erupted between the deceased Fon's first wife and other princes of the royal family. She was steadfast that Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe should be enthroned as the Fon of Oshie, not any other prince from the palace. The other members of the royal family were not in agreement with such an opinion. According to information obtained from one of our informants, the traditional elders *Okum*, were lured by some princesses to uphold that Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe who was based in the United States of America was the right choice. The traditional elders *Okum* were further assured that if they upheld the choice of Ericsyrol Anyangwe as traditional ruler of Oshie, their lot will be solved. These

²⁷⁹Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 44, a prince in the Oshie royal family and eye witnessed to the chieftaincy succession dispute in Oshie, Bamenda, October 2016.

²⁸⁰Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People Places and Events p.221.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

contradictory opinions within the royal family marked the beginning of chieftaincy crisis that later erupted in the chiefdom of Oshie.²⁸²

Furthermore, on the enthronement day, before presenting Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe to the public, the traditional elders *Okum* and the chief priest performed the enthronement rite on his body to fortify him spiritually and mystically. Once the rites were established on the body of the Fon, he assumes the background of a Tiger which symbolizes that he was the Tiger of the chiefdom.²⁸³ The spiritual fortification prevents the Fon from greeting the ordinary citizens in the chiefdom, and failure to respect this role renders him powerless as earlier mentioned. According to the traditions and customs of the Western Grassfields traditional rulers, Fons of neighbouring chiefdoms always attended the enthronement ceremony. The Senior Divisional Officer of Momo presided over the enthronement ceremony representing the Minister of territorial administration. The investiture ceremony of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anynagwe IV was graced by traditional dance groups from Oshie.²⁸⁴

Moreover. there was bound to be friction among members of the royal family, the traditional elders *Okum* and the elites. These issues were all centered on his inability to understand and express himself in Oshie dialect, couple with his inadequate knowledge of the functioning of traditional institutions. In fact, his iiregular absences in the chiefdom to carry out his duties equally created a lot of problems among the Oshie elites and the royal family.²⁸⁵ These weaknesses were manifested after the enthronement ceremony in that, instead for him to stay at home and administered his subjects, he immediately returned to the United State of America to resume his permanent resident status and job. Consequently, he became an absentee Fon and this created a vacuum on the throne despite the fact that, there was a regent who was not also present at home to carry out his duties. Plate 16 is a Portrait of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV of Oshie.

²⁸² Martin Anyangwe, Oshie Peopl Places and Events p.222.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.24.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.



Plate 16: Portrait of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV of Oshie in 1998.

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, July 2017.

2. 2 Oshie Relations with her Neighbouring Polities

Available historical evidence attests that during the first half of the nineteenth century, interchiefdom relations in most parts of the Western Grassfields had existed and were shaped by many factors. These included customs and traditions dealing with tribal lands, regulating territorial issues, and other matters in cases where cultural and linguistic clashes occurred. In cases where traditional diplomacy failed to resolved differences, special negotiators were appointed. When the peace failed, traditional indigenous warfare was ensued.²⁸⁶ During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, relations amongst chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields were subjected to modifications. Inter-chiefdom relations as a whole did not only depends on blood ties, it also involved economic, political and of course, sociocultural considerations. Chiefdoms co-operated with each other in the production and exchange of goods and services and shared their happiness and sorrows as a people.²⁸⁷According to Thomas and Anderson, "We tend to be attracted to those who are

²⁸⁶ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People, Places and Events p.62.

²⁸⁷*Ibid* p.23.

nearer us and have qualities similar to our own, we also are attracted to people whose interests and beliefs match ours".²⁸⁸ It was on this account that chiefdoms were determined to indulge in relations that were described as cordial or hostile. The people of every society modern or traditional, have different dispositions that are realistic towards their environment and their neighbours. It was because of these differences that every society want to maintain cordial relations with their neighbours.²⁸⁹ This was a similar situation with the people of Oshie whereby the traditional rulers demonstrated great dynamism in regional diplomacy with their neighbouring Polities during the colonial days. According to evidence of Oshie oral history, when the people settled at their present territorial site in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they fought some wars with their neighbours.

Diplomatic relations between Oshie and her neighbouring communities, according to oral history was characterised by wars of resistance among themselves. Prior to the settlement of the people of Oshie at their present territorial site, they encountered some constituted groups of people with whom they got involved in tribal wars as earlier mentioned. Due to the dynamic nature of leaders such as Emamba, who was according to oral information the spritual leader of the people at the time. The people of Oshie were victorious in most of these wars although recorded some negative impact in human and material losts.²⁹⁰ The most dreaded of these wars was the one between the people of Oshie, Meta and Ngwo. The main causes of the wars resulted from the search for territorial space for settlement, local hegemony and prestige. When Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie by the year 1918, he inherited some of these problems with her neighbouring communities, but due to his dynamic attitude and ability to settle issues, he was able to maintained cordial relations with some of the neighbours.²⁹¹

According to accounts of ethnographers buttressed with oral information, the most severe of these wars was that between Oshie and Meta.²⁹² The main cause of the war originated from the fact that, the Meta people wanted to chase away the people of Oshie from the valley in which they had settled. In the course of this, war broke out that lasted for two days, resulting in the defeat of the Meta people. After the war peace was maintained and the

²⁸⁸ Thomas W. Laverne and Robert J. Anderson, 1932, *Sociology: The Study of Human Relationships*, 3rded, New York. Harcourt Brace Yovannovich Publishers pp. 101-102.

²⁸⁹ Carlson Anyangwe, *The Judicial System in Cameroon* 1982 p.9.

²⁹⁰ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People-Places- Events p.8.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*.

²⁹² Interview with Tatoh Takwi, 80, Patriarch, Oshie, 10 June 2015.

people of Oshie never had skirmishes with the people of Meta. During the period of German administration in the Bamenda Grassfields, Meta served as a link between the Germans who were stationed in Bali and other peripheral chiefdoms such as Oshie and Ngie. The Meta people obtained labourers from these chiefdoms and supplied them to the Germans who were later conveyed to work in their plantations in the coastal region of Cameroon. Most of the people obtained from Oshie were trained as soldiers whereby some of them fought along side German soldiers during the Second World War.²⁹³

The brutal force and resistance from these wars distorted the traditional and political organisation of the chiefdom of Oshie. The Bamenda station was opened by some of the labourers from Oshie. The persistence raid from the Meta people intensified animosity between the Meta and Oshie people, when they continued to capture the Oshie people into forced labour. Although social interaction and trade between these two villages gradually pacify the situation and gave way to cordial relations. When the Germans were ousted from Cameroon by the year 1916, the people of Oshie maintained cordial relations with the Meta people because of their language ties. When Fon Etunyi Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie, he strengthened relations between the two chiehifdoms. In doing this, he encouraged his subjects to attend the Meta market which was a market for the people of Ngie, Ngwo and other chiefdoms of Njikwa sub-division. The relations were manifested through marriages between the indigenes of Meta and Oshie.²⁹⁴

The people of Oshie also fought inter-tribal wars with the people of Ngwo during the period of settlement at their present site. According to historical evidence, the war resulted from the death of an indigene of Ngwo in Oshie. In response to the mishap, the people of Ngwo attacked the people of Oshie. The war lasted for a day due to the timely intervention of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe who resolved the issue amicably. Although both chiefdoms suffered tremendously in terms of lives and property damage. Though the period prior to and after the Germans in Oshie witnessed a lot of hostilities with her neighbouring Polities. The resilient perception of animosity that existed between Oshie and some of her neighbouring chiefdoms had its roots from these wars. The area only witnessed and enjoyed peace when the British arrived Oshie.²⁹⁵ It was under the influence of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie, assisted by the traditional ruler of Ngwo that peace was finally maintained in the area. To cement cordial

²⁹³ Interview with Achato Anthony, 68, Member of *Nyanyang* cult, Oshie, 15 June, 2015.

²⁹⁴ Idem.

²⁹⁵National Archives Buea, File No Ab/1400/1925: Ngie-Ngunu Escort: Ngunu Native Court establishment 1925.

relations with the people of Ngwo, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe initiated the construction of the road linking the chiefdom of Oshie, Ngwo and Acha Tugi to enhance development in the areas.²⁹⁶

The people of Oshie also witnessed hostile relations with the people of Konda during the period of settlement at their present site. This was due to some historical issues such as hegemony and territorial expansion that strained relations between the two chiefdoms. According to information obtained from my informants, an incident occurred during the funeral ceremony of Awaza, one of the Oshie warrior. An indigene from the chiefdom of Konda attended the funeral celebration and witnessed the bravery and warlike nature of the people of Oshie.²⁹⁷ Upon his return to Konda, he recounted the event to the traditional elders of Konda. In order to bring lasting solution to the disputes, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe as a dynamic ruler mediated between the people of Oshie and Konda. To cement friendly ties between the two chiefdoms, sacrifices were performed at the boundary between Oshie and Konda.²⁹⁸ He finally succeded in maintaining peace between the two chiefdoms, in the course of time he got married to a girl from Konda to add his number of palace wives in Oshie.

(I) Land and Boundary Disputes

The traditional rulers of Oshie played an important role as far as land and boundary disputes between Oshie and her neighbouring Polities were concerned. In fact, land and boundary disputes were a common characteristics of chiefdom relations within the Western Grassfields during the first half of the nineteenth century. Before the arrival of the European colonialists in the area, land and boundary disputes were more recurrent. This was because it was generally believed that all land was the home of the ancestral spirits.²⁹⁹Nobody claimed land, except as directed by the traditional ruler who was seen as the ancestral representative on earth. Boundaries were not marked by individuals but by natural features such as trees, rivers, streams, stones, hills and mountains. These natural features constituted natural boundaries within ethnic groups. These aspects, helped to minimise land and boundary disputes in the region. However, disputes over land became common within the Western Grassfields chiefdoms during the nineteenth century when the various settlement patterns in the region

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Angeme Asaiah,71, traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie, 22 June, 2015.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Ateghe Simon, 55, Teacher and one-time President General of Oshie Students and Teachers Union, Bamenda, 2016.

²⁹⁹ J.C. Drummond-Hay, 1926, An Assessment Report on the Bandop Area in the Bamanda Division for the Year Ended 31st December p.2.

were set up. This situation was due to the fact that, some of the ethnic groups that migrated into the region were in constant search for land on which they could settle and eventually claim as theirs.³⁰⁰

These land and boundary disputes, erupted as a result of the fact that some chiefdoms wanted to acquire new lands or expand existing ones. Consequently, disputes between chiefdoms and fondoms became obvious. An example of land and boundary disputes that occurred during the end of the nineteenth century was the case of Oshie and Mundum II, Ngwo and Konda, infact similar situation was the people of Bafanji who did not want to pay tribute to Bali-Kumbat, a Chamba group that had entered the Ndop plain after them, escaped unpleasant consequences from Bali-Kumbat and took refuge in Bagam.³⁰¹ It was also noted that the Chamba who entered the region at the beginning of the nineteenth century raided the chiefdom of Bafut, Mankon and Nkwen, before settling on their present site. While at their present site in Bali-Nyonga, they carried out incessant warfare against the neighbouring Ngemba, Meta and Moghamo chiefdoms whom they met, seized most of their land, and ended up effecting suzerainty over them. This was familiar with disputes generated by refusal to pay tribute and attempts to monopolise trade.³⁰²

In addition, chiefdoms that were much weaker than the Bali-Nyonga came to acknowledge the latter's suzerainty over them. The chiefdoms provided Bali-Nyonga with leopard skin and other items which were associated with wealth and authority in the Grassfields.³⁰³ There were many other causes of land and boundary disputes such as refusal to pay tribute by tributary chiefdoms to powerful chiefdoms, non performances of mortuary rites during the passing away of the traditional leader of a chiefdom by friendly neighbours such as the case between Oshie and Bako. Attempts to monopolize trade routes and some commodities and other socio-cultural practices such as the refusal of intermarriages between some chiefdoms. They became sources of disputes when they were not performed as was required by the principle of mutuality that existed between the chiefdoms during their peace time's relations.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*.

³⁰² *Ibid*.

³⁰³ W.R. Hunt, 1920, Annual Report of the Bamenda division for the year Ended 31 December, p.7.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*.

A majority of the ethnic groups that migrated into the Bamenda Grassfields region were in constant search for land on which they could settle and eventually claim. After comfortably settling on their present territorial sites, they had to protect and preserve the land that they claimed as theirs for posterity. Consequently, land and boundaries of particular chiefdoms which were known to some and not others were in most places vaguely determined by trees, streams, rivers, hills, valleys and forests.³⁰⁵ Whenever a given boundary between the various chiefdoms was violated dispute was bound to crop up such as the case of boundary disputes between Oshie and Ngwo that occurred in 1980. When the British troops occupied Bamenda in 1917 after the defeat of the Germans during the First World War, the Chiefdoms that were under Bali hegemony saw the defeat of the Germans as their eventual emancipation from Bali reclaimed their freedom, since they were forced by the Germans to live in Bali.³⁰⁶

Issues of land and boundary disputes, erupted in the Bamenda Grassfields chiefdoms during the colonial period due to the fact that most of the settlements provided by the British colonial administrators to the numerous land, boundary and other related disputes were not satisfactory to one or both parties concerned. This was the case of Oshie and Mundum, where a faction of the people of Oshie in Barimbong were paying taxes to the Mundum chief because of boundary issues, when the matter was reported to the British Resident in Bamenda, a partial trial was given to the case. This resulted from the fact that most chiefdom found it difficult to accept the splitting and arbitrary demarcation of the disputes that emanated from territorial claims were purportedly resolved by the British colonial administrators under the various Articles of the Native land and the Inter-tribal Boundary Settlement Ordinances,³⁰⁸ Land and boundary disputes were still going on in the region by the time of independence of Southern Cameroon in 1961. Territorial claims continued to persist under colonial regime because some of these disputes were not satisfactorily resolved.

Another cause of land and boundary disputes in the Western Grassfields chiefdoms was as a result of politico-economic and social problems. Upon arrival, the colonial masters establish the Western system of governance to ensure that their interest was safeguarded.

³⁰⁵*Ibid*.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁰⁷ V.G. Fanso. 1981, «Traditional and Colonial African Boundaries: Varieties, Functions and Problems », Yaounde: 'History Week' of the Department of History April 13-15, Memeographed p. 3.

³⁰⁸ Information on the 1933 Ordinance in Line with the Native Land and Inter-Tribal Boundary Settlement was obtained at the N.A.B.

Boundaries were created that cut across ethnic groups, cultures and families so as to effectively administer the people with less difficulty. It was from the above that the phrase "divide and rule principle" was established to suit the mechanisms of the colonial masters. Natural features like rivers, mountains and hills were the main aspects in ethnic boundaries. This problem of boundary not demarcated following natural features, equally caused a problem when carrying out demographic statistics on population distributions and land use.³⁰⁹

The demarcation of inter-chiefdom boundaries by the colonialists continues to be a source of disputes between communities in the Western Grassfields. The demarcations did not take into account the cultural similarities or differences of the neighbouring people. The presence of the colonialists posed ethnic problems such as, rational and social problems as well as creating for its own purposed and administrative entity that was totally artificial from the point of view of the people in the area. The colonialists went further to put one ethnic group against the other.³¹⁰ They signed treaties with the traditional rulers of the Bamenda Grassfields chiefdoms, a situation which became a problem in the course of time. Such situations led to many bloody disputes such as the one that occurred between the people of Oshie and Ngwo at an area known as Fun hill during the early 1980, the chiefdom of Bali-Nyonga and its neighbouring Wedikum ethnic groups.³¹¹

In the same vein, Fanso argues that land boundary disputes among chiefdoms, did not exist until the colonial masters began defining boundaries with pillars, posts and cairns fixed on the lands in question and represented on maps. Hence when the British authorities began defining and demarcating boundaries between the chiefdoms with posts or cairns, the purpose and significance of the cairns could not be understood by the chiefdoms in the Bamenda region.³¹² It was only when disputes arose that the intention and purpose of the demarcated boundaries were clear. Fanso captured the problems of African boundaries when he remarked that;

In traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular State or polity shared the boundary. A people shared a boundary with another people and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or narrow zone fronting the two

³⁰⁹*Ibid*.

 ³¹⁰Okwudiba Nnoli, 1998, *Ethnic conflicts in Africa*, CODESRIA Book Series, Dakar, Senegal p.18.
 ³¹¹ *Ibid*.

³¹² V.G. Fanso, 1981, "Traditional and Colonial African Boundaries: Varieties, Functions and Problems," Yaounde: 'History Week' of the Department of History April 13-15 p.3.

neighbours sharing it where both were united or joined together. The African spoke of where his people 'meet' with neighbouring people on the land where they 'share' the earth not where they separate.³¹³

Land and boundary disputes between chiefdoms did not exist in the Bamenda Grassfields regions prior to the coming of the colonial administrators. What existed were borders or buffer zones. The delimiting and demarcation of the boundaries of chiefdoms, was through the Native Land Ordinance and the Inter-tribal Boundary Settlement Ordinance of 1926, 1933 and 1962. Since these legislations brought about a completely new phenomenon among the chiefdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields, land disputes between chiefdoms became ceaseless. During this period, cases of farmland and boundary disputes were numerous such as the case between Oshie and Ngie in early 1995³¹⁴

Competition for inadequate economic resources was one of the main sources of land and boundary disputes. The economy of the region revolves around farming thus the unproductiveness of land causes people to leave their original settlements and farm in neighbouring places. The agreements reached at after some decades were forgotten. These agreements could be farm renting or agreement on delimiting the farming area to friendly or neighbouring communities.³¹⁵ A similar situation of land and boundary dispute occurred between Oshie and Ngwo during the colonial days. Here a fertile land was left at the mercy of the Oshie people who neglected the terms of the agreement and claim ownership of the farmland. The search and competition for the scarce fertile land and other economic resources have led to many disputes between the chiefdoms.³¹⁶

Another factor that was responsible for land and boundary disputes in the Bamenda Grassfields was the issues of demography. Population increase leads to expansion. Agriculture was the major factor that uses land intensively and continuously. As the number of people living together increases, the potential for inter-chiefdom disputes develops. Immigrants in some communities do not only increase the population but also sometimes try to hand them to the indigenes. Areas especially at the periphery of Bamenda region such as Oshie that develop fast in density with limited fertile land for cultivation easily found themselves in land disputes especially during farming period with their neighbouring

³¹³*Ibid*.

 ³¹⁴Patrick, Bungfang, 2000, «Inter-chiefdom conflicts in the North West Region of Cameroon from 1889-1999,
 Colonial and Post colonial influences», Maîtrise Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, pp.37-38.
 ³¹⁵ Nkwi, *Traditional Government and Social Change* p.44.

³¹⁶ Ibid

communities. The acquisition of wealth and sources of wealth were sometimes the immediate causes of land and boundary disputes, Nkwi affirms this assertion when he remarked that:

The acquisition of wealth was an ambition of equal or nearly equal in performance to that of power over other peoples. This might entail the occupation of farmland, and thus was found up with territorial expansion. Another common aim was the exaction of tributes from the conquered which suitable circumstances were preferable thought akin to the taking of booty. Access to trade and control of trade routes were similarly strong motives for war.³¹⁷Some chiefdom in the Bamenda Grassfields acquire lands sometimes by invading neighbouring chiefdoms or some chiefs accept the supremacy of others.³¹⁸

Moreover, soil fertility with the search for agricultural and pasture lands, had contributed a lot in land and boundary disputes in the Bamenda Region. Other factors such as social and cultural observations had played significant roles in the occurring and recurrent of land and boundary disputes in the region.³¹⁹

The issues of proximity of the chiefdoms to one another also causes land and boundary disputes in the region. It was but common that there could be no dispute of any kind without contact. Consequently, the Bamenda Grassfields though mountainous still permits a very high degree of contact with each chiefdom. Land and boundary disputes, would have been largely unheard of, if there were natural barriers such as the case of Oshie natural barriers such as rivers were absent. Unfortunately, the absence of these barriers has enabled a good number of communities to fight against one another or among themselves over specific areas.³²⁰The importance attached to land could not be separated from the constant disputes recorded in the region. Land rights were and are either patrileneally or matrilineally, close agnates- brothers, sisters, father's brother; cousins comprise an inner lineage in which there was continuous mutual assistance. With the advent of European colonialists in the area, their conceptions of the essential relationship between people and land were fundamentally different.³²¹

The coming into force of ordinance N° 74-1 of 6/7/1974 later modified by law N° 81-21of 27/11/1981 gave ownership of all lands to the State as stipulated in Articles 1(2) and 15. The implication of this is that chiefdoms no longer laid claims to land ownership. The chiefs were described in the ordinance as custodians of national lands. They could not therefore make war with each other over land issues. It was in this Decree N°77-525 of 13/12/1977 that

³¹⁷ *Ibid*.

³¹⁸ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1884-1914* New Haven Yale University Press p. 308.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*.

³²⁰ Elisabeth Colson, 1971, "The Impact of the Colonial period on the definition of Land Rights," in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960, Profiles of change: African Society and Colonial Rule*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.193-215.

³²¹ M. Lecron Foster and R.A. Rubenstein, *Peace and War, Cross-Cultural Perspectives,* Transaction Books, Oxford 1986 p. 93.

the boundaries of certain traditional chiefdoms in the Mezam, Momo and Njikwa Subdivisions were modified.³²² This situation was justified by Lecron and Rubenstain in their recommendation;

Identification with land and ownership of it, often lie at the root of conflict. The origins of land disputes may eventually be forgotten, especially in the absence of written records, and symbolic and mythic assertions of rights to territory are often added to or blended with the practical reasons for a war, by both sides, to justify a land claim. When such claims are based upon such divine sanctions, war may become endemic, as seems to have been the ease in this political conflict-in-microcosm, painstakingly reconstructed from ancient pictorial records.³²³

The most outstanding factor that characterised the colonial period in the Bamenda Grassfields was land and boundary disputes. It was often said that no human group exists without conflicts; inter-chiefdom relationships were not always completely cordial as earlier mentioned. The causes of these boundary disputes started from territorial expansion during the colonial period. This was a similar situation in the chiefdom of Oshie where, by the year 1930, land and boundary disputes erupted in the chiefdom. There were managed by the intervention of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in collaboration with the British colonialists in the Bamenda Division to put an end to the disputes. Although the major historical dispute over land was that between the chiefdom of Oshie and Ngwo.³²⁴

The land dispute was resolved by the tribal boundary ordinance of 1933. According to this ordinance, the boundary between Oshie and Ngwo was delineated. By the year 1936, the boundary dispute re-emerged again.³²⁵ The Authorities of the Ngunu Native Authority Area wrote to the first district officer, Hook who went to Ngunu area as a mediator to this dispute and fixed the boundary between Oshie and Ngwo. Two years later, the Ngwo people broke the ordinance when they cross over to the Oshie side of the disputed land, this raised tensions among the people of Oshie. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in order to defend his integrity litigated the matter to the Ngunu Native Court represented by the Native Authorities in the area, albeit the matter was not looked into. In 1938, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie further presented the matter to the District Officer in Bamenda Division. Baker the acting British District Officer at the time took a reconnaissance trip to the Ngunu area but could not succeed in bringing lasting solution to the matter.³²⁶

³²² An Annual Publication Magazine, Oshie p.21.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Nndek Oshie, Annual Publication Magazine, p.16.

³²⁵ National Archives Buea, File No 361:10 Ngwaw Native Court Area.

³²⁶ Ibid.

According to information obtained from my informants, it was alleged that, he overtly decided the issue in favour of the people of Ngwo.³²⁷ By the year 1939, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie again appealed the matter to the honourable Resident in Buea A.E.F Murray for the allegation that, the Fon of Oshie opted for the presence of the District Officer in Bamenda Division and the Native Authority surveyors in the disputed area. As for the people of Ngwo, they claimed that they inherited the disputed land from their fore-fathers. The Fon of Ngwo intimated that the interpreter during the boundary demarcation of 1936 was a native of Oshie and so interpreted the verdict wrongly.³²⁸

The Fon of Ngwo further complained that, their farm lands were located on the side of Oshie land and that they wish to continue their farming activities on the land. H.N. Harcourt, the then Assistant District Officer of Bamenda Division went to Ngunu area to mediate and settled the boundary dispute again. The Native Authorities of Ngunu Native Court, settled and fixed the boundary together with Harcourt. These Native Authorities included Fon Etunyi Anyangwe alongside the neighbouring chiefs of Ikweri Banya, Bakwa, Konda, Bako, Ngwo and the Messenger of Ngunu Native Court.³²⁹ In the month of April 4th 1949, the boundary between Oshie and Ngwo was fixed at a cairn beside the stone known at *Togebat*, from which the Peak refered to by the Ngwo people as *Okubafunaw* and *Ogung fun* by the Oshie people was located. It was a bearing of about 226:30 and a distance of 171.6 yards (15.8km) to the second cairn erected between the stream where the *Togebat* stream emerges from the earth.³³⁰ From the middle of the outlet of the *Togebat* stream down stream and across the Oshie-Ngwo path to its convergence with the Nwanjaw stream, including the middle of the waterway of river Anjaw.

Another cairn was planted on the right bank of the *Togebat* stream beside a tree where the Ngwo-Oshie path crosses.³³¹ The boundary demarcation document was officially drawned up by the Native Authority surveyor G.A. Jaiye on the 4th of April 1949. In 1951, it was violated and Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie complained that the chief of Ngwo had led his subjects to demolish raffia palm bushes that belonged to Oshie. The matter was settle peacefully by the Ngunu administration and this enabled peace to reign in the area for a long

³²⁷ Regional Archive Bamenda, File No B/2900(D/1938) File No 361(177:11). Review from District Officer to Resident Ngwaw Native Court Area.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p.40.

³³⁰ National Archive Buea, File No 361(177):45).

³³¹ Ibid.

period, although mixed with some spirit of animosity between indigenes of both chiefdoms. The atmosphere dettered social interactions between the elite of these Polities. The Ngwo people boycotted the Oshie weekly market, palm oil that was brought from neighbouring Menka via Ngwo to be sold in Oshie market was prohibited. Other neighbouring communities were cautioned by the Ngwo people not to trade with Oshie. But the embargo did not last for a longer period as the chiefdoms of Ikweri and Banya were in trade relations and often supported Oshie against Ngwo even though they had boundary disputes with Oshie as well.³³²

By the year 1943, another land dispute erupted between Fon Etunyi Anyagwe of Oshie and the the traditional ruler of Bamundum today Mundum in Menchum valley. According to the dispute, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe II of Oshie complained and submitted an appeal to the Ngwo Native Court that recounted thus; I had a piece of land situated near the Oshie quarter of Barimbong and about fourteen years some of my indigenes opted to live there. After they had settled there for a period of six years I requested them to pay their taxes to me. It happened that the area was located near the village of Bamundum. This led the village head of Bamundum to force the inhabitants to pay their taxes to him, which they continued to pay up to this date of my writing this my humble petition. When it came to my notice that the said parties were paying their taxes to the village head of Bamundum, I requested them whether this was done by their will or against their will. I was informed that they were prepared to pay to me but were forced by the village head of Bamundum to pay to him.³³³

In addition, they told me that I should take steps against them in the Native Court where their names would be included in my Nominal Roll to pay the forth-coming tax to me. As a result of the above I brought the question in an open village council meeting where they were present. It was unanimously agreed that since the land in question belonged to me and the people lived in it, their taxes should be paid to me. Yet the people retorted that the village head of Bamundum would not agree that they pay their taxes to me and I had to take the matter to the Native court. In the Native court when the case was called up in the presence of the Defendants, they were asked by the court whether they were in favour to pay taxes to me or leave the land. They agreed to pay the taxes to me and to live there. As a result of their statement before the Native Court, a decision was given to my favour that read as thus;

Suit 36/42."Judgement for Plaintiff for £10:-damages of his land or resume their original homes as they have admitted in open court and provided the District Officer confirms it and they mean it there is no

³³² *Ibid*.

³³³ Regional Archive Bamenda No NW/La/9.1938/1 File No B.3051, Ngunu Native Authority Complaints, 1938.

objection against their plan. Four months given to satisfy judgement of the court.Ag. Predt.Kunyam V.H.Konda his x mark.10/-cost refunded.(signed)A.A korond.C.N.C.16.7.42.

In August 1943, when I found out that the defendants were not willing to satisfy the Native court judgement. I took an appeal against them and in the judgement they were all arrested and brought up in the Native Court either to pay the £10: -damages or leave the land in question. When the defendants arrived the Court they told the Court that they were willing to pay their taxes to me rater than leave the land. It was further documented on my summons as follows: 3 accs. admonished to pay tax to complt.and not £10: -damages if the land belongs to them 5/-costs to be refunded at once. Ekpiri V.H. his x mark (signed) B.C. Minjo 25/9/43.³³⁴ After the above judgement the Defendants paid their taxes to me. I had to send a letter to the District Officer W. E. Aston Smith in Bamenda for assistance and it was then that the District Officer replied that defendants were to pay their taxes to me the following year which was 1944. In the same year the Assistant District Officer J.H.D. Stapleton came to our Area and in the Native Court took copies of the proceedings of this case from the court to Bamenda as a result of the defendants tendering their complaints to him during that visit.³³⁵

In addition, I was later asked to wait for the District Officer in Bamenda to inform the Defendants to resume the payment of taxes to me. As time went on, I received informations that the Assistant District Officer went to the Defendants resident, before he left for Bamenda and decided the question under dispute with Defendants in my absence.³³⁶ Not long afterwards I visited the District Officer in Bamenda and the Assistant District Officer told me that the defendants were not to pay tax to me but to the village head of Bamundum II. As I stated in my previous paragraphs, the District Officer W. E. Aston Smith had already told me that the defendants were to pay taxes to me in the following year. I was afterwards taken on a surprise to see that the question was later on handled by the Assistant District Officer.³³⁷

The question was again ordered by the Resident to be re-opened. I saw no reason why it had to be decided entirely with the defendants in their homes without the slightest notice to me or the members of the court where the case was originally decided. Under this circumstances I would be very grateful to be informed whether a special order from the Resident was invested to the Assistant District Officer to try this case after it was settled by him. Moreover, why I was not informed of the isolated trial which took place with defendants

³³⁴ *Ibid*.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Regional Archive Bamenda No NW/La/9.1938/1 File No B.3051, Ngunu Native Authority Complaints, 1938.

and the Assistant District Officer. Unsatisfied with the above manner and decision added to the District Officer's decision which ended the question before the arrival of the Assistant District Officer in our area, I had appealed to the Resident for assistance and looked forward for the most considerate instructions.³³⁸ "I have the honour to be, Sir, your most humble petitioner Fon Etunyi Anyangwe." In the course of time the land dispute was resolved through a joint mediation team organised by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe alogside the traditional rulers of Mundum and Beba.³³⁹

Another issue of land dispute erupted between Oshie and Beba. This was due to the fact that, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie reported Fon Mbolifang of the chiefdom of Beba in Menchum valley, to the District Officer in Bamenda for maltreating the Oshie people living at Barimbong quarter of Oshie. Barimbong was and is one of the Oshie quarter that shared boundary with the Menchum valley. In 1953, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe again protested to the District Officer in Bamenda Division concerning the people of Beba who had occupied parcels of Oshie land at Nyiku-Barimbong. The matter was resolved peacefully without any dispute. As a result of this, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe instructed some Beba inhabitants to settle on the disputed area alongside the people of Oshie in Barimbong. The arrangement was concluded between Fon Etunyi Anyangwe of Oshie and the Fon of Beba.³⁴⁰

By the year 1980, the demarcation of inter-chiefdom boundaries by colonial authorities continued to be a source of disputes between communities sharing a common boundary in the Bamenda Grassfields, including the peripheral chiefdoms of Njikwa subdivision.³⁴¹ In August 1982, the indigenes of Banya and Ikweri were attacked by the people of Oshie for trespassing into the Oshie land during a self reliant development project that consisted of digging a road linking Njikwa to their chiefdom.³⁴²

The people of Ekweri Banya retaliated and the incident led to the death of one person and thirteen injured. The administrative authority of Momo Division in Mbengwi was informed. The Senior Divisinal Officer for Momo appointed a commission to investigate the matter but no solution was arrived at.³⁴³ Despite all these boundary disputes, the people of Ikweri Banya had been cooperating with the people of Oshie in matters of development. In

³³⁸ National Archive Buea, File No B.305/volume II.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Okwudiba Nnoli, 1998, *Ethnic conflicts in Africa*, CODESRIA Book Series, Dakar, Senegal, p.18.

³⁴¹ *Ibid*.

³⁴² *Ibid*.

³⁴³ National Archive Buea, File No E 30. C.262.Volume I: Ngwo/Oshie Land Disputes 1987.

1985, the continuous spirit of animosity that have existed between the chiefdoms of Oshie and Ngwo croped up into an armed conflict but was mitigated due to the rapid intervention of the administration. The cause of the conflict was as a result of the fact that, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe of Oshie instructed his subjects to farm on a hill that was allegedly known to belong to Oshie. The area in question was used by a cattle rearer from Oshie for the grazing of his animals. The administrative headquarter of Njikwa sub-division was and is located at the boundary between Oshie and Ngwo.³⁴⁴

In response to the action perpetrated by the people of Oshie, the people of Ngwo on the 8th October 1986, came in their numbers with hoes and cutlasses on the hill to attack the Oshie people. The problem occurred due to the fact that, the official boundary between the village of Ngwo and Oshie ends within the corridor of the Njikwa municipal forest. The people of Ngwo on the other hand claimed that the disputed land belonged to them and that their ancestors farmed on the disputed area until late 1980. According to sources from one of my informant, the people of Ngwo dispersed away D.N Josi's cattle, an Oshie cattle rearer who had lived in the area for close to twenty-five years. This time the people of Oshie appealed to the Njikwa administrator, who pleaded to the Ngwo people to retreat from the land but his plea was turned down.³⁴⁵

Moreover, it was alleged that a certain Mansfield Atanga who was a civil servant at the District Office in Njikwa Sub-division led the people of Ngwo to contravene the Njikwa administrator's resolution. He was largely reported to have formed a coalition of the villages of Konda and Ikweri Banya against Oshie. Infuriated by the disobedience perpetrated by the people of Ngwo, the people of Oshie armed up with cutlasses and other local weapons ready to clash with the people of Ngwo. On the 28th of October 1986, the people of Oshie razed out all the farms cultivated by the people of Ngwo on the disputed area. Although there were no clashes between the people of the two chiefdoms, due to the intervention and mitigation prowess of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside the Assistant Municipal Administrator of Njikwa sub-division. He further informed the Assistant Divisional Officer for Momo, where he arrived the disputed area armed with three gendarmes on the same day but peace had returned and he recorded statements from both parties.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ National Archive Buea, File No E.30/02.1/c.5/05: Ngwo/Oshie Land Disputes of 1987-1995.

³⁴⁵ National Archive Buea, File No E.30/02.1/c.5/05: Ngwo/Oshie Land Disputes of 1987-1995d.

³⁴⁶ Igore Kopytoff, 1961, «Extension of Conflict as a method of Conflict Resolution among the Suku of the Congo», in, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. No. 1, pp.61-69.

In all, the measures taken by the administration to bring lasting solutions to the land dispute were abortive. Though, animosity between the two chiefdoms continued to fuel up as it was rumoured all over Njikwa Sub-division and beyond that the people of Oshie and Ngwo were involved in a land dispute that led to many casualties. Considering the fact that quarrels and struggles were inevitable in any given society, people must seek ways through which their problems could be solved. Various cases of land and boundary disputes in the Grassfields chiefdoms used traditional methods to bring lasting solution to them. At times, when the situation intensified, traditional organizations or institutions came in to assist the administration in handling them.³⁴⁷

Issues of land and boundary disputes were entirely an internal matter that was achieved through the consensus of traditional rulers whose authority was revered within the chiefdom and beyond.³⁴⁸ In this way, the traditional elders were used as agents of mediation and reconciliation. Land dispute between the chiefdom of Oshie and Ngwo was to be handled in a traditional fashion, for each of the chiefdoms had a traditional council, which takes care of the various problems they faced. Resolution of land and boundary disputes between neighbouring Polities was equally the responsibility of the traditional council. There were mechanisms that were put in place for the settlement of conflicts and for redressing the injuries caused. Chiefs or Fons, accompanied by councillors, met halfway between their chiefdoms when relations were strained to settle the problems. For instant the Fons of Mankon and Bafut met that way a few times, to challenge each other, threaten and negotiate, while their people were fighting, until a common oath was taken by the two parties..³⁴⁹ It was through that before the colonialists, the chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields were living in harmony without issues of land and boundary disputes.

There were some attempted solutions that were put in place by the administration and the traditional rulers of Oshie and Ngwo to resolve these disputes. But all was futile due to non-resort to the traditional method of conflict resolution. Conflict resolution was a normative concept that was aimed at reconciling, harmonizing, or managing incompatible interests by fostering a process of institutionalized peaceful interaction. Conflict resolution envisages strategies aim at restoring or establishing the normal state of affairs and raising the level of

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

 ³⁴⁸ Jean-Pierre Warnier, 1975, *Pre-colonial Mankon: the Development of Cameroon Chiefdom in its Regional Setting*, Xerox University Micofilms, U.S.A., pp.398-399.
 ³⁴⁹ Ibid.

peaceful, harmonious, cooperative, constructive and productive interactions of people.³⁵⁰ Conflict signifies a break down in the normal pattern of behavior. It involves a clash of irreconcilable positions resulting in a failure to regulate, reconcile, or harmonize the differences. According to Morton,³⁵¹ "conflict resolution can be both formal and informal. It can either aim at resolving or terminating conflicts in an open and predictable process in accordance with legal principles or focus on efforts to increase cooperation among the parties and deepen their relationship by addressing the conditions that led to the dispute, fostering positive attitudes and allaying distrust through reconciliation, and building or strengthening the institutions and processes through which the parties interact."³⁵²

In a broad sense, conflict resolution is a range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. The term "conflict resolution" was sometimes used by people interchangeably with the term dispute resolution or alternative dispute resolution. Processes of conflict resolution generally include negotiation, mediation and diplomacy. The processes of arbitration, litigation, and formal complaint processes such as ombudsman processes, were usually described with the term dispute resolution, although some refer to them as "conflict resolution." Processes of mediation and arbitration were often referred to as alternative dispute resolution. Conflict resolution as applied in our study refers to any reduction in the severity of land and boundary dispute adopted by the intervening parties, be they traditional rulers or the administration.³⁵³

Moreover, it was factual that, the Western Grassfields chiefdom and Oshie in particular had recorded a lot of inter-chiefdom conflicts related to land problems after the colonial era. However, we must not lose sight that there were some steps that were taken through the dynamic skills of the traditional rulers of the chiefdom of Oshie towards a harmonious resolution of these disputes. There had been some degree of solidarity among the chiefdoms of Njikwa sub-division as a result of the creation of Njikwa Fons union which had been instrumental towards the resolution of land and boundary disputes between chiefdoms in the Area. Chiefdoms had to be friendly and maintain cordial relation in order to develop.

³⁵⁰ Morton Deutsh, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1973.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

According to Gluckman, the necessity of friendship by itself was not enough to achieve lasting friendship in that:

Men quarrel over many things; cattle, land, women, prestige, indeed over accidents [...] or if men don't quarrel, they have differences of opinion about the rights and wrongs of a contract, and these differences have to be settled by some relations rather than that of brute force, if social relations are to endure.³⁵⁴

Peace was achieved through a common agreement among the chiefdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields Region. It was not only the initiative of the administration, but also from the traditional rulers of both chiefdoms. From the 30th of October 1986, the people of Ngwo and the people of Oshie were banned from carrying out any development projects on the grazing land allocated to D.N. Josi, untill the matter was resolved. Secondly the administration decided to retrace the old German boundary immediately and to respect it so as to maintain peace in the area.³⁵⁵

According to the administration, the dispute erupted because of the increased population in the chiefdoms and the consequences of this on the land surrounding the disputed area. The disputed area happened to be the administrative headquarter of Njikwa sub-division. The perpetrating leaders of the land and boundary disputes in Njikwa Sub-division were transfered to other areas. The then District Head of Njikwa, Ngeh Pius proposed to the Senior Divisional Officer in Momo that the disputed area of Oshie, Ngwo, Konda and Ikweri Banya be nationalized and placed at the disposal of the Municipal Administration of Mbengwi Area Council as a cattle market and Forest Reserve for eucalyptus trees.³⁵⁶

The nationalization of the area proved difficult, because of the proximity of the site to the Government High School Njikwa. It was also located at the centre of Njikwa and required a new site to be relocated. Despite all these measures taken by the administration to bring a lasting solution to the disputed land, the problems between Ngwo and Oshie continued but took another twist. The people of Ngwo made it difficult for the people of Oshie to fell and saw wood in the Wedikum area council forest reserve in Njikwa sub-division. In 1987 the Oshie people refused to assist in the construction of the Acha-Tinechong road linking the chiefdom of Ngwo. The two chiefdoms needed the assistant of each other to develop the Njikwa sub-division but it was rather the contrary.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ M. Gluckman, 1973, *Customs and Conflict in Africa*, Alden Press, Oxford p.9.

³⁵⁵ Andigema Evelyn, The Oshie of Njikwa sub-division p. 69.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid* p.70.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid* p.75.

The solution to this disputed land depended largely on the negotiation prowess of the traditional rulers of the two chiefdoms than with the administration. In this light, we noticed during our research that, local or traditional diplomacy was less active during the colonial period and specifically during the period under study. But however, apart from reporting the issues to the administration, the traditional rulers ought to have collectively acted as witnesses to the various decisions taken on the disputed area despite some degree of disagreement at times. But it was regrettable that these agreements were always violated by the inhabitants of the communities at times with the collaboration of the Fons.³⁵⁸ It was however questionable and confirmed that traditional diplomacy during the period under study had undergone series of fragmentations during and after colonial experience in the entire Bamenda Grassfields. Similar situations that occured in the chiefdom of Oshie and her neighbours were experienced in Wum and in Balikumbat which yielded no lasting solution and this explains why most of the Fons during the period of multiparty politics, became more concerned with party politics rather than assuming their rules as auxiliaries of the government.³⁵⁹

Lastly, the people of Ngie were attacked in 1995 by the Oshie people on their farm lands coterminous the Nyebai quarter of Oshie and Tinechong in Ngie. This resulted to an open confrontation between the people of Oshie and the people of Tinechong in Ngie. The disputed area in question was a farmland alledged to belong to the people of Tinechong, but since the people of Oshie settled on their present territorial site, they had been cultivating on the area. This became very difficult for the people of Oshie to relinquish the farmland to the people of Tinechong-Ngie. The matter led to open battle in 1995 whereby some people from Ngie were assaulted and taken to the Oshie fon's palace for justice to be rendered.³⁶⁰ The dispute was mediated by the rapid intervention of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside the administration in Mbengwi before the victims were released. After this peace reign between the people of Oshie and Ngie.³⁶¹

2.2.1 Cordial Relations

The traditional rulers of Oshie also carried out cordial relations with their neighbouring chiefdoms despite some instances of hostile relations that exist amongst them. Inter-chiefdom relations refer to the associations between chiefdoms located within a geographical setting.

³⁶¹ Idem.

³⁵⁸Interview with Itambi Andrew, 53, Mayor of Njikwa Sub-division, Oshie, 13 October 2016.

³⁵⁹ Idem.

³⁶⁰ The informant was an eye witnessed of the land dispute during the year 1995.

Among the chiefdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields, examples of inter-chiefdom relationship is that between Bamendankwe, Mankon and Bali Nyonga, the chiefdoms of Nkwen and Mendankwe. Chiefdoms relate with one another in different ways, such relationship falls under what is generally known as traditional diplomacy. The Grassfields Fons cement cordial relations not only through marriage alliances but also by frequent contacts especially on the occasion of the death of a Fon or during the enthronement of a new Fon. All friendly chiefdoms collaborate together through diplomatic envoys usually despatched by the Fon. The process symbolizes the magnitude of traditional diplomacy that exists among the chiefdoms. Failure by one chiefdom to honour anothers ancestors could lead and did lead to perennial disagreements and hostile relations. Traditional diplomacy is purely preoccupied with the maintenance of good and cordial relationships with friendly chiefdoms as any modern state today will do. The relationships are promoted through friendship and cooperation.³⁶²

The people of Oshie as an ethnic group, owes allegiance to some of their neighbouring Polities. The inter-boundary ordinance has maintained Oshie within its demarcated area, although the people have distinctive cultural affiliation that binds them together with some of her neighbours. In addition, the traditional rulers of Oshie established cordial relations with their neighbouring Polities of Bako, Beba and Okoromanjang to safeguard a continuous supply of palm oil and groundnuts. They were all close neighbours who found it profitable to engage in short distance trade of goods for which they had a comparative cost advantage over the other. Oshie also established friendly relations with the Menka villages of Wedikum and Ngie for the supply of palm oil in Oshie.³⁶³

The traditional rulers of Oshie also established cordial relations with the neighbouring chiefdom of Fringyeng. This was because some of the lineages in Oshie were and are settled in the area. The royal family (*Bughen*) in Oshie was and is linked to the *Bughen* lineage in the chiefdom of Fringyeng. In order to incorporate them in the royal family in Oshie, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe established cordial links through the organization of the *Bughen* royal family meetings in his palace of which the *Bughen* family unit in Fringyeng was involved. The people of Fringyeng according to historical evidence were a faction of the Oshie people who broke away during migration and settled in that part of Meta. That was the more reason why in the chiefdom of Fringyeng, the indigenes were and are divided into two settlement groups. Those that speak the Oshie local dialect and those that speak the Meta language. The

³⁶² Nkwi, Traditional Diplomacy p. 45.

³⁶³ Interview with Fondeh Elias, 65, Retired Teacher, Oshie ,11 November ,2015.

Oshie faction in Fringyeng pays allegiance to socio-cultural activities in Oshie. The royal family meetings in Oshie encompasses the Bughen family in Fringyeng.³⁶⁴

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III further established cordial relations with the neighbouring chiefdoms of Konda and Beba in Menchum valley.³⁶⁵ This was either for the seek of economic crops such as groundnuts that were not grown in Oshie and as well as maintain peace from the boundary disputes his predecessor had with the chiefdom of Beba. Since the early 1980s, both chiefdoms often cooperated in self-reliant development projects with the people of Oshie such as road constructions to link their areas. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to cement cordial relations with these people, established trade links with the chiefs of these chiefdoms. He made it in a way that the Oshie market serves both the Konda, Ngwo, Beba, Fringyeng and Ikweri Banya people for the sell of their products. The Oshie market was and still serves the neighbouring chiefdoms of Oshie as their commercial centre. From the revitalization of the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival by the year 1986, the chief of Konda and Beba had attended it on regular bases through the invitation of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III.³⁶⁶

Cordial relations existed between the chiefdom of Oshie and Konda by the year 1940, during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe II. These relations were established in order to create trade links and also for him to get married with women from Konda village. In this direction, some of his palace wives were indigenes from Konda. In 1979, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III barely four years on the throne of Oshie, distributed farming tools such as wheel barrows, pick axes and spades to the Konda people to help carry out development projects in their village. By the year 1995, he hosted and sponsored the present traditional ruler of Beba, Fon Henry Mbolifang in the Government High School Njikwa. Despite the conflict between Oshie and Ikweri Banya that occurred in 1995, the people of Ikweri Banya had cooperated with the people of Oshie in matters of development. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III also visited the Fon of Ikweri Banya on several bases in his palace and vice versa. Through these cordial relations, the road linking Oshie and Ekweri Banya was enlarged to facilitate movement. ³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ Idem.

³⁶⁵ Idem.

³⁶⁶ Interview with Fondeh Elias, 65, Retired Teacher, Oshie ,11 November ,2015

³⁶⁷ Andigema E. Ambang "The Oshie of Njikwa Subdivision: An Historical Perspective"Post Graduate Diploma in Education (DIPES II) ENS Yaounde 1998. P.32.

(I)Mutual Celebration of the Death of Fons

The traditonal rulers of Oshie played an important role as far as mutual celebration of the death of neighbouring Fons was and are concern. An important aspect of inter-chiefdom relation that is highly practice by the traditional rulers of Njikwa subdivision is the mutual participation at the death of friendly Fons. This is carried out through the despatch of their important associations to express sorrow during the funeral celebration of a dead Fon. Masquerade of neighbouring chiefdoms of Njikwa sub-division could be seen as depicted in plate 17, during the funeral celebration of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe II of Oshie. ³⁶⁸

Plate 17: Masquerades of Neighbouring Chiefdoms during the Funeral Celebration of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe II.



Source: Adapted from Adang Benedict Private Archive, October 2016

In a situation where a Fon fails to attend the funeral celebration of another could lead to a strained relation. When the chief of Bako village passed on by the year 1994, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe despatched a convoy of mourners consisting of the royal masquerade *Abuh* from Oshie to mourn the deceased chief. Cordial relations also existed during the enthronement ceremony of neighbouring chiefs in Njikwa sub-division. This provide a general picture of traditional diplomacy.³⁶⁹

Another aspect of chiefdom relations between Oshie and her neighbouring Polities was the participation in the enthronement ceremony of a Fon by friendly Fons. The honouring

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Idem.

and presence at the ceremony of investiture of neighbouring chiefs by their friendly counterparts was not only a diplomatic act but also a deep sign of cordial ties. Royal successions were carried out after the death or loss of a Fon. The death and succession of a Fon was often an important event in the chiefdom because it brings together all categories of persons from all over the chiefdom and beyond.³⁷⁰ Thus, upon the death of a chief, the transmission of the message was and is done by way of mouth, through an envoy or the regulatory society. Funeral celebrations of Fons between Oshie and her neighbours was a medium to strengthen cooperation ties.³⁷¹

The non-participation at the funeral celebration of a deceased Fon by their friendly neighbours might lead to disputes. A practical example of this situation in the chiefdom of Western Grassfields was the Nso and Bamum relations. Relations between Nso and Bamum had been strained after the Nso-Bamum war at the close of the nineteenth Century. Nso did not perform the mortuary rite of the passing on of two Bamum chiefs: Njoya and Mapiri by Bifon and Sembum II. The Bamum after seeking the intervention of Baba, Bambalang, Bamessi and Bali-Kumbat to induce Nso to perform sacrifices on the graves of the deceased rulers felt humiliated and despised by the Nso,³⁷² this created an atmosphere of impending hostility between them. In this way there was disagreement among the dynastic rulers for supremacy, authority, succession and other internal bickering between the people of the neighbouring chiefdoms. ³⁷³

(III) Language Similarity

The traditional rulers of Oshie also played a significant role in maintaning cordial relations with chiefdoms in which Oshie had language similarities with them. Language was one of the aspect that played an important role in strengthening inter-chiefdom relations between chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields. The people of Oshie speaks interrelated dialects with the people of Ngie, Moghamo, Meta and Fringyeng. This is because the lexicon of Oshie dialect is similar to that of Ngie, Meta, Moghamo. According to historical evidence, they all traced their origin from the Wedikum area. Indigenes from these chiefdoms looked upon themselves as one people. According to Nkwi, the Grassfields languages are the end product

³⁷⁰ Ndoah Toyih, Inter-chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields: The case of Mbesa and Her neighbours, 1927-1988» p.89.

³⁷¹ *Ibid*.

³⁷² V.J. Ngoh, 1988, *Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred years of History*, Yaoundé, Navi Group Publications p.
³⁷³ *Ibid.*

of a double process of internal and external relations.³⁷⁴ Language played an important role in inter-chiefdom relations between commoners, death celebrations of loved ones, and religious activities. This enhance social interactions between the members of the chiefdoms. It also enhance inter-chiefdom interaction such as the case between Oshie, Meta, Ngie and the Wedikum ethnic groups. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe due to language similarities between Oshie and Ngie employed the services of an indigene from Ngie during Court sessions in Bamenda to interprete Oshie dialect in English to the British Officials, Though some slight differences exist in the languages, but the linguistic similarities facilitates interaction between both chiefdoms. Trade, marriages and death celebrations were easily carried out due to the fact that they understand each other and as such were considered as brothers and sisters from the same origin.³⁷⁵

The people of Oshum in Wedikum area, Meta and Oshie, called the attention of their kinsmen with the word "*Méekwemö*" which in Oshie lexicon means "I say" The Meta people on the other hand call the attention of their indigenes as "*Menemo*" which signifies "I say" whereas the Moghamo clan call the attention of their indigenes as "*Moghamo*" meaning "I say" not leaving out the people of Baforchu whose languages are related to Oshie. The people of these chiefdoms constitute a common linguistic affinity from one ancestor with the suffix Mö. Oshie cultural history and language root is traced to the point of Mbeitong settlement. The historical myth has also been supported by written sources, that the languages or dialects of Oshie, Meta and Ngie are mutually intelligible. The vocabulary in their dialects are similar although with some slight differences. These differences are perhaps due to several years of separation.³⁷⁶ Enveloped in this reflection, Fon Adi Luas Anyangwe, in order to maintain friendly ties with Meta, during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival he often invite the dance groups from Fringyeng in Meta to participate in the festival because of their language similarities. ³⁷⁷

British intelligence and Reassessment Report on Meta affirms that Menemo, Ngie, Moghamo, Oshie and Wedikum migrated from Wedikum as well as Chilver and Kaberry also

³⁷⁷ *Idem*.

³⁷⁴ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.34.

³⁷⁵Informant's personal experience from interaction with the people of Meta, Batibo, Wedikum and Baforchu, and as a researcher who have written much on the origin of the Wedikum ethnic groups. ³⁷⁶*Idem*.

captured the same views as expressed in the report.³⁷⁸ They posit that, the political social institutions and traditional practices in Oshie strongly resembles those of the chiefdoms of Ngie and Meta. The chiefdom of Tugi, according to Oshie oral history was part of the Oshie land that was ceded by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe to Meta during boundary demarcation by the Germans because of language similarities. To maintain cordial relations between the two chiefdoms, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe further allocated land for the settlement of some indigenes from Meta in the chiefdom of Fringyeng because of language similarities between the two chiefdoms. The Oshie and Meta people live together as cousin families in the chiefdom of Fringyeng. Despite some difficulties faced by both chiefdoms at the level of social interactions, their relation has remained cordial up to the present day.³⁷⁹

Also, Oshie and Meta exercised a significant degree of inter-chiefdom relations due to language similarity. This is expressed in the political relations that exist between them although differences in opinion at times lead to strained relations. When such situations crop up, many attempts are made by the the traditional rulers of Oshie and Meta to bring lasting solutions to the problems.³⁸⁰ These friendly ties established between the two chiefdoms were carried out in an effort to protect and guarantee peace and harmony between them because one of the wives of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe was from Tugi in Meta. The linguistic similarities alongside the various exchanges of gifts coupled with the inter-marriage alliance means that both people function as one. In this regard, their political institutions were well structured in the same line and functions in a similar way alongside their ritualistic performances.

(IV) Inter-Marriage Alliances

The traditional rulers of Oshie equally demonstrated an important role in inter-marriage alliances with their neighbouring chiefdoms. Inter-marriage alliances between members of one chiefdom and those of another was quite common in almost all the chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields. Inter-chiefdom marriages greatly enhance and strengthen bi and multi lateral relations between neighbouring chiefdoms.³⁸¹ Women were considered as highly valued instruments of diplomacy because inter-chiefdom marriages reduce the occurrence of war and also because, most women given in marriage in a way, serve like the state

³⁸⁰Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy* p.42.

³⁷⁸ Chilver, E.M. and Kaberry, P.M: Traditional Bamenda the pre-colonial history and ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields.Volume I Buea, Government Printing Press,1967.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸¹Ndifor.R, Tazifor John *The Citizen*, A Comprehensive Guide for GCE Ordinary level, Published by Educational Book Publishers Buea, Cameroon 2013 p.48.
ambassadors of their areas of origin. This practice encourage frequent visits and increase the chances of cross-cultural exchanges and prevents war between the chiefdoms. Enveloped in this view, Abwa elucidates the importance of women of Banen states when he stated that,

Les marriages inter communitaire constituaient un autre fait diplomatique permettant d'eviter la guerre entre les differentes communautés Banen [...] L'epouse et les enfants deenaient ainsi les elements garantissant la paix car aucun des deux souverain ne cherchera a porter la guerre contre son allié.³⁸²

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe established cordial relations with some of her neighbouring chiefdoms through inter-chiefdom marriages. He also got married to women from the chiefdoms of Tugi, Konda and Ngwo, his aim was to strengthen friendly relations with them. Despite the cordial relations established by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe through alliances of royal marriages, there exists some instances of hostile relations between these chiefdoms. To overcome the situation Fon Etunyi Anyangwe applied his discretion in mediating over some of the strained relations. In doing this, he set up some of the people of Oshie to settle at the boundary along the disputed areas to prevent the neighbours intruding into Oshie land. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also went as far as establishing relations with the chiefdom of Konda. His uncles were from Konda, to maintain cordial relation with them, he got married to a girl from Konda. As an inlaw to the people of Konda, this prevents any purported conflict between the two chiefdoms.³⁸³

Inter-marriage alliances between indigenes from the chiefdom of Oshie and those of other chiefdoms are quite common and this strengthen cooperation ties and enhance unity amongst them. Most traditional rulers in Njikwa sub-division used marriage alliances to consolidate inter-chiefdom relations. These marriage relations were and are still contracted between the traditional rulers of Oshie and other friendly chiefdoms up to the present day. Royal marriage alliances actually strengthened relations between chiefdoms as princesses in royal palaces got married to other Fons as intermediaries or as resident ambassadors. Princesses from the royal palace in Oshie also got married in Meta villages.³⁸⁴ By the year 1992, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe betrothed one of the princesses to the Chief of Konda. This was because his uncles were from Konda, in this way to cement cordial relations with them, he gave his daughter in marriage to the chief of Konda.³⁸⁵

³⁸² Daniel Abwa, la Diplomatie Dans L'Afrique Pré-coloniale pp.84-8.

³⁸³ Fon Etunyi Anyangwe despite his non literate nature was able to apply diplomacy in issues of land and boundary disputes in the local administration of Oshie chiefdom.

³⁸⁵ Interview with Atambele Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie, July 2015.

When the people of Oshie visited the Konda chief in his palace, they were welcomed and accorded a lot of hospitality. Children put forth by the princess from Oshie were able to express themselves in both languages. Hence, marriage was an instrument that created a long lasting alliance between chiefdoms.³⁸⁶ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III in his early days got married to a girl from Bali, the wedding ceremony took place in the palace of Oshie in 1960. According to information obtained from one of my informant, he got married to a girl from Bali due to the fact that by the year 1960 there were no educated girls in Oshie by the time.³⁸⁷ This went along to cement cordial relations between Oshie and Bali. ³⁸⁸

During the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, as Fons were entitled to many wives, he inherited the widows of his predecessor and maintained cordial relations with the in-laws of some of the women in their chiefdoms. Taking into consideration that no tradition in the Western Grassfields chiefdoms forbids the royal prince to get married to a princess from another royal family. Inter-chiefdom royal marriages encouraged family ties which strengthened relations between families in the neighbouring and distant chiefdoms. In this regard, family unions encouraged affinity ties. During birth and funeral celebrations in Oshie, Konda and Meta chiefdoms, the families concerned visited and partook in the funeral ceremonies. In fact, during celebration of births in these chiefdoms, the women prepared large quantities of food while the men supply palm wine. The name of the child was given from the names of the great grand parents to ensure continuity. Hence the child was seen as an element that brings unity and joy in the chiefdoms.³⁸⁹ The organization of birth ceremonies at times acted as a renewal of friendship ties between the communities. Funeral celebrations in these chiefdoms also brought people together since they were linked historically. In many cases, they were called upon to perform certain services not only to the living but also to the dead.³⁹⁰

It was a common practice among these chiefdoms that, the death of a family relative in other chiefdoms, was attended by the closest family members in Oshie. People from Oshie trekked as far as the chiefdoms of Konda and Fringyeng and vice versa for death ceremonies. During such occasions, new alliances of friendship were created and old ones strengthened.³⁹¹ The chiefdoms were linked by dynastic origin, friendly ties and blood brotherhood. Fon Adi

³⁸⁶ Nkwi, Traditional Diplomacy p.47.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹Interview with Ndambi Mathias, 70, Family Head, Oshie, 15 October ,2015.

³⁹⁰ *Idem*.

Lucas Anyangwe established close contact with the chiefdom of Fringyeng because of blood brotherhood and because some members of the Bughen royal were residing in Fringyeng.³⁹²

Princesses and other women who were given in marriage to residents in the distant chiefdoms were considered as diplomats but in an implied sense.³⁹³Aside from the political realms, there exists issues of social ties and an array of the other cultural components that were usually employed to exercise diplomacy. The building of amicable chiefdom relation in the colonial era in Oshie and its neighbouring communities was sustained through marriages and trade. It was common to find princesses in the neighbouring palaces as wives to the Fon. Women during this period were regarded as special diplomatic gifts and through them peace was always maintained between neighbouring chiefdoms.³⁹⁴

(V) Royal Spear and Bag Diplomacy

The royal spear and bag of the traditional rulers of Oshie played an important role in chiefdom relations. Generally, the royal spear and bag were highly used as instruments of diplomacy by traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields. These objects symbolizes the highest aspect of diplomacy and authority in the chiefdom of Oshie and was known as *Ighong Ofuh*. The royal spear was special and venerated almost by all because it was also meant to strengthen cordial relations between Oshie and other eighbouring chiefdoms. Its presence anywhere in the Oshie territory was never taken for granted. The royal spear could be likened to the flag and the seal in the modern states. The spear was not carried by common people in the community.³⁹⁵ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe used the royal spear during important diplomatic missions in negotiating chiefdom boundaries, during official visits to neighbouring chiefdoms. It was uncommon to find the royal spear being paraded around anyhow. It commanded respect of all sundry, women and commoners were expected to provide its due respect. The royal spear was an emblem of force and authority that coordinated internal and external diplomacy. Those who moved with it did so in the name of the chiefdom. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also

³⁹² Idem.

³⁹³ Interview with Anyangwe Mathew, 72, Oshie palace prince, Bamenda, 14 October 2016. He confirmed the opinion that Princesses who were given in marriage were intended primarily to strengthen relations between the villages.

³⁹⁴ Idem.

³⁹⁵ Interview with Ewala Abuh, 56, Palace retainer and core member of *kwifuh*, Oshie, July 14 2015.

used the royal spear during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival, to coordinate the purification process of the chiedom alongside some incantations. ³⁹⁶

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also used political instrument such as the royal bag in the execution of traditional diplomacy. The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the Diplomatic Bag as" container in which letters were sent between countries, representatives to other countries by dint of their importance, it commanded diplomatic pedigree. They were expected not to be examined by custom officials. It was in the royal bag that important diplomatic ornaments were stored and sent to other neighbouring Fons in Njikwa sub-division. Diplomatic bags were and are owned by Fons in palaces. The content could include gifts to the neigbouring Fon such as a traditional cap made of special raffia fibbre, drinking cups, peace leaves or special carvings. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III established a dense network of traditional diplomacy which involved the exchange of royal gifts and visits during the enthronement ceremonies and deaths of a neighbouring chiefs in Njikwa sub-division and beyond. Nkwi paints such picture when he stated that;

In the Western Grassfields, it was customary for Chief to engage in gift exchange with their peers. These exchanges were affected by emissaries[diplomats] carrying cowries decorated raffia bags[royalbags] marked with Peace emblems which contains such [high diplomatic] articles as Camwood, armlets, carved drinking horns, bass, pipes or stenciled clothes. These royal exchanges had diplomatic connotations. They might follow the settlement of boundaries and be succeeded by the captives and runaway wifes and the establishment of normal relations. The royal exchange of gifts called Bo-rtoh the royal bag had high political implication. A gift of wealth to one Fon by another demanded a reciprocal jesture when the occasion presented itself...Chiefs of the Grassfields cemented their relations not only through marriage alliances but also by frequent contacts especially on occasions of the death of a Chief.³⁹⁷

A similar colouration of a picture of traditional diplomatic relations among traditional chiefdoms which indicates that traditional diplomacy was not only an issue of the chiefdom of Oshie, but was also practiced by other chiefdoms in Cameroon, was the case of the people of Banen in the centre region. Based on this reasoning, Daniel Abwa remarked that ;

Les échanges de cadeaux entre differents souverains Banen permettaient de renforcer les liens d'amitié entre eux et partant entre leurs communautés respectives ; ils constituaient des actes diplomatiques de grande importance pour éviter les guerres. Cette amitié entre les souverains favorisait la circulation des biens et des personnes a l'intérieur de leurs communautés. En effet, dans les pays Banen précolonial, l;insécurité regnait dèsque l'on se trouait hors de la communauté…L'attitude du souverain…dependait effectivement de la qualité des relations qu'il entretenait avec son homologue.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Idem.

³⁹⁷ Nkwi, *Traditional Government*.p.p. 45-6 He did not cite a concrete case where Camwood was used during the period but suggested that each official royal act and endorsement only had its weight if the royal spear and Camwood were used.

It was through such circumstances that Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe established his network of diplomatic relations with the neigbouring chiefdoms of Oshie. Indeed, the carriers of such bags did not know the content, except the bags were filled or loaded in their presence. The content of the bag was expected not to be known to any other person except the ruler of the chiefdom to whom the bag was sent. The carriers of the royal bag were usually treated with special care and once in the foreign territory, they were considered to have diplomatic immunity.³⁹⁹

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe equally exchanged gifts with the Fons of the neighbouring chiefdoms of Njikwa sub-division. The exchanged of gifts was aimed at cementing friendly ties and maintaining cordial relations among the chiefdoms. It was customary for Fons to engage in gift exchanges with their peers. These exchanges were effected by emissaries carrying cowrie-decorated bags, marked with emblems which contained articles of value such as, ivory armlets, carved drinking horns, brass pipes and stencilled clothes. According to Nkwi, the exchanged of gifts followed the settlement of boundaries and the return of captives and run away wives. This was intended to establish cordial relations.⁴⁰⁰ The royal exchange of gifts such as the royal bag had high political implications. A gift of wealth to a Fon by another required a mutual gesticulation when the occasion presented it self. The gift in return had to be the same or more in value to avoid downgrading of prestige or honour.⁴⁰¹

Furthermore, greater care was taken of all gifts made to the Fon by a friendly chief and their value. Traditional diplomacy was equally preoccupied with the maintenance of cordial relationships with friendly chiefdoms as in modern state today. The relationship like in modern states were to foster friendship and co-operation. Fons co-operated among themselves in arresting runaway wives and returning them to their proper husbands. In the Western Grassfields chiefdoms, it was customary for chiefs to exchange visits with their peers. Chiefs as well as their subjects made regular visits to neighbouring chiefdoms. These visits were often reciprocal and enhanced friendly relationship between chiefdoms. During such visits the exchange of "palace bags" was highly noticed. The term palace bag was collectively applied to all the gifts a chief took to his fellow chiefs. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also established cordial relations with the chiefdoms of Konda, Beba and Bako through the exchange of "palace bags." The exchange of these bags help to strengthen diplomatic ties. Exchange of

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ndoah., «Inter-chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields: The case of Mbesa and Her neighbours, 1927-1988» 2009 p.43

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*.

visits amongst chiefs and commoners also helped to enhance closer relations. Nkwi rightly affirms that:

The exchange of gifts and counter gifts among chiefs had diplomatic implications or connotations. The exchange might follow the settlement of boundaries and succeeded by the return of captives and run-away wives and the opening up of regular trade.⁴⁰²

The above quotation elucidate that, the exchange of visits by the Fon of Oshie and Konda both in time of trouble and joy had diplomatic undertone. Exchange of visit between commoners also acted in the same light. The circulations of royal bags or diplomatic bags known in Oshie as *Abam Ofuh* was an extensive and frequent practice among the chiefs of Njikwa subdivision. The main rules and regulation of gifts exchange between chiefs was that "no bag that entered the palace ever came out empty.⁴⁰³ Either the bags were carried back by the messenger with counter gifts or they were later brought back by the messenger of the receiving chief. These things included palm wine, goats, carved wooden stool, clothes, "Doma" caps, ornament and decorated calabashes, leopard pelts, elephant tusks and money.⁴⁰⁴

In most cases, these bags bore emblems of certain plants called peace plant known in Oshie and other neighbouring chiefdoms as *Nkeng*. Palm wine in a calabash, corked with fresh raffia palm frond with part of it pointing upward was meant for the Fon.⁴⁰⁵ The palace bag was also sent in times of sorrow, during the death of a Fon. The occasional visits between Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to other chiefdoms of Njikwa subdivision were most often than not pre-arranged by inherent envoys or palace notables of the chiefdom concerned or at the invitation of the Fon. This occured when there was a problem that required settlement by the two Fons or that a clan needed some assistant from the other.⁴⁰⁶

A particular aspect of the diplomatic royal bags was that; it was usually given alongside their content. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the execution of diplomatic relations, often instructed the bearer of the bag to return with gifts in similar but differently decorated bags to the Fon. The carriers of these bags were regarded as actors of diplomacy and were usually escorted to the main entrances of the chiefdom by respectable royal guards. It was this kind of attachment given to the royal diplomatic bag by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe that facilitated the practice of high level diplomacy. Like the royal spear, the royal bag was

⁴⁰² *Ibid*.

⁴⁰³ Nkwi., *Traditional Diplomacy* p.51.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*.

different in size, form, design and content from the ordinary bags, the people carried along. Though at surface levels the bags appeared almost the same with the ordinary bags.⁴⁰⁷

(VI) Diplomatic Envoys

Diplomatic envoys deployed by the traditional rulers of Oshie also played important role in inter-chiefdoms relations within chiefdoms of Njikwa sub-division. In modern diplomacy, diplomats are those who have been invested through formal training or other intensive considerations with the act of managing or controlling relations between chiefdoms and nations. They may also be trained to handle issues involving wider spheres like those of the UN or regional organizations and the Arab league. In African traditional diplomacy, diplomats can only hold national or state office. This implies that traditional diplomacy most often falls short of intervening on issues that concern multiple states though alliances were and are still common.⁴⁰⁸

Traditional diplomats in typical Western Grassfield fashion were people drawn from all the different institutions who portrayed distinguish mastery of the internal functioning of the chiefdom or fondoms, its foreign policy options and its goals. Such people received this training becoming palace retainer notables as was in the case of Oshie, *Nwerong* in Nso, *Kwifoyn* in Kom, *Ngumba* in Bali. Such diplomatic envoys could equally be members of the regulatory societies or those who had acquired skills of rulership and diplomacy as a result of representing the Fon anywhere. Those who handled issues of diplomacy in Oshie were usually the notables. Unlike modern diplomacy where each state had embassies and resident diplomats. In the chiefdom of Oshie, traditional diplomacy was conducted overtly by visiting diplomatic envoys delegated by the Fon.⁴⁰⁹

In the administration of the chiefdom of Oshie, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe instituted the use of diplomatic envoys known as palace Messegers. These messengers were sent most often to occasions where the Fon was unable to honour the invitation. They also carried with them some messages concerning the reason why the Fon was unable to attend the occasion. His visits to friendly colleagues was usually accompanied by these messegers whose

⁴⁰⁷ Within the Chiefdom the belief or multi-factious existence of gods and the need for self protection further accentuated by pride and the desire for good living pushed most people to have bags or personal account. These bags served as sanctuary of their gods.

⁴⁰⁸ Idem.

⁴⁰⁹ Bongfen Chem Langhëë, V.G. Fanso et al (eds.), 1996, *Nso and its Neighbours: Reading in Social History*, Amherst College, Massachusetts p.26.

knowledge of the given chiefdom helped interpret the required behaviour and diplomatic protocol.⁴¹⁰

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the influence of European colonialists on the institutions of traditional authority in the Western Grassfields during the colonial era, with focus on the traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie. In an exploration of facts related to the various themes examined in this section of our study, the chapter reveals that, the arrival of the British colonial administration in the chiefdom of Oshie paved the way for a transition of traditional rulership from Emamba to the Anyangwe dynasty. The chapter also reveals that, the succession rites and enthronement of rulers in the Anyangwe dynasty were strictly hereditary according to the customs and traditions of the people of Oshie. Lastly, the chapter reveals that, the Oshie traditional rulers demonstrated great dynamism in regional diplomacy as seen in the way they collaborated with their neighbouring Polities. These were expressed in issues of inter-chiefdom relations such as inter-marriage alliances, mutual celebration of the deaths of Fons, dialect similarities, royal spear and bag diplomacy and diplomatic envoys. Although such aspects were intertwined with some instances of hostile relations, these were largely moderated through the intervention of the elites of Oshie, Ngwo, Ekweri Banya and Njikwa administration at large.

CHAPTER THREE THE DYNAMISM OF OSHIE TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP IN ECONOMIC MATTERS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in the economic development of the chiefdom. It treats the various economic initiatives put in place by the Oshie traditional rulers to enhance development in the chiefdom. These are pegged on economic development of Oshie rulers, development in housing infrastructure, notably the Oshie palace *Toh*, creation of quarters and markets, creation of community development association, inter-quarters link roads, cooperative association, formation of women development and cultural association and initiation of new concepts of economic development platforms.

3.1 Economic Development of Oshie Rulers

The traditional rulers of Oshie displayed a significant role in the economic development of the chiefdom. In the local administration of the chiefdom of Oshie, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe portrayed an open policy in development as his predecessor. He constructed a special grass house in his palace and appointed palace notables known as *Ntchangandei*.⁴¹¹Agriculture constituted the main activity of the people with singing and dancing. In spite of the fact that the population of Oshie was fast growing; there were a number of activities that were organised to take care of leisure. In some occasions, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe organized the *Anangkobi* dance to entertain themselves during night period. It was in this atmosphere that the cultural values and aesthetics were manifested and the feeling of belonging created as well. Women, children and men of all ages spent their time either farming or involved in cultural dance.⁴¹²

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe tactfully programmed the Oshie economy to be based on three basic components which were both implied and overtly expressed. These were: child, food, enterprise, and money. To achieve food self-sufficiency, it was made the duty of all to strife for food through ploughing, harvesting and gathering throughout all the nocks and crannies of the chiefdom. By child, it was an obligation of all to fight for good health through good

⁴¹¹ Interview with Onya Moses, 71, Retired Civil Servant, Bamenda, 25 November 2015.

⁴¹² *Idem*.

conduct, reproduction, accountable and responsible life style. To attend a certain level of development, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe encouraged both men and women to be creative in order to generate economic activities in the chiefdom. In fact, all the indigenes were supposed to work towards becoming wealthy which commanded respect and kept the fame of the chiefdom intact.⁴¹³

Having absorbed the economic policies of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, each quarter organised itself into what was known as *Komitis*. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in order to develop the society relied so much on these *Komitis*. Through such initiatives, the road between Oshie and Acha Tugi, Oshie, Konda and Fringyeng was contructed to enhance trade links between Oshie and these villages. Fashioned in this code of conduct, the Oshie economy during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe developed a network of activities which were really well tailored to ensure a vibrant economy. The major economic activity was centred on agriculture. Food self-sufficiency which constituted the bed rock of the Oshie economy was maintained through the growing of crops. ⁴¹⁴

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also encouraged the men folk to assist most of the time in acquiring and cutting down grass on the plots which were generally small averaging five hundred to one thousand square meters, the growing of crops was strictly in the hands of the female folk.⁴¹⁵At the lower stratum of the society, daily life was sustained by a form of exchange over long and short distances. Precious commodities that were not found in Oshie were obtained through trade by enterprising men who later became wealthy and influential. It was equally through these traders that a great number of foreign articles freely entered the Oshie economy as will be seen later. ⁴¹⁶

He passed on by the year 1974 when he had accomplished just little as far as politics and development of the chiefdom of Oshie is concerned although he transformed Oshie into an academic centre and other outstanding reforms in the local administration of the chiefdom. By the year 1975, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie as the 3rd traditional ruler. His administration (reign) which lasted from 1975 till 1997, can aptly be described as the golden age of Oshie traditional governance or better still, the age of enlightenment. This was because he was the first educated Fon in the Anyangwe dynasty and

⁴¹³ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p. 14.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴¹⁵ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie p.17.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid*.

at the time of his enthronement, he was a civil servant, a chartered surveyor and deputy Director of lands and surveys. To begin with the administration of the chiefdom, he vigorously continued with the development policies of his predeccessors through academic training, more precisely by raising the status of Oshie and by initiating other economic development platforms in the chiefdom as will be seen later.⁴¹⁷

In the development of the chiefdom, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe used his academic knowledge and expertise as a surveyor to map out the various quarters of Oshie to have a good planning.⁴¹⁸ Through such methods, the spirit of self-reliant development projects in Oshie was elevated to unprecedented level. He began by encouraging parents to send their children to school, as his father did to him. According to him it was only the educated class of people that could change the Oshie society. He also encouraged Students during holiday to work together with their parents to maintain the spirit of self- reliance. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe watch words were "*The best example is a good sermont*". In order word, development theory should not seem a mockery of reality.⁴¹⁹

According to Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, obedience was the royal road to order and stability and the only basis of sound development. Development was like a body, with the head, arms and feet that performed their ordained functions. The Oshie indigenes constantly made mockery of those who were not hard-working and had made no useful contributions to the development of Oshie. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe thus remarked that;

It is therefore necessary to have progressive cooperation and some sort of sustained effort. We must continue to show that we are playing our part in self-help schemes and at the same time castigating the negligence of those who do not want to cooperate.⁴²⁰

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe and development were synonymous. He was development inclined in that, he was purportedly said to move round all the quarters of Oshie on weekly bases to draft out development projects. This was done in a way that any person who visited the Fon in the palace, on whatever matter would end up in a conversation centered within development. Any one out of this scheme was largely considered by him to be useless. He had a predestined policy in that, ill-fated persons were considered less important because they ran counter

⁴¹⁷ Interview with Slyvester Anjang, 57, farmer, Oshie, June 2016.

⁴¹⁸ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 44, Prince of the Royal family in Oshie and one time regent, Bamenda, 2017.

⁴¹⁹ *Idem*.

⁴²⁰ An Annual Publication Magazine p.16.

activities on matters of development. He did so irrespective of their social status and positions.⁴²¹

Prior to the ascendancy of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to the throne of Oshie, the federal system of government had been dissolved in favour of a Unitary Constitution in 1972. The position of Prime Minister of West Cameroon and the federal vice president were abolished. Ministries were weakened in favour of a more powerful and specialized presidential system. Key Ministries and Agencies, including all state intelligence were brought under the presidential system in Yaounde and government and parliament was neutralized.⁴²²Of special importance was the president wide powers of appointment and transfers of civil servants across the growing civil service.⁴²³

Cameroonian political elite became increasingly versed in technocratic bureaucracy. State administrators such as prefects became the real holders of power. By killing democracy and neutralizing all state political leaders into one party the CNU, Ahidjo's stewardship of the nation became like that of the traditional rulers. The traditional rulers saw many things in common with the state administrative machinery particularly during the period of Ahidjo, who ruled as a benign authoritarian ruler although had a lot of respect for the traditional institutions.⁴²⁴Ahidjo's political philosophy was based on consolidating national unity and self- reliance development where by traditional rulers became very much attached to this method of governance.⁴²⁵

The mechanism of the one party system did not open up issues to public debate let alone competition among candidates to elective posts on individual bases. It functioned through constitution with the local organs of the party at the grass roots level and decisions were taken by the central committee for the various arms of government to execute. The President nominated the Ministers and local elections were based on a list system, drawn up by the central committee for public approval by a yes vote.⁴²⁶ In this light, the political dispensation of the time did not expose traditional rulers who were looked upon as threats, in the use of supernatural powers and election malpractices. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III

⁴²¹ An Annual Publication Magazine p.17.

⁴²² Cameroon Fragile State, Crisis Group Africa Report No 160, 25 May 2010 p.8.

⁴²³ *Ibid*.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴²⁵National Archive Buea, File No Sc 7/a/1960/17 attributions regarding the recognition of Chiefs in Southern Cameroons.

⁴²⁶ National Archive Buea, File No Sc 7/a/1960/17 attributions regarding the recognition of Chiefs in Southern Cameroons.

serving in the Ministry of Lands and Surveys in Yaounde by then, became a member of the CNU party.⁴²⁷ Whenever there were party meetings, the Fons were invited to observe what was happening and gave their advice and proposals which in most cases were taken into consideration.

The support given to traditional rulers was from the federal government. In doing this, Ahidjo made sure the autonomy he accorded to them in exchange for their support was not so great as to defy his position.⁴²⁸ According to Ahidjo, government had to draw an insight from traditional rulers to achieve the basic principles of democracy, necessary for national political development.⁴²⁹ Ahidjo in safeguarding chieftaincy was to protect traditional values. To carry out such dispensation he embarked on the decision of incorporating chiefs into the political and administrative organs of the state as a means to ensure an effective integration of chieftaincy into the administrative machinery of the state. To him chiefs were simply auxiliaries and indispensable associates of government. Stating his policy towards traditional rulers, he asserted that;

In their own interest, as in the interest of their peoples, the traditional chiefs must remain the artisans of the evolution in our country; they must even place themselves in the avant garde of this evolution. What I am asking of them is that they act in such a way that this evolution comes about with them, for in the contrary case, they [will] be vanquished by it.⁴³⁰

A few years later Ahidjo assessed the role of traditional or natural rulers (chiefs) who hitherto had paid attention to his request by declaring that;

The adaptation of traditional chieftainships to the present day institutions of the state has not restricted itself to the suppression of its anti-democratic aspects; associating chieftaincy intimately with our basic institutions is also bringing it about. Thus, in the West and North, especially, many chiefs have been elected or appointed as municipal councilors or mayors.⁴³¹

Ahidjo in his political plan permited the federal state of West Cameroon to handle chieftaincy matters in its own way until the government standardized its functions. The advent of the unitary state in Cameroon brought the need for the harmonization of chieftaincy policy for the entire territory and also gave a face-lift to the functions of traditional rulers. Most of the reorganization of chieftaincy rule that was taken, benefited only a meagre number of chiefs whereas a good number of them remained largely unsatisfactory. Particularly the traditional

⁴²⁷Interview with Nyamusah Asaiah, 54, Yaounde, 12 March, 2015.

⁴²⁸ CNU Political Philosophy, p. 41; Ahidjo contribution to National construction, pp.75-6.

⁴²⁹ Tohnji Walter, Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance 1961-2000 p.120.

⁴³⁰ Johnson, Cameroon Federation, p.161; Aletum, Political conflicts p.147.

⁴³¹ Ahidjo, contribution to National construction; Aletum, Political conflicts p.171.

rulers of the Anglophone region who had put in much following the abolition of the West Cameroon House of Chiefs.⁴³²

In February 1977, during the establishment of the newly created Donga Mantung Division, Ahidjo pledged to reorganize chieftaincy rule in Cameroon along side extensive reforms. The aim of the reforms was to boost up chieftaincy and national development, while safeguarding their functions as custodians of tradition.⁴³³ To fulfill this promise, on 15 July 1977 a decree organizing chieftaincy was published. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, just two years old at the helm of Oshie as an influential and educated ruler benefited from the decree. In that direction, he strongly fought for the reclassification of the status of Oshie and the chiefdom was reclassified to a second class chiefdom in Njikwa sub-division. In his capacity as an Assistant Director in the Ministry of Lands and Survey in Yaounde, he fought for other development projects such as the constant maintainance of the ring road linking Oshie and the Mbengwi area by the High ways department. When he retired from active service, he returned to Oshie and continued serving as CNU activist in the area.⁴³⁴

According to the terms of the chieftaincy decree, Article two stipulates that, chiefs and their chiefdoms were classified, whereas Article four provided optional powers to the Administration to categorise, chiefdoms as first, second and third class depending on their population, size and economic wellbeing. First class chiefs were chiefs whose jurisdictions constituted the size of a division or second class chiefdoms. Second class chiefs were chiefs who had the population of two third class chiefdoms or whose jurisdiction covered the size of a sub-division. The jurisdiction of third class chiefs corresponded to a village or quarter in rural or urban setting. According to Articles 7 and 15, the first class chiefs were to be appointed by the Prime Minister, second class chiefs by the minister of Territorial Administration and third class chiefs by the Prefect or Senior Divisional Officer.⁴³⁵

In the process of integrating traditional rulers to play some minor administrative functions in modern government, Ahidjo signed another presidential decree in 1974 creating the Ministry of Territorial Administration. All the traditional rulers were made part of this

⁴³² Amaazee Bong, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History*. Yaounde: SOPECAM, 2002. P.48.

 ⁴³³Tohnji Walter Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance 1961-2000 p.234.
⁴³⁴ *Ibid* p.235.

ministry and were from there hence forth, expected to be answerable to the Minister through his different agents in the conduct of their administration. At the Divisional level, the Minister was represented by the senior D O. or prefect with his various assistants while at the sub divisional level; they were represented by the sub D O. This new arrangements made both the Fon and chiefs to be given books on which they were to register their activities under the supervision of the D O. It meant intrinsically that, Fons or chiefs were made completely answerable to the D O. with regards to the conduct of their administration.⁴³⁶

This was the more reason why prior to the publication of the chieftaincy decree, the enthronement ceremony of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was presided over by the Senior Divisional Officer for Momo Division since Oshie was yet considered as a third class chiefdom.⁴³⁷ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe became answerable to the Senior Divisional Officer of Momo Division.⁴³⁸ Due to his learned nature and popularity in Yaounde as a retired Assistant Director from the Ministry of Land and Survey, he lobbied with the officials of the Ministry of Territorial Administration by presenting an outline of the population of Oshie and the economic potentials of his people in the entire Njikwa Sub-division. Oshie was reclassified from third class chiefdom to a second class chiefdom, hence he became a beneficiary of the allowances accorded to Fons.⁴³⁹

Due to the fact that, the allowances allocated to Fons was to be determined by the head of state after the enthronement of each Fon.⁴⁴⁰ This prompted the Fons to write to the Minister of Territorial Administration for increase in their allowances. But for the fact that the process was long and slow, this led many Fons taking the option that, their chiefdoms should be declassified. The situation of low allowances deteriorated in the 1980's and 1990's due to the economic crisis that hit the country and the devaluation of the CFA Francs. This further plunged the Fons into financial hardship with some having no allowances such as the third class chiefs. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to overcome such situation of economic crisis in Oshie created what was known as "Njikwa Funds Union" made up of the various third class

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴³⁷ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie- People-Places-Events p.30.

⁴³⁸ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 59, member of the Royal Family in Oshie, Bamenda, 2017.

⁴³⁹ Interview with Tah Regiona nee Anyangwe, 65, Mafor of the Royal family in Oshie, Oshie, 17 November 2016.

⁴⁴⁰ Tohnji Walters, Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance 1961-2000 p.264.

chiefs of the area with the objective of raising funds to support the chiefs of Njikwa subdivision in order for them to enhance development in their areas.⁴⁴¹

By the year 1990, the one party system could not escape the wind of democratic change that resonated through out the African continent. With the institutionalization of democracy and its mode of dispensation through the emergence of political parties, it was realized that, the new political order no longer permitted the traditional rulers to be part of the system of political frame work put in place. The traditional rulers as auxiliary agents of the central administration were lured into the Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM). The main objectives were that, once the traditional rulers had been enlisted to the ruling party, their subjects will be eventually members of the party. This irritated their subjects who held that, the new political dispensation did not permit natural rulers to be militants of any political party as divine rulers and protectors of all people. That natural rulers rather check and control the action of politicians for the general good of the people.⁴⁴² The people further called for their rulers to distance themselves but when the forces of democracy emerged they were met with violent suppression.⁴⁴³

The President of the Republic during the CPDM congress in Bamenda in 1985, extended the political platform to involve the traditional rulers, such that the ruling party should be represented at the grass root. Through this, Fons were co-opted not only to have the rights to militate openly in the ruling party but equally to handle key rulership positions. This provided a subtle ground for some Fons to emerge in the CPDM party. Such a political attitude by Biya was mainly rooted in the fact that, a new political offering was common, which consequently gave birth to a number of political parties that competed for political space in Cameroon at the time. During the early 1990, a moderate number of Fons were openly in support of the opposition or the neutrality of Fons in partisan politics. The Bamenda Grassfields traditional rulers mobilized themselves under various lobbies to demand more recognition and resources from government. This was often in opposition to the competing interests of their counterparts within the Western Grassfields and in other regions.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie people, Events, places p.180.

⁴⁴² Cameroon Fragile State 2010 p.9.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

The new political dispensation provided opportunities where people could express their grievances against the regime.⁴⁴⁵ Among the new political parties formed, was the Social Democratic Front (S D F) which worn not only the hearts of the people of the North West but also, that of a cross section of the entire Cameroon population. Due to the political scenario in Cameroon, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe of Oshie as an astute politician and member of the CPDM party, deviated from the ruling party to militate in the S D F opposition party. His political vision was to achieve a renowned political position if the opposition party emerge victorious during the 1990 presidential elections in order to develop his chiefdom.⁴⁴⁶ Nyamnjoh captured such a situation when he affirms that, those chiefs who threw their weight behind the opposition parties or claimed neutrality, tended to be against the ruling party for failure to bring development to their home areas.⁴⁴⁷

In supporting the opposition party, disgruntled Fons were hoping for a new political dispensation that would reinstate the dignity of chieftaincy and reward them.⁴⁴⁸ As a consequence, no position was politically neutral, not even the one party that proclaimed that chiefs should be above partisan politics. But for the fact that the opposition party did not appear victorious due to some political unforsen circumstances, the ruling party resorted to intimidation of the opposition candidates and their supporters in the various chiefdoms. Before his death, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III had changed or moved from the opposition party to reinstate his candidacy in the CPDM party. But during his tenure as a CPDM militant, Oshie benefited from some development projects such as the maintenance of the Acha Tugi road linking Oshie by the administration. He passed on in 1997 after accomplishing a lot in the domain of politico-economic development of the chiefdom and was succeeded by his son Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV in 1998.⁴⁴⁹

The reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV at the helm of Oshie was marked by a lot of challenges due to his permanent resident in the United State of America. These included an abandonment of maintenance of the road between Acha-Tugi and Oshie. Banditary and general insecurity was at its peak and this was the period whereby government services were fine-tuned in Oshie. Indeed, the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe witnessed a

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 44, prince of the royal family, Bamenda, July 2017.

⁴⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁴⁸ F.B. Nyamnjoh, Our Traditions are Modern, Our Modernities Traditional'; Chieftaincy and Democracy in Contemporary Africa. CODESRIA p.9.

⁴⁴⁹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People, Places and Events p.98.

lot of challenges such as chieftaincy crisis that attempted to dethrone him from the throne of Oshie because he had abandoned the chiefdom for quite a long period of time and development activities were no longer taking place. To overcome these challenges, many development projects were realised in Oshie through the effort of OCA with outstanding projects such as the maintenance of the Acha-Tugi road. The Oshie health centre was upgraded to a Cottage hospital with a resident medical doctor. The construction of classrooms at Government school Nyebai and Bereje. The creation of Governent Secondary school Oshie and police post with the provision of police Vehicle. Donation of beds to the Cottage hospital by the Edom subgroup. Intensification of relations with the administrative, political, traditional and religious authorities.⁴⁵⁰ In fact, by the year 2009, the crisis that attempted to occured in the chiefdom of Oshie was resolved through the initiatives of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe alongside the administration and the elite.⁴⁵¹

3.2 Oshie Rulers and Housing Infrastructure

The Oshie traditional rulers played numerous roles in the development of housing infrastructure in the chiefdom of Oshie. In the domain of architecture during the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, his palace was built in a traditional architecture with bambos, mud and rooft with grass. Most of the houses were located in areas of farmlands that later developed into quarters. The surroundings of each of the houses consisted of plantains, Mango and pear trees. Boundaries were not demarcated as such, every man acquired land depending on the size of his family and wealth. The traditional housing architecture was carried out through communal labour using local materials.⁴⁵²In order to solve the problem of shelter, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe encouraged the indigenes to occupied lands in order to construct their homesteads. These houses ensured good health and portrayed wealth and fame.⁴⁵³

In addition, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe by showing an example of the type of traditional houses in his palace, made it in way that, the construction of houses and the determination of the size was a domain reserved solely to the male folk. It was an obligation for every grown up male in Oshie society to own land on which to build his compound and shelter his family and close relations. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie by the year 1924, a year after the death of the father according to tradition and custom of Oshie

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵² Aaron. S. Neba., Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon, Neba Publisher, 1987 p.51

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

and became the custodian of the land in the chiefdom. He exercised a titular claim to all land within the chiefdom boundaries. The control over the land was vested on the Fon and lineage heads who saw to it that each member of the lineage had adequate land either for the cultivation of crops or for the construction of new homes. In the construction of houses, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe encouraged the indigenes to construct more houses as the population was increasing in typically traditional method to reflect the culture and tradition of the people. The houses were built on very small foundations dug with locally made tools and hoes. They were constructed with bamboos embalmed with mud and roofed with thatch and grass. Most of the houses had square and rectangular shapes and were of reasonable height with one or two windows and a door for ventilation. The ceiling known as *Azabani* was incorporated in the house where corn and other food items were kept to ensure the economy of the family.⁴⁵⁴

The internal section of the house was divided with bamboo shelves in which was the father, mother and the children beds. At the centre of the house was a traditional dryer for the drying of food items hung over the fire. When a house was built, the youths helped to harden the floor by setting fire in it every nightfall and telling stories, riddles, exchange idiomatic expressions and sang folkloric songs by dancing.⁴⁵⁵ The construction of the houses of this nature required labour from all especially those who embraced Christianity. On the roof of the structure was a Christian missionary who worked with the indigenes to improve upon the housing infrastructure. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also encouraged young boys to be involved in various forms of development enterprises such as the arts of construction of traditional houses made of bamboos, mud and thatch grass, in fact, this was only meant for the elderly male as seen below. In this light, they were able to become proficient at income generating activities in the chiefdom that could enable them to build their own homestead through communal labour of close relatives at mature age.⁴⁵⁶ It was somehow rotative in a way in that when a traditional house was built for an individual, the next round was to be for another member of the male group and this was predominantly during the dry season. Envelope in this method, the traditional housing architecture was common in the entire community. Plate 18 depicts the construction of a traditional house in Oshie during the colonial period.

⁴⁵⁴ The construction of traditional houses was unique within the colonial Oshie community. The task was reserved solely to the menfolk who master the traditional methods of housing architecture. This was often done in a communal method where people were asigned different duties, i.e those to cut bamboos and grass for thatching and those to mount the walls and the rafter.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.



Plate 18: The Construction of Traditional House in Oshie during the year 1973

Source; Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection from the Regional Archive in Bamenda, October 2015

Note[:] The construction of traditional Houses of this nature required communal labour from the youths. The primary materials used for house construction were sticks, mud and grass.

Houses were constructed with exceptional heights and little ventilation alongside apartments as there was need. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe through his regular visits in the Bamenda region during the colonial days emulated the housing infrastructure in the area, and encouraged the indigenes to abandon the method of construction of traditional houses and resort to modern methods. Most wealthy men resorted to modern forms of housing infrastructures. In the main, there was widespread use of local material like sun dried bricks with thatch and grass. This replaced the raffia palm bamboos and grass that was used during the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe. According to traditional design, all houses were expected to cluster round a court yard which was inhabited by women, younger boys and girls of all ages.⁴⁵⁷

There was a distinction between the apartments of women and men. The female houses were generally large to encompass the children. They were usually clustered round a compound central yard facing each other. Their internal arrangements or components were

⁴⁵⁷ During the year 1930 in Oshie, people live in cluster in the various quarters. Houses were constructed in close proximity to the others, barely consisting of a joint appartment between the husband and wife. The other appartment served as a kitchen and bed room for the children.

simple and tactfully designed to host the basic needs of the household. As family heads, the male houses were mostly constructed on commanding positions and they were distinguished and clearly separated from the rest of the houses in the compound. They were detached and designed to have second entrances which were generally believed to serve for security reasons. The men lived alone with some of their younger male children. The internal components was made up of the master's bed, a fireside of exceptional size and the beds of the younger boys and that of strangers. It was rare to see a single house or a man sharing the same house with his wife or a woman living alone in the single house. The size of a compound reflected the degree of the owners' wealth which was a classic symbol of fame.⁴⁵⁸ Plate 19 portrays a traditional housing structure in colonial Oshie.

Plate 19: Traditional House in Colonial Oshie.



Source: Adapted from Adang Benedicks Private Archive, Oshie, 2016

The traditional house above was constructed with bamboo, rooft with grass and thatch and plastered with red earth. This was a typical model of traditional structures found in Oshie during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, it had only a single door and was air tight, reserved for the male folk. Infact, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in his vision of a civilised society encouraged the construction of houses in Oshie, in doing this, he allocated land to his sons, title holders and notables to construct many houses in the chiefdom. It was believed that many housing

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Atambele Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie July 2015.

infrastructures in the community was synonymous to good living which had a direct link with fertility and population growth.

It was by the year 1950's, that Fon Etunyi Anyangwe alongside other wealthy individuals introduced corrugated iron sheets for roofing in the Oshie palace. In this way, other iron tools became common especially among wealthy persons such as the traders. This was further compounded by the impact of Western Education which provided more realistic opportunities and sources of wealth to individuals. In this perspective, they were no longer dependent on the encouragement from Fon Etunyi Anyangwe and the housing infrastructure in the palace. Traders who grew rich, commanded tremendous respect from the poor. Their housing infrastructure was different from the rest of the ordinary houses that were simply made with sticks and mud. When cash crop like coffee was introduced in Oshie, the money obtained from the sell of coffee, enabled many people to change their housing infrastructure and sent their children to schools. In the main, there was widespread usage of sun dried bricks and corrugated iron sheets, that has replaced the traditional method used during the reign of Fon Adand Engu Anyangwe.⁴⁵⁹

3.2.1 Renovation of the Palace Structures (*Toh*)

The traditional rulers of Oshie also played a significant part in the construction and renovation of the housing infrastructure in the Oshie palace. The Western Grassfields chiefdoms consist of palaces where the power of the highest authority of the community was based. In other word, the palace was referred to as the official residence of a sovereign ruler. The traditional palace in Oshie was and is generally called *Toh*, relative to other palaces of the Western Grassfields chiefdoms that have similar appellation. The royal seat of Emamba, the spiritual leader of the Oshie people during the colonial days was built at Ebah quarter. When the traditional rulership in Oshie changed hands from Emamba to the Anyangwe dynasty as earlier mentioned in the study. Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe in order to consolidate powers upon himself moved the the royal seat of Oshie traditional ruler (palace) from Eba to Bereje quarter.⁴⁶⁰ From that inception, Bereje quarter became the seat of royalty in Oshie up to the present day.

Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, in order to continue with the local administration of Oshie, re-enacted the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* put in

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with Anjoneck Joshua, 70, Carpenter, Oshie, 17 July, 2015.

⁴⁶⁰ *Idem*.

place by Emamba. Indeed, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe in order to maintain his authority at the helm of Oshie initiated the construction of the palace in a traditional architecture with bamboos, plastered with mud and roofed with thatch and grass.⁴⁶¹ Enshrined with the duty of protecting traditional seals, the palace was constructed with many houses divided into departments. He designs the palace to have features that distinguished it from other compounds in the entire community. At the front part of the palace was an open plaza that was used to receive the people during important occasions. Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe as a dynamic ruler constructed the traditional palace in Oshie with departments such as, the different ritual houses and the apartment to receive guests. At the centre of the palace was the grass house where the Fon met during important occasions with the traditional elders *Okum*. These departments reflected the different ministries of the present day government in the presidential system. These departments were occupied by the wives and children of the Fon and the Palace retainers known as Nchindas.⁴⁶²

Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe passed on after initiating the foundation of the Oshie palace. When Fon Etunyi Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie the housing infrastructure in the Oshie royal palace still maintained its traditional outlook. In the course of time as he began having contact with other Fons of Meta and the Bamenda region, where chiefdoms and fondoms were undergoing a process of development that entailed moving away from a traditional setting to modern society.⁴⁶³ By the year 1925, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe undertook measures to change the traditional housing infrastructures in the entire community, the method of building bamboo houses plastered with mud and roofed with thatch and grass changed to sun dried bricks, stones. The first sun dried brick house was constructed in the palace by architects brought from Bafut, roofed with zinc. Only wealthy individuals such as traders in the chiefdom emulated such paradigm and change their traditional housing infrastructure though a good number of the houses were still roofed with thatch and grass.⁴⁶⁴

Prior to the coming of the Basel Mission in Oshie by the year 1926, two years after the enthronement of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe II, the housing infrastructure was still in its traditional mode. As a traditionalist, he provided them land to build their church at Azani quarter roofed with thatch and grass. His reflection was to welcome and adapt the Basel Mission in the

⁴⁶¹ *Idem*.

⁴⁶² Interview with Anjoneck Joshua, 70, Carpenter, Oshie, 17 July, 2015.

⁴⁶³Monte Palmer, *Dilemmas of Political Development*, An Introduction to the Politics of the Developing Areas, F.E Peacock Publishers.INC.ITASCA, ILLINOIS 60143, 1985 p. 36.

⁴⁶⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.31.

tradition and custom of Oshie. But when they started their preachings the situation changes and some indigenes were converted to their religion. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe thus encouraged his people to change their life style although houses were still constructed with stones, sun dried bricks, roofed with thatch and grass.⁴⁶⁵ In this regard, traditional rulers in the Western Grassfields chiefdoms and Oshie in particular during the colonial days, acted as the product of change due to their encounter with the colonialists but still clung to tradition and custom. For the fact that traditional societies comprised of individuals, dynamic rulers emerged from the traditional setting and transformed the societies to a quasi-modern out look. Daniel Lerner describes a traditional individual as being;

.....defined, dynamically, by what he wants to become. What differentiates him from his traditional peers is a different latent structure of aptitudes and attitudes. The aptitude is empathy-he "sees" things the others do not see, "lives" in a world populated by imaginings alien to the constructive world of the others. The attitude is desire-he wants really to see the things he has hitherto "seen" only in his mind's eye, really to live in the world he has "lived" in only vicariously......⁴⁶⁶

Here authoritative decisions concerning the policies to be followed, burdens to be shared and other values to be allocated were made by the village head or chief either singly or in conjunction with the traditional elders, whereas the decisions were implemented by the lower communal units. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe passed on by the year 1974 when the traditional methods of house construction in Oshie was still in practice by the indigenes, though only few houses in the palace were roofed with zinc. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie in 1975, the housing infrastructure in the palace were still in its traditional outlook. As a dynamic ruler, he used his knowledge in surveys and photogrammetry to design a modern system of housing architecture in the palace. This was done through the planning and drawing of good housing plans for his subjects to emulate and construct good houses. He also allocated portions of land to wealthy persons who were able to construct modern housing infrastructure that attracts foreigners in Oshie.⁴⁶⁷

As an expert in land and surveys, he provided a modern face-lift to the Oshie palace. Due to his fame and popularity, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe became acquainted to many traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields through his cordial relations with them. He

⁴⁶⁵ The housing infrastructure in the Oshie palace during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe consisted of Bamboo, mud, grass and thatch. When the Basel Mission arrived Oshie with their westernised modern philophy, they taught the indigenes how to construct modern houses. The first housing infrastructures were constructed in the Palace to replace the traditional method of building houses.

⁴⁶⁶ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.31.

⁴⁶⁷ Through the initiative of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, as an expert in surveys and photogrammetry. The traditional housing infrastructure in Oshie were changed to modern housing structures. As a literate leader, he employed his talents to mould out the Oshie pristine society to a quasi modern outlook.

adopted the images of palaces in larger fondoms such as Bali and Mankon to provide new face-lift to the Oshie royal palace. He constructed the Oshie palace with special arrangements that reflected other traditional palaces of the Western Grassfields. Enveloped in this reflection, by the year 1989, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe undertook some major development schemes to refurbish some of the old structures in the Oshie palace. In this direction, he changed the grass roofs of some of the houses in the palace with an exception of the one reserved for the burial of deceased Fons.⁴⁶⁸

In addition, to ensure an adequate security in the palace, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe constructed an enclosure round the palace to prevent free intrusion of the indigenes into the palace locale. The wives he inherited from his predecessor were lodged in their respective apartments with their children such as the princes and the princesses. He also built an enclosure surrounding the traditional grass house at the centre of the palace where the village traditional stones *Ifoung* were kept and also where the dead chiefs were buried. The thatch on the grass house was replaced annually by the Oshie people. Only the traditional elders *Okum* and the Fon had access into the house. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also constructed the Oshie palace hall where the village traditional council was held, and also the Oshie Students and Teachers Union OSTU. Since the palace was divided into departments, his own apartment that served as his residence was located opposite the main palace buildings where visitors and important persons were received.⁴⁶⁹

Moreover, at the main entrance into the palace was the grass house symbolizing the seat of royalty in Oshie. In fact, the grass house was a common feature of the palaces in the chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields. In the palace as well, there was a house reserved for the palace institution, the *Kwifuh* society. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also inherited all the widowed wives of his father. He actually made children with some of these wives to fill the houses in the palace. His mother was also considered as one of the palace wives, as indicated on official government documents. The number of houses in the Oshie royal palace during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe increased due to increase in population of his wives and children. In fact, the Oshie palace during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was likened to the palaces of larger Fondoms where visitors visited the Fon on daily bases. The small houses roofed with grass located just at the entrance into the palace

⁴⁶⁸ Martin Anyangwe, The Oshie People, Events and Palces p.33

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

precinct distinguished the palace from ordinary houses in the chiefdom. Plate 20a and 20b portrays the entrance into the Oshie palace with the grass houses juxtapose from each other, while plate 20b depicts the resident of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III.



Plate 20 a: Gate Way Entrance into the Oshie Palace.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Oshie palace, October 2015

Plate 20b: The Palace Resident of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III of Oshie.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Oshie palace, October 2015

Note, This section of the palace was the department where the Fon received the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. Some of the princes and princesses were lodged in the building above, especially the little apartment located beside the main house. There was a special apartment arranged with a veranda between the main building and the little apartment meant for the Fon. It was in this section that the Fon received important

guests from all over Cameroon and the diaspora in the palace. The apartment also served as a place where the Fon receives diplomatic envoys from neighbouring Fons in Njikwa subdivision and beyond. Plate 21 is a cross section view of Oshie palace *Toh*.

Plate 21: Cross Sectional View of Oshie Palace Depicting the Peak of Traditional Grass House at the Centre.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Oshie palace, October 2015

The housing architecture seen above represents just a tiny segment of the different departments found in Oshie palace. The Palace is segmented into many departments and each of these departments has a precise role to play. The entire palace buildings constructed with sun dried bricks although plastered with cement are located adjacent the main palace residence of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. These houses were redecorated with other departments added to the existing ones to provide a modern outlook to the Oshie palace.⁴⁷⁰

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the provision of a new face-lift to the Oshie palace, enabled the chiefdom to be reown in the entire Njikwa sub-division. This was in contrast to the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe whose palace retainers were referred to as *Nchindas*.⁴⁷¹In other to maintain discipline among the Oshie indigenes, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe constructed a prison in the palace and adopted a sort of preventive and defensive diplomacy. In like manner, some of the houses constructed in the palace by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe

⁴⁷⁰ Idem.

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Anyangwe Robert, 76, Retired teacher and member of Royal family, Oshie, August 2015.

were used for the lodging of important guests during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival. The palace also consisted of an apartment (Museum) that was used by the Fon to preserve work of arts and ornaments of culture of the Oshie people. At the entrance into the main palace was the Palace Hall and little courtyard. The yard is used by traditional dance groups during important ceremonies in the palace.⁴⁷² All these reflects the wealth and fame of the Fon and the chiefdom at large.

Besides, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe as open minded ruler collaborated with all classes of people in Oshie, this went further to reduce the chances of eminent attack on his authority. He also created a local military force in the palace consisting of some of his Messengers. These men were always with the Fon to safeguard his authority. Their role was to enforce the decisions of the Fon in the council, and track down wrong doers in the community. They punished criminals and apprehended issues of theft in the chiefdom on the instruction of the Fon and acted as the court of Appeal in the chiefdom arbitration council.⁴⁷³ They also acts as the Fon's intelligence system when executing decisions from the Fon to the entire community. They are equipped with uniforms and batons that they move everywhere with as their combating weapon. Some of them are lodged in the palace and provided adequate facilities.

Furthermore, during important occasions that warranted the presence of the Fon, he was accompanied by a convoy of Messengers acting as the body guards. They safeguarded the the Fon when being in a public occasion and other village activities that warranted his present. The Fon is considered as the over lord of the land, guests who visit the Fon have to obtain permission from the Messengers.⁴⁷⁴ During the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival, the Messengers move together with the Fon's entourage from the palace to the ceremonial ground. The fon's entourage consists of the princesses carrying the royal bag and the fly whisk, alongside the traditional elders *Okum*, to the ceremonial ground. They also safeguard the Fon when seated at the stadium during the *Anangkobi* dance festival. Any gift that enter the palace in the form of palm wine or whisky is presented to the Messengers for the Fon.⁴⁷⁵

3.2.2 Creation of Quarters and Markets

The traditional rulers of Oshie also demonstrated great dynamism in the creation of quarters and market to enhance the economic development in the chiefdom. According to the social

⁴⁷² *Idem*.

⁴⁷³ The local force (Militia) created by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe still exist in the palace right up to the present day. Through the creation of these local police forces, issues of theft were reduced in Oshie.

⁴⁷⁴ Interview with Abu Ewala, 62, one time Messenger of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, Oshie, 23 October, 2015. ⁴⁷⁵ *Idem*.

groupings of people in a society, the formation of little settlements especially within village setting was often referred to as quarters or hamlets. When the people of Oshie left their ancestral home in the Oshum area in Widekum, arriving at their present territorial site, they first settled at a place known as *Otikob*. From there, they moved and settled at another place called *Njumuku* (Fulani village on top of a hill) as earlier mentioned at the beginning of our study. Due to its hilly topography that was not suitable for cultivation, they again moved and settled at *Oshumugwari* and finally at Eba quarter.⁴⁷⁶

From *Oshumugwari*, they spread out towards Fun and Nyekob to an area known as Abiya hill at the present site of Government High School Njikwa. They encountered with a faction of the people of Ngwo and sent them away. Some of the temporal settlement areas later developed and became permanent settlement areas. The temporal areas first served as farm lands but due to the need for fertile areas of settlements, these farmlands were developed into quarters. Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe used the authority bestowed on him as the traditional ruler and instructed the various families such as the *Bukobi*, *Bugyi*, *Bu-ngyanjek*, *Bujugo* and *Bu-Bawek* to settled at *Eba* area, *Togobei* and *Oshumugwari* and also spread out to other areas in order to occupy lands for the construction of their household.⁴⁷⁷

The people further spread out to other settlement areas that nowadays form the *Ekeh*, *Edom*, *Bemban*, *Fum* and *Nyekob* quarters in Oshie. Some of the people in *Nyekob* area migrated to *Nyebai* and *Togobeiku* for economic and strategic reasons. In like manner, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe in his quest for land acquisition further encourage the other families of Oshie to occupy the areas of *Azani*, around the German settlement area, Baiku, Berenangong and some to occupy the borders in Barimbong due to its fertile soil and proximity to the Menchum valleys and Fringyeng. Meanwhile the royal family (*Bughen*) maintained their site in Bereje quarter which was the seat of royalty. As the people settled in these areas, they exchanged their produce among themselves in the form of trade by barter.⁴⁷⁸In fact, the Oshie economy at the time was largely subsistence, most of the products were consumed within the household. Exchange transaction was from household to another between very close families.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with Anya Joshua, 62, Farmer, Oshie, 17 July, 2015.

⁴⁷⁷ Idem.

⁴⁷⁸ Idem.

The circulation of the products outside the household was done by means of exchange or trade by barter as earlier mentioned.⁴⁷⁹ In the course of time and increase in the production of local crops by the indigenes, the need to have a permanent place that serves as a market place developed. The local market place was where the indigenes of Oshie were to meet once or twice a week on fixed days to exchange their commodities. Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe alongside the people in order to enable trade among the people of Oshie, created a market place for the exchange of their products at Nyikob quarter by the year 1920, at a man's compound known as Mbi-Nzie, located at the neighbourhood of the present government High School Njikwa towards Ngwo village.⁴⁸⁰

In this way, the Oshie people exchanged their produce among themselves and alongside the people of Ngwo and Konda. The medium of exchange was cowries and salt.⁴⁸¹ During this time, people were afraid to venture to distant markets to exchange their produce for fear of being kidnapped and sold into slavery. In order to overcome such situation, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe together with his subjects further organised a fixed market day to take place on a traditional weekly day known as *Njid*. The traditional holiday was equally fixed known as *Njebi*, which served as a traditional market day for the Oshie people. As the production of food crops increases, through the instruction of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, the market was further moved to Bereje quarter at a road junction area known nowadays as "Three Corners Bereje". When Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe passed on, he was succeeded by his son Fon Etunyi Anyangwe by the year 1924. Due to the increase in population, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe further moved the market place to Andong in Baiku quarter and then to Edom quarter which later became the permanent commercial centre in Oshie up to the present day.⁴⁸²

The market place at Edom was the main commercial centre between the people of Oshie and the neighbouring communities. The housing infrastructure in the market consist of sheds constructed with bamboos and roofed with thatch and grass. The main products that were sold in these sheds was palm wine, the women also used the sheds to preserve the remains of the market produce. Other sectors of the market were reserved for the sell of food

⁴⁷⁹ Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and colleges p.64.

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Ozughen Solomon, a Patriarch who served as a Cathechist with the Basel Mission during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe. He testified to me that he was a witnessed to the creation of the first Market by Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, Oshie, October 1914.

⁴⁸¹ This information was obtained personally from Pa Ozughen Solomon a patriarch and retired catechist in 2004 in his compound in Oshie,he is of blessed memory.

⁴⁸² Interview with Anya Joshua, 62, Farmer, Oshie, 17 July, 2015.

stuffs and palm oil by the women folk from neighbouring chiefdoms who traded with the Oshie people. The Hausas arrived Oshie by the year 1938, as petty traders with their commercial articles such as jewelleries, beads, clothes (Hausa gowns) and perfume.⁴⁸³In order to create an accommodation for the Hausa traders to sell their products since they were nomadic traders. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe allocated a section just within the locality of the market for them to settle and sell their articles to the Oshie indigenes. The locale later developed into what was known as Hausa quarter in Oshie.

In addition, some people of Oshie who became traders as well as the Hausa was a certain Ashime Amandong. His commercial activities changed the economy of Oshie, enabling the Edom quarter to develop and serve as the economic nerve centre in Oshie.⁴⁸⁴ When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie in 1975, with his knowledge in surveys and photogrammetry. He mapped out the Oshie market and implemented a new method of architecture that consisted of sun dried bricks and zinc to replace the bamboo sheds. He also encouraged the well to do individuals through the provision of portion of lands to set up businesses in the Oshie market. He equally created income generating activities through the provision of a corn mill in the market by the year 1980, which aided both the Oshie and the Hausa community. By the year 1995, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe put up a whole sale provision store at Edom where indigenes were employed to work there. Through such development scheme, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe organised the Oshie market in a way and encouraged both men and women folk to served, revenue obtained from the sell of their farm produce in "*Njangi*". These were informal joint stocks organised periodically by the indigenes to aid members rotationally in their socio-economic commitments.⁴⁸⁵

There was a variation in the days of the week from the westernized weekly days of the month. Indeed, the traditional names distinguished each day of the week with their various connotations. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in respect to the customs and traditions of the people, distinct the Oshie weekly days according to the Oshie traditional calendar with two traditional public holidays. The first of these traditional public holidays was known as *Njebi* which also served as a market day. *Njebei* was equally a day set aside by the traditional elders *Okum* for resting.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ Interview with Angono Lucas, 72, Retired Road Overseer, Oshie, October 2016.

⁴⁸⁴ Idem.

⁴⁸⁵ Idem.

⁴⁸⁶ Martin Anyangwe, People-Places-Events in Oshie, p.202

Moreover, it was forbidden for the Oshie indigenes to till the earth with the hoe or matchet on such a day. The day was set aside for resting due to the fact that most of the indigenes of Oshie were subsistence farmers, consequently after a tedious working week, there was the need to take a break. The second day was Njid which was a day set apart by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe for the commemoration of the pioneer ancestors of the land. This day served and has been serving as the Oshie main market day.⁴⁸⁷ There was also a day known as Ebar, a day that prohibited the indigenes from working in their farms. It was a natural occurrence in the past that any work done on such a day never produced surplus. Consequently, the day was consecrated to other subtle activities such as harvesting of crops, weeding of farm lands, clearing of the surroundings of households and coffee plantations. Most funeral celebrations were organized to take place on such a day.⁴⁸⁸ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also encouraged the people of Oshie to respect the traditional weekly days. A year in Oshie was made up of thirteen lunar months because the people look up for signs of the moons that appear in the sky. There is no direct association between the Western weekly days and the Oshie traditional weekly days. Table 3 portrays a rotative traditional weekly and market days in Oshie.

No	Traditional Weekly Days	Meaning in Oshie
1	Njebi	Traditional Market day
2	Yizang	Working day
3	Yingweki	Working day
4	Yishe	Working day
5	Njid	Village Market day
6	Koimbei	Working day
7	Yiche	Working day

Table 2: Traditional Weekly Days in Oshie.

 ⁴⁸⁷ To facilitate the strict observation of this public holiday, the village market day was affixed on this day. *Djid* served as the community market day while *Njebei* served as the small market day.
⁴⁸⁸ Idem

8	Eba	Partial Working day

Source: Adapted from Martin Anyangwe, People-Places-Events in Oshie 2010 p.203

3.2.3 Creation of Inter-quarter Link Roads and Bridges

The traditional rulers of Oshie played a major role in the construction of roads and bridges for the economic development of the chiefdom. Road networks in the chiefdom of Oshie were not quite encouraging. Movement was through narrow and bushy foot path. The men folk cleared and widened the path in order to enable free movement of people particularly during the wet season. Little brooks that coursed across the quarters consisted of little or no bridges and this hampered movement to other quarters during the wet season. In order to overcome such challenges, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe organised the indigenes to dig and widen the foot path. The foot path were dug by the indigenes of each quarter through communal labour. It was through the spirit of communal labour that the road from Acha Tugi to Oshie was dug between the years 1953-1959.⁴⁸⁹ The construction of the road was supervised by a masquerade known as *Atsop*, it ensured and maintained hardwork among the people.⁴⁹⁰ The main aim of the road was to link Oshie with the Bamenda region to enhance economic development of the area. The digging was done with rudimentary tools such as pick axes, cutlasses, dig axes, spades, hoes, crow bars and sticks. Bridges and culverts were built with tree trunks. 1954.⁴⁹¹

Also, as the spirit of community development intensified among the people of Oshie, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe organised the people of Oshie to dig the road linking Oshie and the neighbouring chiefdom of Konda to the west and Fringyeng to the east in order to ease trade and communication amongst them. Through the influence of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, the people of Oshie further contributed money and constructed the bridge linking the Bereje and Edom quarters through communal labour. The course of the stream that hampered communication between Bereje and Edom quarter was diverted with sticks, hoes and other crude tools.⁴⁹² Through this spirit of community development, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe encouraged the people of Oshie to dig the road connecting Oshie and the chiefdom of Ngwo by the year 1965. He passed on from the throne of Oshie without accomplishing a lot although

⁴⁸⁹ An Annual Publication Magazine, Oshie p.10.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid* p.15.

⁴⁹¹The land Rover was hardly moving, either because of lack of driver, fuel, Mechanics and spare parts. What ever the case this highly cherished commodity turned out to be a white elephant to the Oshie people.

⁴⁹² An Annual publication Oshie p.15.

the economy of the chiefdom was flourishing due to the trade links he established with the neighbouring Polities through the construction of road network. ⁴⁹³

During the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III, as an open minded and development oriented ruler, by the early 1980s, he embarked on the construction of inter-quarter link roads and bridges. This attracted alot of attention from the entire indigenes from all the nocs and cranies of Oshie. For the fact that many people in the chiefdom were involved in coffee cultivation which of course was a very significant factor in considering road construction. There emerged a mutually reinforcing relationship between coffee cultivation and road construction. Indeed, the necessity to transport coffee and other agricultural products led to the digging of inter-quarter link roads through communal labour. The development initiatives were aimed at opening up the foot paths in the various quarters for economic progress. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in carrying out such development projects, applied his knowledge in surveys and photogrammetry to map out the road network in the various quarters in Oshie.⁴⁹⁴

To begin with such an enterprise, he lobbied and exposed the problems of road infrastructure faced by the chiefdom of Oshie to International Organizations such as the Swiss Association for local development (HELVETAS). This organisation served as a partner in self-reliance development projects in the Grassfields societies and also to officials of the British Embassy whom he was always inviting during the *Anangkobi* dance festival in Oshie. Enveloped in this reflection, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe invited some of these officials in Oshie to observe the difficulties faced by the indigenes in the economic development of the community. These officials, after carrying out feasibility studies of the area and pilot projects, allocated funds for the construction of the roads and bridges. To complement such task, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe employed the assistance of quarter heads who assembled the indigenes of all the quarters in Oshie who provided human labour.⁴⁹⁵

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also used his knowledge in surveys to traced and map out the inter-quarter road paths into motorable roads. The narrow foot paths were further widened, bridges and culverts contructed to protect against flood and erosion. In the northern sector, he also extended the road net work to connect Oshie and the chiefdom of Konda that served as economic bread basket to the Oshie women who traded with the Konda people. The road that linked the Barimbong forested quarter of Oshie was also constructed through the self-reliance

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Awah Williams, 46, Water Plumber, Oshie, 8 October 2015.

⁴⁹⁵ Idem.

development scheme of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to link Oshie with Beba villages in Menchum valley. Streams and little brooks flowing across the various quarters that acted as a hinderance to women for the transportation of their products during the rainy season were constructed.⁴⁹⁶ He further made sure that the bridges linking Oshie with all the neighbouring Polities were constructed to boost up economic development in the chiefdom through trade. The construction of road networks in the chiefdom of Oshie led to the expansion of trade by the men and women folk who traded with other areas in the region and also attracted investors to establish their business ventures in Oshie.⁴⁹⁷

There was also the construction of the bridge linking the Eba quarter of Oshie, women could not cross over to their farm lands or return home when it rained because of floods.⁴⁹⁸ Cases of women drowning in this stream after severe storm when returning from their farms were often recorded. In this light, just like the enlightened despots in Europe who constructed bridges and drained mashes, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through his self-reliance development policy, lobbied for financial assistance from the officials of the British Embassy in Yaounde. The construction of the bridge was thus realized through the participation of local technicians recruited by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside some from the Public Works Department in Mbengwi. In this reflection, funds were made available for the purchase of material such as cement and irons that were used in the construction of the bridge by the Oshie indigenes.⁴⁹⁹

In addition, the work took slightly over two months, but had the cement supply not have been interrupted the bridge could have been completed within five or six weeks. After the construction phase of the bridge by the technicians, labour was supplied by the indigenes through communal labour, mostly by the men and women folk of Eba quarter in filling the bridge with earth. The bridge was then prohibited from usage by the Fon in order to officially inaugurate it before the indigenes from Eba quarter could begin crossing over it. Plate 22 depicts the inauguration ceremony of the Eba brige by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside the British officials and some Oshie indigenes.

⁴⁹⁶ Interview with Awah Williams, 46, Water Plumber, Oshie, 8 October 2015.

⁴⁹⁷ *Idem*.

 ⁴⁹⁸ The Eba bridge is the bridge connecting the Azani quarter of Oshie. Historically, the Oshie people first settled in this area before spreading out to the various quarters. It is here that the most powerful traditional doctor in Oshie dwelled before his last days during the early 1990s.
⁴⁹⁹ *Idem*.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015.

The bridges at *Ogyi Yaghari* and *Ogyi Shine Banyi* linking Baiku and Berenangong quarters were also realized in the same year.⁵⁰⁰ This was largely through the financial contribution made by the indigenes piloted by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. The bridge at the entrance leading to Nyebai quarter of Oshie was also realized through the financial support from the elite. These development schemes on bridges were put in place to substitute the planks that had already outlived their strength. The inter-quarter link roads were kept clean, by the men and women folk on weekly bases, supervised by the quarter heads of each quarter. The road linking Acha-Tugi Hospital was constantly maintained through communal labour to enable trade to flourish between Oshie and the Bamenda region. Since agriculture consituted the back bone of the Oshie people, the construction of roads network in Oshie enabled the indigenes to sell their produce to the outside world in order to maintain economic growth in the chiefdom. According to Kenneth Berrill:

To continue its fast economic growth it needs, basically, an improved road system, an enlarged agricultural extension service which will train the farmers to produce more and better crops, and an improved marketing and grading service. 501

⁵⁰⁰ *Ogyi* in Oshie language denotes stream or watercourse. The *Ogyi Yaghari* and *Shine Banyi* bridges nowadays provides that latitude between the people of Fringyeng, Barimbong and Berenangong quarter to cross to the Bereje and the rest of the quarters in Oshie without encountering floods.

⁵⁰¹ Kenneth Berrill, The Economy of the Southern Cameroons Under United Kingdom Trusteeship, Cambridge, 1960 p. 42.
On the southern sector, the road that linked Oshie and the chiefdom of Ekweri Banya was constructed through the self reliance development initiatives of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III to link up trade links with the chiefdom. In order to realise the earmarked development projects, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe collaborated with some of the Oshie elite who were working with the public works department in Mbengwi. They lobbied with the government officials in that department and provided carterpillars to construct these roads. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also distributed some of the construction materials donated by the officials of the Swiss and British Embassy in Yaounde, to the Konda people to carry out maintenance on the road linking Oshie and the chiefdom of Konda. In the domain of poverty reduction, hoes, wheel barrows and cutlasses were distributed to the Oshie indigenes to carry out agricultural activities in their various farms. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe disenclaved the Oshie landscape and inter-quarter road net work, thereby enabling the chiefdom to assume a modern face-lift.⁵⁰²

3.2.4 Trade

The traditional rulers of Oshie also played a significant role in the promotion of trade in the chiefdom. During the colonial period, the economy of Oshie was largely subsistence, most products were consumed within and beyond the household. The distribution of the products beyond the household and the community was accomplished by way of exchange or trade by barter. Trade made it possible for the people of Oshie to exchange their products with the neighbouring communities. Trade was an essential economic activity which influenced production beyond the requirements of the household. Items that featured in distant trade between Oshie and her neighbours were generally things such as palm wine and palm oil, cloth, gunpowder and designed calabashes. Goods were transported by traders on their heads days and weeks. In the course of time and with the expansion of trade, barter began to give way to some form of monetary value.⁵⁰³.

Long distance trade during the colonial period in Oshie was carried out between close and distant chiefdoms. There was no means of transportation and walking on foot was common among the traders and the indigenes.⁵⁰⁴ To safeguard their goods, traders had trust worthy and trade friends who provided them with shelter and food. In this direction, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe established trade links between the people of Oshie, Ngie and the

⁵⁰² An Annual publication Magazine Oshie, p. 17.

⁵⁰³ J.P Warnier, *Pre-colonial Mankon*:The Development of a Cameroon chiefdom in its regional settings Ph.D Thesis, Woroy. Ann. Arbor Michigan, 1975 p.114.

⁵⁰⁴ Nkwi, Elements for a History of the Grassfields p.53.

Menchum valleys (Okoromanjang). This was to enable the people of Oshie benefited from the palm oil that was produced in large quantities in these chiefdoms. The people of Oshie who are next neighbours to the Ngie villages produced little or no palm oil. In fact, the climate of Oshie does not favour the growing of palms, thus the Oshie people depended largely on the palm oil produced from these regions.⁵⁰⁵ Palm oil was useful not only because it was so important for cooking but also because it was the main item that was used during marriages and other important occasions. Palm oil from Menchum was transported on head load to Oshie and other areas of the region through trade networks.⁵⁰⁶ Through these process of trade in palm oil, a number of foreign items freely entered the chiefdom of Oshie.

Trade and exchange was equally common among members of the royal family. This took the form of royal trade within which, Fons through their envoys practiced a form of trade and exchange that encouraged traditional diplomacy. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe was said to have sent some royal gifts and ornaments of prestige to his counterparts in other chiefdoms. In the same vein, many articles were sent or exchanged in form of royal trade from these chiefdoms to Oshie. Indeed, the strength of the Polity depended largely on her ability to build an effective network of friends through royal trade. Towards the end of the twentieth century, most of the traditional rulers in the Western Grassfields and Fon Etunyi Anyangwe engaged themselves in the trade of Dane Guns. This became a fashionable article of royal trade because it was highly used during funeral and cultural manifestations. The arrival of Dane Guns through trade in Oshie and its neighbouring chiefdoms from Nigeria alongside stencilled cloth, kitchen utensils and gunpowder demonstrate the extent in which traders and the traditional rulers of Oshie were engaged in the trade.⁵⁰⁷

The Oshie people traded with the people of Ngwo in items such as beans that was exchanged for palm oil, coming fom Menka area in Wedikum. In the course of time and with the expansion of trade and circulation of currency, the trade by barter began to give way to exchange for some form of monetary value.⁵⁰⁸ In order to improve the economic wellbeing of the people in the community, many people resorted to long distance trade to acquire what they could not produce. It was in this atmosphere that Fon Etunyi Anyangwe encouraged many people during communal gathering in the chiefdom to trade with near and distant chiedoms. Their major economic produce was and is palm wine. In this light, palm wine was transported

⁵⁰⁵Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People-Places- Events p.28.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵⁰⁸ Interview with Anjonek Elizabeth, 73, House wife, Oshie, 21 November, 2018.

through head load from Oshie and sold in the Meta markets (*Tad*). On their return, they purchased peas (Avocados) and '*Achahie* and pottery pots for cooking.⁵⁰⁹

In long distant trade, the people of Oshie in the past, went as far as the Nigerian markets of Ikom and Amana to purchase clay pots. These pots were used for the storage of palm wine that was produced in large quantity in Oshie. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also created avenues whereby the people of Oshie could trade with the markets of the Ndop plain area to purchase pottery pots that were in turn resold in Oshie as kitchen utensils for the storage of palm wine and palm oil. The principal pottery centres were Bamessing and Babessi and to a lesser extent Bamali. As the trade network developed and expanded over the area, the Oshie traders mostly women purchased palm oil in the Ngie and Menka markets to be sold in Oshie. The Ngie people especially women folk in turn purchased palm wine from Oshie market and sold in Ngie.⁵¹⁰

The production of palm wine in large quantity in Oshie, enabled Fon Etunyi Anyangwe to establish trade links with the Okoromanjang markets of Menchum valley. The palm wine was at times exchanged with palm oil for consumption in Oshie. In the same vein, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also establish trade links with the people of Bako due to the production of palm oil and rice in the area.⁵¹¹ Fon Etunyi Anyangwe further establish trade links with the Meta and as far as the Bali markets. The transaction was done through a network of trade routes and centres which linked, Meta, Bali, Bamessing in Ndop and the Menchum valleys to Oshie. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie, he expanded the trade network between the people of Oshie and their neighbouring chiefdoms. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in his new concepts of economic development in Oshie constructed and extended road network to link the chiefdom of Konda. His aim was to open up trade links between the two chiefdoms because konda had warm climate with fertile soil that favours crop production due to its proximity to the Menchum valleys. Local products from this area such as cocoyams, plantains and plumes were bought by the Oshie women and resold in Oshie, Meta and at times in the Bamenda markets.⁵¹²

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the construction of road network linking Oshie and the chiefdom of Ekweri Banya, opened up trade links between the two chiefdoms. Palm oil,

⁵⁰⁹ Achahie was a type of food item produced by the Meta people, from the remains of palm kernels. It was eaten alongside other food items like cocoyams and potatoes.

⁵¹⁰ *Idem*.

⁵¹¹ *Idem*.

⁵¹² Interview with Anyangwe Mathew, 68, Retired Civil Servant, Bamenda, june 2017.

groundnuts and other local products from the area were sold in Oshie market by the indigenes of Ekweri Banya. The availability of road network connecting the two chiefdoms created a lot of friendship between the people as far as trade was concerned. A segment in the Oshie market was reserved for the sell of palm oil by indigenes from Ekweri Banya and Menka. The trade transaction between Oshie and these chiefdoms helped to boost up the social and economic lot of the Oshie people. The palm oil from these areas also provided an additional source of storable wealth because some well to do women in Oshie purchased the palm oil during market days and resold to the indigenes when the supply was scarce.⁵¹³

Moreover, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the construction of the road network linking the Barimbong quarter in Oshie was for economic purpose. His aim was to create trade links between the people of Oshie and Beba in Menchum valley. The area was well known in the region for the production of groundnuts in large quantities. A majority of economic power of the women folk in Oshie depended largely on groundnuts from Beba. The trade network was organised in a way that indigenes from Oshie often trekked on long distances particularly on Beba market days to purchase groundnuts that were resold in Oshie. Money obtained from the sell of groundnuts was used to solve their economic needs at local level, such as njangi groups (economic associations) which made it very possible for the indigenes to become deeply involved in commercial activities.⁵¹⁴ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in constructing road network linking Oshie and the chiefdom of Fringyeng enhance trade links between the two chiefdoms. In fact, the road from Oshie passing via Fringyeng had served the indigenes in trade links with the Bamenda markets. Many commercial women and men from the chiefdom of Oshie used the road to sell out their products in the Bamenda markets.⁵¹⁵

In the export of agricultural products by the Oshie men and women folk, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe greatly boost up the agriculture sector as it was the dominant economic activity of the people. He provides farming implement to most of the farmers in Oshie to improve on their agricultural activities. There was hardly no household in the chiefdom that was not fully or partially involved in agricultural activities, because it provided more assured supplies of food. A variety of crops were cultivated such as cocoyams, maize, beans, potatoes, cassava and tree crops such as bananas and plantains. Although the domestic economy was overwhelmingly a subsistence one, a good quantity of the products was exported to the

⁵¹³ Idem.

⁵¹⁴ *Idem*.

⁵¹⁵ Idem.

Bamenda markets. Agriculture was wholly in the hands of the indigenes with the exception of a few nomadic Fulani herdsmen. Basically, a farmer depended on his own labour and that of his immediate and extended family for agricultural production. Women did most of the farming, while the men were limited with the clearing of farms and the planting of plantains.⁵¹⁶

Maize was arguably the most widely, and perhaps most intensively cultivated of the food crops. It was one of the most preferred food crops because, it took a shorter period to mature and needed relatively less labour input than most of the other crops and it could also be easily preserved for a year or two. Another crop of economic importance in Oshie was the cocoyam. According to P.N. Nkwi and J-P. Warnier, this crop was introduced into West Africa from Southeast Asia as early as 1500 A.D.⁵¹⁷

The crop appears to have had an early entry into the economy of North West region and Oshie as evidenced by its prevalence in the area. This was because, it was reportedly being cultivated in large quantity in the chiefdom. However, the entire community of Oshie was involved in the cultivation, of cocoyams than other crops. In order to boost up agricultural activities in the chiefdom, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe distributed hoes, spades and cutlasses to the men and women folk in Oshie. He also provided foodstuff such as rice, flour, groundnut oils and can beef to the entire community at the end of each year particularly during Christmas celebration. To facilitate the exportation of products such as cocoyams, plantains and maize that was produced in large quantity in Oshie. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe made provision of a truck to the women folk that was meant for the transportation of their produce from Oshie to the Bamenda markets.⁵¹⁸

Another aspect of agriculture which constituted a major economic activity of the people of Oshie was animal husbandry. Goats, sheep, pigs and fowls were among the animals reared by the indigenes. Cattle rearing was solely reserved for the «well-to-do» indigenous people and minority groups like the Fulani, locally referred to as the Mbororo. This was because there was plenty of pasture for animals to graze and foodstuff to feed the pigs and fowls. Livestock provided such basic needs as food in the form of meat, milk and leather utensils from hides. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to develop the consumption of meat in

⁵¹⁶ *Idem*.

⁵¹⁷ P.N Nkwi, and J. P warnier, Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields, Yaounde: University of Yaounde, Department of Sociology Publication 1982 p.21.

⁵¹⁸ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Places, Events p.31.

the chiefdom of Oshie made provision for the construction of abattoir or slaughter House at the market square. He also encouraged the Fulani community and the wealthy persons in Oshie to get involved in animal husbandry. Some of the animals such as fowls were used for feasting, rituals and pigs for traditional marriages. However, a majority of the animals such as goats and cows were exported to the cattle markets in Meta and Bamenda by their owners.⁵¹⁹

In all, trade has become the major economic activity of the Oshie people. Articles sold in the markets include food, general provisions and hardware. Marketing is carried out through a chain of retailers and some wholesalers who are the principal suppliers of most provisions. In this connection one has to note that this nature of commerce has subsequently replaced what used to be known as "long distance trade" where indigenes were compelled to move across long distances with their products, especially palm wine (originating from Oshie, to sell in neighbouring chiefdoms of Menchum valleys for better profits and exchange rates. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on in 1997, at the time the economic development in the chiefdom of Oshie was at its peak.⁵²⁰

3.3 Creation of Community Development Association

The traditional rulers of Oshie show great dynamism in the creation of community development associations. Development can be conceived as multi-dimensional referring to positive changes which affect the majority and which lie in the economic and social spheres of societal life. It involves social progress in economic components of societal life. According to Rodney, development can be considered from three levels of individual, social group and state. According to him development implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.⁵²¹ Development at the social group level refers to the capacity of a social group to regulate both its internal and external relationships, while at the state level; development entails both quantitative and qualitative growth in economic, political and social aspects of human life in the society.⁵²² This view takes into cognizance the entirety of human activities.

Gurk, on the other hand perceive development to connote not only a change in time but also change which have direction; it implies advancement or improvement over some

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid*.

 ⁵²¹ Walter Rodney.*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London Panaf Publishing, Inc, Abuja Nigeria 1972 p.
⁵²² *Ibid*.

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more primitive status.⁵²³ His definition informs us that for any change to be developmental, it must be directional, it must proceed towards a certain end, which is an improvement upon an earlier stage. As for him any study of development process must be concerned with numerous dimensions, all of which are oriented towards making life better for all citizens in the socio-economic development of the community.⁵²⁴

During the colonial days, there was the creation of all sorts of local development associations both by the Fon and the people. A case in particular, was the creation of community development association during the year 1952 by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe to develop the economy of Oshie. In fact, development in Oshie was a thing to which every one was obliged to contribute his own share. A human being according to Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, was born to serve a purpose in his community or Village and Nation. The spirit of community development in Oshie was an execution of this natural purpose. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe alongside the people of Oshie took measures to transform the Oshie society, as they put it "One hand cannot tie a bundle" meaning "many hands do light work." Fon Etunyi Anyangwe initiated communal labour and committee meeting in the various quarters of Oshie. In the same vein, the women folk organized themselves in groups known as Mvo to cultivate and also harvest agricultural produce. It was a rotative system in which every member had her turn.⁵²⁵ This system of agriculture was aimed at augmenting the economic welfare of the indigenes although a reasonable quantity of the produce was consumed within the household.⁵²⁶

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, through the spirit of communal labour encouraged the people of Oshie to organise communal economic meetings or mutual aid associations. These economic associations were organised by close friends, relatives and members of the same quarter to help members meet their social commitments. It was an organisation of trustworthy people in the community who were able and committed to pay their fixed levies regularly. Each time the association met either weekly or monthly, one member was required to entertain the rest with food and drinks. All the members took turns in entertaining the rest of the members in strict rotation. The member whose turn was to entertain received the mutual aid package made up of the fixed contributions of all the members. He was expected to use

⁵²³ M.C.Gurk, H, *Growing and Changing*. London Methuen and Co. 1975 p.67.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

the package to educate his children in schools, settle mainly social problems like bride-price and funeral celebrations.⁵²⁷

Communal labour was also organised by the men folk in that they organised themselves into teams when they had to clear farms or pull logs of wood for the building of bridges. This was absolutely necessary because the roads were not motorable during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe. Foot paths were largely in use. In this reflection, he encouraged the menfolk to clear the bush path through the organisation of communal labour supervised by the quarter head of each quarter. But prior to this period, the Germans had taught the Oshie indigenes on how to work hard.⁵²⁸ Through the influence of the Germans as well, the Oshie people became well organized in communal activities. Having imbibed these ideas, each quarter organized itself into what was known as *Komiti*, to carry out development activities in their quarters as earlier mentioned.⁵²⁹

During such development activities, the quarter head was the sole controller of the people. They also instituted a "Trouble Fund" and a development Fund. The spirit of communal development was demonstrated by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in collaboration with the Oshie indigenes. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in his pursuit for formal education collaborate with the Basel Mission to construct a number of primary schools, such as the Basel Mission school Bereje and Nyebai Oshie. It was through these collaborative experiences that the people developed a sense of oneness and hardwork. Hence, the people of Oshie began visualizing a modern Oshie society.⁵³⁰ Fon Etunyi Anyangwe further encouraged his children to build houses and to transform the primitive image of the chiefdom of Oshie.

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe through his collaboration with the Basel Mission also played an active role in the economic development of the chiefdom of Oshie. In fact, the Basel Mission made several efforts with success to improve upon the material conditions of the people. The material benefits which converts enjoyed included school gardens and school farms that were created around the school yards. Farms were also cultivated around the church premises by christians for subsistence benefit of the pastor whereas in the school gardens, vegetables such

⁵²⁷ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p.14.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie,1984 p.15.

as cabbages, lettuce, carrots, onion and tomatoes were grown by the school pupils. Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and yams constituted the bread basket of the school.⁵³¹

Many cash crops such as coffee which has today become the only major crop not only in Oshie but through out the entire Western Grassfields and fruits like oranges were grown in the school as well as the church farm. Mangoes and avocados were also grown in the farms. On weekly days school pupils and converts took turns to work in these farms on communal labour. It was from this back drop that many Oshie people emulated the examples of the Basel mission and were able to open up their own large farms of coffee which henceforth held them down to mother earth. Other economic crafts were also taught in schools and during congregational meetings. The women folk benefited from needle work, weaving and local baking of bread for sell in the village market. Pupils were taught in the art of production of various forms of handwork such as woven bags, baskets, brooms, local bamboo chairs and carved objects.⁵³² These articles were sold in the local market for the school revenue. Church offerings made many indigenes to get involved in economic activities so as to be able to pay their tithes. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie in 1975, he vigorously pursued the development policy of his predecessor. He did this through the development of Oshie man-power in academic training. In the course of time, the urge for development in the chiefdom intensified in him and he undertook measures to implement economic transformation of the chiefdom.⁵³³

3.4 Introduction of New Concepts of Economic Development

Self-Reliance development scheme, was one of the root of effective community development that was undertaken by communities in Cameroon and most of Africa South of the Sahara. The concept of self-reliance dealt with indigenous participation and rural development. It advocated the need for people to improve their conditions using local initiatives and resources in their own hands. According to Charles and Lotsmarts, in most African countries community development depended solely on voluntary cooperative efforts.⁵³⁴ This explains why the emerging tendency in development marked an important point of take-off for better living. The aspect of self reliance development was a trend that was enshrined in the customs

⁵³¹ Nkwi., *Traditional Government and Social Change* p.170.

⁵³²*Ibid*.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Charles C. Fonchingong and Lotsmart N. Fonjong, The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community Development Initiatives in the Cameroon Grassfields in Nordic Journal of African Studies 12(2):2003 p.199.

and traditions of the people of Oshie right from the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe although it was in the form of communal labour. European colonialists' intrusion in the area, introduced many self-reliance economic development initiatives. Self-reliance development was centred within community development and was attached to related concepts like self-help, mutual-help and indigenous participation in rural development.⁵³⁵

Self-reliance was therefore, development that was based on the country's regions own resources involving its populations.⁵³⁶ Communities and individual fine-tuned their own development according to their own needs, values and aspirations. Self reliance at large was seen as a state of mind that regards one's own mental and material resources as the primary stock to depend on it. The concept of self reliance does not differ significantly from the principles of self-help which enables the local people to exploit to their advantage, resources which would have been lying dormant and thereby perpetuating poverty in their communities.⁵³⁷

The traditional rulers of Oshie played an immense role in the introduction of new concepts of economic development in the chiefdom (Self reliant development projects). The new concepts of economic development introduced by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the chiefdom of Oshie (Self-reliant development) refers to a situation where the citizens of a nation depend on their resources and more particularly on their capabilities to achieve development. The development of a nation depends on the people themselves, working hard and intelligently. Self-reliant development, in other words, was the capacity to generate one's own development. By participating in hard and intelligent work, by devising appropriate policies and by having good rulership, a nation could be self-developed. There was self-reliant development when the citizens have the capacity to introduce new technology into the production of subsistence goods. Central to the notion of self-reliance was the ability to meet domestic demands from domestic sources.⁵³⁸

Moreover, genuine community participation could be seen in the chiefdom of Oshie in the way the people were constructing and maintaining the palace, inter-village roads and

⁵³⁵ Charles C. Fonchingong and Lotsmart N. Fonjong, The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community

Development Iniatives in the Cameroon Grassfields. University of Buea Cameroon, in Nordic Journal of African studies 12(2):196-219(2003).

⁵³⁶ *Ibid* p.198.

⁵³⁷ Charles C. Fonchingong and Lotsmart N. Fonjong, The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community Development Initiatives in the Cameroon Grassfields in Nordic Journal of African Studies 12(2):2003 p.199. ⁵³⁸ Aaron S. Neba *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Neba Publishers, p.181-82.

brideges. It was in this light that Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe encouraged his subjects to be self developed in Oshie when he ascended the throne by the year 1975. Five years after, there was an upshoot in local development, mostly in the execution of government initiated and sponsored projects.⁵³⁹ In fact, many development associations emerged during the 1980's due to the economic crisis that rocked the country. One of the distinct characteristics of Grassfields communities is that, they were composed of traditional chiefdoms ruled by traditional rulers. It was generally in the palace that the traditional council met to take decisions on development projects in the village. The major internal administration of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, was centred on self-reliance development of the chiefdom of Oshie.⁵⁴⁰

In addition, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe used his initiative and expertise to undertake many outstanding development projects in Oshie. As an open-minded ruler, during his reign in order to maintain a smooth functioning of the administration, he accorded specific honorific functions to some members of the Royal family. Prince Stephen Anyangwe in that capacity, was provided some responsibilities, all of which touched on the entire Oshie community. By a circular letter dated 17th June 1992, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe assigned to him the following functions; He was to act as custodian of all traditional affairs that were performed in Oshie. He was as well assigned to work in close collaboration with the traditional elders Okum and the Assistant traditional elders Ngyeh, in all matters connected with development in the chiefdom.⁵⁴¹He was to assist in all internal landed property of the indigenes of Oshie. The circular letter was copied to the Oshie Council of traditional elders Okum and the Secretary General of Oshie Village Council.⁵⁴² Another member of the Royal family, Prince Jeremiah Anyangwe Ozimba, was accorded some development responsibilities. Thus by the circular letter, the Fon of Oshie assigned to him the following attributions; He was to look after all development programmes in Oshie and ensured an effective accomplishment of the various development projects.

Similarly, he was to administer over the functioning of the various development committees such as; the Finance Committee, Oshie Village Cultural and Development Association OCA, Village Development Committee, PTA, the Health Committee and the Market Supervision Committee. The circular letter was copied to the Oshie Council of

⁵³⁹ *Ibid* p.199.

⁵⁴⁰ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p. 42.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid*.

⁵⁴²Martin Anayangwe, Oshie People-Places-Events, p.17.

traditional elders *Okum* and the Secretary General of Oshie Village Council.⁵⁴³ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through his self-reliant development initiatives, under scored many development projects that were of long lasting to the entire community. Having a deep-seated knowledge in development policies, he and development were synonymous. He felt development so much that any one who visited in the palace on whatever matter ended up talking about development. He used his expert knowledge in surveys and photogrammetry to map out Oshie into development areas and proceeded to use external assistance from local and international organizations to execute his development projects. He opened up all the quarters, making use of modern equipments such as caterpillars and made the quarters accessible by vehicles.⁵⁴⁴

3.4.1 Creation of Oshie Cooperative Association

The traditional rulers of Oshie also portrayed great dynamism in the creation of co-operative associations in the chiefdom in order to promote the production and sell of coffee and other economic products. The concept of co-operative has evolved over time and space. H.E. Babcock defines co-operatives as legal, practical means by which a group of self-selected, capitalists seek to improve their individual economic position in a competitive society. Richard Kohl has underlined some aspects of this definition as deserving attention in an understanding of what co- operatives are supposed to be.⁵⁴⁵ First, is that a co-operative is a device which permits group action for the economic gain of the individual members. Second, it is an active part of the competitive business framework. And third, co-operative is one of the legal forms of business organization. According to E.H. Whetham, the essentials of a formal co-operative society are a group of members combining their capital and enterprise for their mutual benefit. There is usually a limit to the number of shares which any one member. The Rochdale principles are generally accepted as the governing principles of the modern co-operative.⁵⁴⁶

This ideology originated from a group of weavers in Rochdale, England, who were credited with the opening of a store in 1844, which was governed by these principles. These principles of co-operative operation as developed by the Rochdale pioneers were: open membership, democratic control, dividends on the basis of purchases, limited returns on capital, political and religious neutrality, cash for trading and promotion of member education.

⁵⁴³ Richard L. Kohls, *Marketing of Agricultural Products*, New York: Macmillan, 1961 p.383.

⁵⁴⁴ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Places, Events p.31.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Edith Whetham, Agricultural Marketing in Africa, London: OUP, 1972 p.93.

These principles constitute the foundation and guiding principles of modern co-operatives. With some background knowledge of these guiding principles in mind, a group of farmers from Bamenda formed the first co-operative marketing society in Nkwen in 1947. Their main aim was to overcome some of the marketing difficulties confronted by the farmers when they marketed their produce as individuals. Secondly, they wanted to bring the general benefits of co-operative marketing to the coffee farmers, a majority of whom were illiterate and new in the coffee business. As this co-operative handled produce from the entire province, it was soon realized that the area was too vast for a single society. Thirdly, it was seen that the individual farmers incurred much expenditure to transport their produce to the lone Co-operative Produce Marketing Society CPMS located at Nkwen.⁵⁴⁷

In order to overcome the shortcomings of concentration, more co-operative associations were formed in the different areas so that the farmers of each area could bring their produce together without much difficulty.⁵⁴⁸ It was through this trend that Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in collaboration with the coffee farmers in the Nyen co-operative association in Mbengwi by the year 1961 introduced the cultivation of coffee in Oshie. It was later motivated by the agricultural activities of Martin Oyebog who was a Senior Agricultural Officer in Bamenda Division. Though there was a continuous fall in the price of coffee in the world market, production was on a steady increase. The main reason was that for a long time, coffee had been regarded to be the only exportable crop, which could be cultivated in the Oshie highlands. Many farmers had therefore increased production in order to receive higher revenues regardless of the falling prices.⁵⁴⁹

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe encouraged Martin Oyebog to open up coffee farms in Oshie, he carried out the process by opening up coffee plantations in Bereje, where it thrived very well due to the hilly topography of the area. To this effect, many people emulated him and set up their own coffee plantation. Some created their coffee farms beside their household, along side with plantains and banana plantations because it was the unique masculine activities at that time. Coffee farms were opened in all the quarters and it became the major economic activity of the male folk. The sell of coffee was difficult since many producers had to

⁵⁴⁷ N.P. Bantar, "The North West Coffee Marketing Co-operative System" 1947-1997 p.2.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Etamo Emmanuel Kengo, "Coffee in the Economy of the North West Province of Cameroon", 1923-1993, PhD Thesis, Department of History and International studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 2009 p.125.

transport their coffee on head load to Nyen cooperative association in Mbengwi that was in charge of buying coffee in the entire Momo division.⁵⁵⁰

Due to the avalaibility of Arabica coffee in Oshie, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through his self-reliant development projects, by the year 1980, initiated the creation of Oshie cooperative association to facilitate the economic activities of the people. Most village development Associations in the area were formed during and after this period in response to the government's inability and failure to bring such basic amenities to the rural communities. Most projects realized in the area were undertaken during the period coupled with the structural adjustment programme that began in 1987, a period which governments spending power was seriously limited.⁵⁵¹

Furthermore, from the inception of Oshie co-operative Association, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe lobbied for funds from International Non Governmental Organisations, and undertook measures to construct the cooperative hall. This was done in conjunction with the construction of an agricultural office to house its members. In this reflection, coffee that was produced in Oshie was packaged in bags, weighed in the Oshie co-operative hall, before it was transported to the Nyen Co-operative association in Mbengwi. In fact, the construction of the Oshie cooperative hall, curtailed the process of transporting coffee on head load by the Oshie indigenes to Mbengwi. The farmers after weighing their coffee were paid in Oshie. The objective of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the creation of Oshie co-operative association was to;

a) Arrange for and raise funds for financing the legitimate operations of its members. In this connection, it may contract for loans and solicit for grants/subsidies from sources approved by the Supervisory Minister on behalf of its members.

b) Supply farmers with farm inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural equipments.

c) Undertake or cause to be undertaken in an organized and orderly manner, the collection, transport, storage, packaging, grading, preservation, processing and sale of agricultural products in the best interest of the producers.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Fonchingong C.and Fonjong L. The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community Development Iniatives in the Cameroon Grassfields p.208.

d) Develop a management and supervision system to guarantee the smooth running of the cooperative and the provision of better services to farmers.

e) Encourage and provide education, training and refresher courses for the farmers, the general public, officials and employees of the co-operative association.

In all, money obtained from the sell of coffee was used to construct modern houses, educate their children in schools, health and in mutual aid associations. These were informal joint stocks organized periodically by the coffee farmers of each quarter to aid partners in their socio-economic commitments.⁵⁵² The creation and functioning of Oshie co-operative association witnessed some challenges by the year 1985 due economic liberalisation and the fall of the price of coffee in the world market and the failure of the state to take adequate measures to control its production. Coffee farmers started looking for other viable economic alternatives. In the face of the problem, some farmers decided to supplement coffee cultivation with other economic activities.⁵⁵³

Besides, many coffee farmers in Oshie decided to replace their coffee farms with the cultivation of food crops such as cocoyams and plantains which was not produce in large scale. In this light, there cmerged a new trend in agricultural production, where both men and women got involved in production of cocoyams. This trend persisted and the argument advanced for it by the farmers was that food crops pays more than coffee. Moreover, part of the food was consumed by the farmers and their families, and this maked it more relevant than coffee. While some farmers were cutting down their coffee plants to cultivate food crops, others simply abandoned theirs to grow into bushes. Majority of male farmers in Oshie resorted to the production of raffia palm wine. This became the major source of income for the men while still reserving food crop production in the hands of the women. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through his self reliance development policy further dug out most of the coffee farms to create inter-quarter link roads within the chiefdom. The Oshie co-operative hall was further transformed to Government Secondary School Oshie when Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on in 1997.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵² An Annual publication Magazine Oshie, p. 24.⁵⁵³ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵⁴ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p. 38.

3.4.3 Creation of Oshie Cultural and Development Association (OCA)

The creation of Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA was greatly motivated by the traditional rulers of Oshie. However, the creation of cultural and development association in this section will be examine in relation to the role played by culture and development. An important element to bear in mind about the nature of culture is that it is dynamic and subject to change. Since culture evolves as a result of the efforts of human beings to adapt to their environment, it is expected that as the environment changes, culture also changes. Nwaegbu state that the process of expanding culture has been under way for many centuries.⁵⁵⁵ However, culture is a human thing and as the human spirits become more evolved, their perception of their environment and the right and wrong changes reflect in their culture.⁵⁵⁶

Development on the other hand refers to the positive changes which affect the majority and which lie in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of societal life. It involves social progress in both economic and non-economic components of societal life. According to Rodney, development can be conceived from three levels of individual, social group and state. According to him, at the individual level, development implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.⁵⁵⁷ Cultural Development Association according to our study refers to an association that was created through the self-reliance development policy of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to enhance development projects in the chiefdom.⁵⁵⁸

The idea of the creation of Oshie Cultural and Development association was first brought up in a meeting of a cross section of Oshie elite, held in Bota Limbe on the 12th of July 1986. It was brought up by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, in the presence of a seven-man delegation of Oshie village Council OVC members. On the first of September 1990, in an enlarged meeting convened by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to discuss matters of culture and development in the chiefdom of Oshie. It was unanimously agreed upon by the elite that, the Oshie Cultural and Development Association be created. As a matter of fact, an *ad hoc*

⁵⁵⁵ Nwaegbu, Mercy U,(2011) Globalisation of cultural Heritage: Issues, Impacts and Inevitable Challenges for Nigeria Available at <u>http://unniIIib,unl.edu/Ipp</u>.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Walter Rodney., *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London Panaf Publishing, Inc, Abuja Nigeria 1972 p.60.

⁵⁵⁸ Rodney, How Europe Under Developed Africa 1972 p. 55.

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committee was appointed to sensitize all the Oshie elite residing out of the chiefdom to meet at home during the month of December 1990 to inaugurate the association.⁵⁵⁹

During the month of December 1990, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe organised the first General Assembly of OCA at the Fon's palace and discussions were centred on a wide range of development issues. A sixteen-man interim executive was designated to coordinate the association for a period of one year of which a solid foundation was to be laid. In this light, three committees were created such as; the Constitutional Committee to draft a proposed constitution for the eventual adoption of the association, the Development Committee to identify priority projects, study them and rank them in order of value for execution and finally the Finance Committee which was in charge of accessing the cost of development projects and seek for ways of raising funds to execute them.⁵⁶⁰

A year after, in the month of March 1991, His Royal Highness Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in collaboration with the interim executive of OCA convened a joint executive committee meeting in Bamenda during which the programme of action for OCA was proposed. It was further presented in an enlarged executive committee meeting of OCA branch delegates meeting that was held in December 1991. It was during the meeting that, the Oshie village Development Association was launched. The proposed constitution and programme of activities for the association were adopted and a sixteen-man executive was elected to run the Association for a period of three years. After going through a lot of preliminaries, beginning with the conception at Bota Limbe, the Oshie Cultural and Development Association was born. The acronym adopted by the general assembly was OCA and not OCDA, as was espected. The date of 26th December 1991 became the formal birth day of Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA.⁵⁶¹

The pioneer President to pilot the association was designated within the same year. The president upheld the position for a period of over fifteen years. His tenure of office fell within the ambit of self reliant development programs of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, a period when the word development was in every Oshie man's vocabulary. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside the Oshie Cultural and Development Association from its inception has acted as an impetus behind all the development projects in Oshie. In his capacity as the National President of OCA, Oliver Binda was at the peak of development. In the execution of the

⁵⁵⁹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People-Places-Events p.215.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People-Places-Events p.217.

cultural and development programs of OCA, he carried out the arduous duties of organising cultural meetings in order to raise development funds in Oshie. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe together with the OCA President instituted the payment of development levy by all the Oshie elite in the various branches in Cameroon. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also co-founded some influencial Oshie social Meeting Houses such as the Oshie Elite in Yaounde and Edom Social meeting in Fako-Littoral. He modelled these two meetings to be a think-tank of Oshie and also to be pace-setters for every Oshie men and women.⁵⁶²

When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on in 1997 and the expiration of the mandate of Oliver Binda at the helm of OCA, Rev Professor Anyambod was elected as the second President of OCA. During his tenure at the head of the association, the chiefdom of Oshie witnessed some major problems of development. The state of the Acha Tugi-Oshie road was at the most awful condition in many years. Banditry and general insecurity was at its peak. It was also the period whereby many government services were alocated in Oshie. He in collaboration with the elite realised some development projects that were of long lasting in the Polity such as; the main road axis between Acha Tugi and Oshie road was renovated. The Oshie health centre was up graded to a Cottage Hospital, with a resident medical doctor. There was also the construction of classrooms at Government School Nyebai and Bereje.⁵⁶³

There was the creation of Government Secondary School Oshie and the Police post with the provision of police van to maintain security in Oshie.⁵⁶⁴ Resolution of the Oshie-Ngwo conflict. Intensification of diplomatic relations between the administrative, political, traditional and religious authorities. As OCA President, he played an immense role to negotiate for the memorial celebration of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe who was the architect behind OCA and an initiator of many development projects in Oshie.⁵⁶⁵ Other village development associations in the Grassfields that had the same objectives as the OCA development association in Oshie included; the Mankon Cultural and development Association MASCUDA, the Pinyin Development Organization PDO and the Njinikom Cultural and Development Association NJICUDA founded in 1974.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶² *Ibid*.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

 ⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Rev Professor Anyambod Emmanuel, 62, one-time President of Oshie Culural and development Association OCA, Yaounde, 28 November 2015.
⁵⁶⁵ Idem.

⁵⁶⁶Fonchingong C.and Fonjong L. The Concept of Self-Reliance in Community Development Iniatives in the Cameroon Grassfields p.200.

3.4.2 Creation of Women Development Association

The Oshie traditional rulers equally played a significant role in the creation of women development association in the chiefdom. Women in the Grassfields societies and Oshie in particular played an eminent role in the running and management of village development Associations. No matter whether they were women working in the public or private sector, housewives; they were all involved in the running of village development Associations that involved designing out projects from the initiation point to the implementation phase. These women were often very influencial in assemblying their fellow women folk to participate in community activities. Women most often occupied the positions of treasurers, secretaries and advisers. The position of treasurers or financial secretaries attributed to women was generally based on their trustworthiness in dealing with financial matters.⁵⁶⁷

In the chiefdom of Oshie, women were so instrumental in economic activities in that they formed cultivation associations, transported their produce to the market for commercialization to complement their economic problems. Anyanwu captured the situation of women development association in the case of Alara in neighbouring Nigeria, in that the men dug the ground while the women handled the part of filling up the rooms with sand.⁵⁶⁸ This was an example of gender roles that existed in most part of Sub-Saharan Africa before Western imperialism. In the case of Oshie, the domestic economic activities of women was agriculture. Agriculture was and is still the dominant economic activity of the people.⁵⁶⁹

Due to the high production of cocoyams and other root crops in the chiefdom of Oshie, by the year 1980 Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe created the Oshie Women Cooperative Association. The association was formed as a result of the fact that, the women folk of each quater were solely involved in the cultivation of root crops such as cocoyams in large quantity in the dense forest bordering Oshie. This was the more reason why, during this period Oshie had land and boundary disputes with its neighbours because of the fertile forest where cocoyams were cultivated. The production of cocoyams had little or no adequate market for commercialisation, due to the poor nature of road that linked Oshie and Bamenda region. These conditions rendered majority of the women to transport the cocoyams in bags from Oshie on head load to be sold in Meta market through long distance trekking.⁵⁷⁰

 ⁵⁶⁷ Anyanwu, Community development. The Nigerian perspective. Ibadan p.23.
⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges p.58-59.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 44, Prince of Royal family, Bamenda, October 2016.

The inaccessible and poor nature of the road greatly hindered the Oshie women from generating revenue from the sell of their agricultural produce in other to educate their children in schools and solved their domestic needs. Although there was the main Oshie market that served as the major commercial centre for the villages in Njikwa sub-division. The purchasing power of market women from Bamenda was not well appreciated by the women. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to solve the problem of production and sell of cocoyams and maize in Oshie, lobbied for funds from the German Embassy in Yaounde. This was done by exposing the difficulties faced by the women in self help economic activities. The German Embassy thus provided a vehicle in the form of aid to Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, to facilitate the transportation of their produce from Oshie to the Bamenda markets.⁵⁷¹

The vehicle was titled "Oshie Women Cooperative Association." In the course of that year, the vehicle was put into multipurpose functions for the transportation of coffee from Oshie to the co-operative society in Nyen. By the year 1985, the production of large quantities of cocoyams by the Oshie women dwindled due to climate change and poor fertility of the forest soil. Consequently, the transportation of cocoyams from Oshie to Bamenda dropped. The quantity of cocoyams and other food crops cultivated was meant for subsistence. In like manner, when the price of plantain dropped in the Oshie market, it affected the sell of most of crop produced in the area and its exportation to external markets.⁵⁷²The Oshie Women Cooperative Association vehicle that was meant for the transportation of products from Oshie to the Bamenda area and Nyen co-operative association was put to other functions. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe during this period set up a development Association in Oshie. The association adopted its name as the Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA.⁵⁷³ The OCA at present serves as an impetus behind the various development programmes carried out in the chiefdom of Oshie.⁵⁷⁴

In this regard, a new trend of development Associations gradually emerged within most villages in the Grassfields relative to that of Oshie. There was the formation of womens development associations, which was meant to carry out women led projects. These include

⁵⁷¹ The vehicle provided by the German Embassy to the Oshie women to ease transportation of their produce to Bamenda was named "Oshie Women". When the production of cocoyams by the women dwindled, the vehicle was put to other functionc such as the transportation of coffee to Mbengwi cooperative association. ⁵⁷² *Idem*.

⁵⁷³ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events, p.32.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

low cost projects such as the provision of furnitures to schools and health services. These activitie did not exclude the women from participation in activities regarding development in the community. Women were also more effective in raising funds than their male folk. In the same light with the self reliant development policies of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. By the year 2000, there was the creation of the Oshie Sisters in Development abbreviated OSID.⁵⁷⁵ It was limited only within the working class women and was also opened to any well to do woman who could contribute for the development levy of Oshie. It was made up of five branches in Cameroon.⁵⁷⁶

The semi-autonomous branches that were based in the different regions and towns of Cameroon had different appellations. They were the Reliable Ladies of Fako-Littoral with its head office in Limbe, the Dynamic Ladies of Kumba with its head office in Kumba, the Gentle Ladies of Yaounde and Bamenda including the home branch in Oshie. The OSID branch in Oshie provided many socio-economic wellbeing to the women folk and the entire village through many self reliance development projects such as: the provision of funds for the reconstruction of the Oshie roads, educating female students at Government High School Njikwa and donation of prizes for academic excellence to some deserving students from 2003-2004. They also provided material assistance to the Oshie Cottage Health centre, corn mill and financial assistance for the maintenance of water supply system in Oshie.⁵⁷⁷

In the main, a great number of the Oshie women folk had improved on their economic difficulties through the OSID Association. These five branches met in Bamenda during their General Assembly and took the decision to merge into an enlarged body of a single OSID Association. Although they continued to function as a loose confederation whereby the national executive coordinates its activities. The association has been acting as a backbone and support to the Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA in many village development projects. There were also some members in the diaspora who were affiliated to the branches, who carried out the same functions as those back in Cameroon.⁵⁷⁸

The women folk in the chiefdom of Oshie through the self reliant development policies of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, had demonstrated remarkable differences in group participation through the creation of women cooperative associations to solve economic

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid* p.31.

⁵⁷⁵ Anyanwu, Community development. The Nigerian perspective. Ibadan p. 14

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People-Places-Events 2010 p.30.

difficulties, provide infrastructure and promote communal solidarity. Niger-Thomas also captured the same situation of women development association in the case of Manyu Self Reliance Food Stuff Cooperative Association. ⁵⁷⁹ The association, through cooperative efforts was able to increase the productivity of basic food products such as cassava, provide access to market facilities and the promotion of income generating activities for women.⁵⁸⁰

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in economic development of the chiefdom. In the exploration of facts related to the various themes developed in this section of our study, the chapter reveals that the traditional rulers of Oshie demonstrated great dynamism in economic development of the chiefdom. These include infrastructural and economic development projects such as; creation of quarters and market, renovation of the palace structures, the initiation of community development projects, introduction of new concepts of economic development programs, construction of inter-quarter link roads and bridges alongside the Oshie co-operative hall and promotion of other economic activities such as agriculture and trade. Lastly, the chapter reveals that, the creation of women cooperative association and the Oshie cultural and development association OCDA through the initiatives of the traditional rulers, has been the main impetus behind the economic development of the chiefdom up to present. The next chapter will be focused on the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in socio-cultural development of the chiefdom.

 ⁵⁷⁹ Niger-Thomas, M.1997 Regionalism: A Strategy for Self-Help: The case of Manyu women in changing Society.In:P.N.Nkwi and F.Nyamnjoh(eds.) *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon. Lessons Learned and the Uncertain Future*. ICASSRT Monograph 1, African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands.
⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR THE STRENGTH OF OSHIE TRADITIONAL RULERS IN SOCIO-**CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the dynamic roles of Oshie traditional rulers in the socio-cultural development of the chiefdom of Oshie. The chapter begins with an insight of the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers and traditional religion. It further handles issues on the development of other socio-cultural activities such as, re-organisation of marriage institutions, the Fon and the guitar dance, Christianity in Oshie, provision of basic social amenities and revitalization of cultural activities such as the Anangkobi cultural dance festival.

4.1 Oshie Rulers and Traditional Religion

The traditional rulers of Oshie also played an immense role in the religious life of the chiefdom during the period under study. Traditional religion was the main characteristic of Oshie society during the colonial era. This entails the traditional belief system of the people of Oshie. Man was obliged to depend on forces out side himself, forces that contribute to his welbeing and in unity with his relations. The traditional rulers of Oshie during the colonial era were staunchly involved in the traditional religion of the chiefdom. The Fon was at the helm of the political organisation and a custodian of tradition and culture of his people. He was according to tradition and culture of the people responsible for the pouring of libation at ceremonies aimed at cleansing the entire community. The Fon and the traditional elders Okum also worship and cleanse the palace shrine known as Ifoung. The Ifoung in the palace represented the ancestors of the deceased Fons in Oshie. They are cleansed on monthly bases by the Fon and the traditional elders Okum. In spite of the belief in ancestral spirits, the Fon, alongside the entire people of Oshie know that, there is the almighty God and look upon him for protection.⁵⁸¹

In the course of communion with the ancestors, the Fon often performs some libation by pouring palm wine accompanied with some incantations using the royal cup.⁵⁸² Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe as a traditionalist was a staunch adherent and worshipper of the traditional religion. In accordance with the tradition of Oshie, during the cleansing of the Ifoung

⁵⁸¹ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie p.56.⁵⁸² Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.37.

alongside the traditional elders *Okum*, a chicken was often slaughtered and the blood spilled over the stones. It was believed that, the *Ifoung* guides the entire community since it represents the ancestors of the land. There is the general belief that bad and good ancestors exist in the world beyond.⁵⁸³ The bad ancestors chastise bad behaviour shown by their descendants, while the good ancestors appear through dreams or vision to provide unknown information to the living. These ancestors are believed to protect the people against danger and unforeseen calamities. Some appear to alert the people on certain good or evil circumstances. Others come as birds of ill omens to perch and snivel all night long at the back yard of the household.⁵⁸⁴

Another god that is worshiped by the Oshie traditional rulers and the people is *Endong* a traditional cup designed from the Bufalo horn. It was kept solely by the Fon and the family heads having been inherited from their ancestors. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, as a traditionalist used the royal horn *Endong Ofuh* during serious calamities in the chiefdom to cleanse the entire community alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and the herbalists. He also used the *Endong Ofuh* during the cleansing rite of the family ancestral stones in the palace known as *Ifoung* Bughen.⁵⁸⁵ It was generally believed that, the *Endong* constitutes some spiritual authority from the ancestors that could bring fortunes to the entire family and the community at large. It was also believed to bring misfortune to the family if it was not well handled. The *Endong Ofuh* is often one handed down to the Fon by his predecessor.⁵⁸⁶ It bears some ritualistic connotations as tradition demands.

The *Endong Ofuh* and family *Endong* are claimed by the Fon and various families in Oshie to be a god that brings blessings to the family members in many aspects such as; when a girl was betrothed to a husband for marriage, safety journey and prosperity.⁵⁸⁷ It was also used to invoke the ancestors to bring peace to the family members when they are gathered during family meetings. The purification rite of the *Endong* is carried out annually by the family alongside the ancestral stones *Efoung*. The *Endong* was also used by the family heads and the traditional doctors to nib off strange illnesses that have befallen a family member. It was often thought that, evil spirits attack people in the family, thus the *Endong* has a

⁵⁸³ *Ibid* p.110.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Moses Njenwik Binda, 71, family head, he provided me with valuable informations on traditional religion in Oshie, 21 July 2015.

⁵⁸⁶ *Idem*.

⁵⁸⁷ Idem.

prominent role to play during such moments. Plate 23 is a depiction of traditional horn *Endong* Ofuh in Oshie.



Plate 23: The Traditional Endong Ofuh in Oshie.

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedicts Private Album, Oshie, March 2017

The *Endong Ofuh* as seen on the plate above, according to tradition also has some adverse effects in that, it was used by the Fon to provoke the dead of recalcitrant persons in the chiefdom.⁵⁸⁸ The *Endong* in general was also used to appeales to the ancestors to bring peace among family members when they are gathered together by the family heads. ⁵⁸⁹

Another characteristic of traditional religion that was practiced by the people of Oshie was the worship of shrines. The shrines were the traditional protective gods that safeguard and maintain the subjects in the community together. There are known as *Ozip* and are located at all the entrances into the chiefdom. To maintain the traditional rites in the chiefdom Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in his capacity as the custodian of all tradition and culture in Oshie often instructed the traditional elders *Okum* and the traditional herbalists to cleanse the shrines and reinforce its protective powers. The shrines were built at strategic sites such as; the main entrances into the chiefdom, road junctions, market place and the Fon's palace.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Moses Njenwik Binda, 71, family head, Oshie, 21 July 2015

⁵⁸⁹ Idem

⁵⁹⁰ Idem.

The *Ozip* protects the entire community from evil incursion in the chiefdom like disasters such as erosion, drought, floods, storms and epidemic diseases. These gods also protect the community from any alleged malevolence perpetrated on the Oshie indigenes by an ill-fated person. These gods are believed to immediately counteract and cleanse the community from such calamities. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie, he refurbished the various shrines in the chiefdom through an organisation of consultative meetings with the traditional elders *Okum* and the traditional herbalists in the palace. In this light, the main shrines were often embellished with fresh palm fronts and peace plant known as *Nkeng*. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in collaboration with the traditional elders *Okum* and the traditional medicine men further buried a life dog at the main shrine at the market place to reinforce its spiritual powers.⁵⁹¹

Another type of traditional religion that was practiced by the people of Oshie was the cleansing of witchcraft suspects at the chiefdom main shrine at Egwobei.⁵⁹² This was carried out during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe. He organised it in a way that evil doers in the community were made to visit the shrine of *Egwobei* to cleanse themselves morally and spiritually. When an individual was suspected of having bewitched another, through the instructions of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, the individual was conveyed to the shrine at *Egwobei*. The suspect was made to swear an oath which consisted of drinking a potion known as *Egok* to exculpate himself from the witch craft accusation.⁵⁹³ If the accusation was faulty, the suspect was set free without death threat. But if the oath was real, he was made to suffer from swollen stomach. This was a deterrent only to suspects of evil perpetrators and occultists. During such period people were coordinated solely by the traditional elders *Okum*.⁵⁹⁴ The shrine of *Egwobei* though was a traditional religious sanctuary, it was also the seat of the highest and dreaded disciplinary village masquerade known as *Aken*.

At the sanctuary of the shrine at *Egwobei* is the chiefdom traditional drum known as the *Nndek* drum. The Nndek was and is a wooden talking drum in the chiefdom of Oshie meant for the dreaded *Aken* cult. In fact, the judiciary arm of the traditional rulers in Oshie is the Aken at Egwobei. The Nndek drum is played solely by their priests and only during the

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Moses Njenwik Binda, 71, family head, Oshie, 21 July 2015.

⁵⁹² Binda., Tilly Light in Oshie p.41.

⁵⁹³ When an accused person claims ignorance, depending on the gravity of the situation, he was taken to Egwobei to take an oath by swearing. He was forced to drink some magical portion, to testified his ignorance. This was done in the present of traditional elder *Okum*. After drinking the portion, the accused person stayed for period of seven days. If guilty, he was said to developed a swelling stomach and legs, before he died. ⁵⁹⁴ *Idem*.

outings of the Aken masquerades. The purging away of evil incursion and ailments in the community, were often carried out through the instructions of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe. The traditional elders *Okum* through the instruction of the Fon informed the entire community by the use of the Nndek drum at midnight accompanied with yelling by all the indigenes at dawn.⁵⁹⁵ During such nights, the entire community was absolutely silent while the *Nndek* drum disseminated its message to all the quarters in the chiefdom. Since the inception of the traditional drum *Nndek*, it had lain on the same spot in its shrine built with bamboos and roof with thatch and straw. Plate 24 is a depiction of the traditional elder *Okum* disseminating an important message to the entire community through the *Nndek* drum.

Plate 24: The Traditional Elder Okum Playing the Nndek Drum at Egwobei.



Source: Adapted from the Annual Publication Magazine NNDEK OSHIE, Second Edition 1984.

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Simon Ozimba, 67, Farmer and traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie, 15June, 2015.

4.2 Social and Cultural Manifestations

The traditional rulers of Oshie played an enormous role in the development of social and cultural practices in the chiefdom. Culture as used in the context of the study refers to the social activities of a human group that distinguishes the members from another. It refers to the interactive collection of common characteristics that influences a human group and response to its environment. The way of life of the members of a society, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn and share together. Culture signifies that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It also represent a set of tangible and intangible elements such as diet, tools, technology, and language that give shape and meaning to everyday lives of a particular group of people.⁵⁹⁶ The concept of culture consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow and the material goods they create. It refers to the way of life of the individual member of groups within a society; how they dress, their religious ceremonies and leisure pursuit.⁵⁹⁷

Culture appears to be important in several reasons. Firstly, it stands out as a factor that defines people's identity and has been argued that a people without culture were a people without identity. By defining people's identity, culture helps to distinguish between peoples of different societies or communities. According to Adedimeji, to be removed from one's culture was to be deprived of one's identity.⁵⁹⁸ To lose one's identity was to be tossed in the wind fluttering along like a leaf separated from its tree. Culture can also be considered as an important element that ensures the survival of a community. In corroboration to this, Adedimeji asserts that a society robbed of its culture can only marginally survive and anyone that loses his cultural legacy was bound to perish.⁵⁹⁹ Culture plays a critical role in ensuring continuity in any given society by helping to transmit values, beliefs, rituals, from one generation to the other. Since culture usually evolves as human beings attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment, it obviously plays a key role in facilitating human adaptation which in turn is necessary for long term survival.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁶ Edewor, P.A., Basic Concepts in Culture In Adedimeji Mahfouz (2006) Globalisation and the survival of the Nigerian Cultural and Linguistic Heritage: The American Paradigm. Department of English, University of Ilorin, Nigeria 2003 p. 314.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Adedimeji, Mahfouz., Globalisation and the survival of the Nigerian cultural and Linguistic Heritage: The American Paradigm, Department of English University of Ilorin Nigeria 2006 p. 56.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

In all, cultural skills were expressed particularly in cultural manifestations. These cultural manifestations are carried out in the form of traditional dances and cultural festival. At the end of each year, the traditional rulers of the chiefdoms and fondoms organize cultural activities to commemorate the end of the annual year. In the colonial days, the Fon had to supervise important rituals at the end of each year, after the yam season. He had to make sacrifices to the ancestors and requested for their blessings. When the sacrifices were accepted, the blessings of the ancestors were transmitted through the provision of camwood to the entire Population.⁶⁰¹

As a matter of fact, culture in our study refers to the general practices of the people of Oshie. The culture of the Oshie people has its roots from the traditions of the people of Oshum, their immediate place of origin in the Widekum area. The culture of the Oshie people was pregnant with deep cultural peculiarities, greatly esteemed within Oshie and beyond. Culture in Oshie was manifested in material and spiritual forms such as; rituals, celebrations of deaths, sacrifices performed to conciliate the ancestors and cultural dances. The material culture among the Oshie people depicts the indigenous and artistic skills of the people.⁶⁰²

In addition, culture in Oshie was deeply entrenched and highly respected. The Oshie people have a divergent of cultural practices which was manifested both in material and spiritual forms. Rituals and deaths ceremonies were held and sacrifices made to appease ancestral spirits. The material culture in the form of arts portrayed the inventive and creative ability of the people. Artistic expressions run deep in dance, songs and architecture. The Oshie people have a distinctive culture that is manifested through a variety of traditional dances found in the chiefdom. The culture of Oshie in particular remains peculiar and authentic. The material and spiritual culture emphasizes solidarity, discipline, love, justice and compassion. The creation of Socio-cultural activities by the Oshie rulers in this section of our study will be focused on the domain of traditional dances and music.⁶⁰³

Oshie traditional rulers portrayed a lot of enthusiasm in socio-cultural manifestations in the chiefdom during the colonial era. The *Ebid* was a victory dance that was manifested by the people after a successful conquest over their enemies during inter-tribal warfares. During such warefares the people often return with skulls of defeated opponents. In order to celebrate their bravery and victory in these tribal wars, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe organized the *Ebid* dance

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Simon Ozimba, 67, Farmer and traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie, 15June, 2015.

⁶⁰² *Idem*.

⁶⁰³ Idem.

to be perform during the death of the title men in the chiefdom and equally during the Anangkobi dance festival.⁶⁰⁴ In the course of the *Ebid* dance, the skulls of defeated enemies were displayed at the dancing arena accompanied by war-like incantations from the warriors.⁶⁰⁵

Individuals who had excelled in hunting expeditions by killing dreaded animals such as Buffalo, leopard and Tiger were held with high esteem during the *Ebid* dance. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe according to tradition, decorated such persons with traditional titles and insignias such as black synthetic fibre cap, red parrot feather and porcupine quill.⁶⁰⁶ The *Ebid* dance was one of the celebrated and most attractive dance in Oshie because it was reminiscent of the people's past, when they fought tribal wars with their neighbouring communities. In the course of time the Ebid dance developed and was performed solely during the death of notables and title men in the chiefdom. Its activities characterised of war like performances that reflect the war-like nature of the Oshie people.⁶⁰⁷

On the other hand, the *Ebid* dance consist of the Fon, traditional elders *Okum* and assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* and their associates the *Agwee* masquerades. The *Agwee* are often seen with a white flag chanting traditional war songs while the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* were identified with Dane guns during the *Ebid* dance.⁶⁰⁸ Fon Etunyi Anyangwe organised the *Ebid* dance in a way that during the manifestation of the dance, the costum is purely traditional. Social classification was highly respected as the dancers dined together. The crowd of dancers is often cleansed traditionally from any mishap incured inadvertently in the community as they performed at the dancing arena. Both men and women carried along leaves of plants that were thrown at the dancing arena as a symbol of purging away illnesses.⁶⁰⁹

During the year 1930, the Oshie traditional elders *Okum* organised at Eba quarter in Tanwani's compound of Bukobi family, an annual dance known as the *Anangkobi* dance. This was during the yam season between October and November to commemorate the advent of peace after the upheavals and hair raising experiences of the First World War.⁶¹⁰ The

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with Simon Ado, 65, Farmer, Oshie, 26 August ,2016.

⁶⁰⁵ Idem Interview with Nyambi Mathias, 71, Farmer, Oshie, 27 August, 2015.

⁶⁰⁶ Idem.

⁶⁰⁷ Idem.

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Daniel Atambele, 71, retired teacher, Oshie, June, 2016.

⁶⁰⁹ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.58.

⁶¹⁰ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p.11.

Anangkobi dance had some connotations such as the Bukobi's family yam or cocoyam. It was a night dance performed in full moonlight and open to all adults and children. Its drum had a telling effect on the village folk who immediately responded to its call. It was a dance that enhanced the solidarity of the Oshie people and rendered them rooted down to mother earth.⁶¹¹ During the *Anangkobi* dance, the cultural values and aesthetics of the Oshie people are strengthened between the groups and feeling of togetherness. It is performed from one compound to the other but due to the increase in population, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe relocated the venue of the dance later encompassed the entire Oshie community and was organised to take place at the end of each annual year. Through communal labour initiated by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, a field was dug for the purpose of the *Anangkobi* dance celebration.⁶¹²

Christianity was introduced in Oshie land by the year 1932 and with their dogmatic doctrines, this hindered the development of *Anangkobi* dance. Its tempo was further slowed down by the out-break of the Second World War in 1945. This state of affairs rendered the youths who formed the exhuberant core of the dance mirthless. The consequences was desperation and migration of the young men to the C.D.C plantations in the South West province despite the effort made by Fon Etunyi Anyangwe to modernise its activities. Though it hindered development, it was also a means to stop malpractices and archaic custom that enslave the people. To this effect, the *Anangkobi* dance lost its tempo and hold on the people. During the year 1950, it became a periodical dance having only a lack-lustre hold on the people. ⁶¹³

In the course of the year 1960, there was the infiltration of other cultural practices into Oshie because of migration of the youths to the coastal region. In this way, the *Anangkobi* dance was nearly replaced by an alien annual dance known as the Mandéré, a dance that has its origin from the Chamba tribes of the North West province, characterised by fluting and whistling. The dance failed because fluting was not native to the people of Oshie and besides, it was a borrowed dance that was characterised by cultural treachery that made them more of eagles in borrowed feathers. From 1960 to 1975 on-ward the *Anangkobi* dance became a periodical dance celebrated in the chiefdom of Oshie at the end of each annual year.⁶¹⁴ The Anangkobi was further mordenised by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the year 1980 to its

⁶¹¹Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.36.

⁶¹² *Ibid*.

⁶¹³ *Ibid*.

⁶¹⁴ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, 1984 p.5.

annual status and made to include other socio-cultural activities that will be discourse as the study progress.⁶¹⁵

Another aspect of social and cultural manifestation that was greatly motivated by the traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie was the *Okani* dance. The dance was introduced in Oshie during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe and its performance was purely traditional. According to Oshie oral history, the *Okani* dance was brought from the chiefdom of neighbouring Ngwo and introduced in Oshie by a certain Akaah Anya-Ngom of Eba quarter to act as an aspect of social cohesion among the male folk. In the course of time, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe as a traditionalist and custodian of tradition and culture of the people, fervently encouraged its performance and the dance evolved and produced other sub branches that looked upon the main *Okani* dance as their mentor. Members were admitted into the dance through an initiation into the Njirinjit secret dance. The exuberance of the dance increased and spread in the entire Oshie community.⁶¹⁶

During the public manifestation of the Okani dance, allusions are often made to the derivation of Oshum and Mbeitong through incantations. The legendary expression, ayuokani *mbi Oshie ni mbiachew a Mbeitong*.⁶¹⁷ The *Okani* dance was opened only to the male folk but as tradition demands, membership is limited solely to initiated members of the secret dance known as *Njirikeh* dance. The *Okani* dance appears special to Oshie people and is revered by other communities. The dance forms the core of all the cultural manifestations during the Anangkobi dance festival. In 1992, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe modified its costum through the provision of a loin cloth that is used alongside other regalia. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in his zeal for the dance, projected its manifestation to be known in the North West region and beyond. In fact, through the effort of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in 1992, the Okani dance represented the North West region in the National Arts and Cultural Festival organised in Yaounde.⁶¹⁸ From its inception and evolution, the Okani dance was and remains the main traditional dance of the Oshie people mostly solicited during important ceremonies and of course practiced by branches of Oshie elite located in the various regions of Cameroon. Although, the core of the dance depends strictly on heritable rite. Plate 25 portrays the Okani dance of Oshie during public manifestation.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid* p.5.

⁶¹⁷ The expression in Oshie language signifies the *Okani* dance of the Oshie people who originated from Mbeitong and Oshum area in Wedikum. ⁶¹⁸ *Idem*.

Plate 25: The Okani Dance of Oshie. 1992.

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedick Private Archive, Oshie 15 March 2015.

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also demonstrated a lot of enthusiasm in the manifestation of women folk dance such as the *Engomi* dance. This was because it portrays the history of the people of Oshie. According to Oshie oral history, locusts appeared in the chiefdom during the early 1930 in the cold harmattan season after the harvest had been done, and ate up all the grass in the farms. They were said to have been moving in swamps and comes once in a generation. Achebe captures such a scenario, when he informs us that locusts came once in a generation, reappeared every year for several years and then disappeared for life time.⁶¹⁹ When they settled in an area for longer period, their numbers increased as they ate up every grass of the area. ⁶²⁰

The women folk during the *Anangkobi* dance festival fine-tuned songs to demonstrate how locust were caught and eaten by the people of Oshie in the past.⁶²¹ Locusts caught were dried and prepared with cocoyams, this greatly inspired the Oshie women folk to formulate songs that were sung to manifest its sweatness. The dance became well practiced and gained grounds in the entire community because of its legendary connotation. The women folk in

⁶¹⁹Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Heinemann Educational books Ltd 22 Bedford Square, London WICB3HH 1958 p.38.

⁶²⁰ Interview with Slyvester Anjang, 57, farmer, Oshie, July 2016.

⁶²¹Binda., Tilly Light in Oshie p.59.

Oshie often gather on traditional days to entertain themselves with the *Engomi* dance.⁶²² Plate 26 portrays the *Engomi* women folk dance of Oshie during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival.



Plate 26: Engomi Dance during the Anangkobi Dance Festival in Oshie. 1992

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedick Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015.

Note; The *Engomi* dance demonstrated how in the past swarms of Locust caused great disaster to the greener pasture. These insects destroyed the green plants and brought poor harvest and hunger in Oshie. Dressing for the dance was purely traditional. The dance's costume consisted of wet and dry plantain leaves stitched together to form skirts tied round the waist and a blouse with rattles on both legs.

Other outstanding male and female social and cultural dances in Oshie include the, *Ndongotok, Abandong, Njiri-Njit, Ogwachu, Esong-aku, Ebon* and *Etchepei* dance. Many of them have stood the taste of time due to the effort of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe who was always encouraging their performances during the *Anangkobi* dance festival in the chiefdom of Oshie.⁶²³ The *Ndongtok* is also one of the most enthusiastic dance performed by the Oshie indigenes of Barimbong quarter. In the course of time, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to harness all the cultural dances in Oshie incorporated the dance among the Oshie indigenes of Bereje quarter. It was first performed by the elders but because of its challenging method of dancing, it was relegated to the younger generation. Its melodious tune is played on

⁶²² The word *Engomi* in Oshie language signifies something in excess. The large number of locust that were caught and eaten during the colonial era by the people of Oshie were known as *Engomi*.

⁶²³ Idem.

xylophone with a wooden standing drum. Plate 27 is the *Ndongotok* dance during the Anangkobi dance festival in Oshie. Its costume consist of feathery masks with a large gown that enables flexibility.⁶²⁴



Plate 27: The Ndongotok Dance during the Anangkobi Dance Festival in Oshie.

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedick Private Archive, Oshie, October 2016.

Note; The *Ndongtok* dance was and is still one of the attractive masculine dance performed during important ceremonies. Its costum was purely traditional with carved masks of many designes signifying its dreadfulness to the general public.

The encouragement of His Royal Highness Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in promoting traditional practices in the chiefdom of Oshie, created avenues for other forms of male traditional dances that bears resemblance to the *Ndongtok* dance in other quarters such as the *Ogwachu* dance. There is also another male dance known as *Njiri-Njit* that is reserved solely to initiated members. It is performed solely during the death of its members. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe as the custodian of tradition became initiated in the *Njiri-Njit* dance. This was because as a custodian of tradition and culture of the people of Oshie, the Fon was to be involved in all traditional practices in the chiefdom.⁶²⁵ Plate 28 portrays a cross section view of the *Njiri-Njit* dance during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival.

⁶²⁴The Ndongtok dance is an old aged dance, that was mostly practiced by the elderly men folk in Oshie. The father of this dance is known as Oburi Ekune who is of blessed memory.



Plate 28: Njiri Njit Secret Dance during the Anangkobi Dance Festival in Oshie.

Source: Adapted from Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2016.

The *Njiri-Njit* dance was and is still the highest secret dance in Oshie open only to the initiated members. In as much as it was the highest ritual secret dance, non initiated members were prohibited to approach it, except the initiated members. According to tradition, majority of the initiated members of *Njiri-Njit* dance was the traditional elders *Okum*. The *Njiri-Njit* members appear conceited during their performance in that uninitiated members are forbidden to come closer to them. The dance is also performed during the funeral celebration of a traditional elder *Okum*. The playing of instruments in Oshie in most male dances is restricted only to initiated members. The Oshie people have an established variety of cultural practices made up of interesting traditional dances. ⁶²⁶

On the other hand, the other male dance that is restricted to non-members and the entire public was the *Kwifuh*, a dreadful dance that comes out during the death important personalities. There was also the *Adebere* that comes out solely during the night. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe greatly encouraged their outings and performances especially during the death of titled persons in the chiefdom.⁶²⁷ The *Adebere* is looked upon to be spiritual as it was prohibited from perceiving. The *Onang*, *Adebere*, *Kwuchong* belongs to the *Kwifuh* society, they were the most secret and dreadful palace dance in Oshie. Membership into the various dance was through special and elaborate initiations or through hereditary rites.⁶²⁸ Other women dances apart from those earlier mentioned includes the Elephant tusk dance known as

⁶²⁶ Idem.

⁶²⁷ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.66.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.
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Isongaku, Squirrel dance *Ibon, Etchepi* and the *Anjang* which was dance created to honour the first settlers in Barimbong quarter of Oshie. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe greatly encouraged the manifestations of such women dances because they reflect many aspects of Oshie cultural heritage. Their tunes have deep rooted connotations to the traditions and customs of the people.⁶²⁹

Another social and cultural manifestation that was highly encouraged by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was the Elephant tusk dance. The dance symbolizes the elephant tusk that was always placed on a leopard pelt for Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to put his feet on. The Fon was regarded as a traditional war hero when his feet were placed on the elephant tusk. In this regard, he was equated to a wild animal such as the leopard and the elephant. It also portrays the super-natural qualities inherent in the Fon. During the *Anangkobi* dance festival of Oshie, the women folk of Bereje quarter in a way of expressing their happiness and praises to honour Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, created the elephant tusk dance.⁶³⁰ The dance was only limited to the women folk of Bereje quarter. With its sweet melody, easy to dance style, and luring rhythm from the wooden drums, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe encouraged its performance and it remained one of the most celebrated women dance in Oshie. The squirrel dance known as *Ibon* dance, demonstrated how small bush animals destroyed crops in the farms, especially groundnuts and maize. The dance is reminiscent to the early days when many of these bush animals hindered crop cultivation in Oshie.⁶³¹

Other forms of traditional practices in the chiefdom of Oshie apart from the aforementioned dances, are cultural manifestations that express deep feelings of the people in "sorrow" and "joy" during ceremonies of births, deaths and marriages.⁶³² At the death of an old woman in Oshie, the women folk of reasonable ages sing dirge songs prior to her burial while carrying dry firewood, along side some of her belongings known as the traditional women cry die. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe equally encouraged its performance because it depicts the traditions and customs of the people of Oshie. Some of the songs are poetic and full of transcendental connotations, rhythm and harmony that was maintained and passed down from one generation to another. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe prior to the arrival of Christianity encouraged children in Oshie to learn folk songs and music to acquaint themselves with the local culture. This was due to the avalaibility of tunable and non-tunable instruments of

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid* p.67.

⁶³¹ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p.23.

⁶³² Interview with Fobang Jerry , 57, member of *Njit njit* cult, Oshie,5 October ,2015.

various types. The most common of these instruments is the wooden talking drum known as *Annuh* and the standing drum *Engong Mban*. These instruments are meant only to those who have a mastery on the art of playing drums especially during death celebrations.⁶³³

4.3 Re-organisation of Marriage Institutions

The traditional rulers of Oshie played an important role in the re-organisation of marriage institutions in the chiefdom. Oshie Polity comprised of a collection of a number of exogamous families or lineages. A lineage comprises of all the people who trace their ancestry to a single man or woman. These lineages are small and large depending on the chiefdom, and the number of recorded generations. They are exogamous, meaning that anyone born in the lineage has to marry into another family other than his or her own. Among the Oshie people, marriage was exogamous. It involves the extended family known as *Ibeghi* and *Ukwo* (immediate family) and the family lineage. In traditional Oshie society marriage was regarded as a necessity. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe greatly motivated the indigenes of Oshie who were of marital age to respect traditional and cultural ethics before marriage was contracted between a man and a woman.⁶³⁴ The family of the husband had to examine critically the background of the bride family before marriage was contracted.

A careful examination of the bride was to ensure that she was able to procreate. This was because unfortunate men are alleged to get married to impotent women inadvertently. The behavioral pattern of the two families concerned was also taken into consideration because marriage was considered as an eternal union. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe in this light, provided a piece of land to the mature princesses in the palace and women. He also encouraged every young man of marital age to be given a wife by his father and a piece of land to construct his household.⁶³⁵ Girls were betrothed to husbands whom they never knew them or without initial contact. In some situations, young girls were forced into marriage when they proved to be stubborn. It was in very rare circumstances that girls were given out to husbands as payments of debts. ⁶³⁶

⁶³³ Interview with Fondeh Samuel, 48, builder, Oshie, 5 December 2016

⁶³⁴ *Idem*.

⁶³⁵ It was an aberration in Oshie during the pre-colonial period for a young man to impregnate a woman without performing the necessary marital rites. In situations where such acts were committed it was considered as an incest that required ritual purification. Although it was rare for a man and woman to engage in an entercourse before the marital age.

The bride price was so huge and was paid for a long period. It was paid to the immediate family of the bride which includes, the maternal uncles and aunts, paternal uncles, father, mother, sisters and brothers of mature ages. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also instituted bride price endowment as a way of settling two parties engaged in marriage. It largely depended on issues of friendship alliances, good and well behaved family relations.⁶³⁷ In the past in Oshie, to get into marriage contract with a girl from a family requires hard work from the husband to the bride family and the provision of gifts to them. This was done by assisting the father-in-law in what ever work that was available in his compound. Assistance was also given to mother-in-law by clearing her farms and transporting foodstuff from the farms during harvesting seasons to the house. When the in-laws were satisfied with the attitude of the suitor and his family, their daughter was then ceded out to the suitor. This custom went on for a long period without any disruption. In the course of time, the provision of man power and hard work changed to gift in kind, in the form of pigs, goats and fowls.⁶³⁸

The gifts were provided by the suitor's family as a sign of appreciation to the bride family.⁶³⁹ When money came into circulation in the chiefdom of Oshie through long distance trade, in the form of shillings and pounds. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe recommended the indigenes to pay bride price endowment in terms of money. The parents of a girl in marriage were able to assess their suitor with an agreed some of money to be paid as bride price. The bride price ranged from 100 pounds and above depending on the age and healthiness of the bride. The payment of bride price was reduced when the Basel Mission arrived Oshie, they preached against polygamous practices and the high bride price endowment. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe from the knowledge he obtained through his collaboration with the Basel Mission condemned the polygamous marriages and a reduction in bride price endowment.⁶⁴⁰ Although he did not restraint from such practices because as an epitome of tradition a Fon was obliged to get married to many women.

It was common among the chiefdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields that, both the Fons and wealthy persons get married to many wives. A clear evidence to this assertion was Fon Etunyi Anyangwe who inherited the widowed wives of his predecessor and continued with the procreation of children. Though, he denounced polygamous marriages, Fons were by dint of tradition obliged to fill their palaces with women. This explains why his palace was full

⁶³⁷ Interview with Aweneg Triphina ,62, House wife, Oshie, 24 November, 2017.

⁶³⁸ Idem.

⁶³⁹ Interview with Mbakwa Micheal, 65, Farmer, Oshie, 26 November, 2015.

⁶⁴⁰ Idem.

with royal women. It was generally nurtured in Oshie that the uncles were those who provided blessings to the girls of each family going into marriage. A man's wealth was determined through the number of wives and female children he could betroth in marriage to husbands. A bride was taken to the husband's household by her sisters alongside those of her husband after the marriage was contracted. She was then anointed with camwood by the elderly women in the husband's family. These elderly women represented her mother in her marital home.⁶⁴¹

The women further prepared roasted plantains with palm oil and fed the new wife who was referred to as *Oghen*. Any person who visited the new wife was given a portion of the roasted plantains with palm oil. The new wife was treated with cosset and meekness during the period of three months. According to tradition, she was not supposed to talk or express amusement with the people of the husband's household. The elderly women in the husband's household offered her with kitchen utensils such as; pots, palm oil, foodstuff, salt, dishes and clothes. The bride was treated with reverence by every body in both families especially the children.⁶⁴² In Oshie traditional society, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe greatly promoted the act of betrothing out daughters in marriage and expected them to bring forth children to increase the population, and acted as sources of diplomacy between families. This was the expectations of the parents and uncles of the bride and the people of the husband. The birth of a child was regarded as blessing from the ancestors, and the first male child was treated with care and looked upon as the successor of the father.⁶⁴³

During child birth in Oshie, people engaged themselves in various social entertainment to welcome the new born child. One of these traditional customs was the born house feast known as *Enneinwo*. Its celebration was open to every member in the community, most especially to the initiated members of the women folk. It was an obligation that a woman has to be ceremonially initiated into the membership society of *Enneinwo* through the provision of the necessary requirements.⁶⁴⁴ The born house was a feast celebrated solely by married women that have children. The feast is organized exclusively by women in the family in which the bride is married.

His Royal Highness, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe also encouraged the honour accorded to the first birth of a newly married woman in Oshie because according to tradition some women

⁶⁴¹ Interview with Andigema Martina, 68, House wife, Oshie, 25 October, 2016.

⁶⁴² Interview with Mbakwa Micheal, 65, Farmer, Oshie, 26 November, 2015.

⁶⁴³ Idem.

⁶⁴⁴ Interview with Ndambi Josephine, 48, House wife, Oshie, 26 October, 2015.

were said to be barren and bewitched by ill fated uncles. The mother of the new born child was generally given the name *Avobu* meaning motherhood. During this period the newborn baby and the mother were confined in the house for an unspecified number of days, while she was catered for by other women of the family. As tradition demands, it was a duty for the husband's family to take care and provide all the necessary types of food required for the wife. The organization of born house celebration or merriment known in Oshie as *Aghenwo* during the period of child birth was open to every body as it was the culture of the people. Any body who visits the new born baby was provided with the Oshie traditional meal known as *Abang*.⁶⁴⁵

When the new born child attains a certain age, the father of the child organises a feast that involves the entire family, neighbours, friends of both husband and wife and well wishers. This was to enable the wife to be release from house confinement. There was dancing, feasting and jubilation for the new born baby. The eligible women who had acquired the membership status of born house celebration also helped in initiating new members into the feast. The feast was symbolic because it signifies seniority or maturity of a woman. An aspirant to the born house status is obliged to make some merriment that comprise of preparing food to the initiated members.⁶⁴⁶ To be eligible for the born house celebration, a woman according to tradition, was obliged to respect and follow such preliminary phases before she could attain the final initiation stage.

Women who also craves to obtain the social status of born house are required to contact the eldest women in her family for rules and regulations.⁶⁴⁷ In a situation where the husband of the aspiring applicant is a polygamist, she was bound to consult her marital companion to ensure the success of the ceremony. During the initiation phase, all the family women converge in the compound of the aspirant in groups according to their status. The elderly women designate one of the initiated member to share the food prepared in respect to traditional norms. The feast is usually celebrated with a lot of pomp and pageantry in such a way that the initiated members eat to their statisfaction. Palm wine is usually provided by the husband of the aspirant.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁵ At the celebration of the birth of a child in Oshie during the colonial period up to the present. The most common traditional meal that was eaten was *Abang*. This was pounded cocoyams put together with yellow soup made from burn plantain coat mixed with palm oil and other ingredients.

⁶⁴⁶ Interview with Egute Elizabeth ,70, House wife, Oshie, 5 november, 2015.

⁶⁴⁷*Idem*.

⁶⁴⁸ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.21.

The uninitiated women on the other hand are not permitted to participate in the born house feast unless they had acquired the membership status. However, the general participation is not only limited to the family women of the aspirant but is open to the initiated members of other families in Oshie. In the course of time, the aspirant become qualified to participate in other born house feasts organized by other aspiring women. At the end of the born house initiation phase, the women appoint two initiated members in the family alongside an elderly woman to bless the initiated member and confirms her status. From this final initiation stage, the woman become a full member of born house in the entire community. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe greatly encouraged the born house feast and such marital rules and regulations because it rendered the womanhood tied down to Oshie tradition and respect of cultural values.⁶⁴⁹

4.3 Oshie Rulers and Guitar Dance

The traditional rulers of Oshie were also engaged in the development of social activities in the chiefdom of Oshie. The guitar dance locally known as *Egime* and the Tilly light were some of the social activities that are purported to have brought civilisation into the society of Oshie. The guitar dance was introduced in Oshie by the year 1940 through the effort of some Oshie indigenes known by the time as the "enlightened." Just as the enlightened despot of the age of englihtenement in Europe. These enlightened despots were the indigenes from Oshie who attended higher standard of education in Mbengwi known at the time as the centre of education in Momo Division. These Oshie indigenes in Mbengwi witnessed many social activities such as the guitar dance that was common in that area at the time. The dance became so interesting to them and they deemed it necessary to be introduced in Oshie. In this reflection, they informed Fon Etunyi Anyangwe, who encouraged them to bring the dance in Oshie particularly in the palace where he was to be the host.⁶⁵⁰ Preparations were nurtured to convey the guitar dance to Oshie alongside the Tilly light as it was not yet common in the area. The guitarist was an indigene from Meta named Sambagha, a renown musician in the area in socio-cultural matters.⁶⁵¹

The guitar dance and the Tilly Light into Oshie, was organised to arrive Oshie in the night. This was because the organizers wanted its extraordinary bright light to attract the people's attention. In respect to the plan, when the guitarist was approaching the area, he was

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid p.21.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid* p.113.

⁶⁵¹ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.115.

made to delay at the first quarter into Oshie, while the others went direct to the Oshie Fon's palace for further arrangements. The guitarist arrived Oshie, when the women had returned from their farm lands and headed to the Oshie Fon's palace, while playing on his guitar and the Tilly light shining along the way. The sound from the guitar overwhelmed the people around him and they screamed with a lot of excitement. The convoy to the Fon's palace, was made up of primarily young girls.⁶⁵² The bright light from the Tilly Lamp attracted most of the people from their various quarters of Oshie, as the guitarist moved from Fum through Edom quarter to the Fon's palace.

The Oshie people who saw the Tilly Light from a distance screamed with a lot of excitement, while some followed the guitarist and the Tilly Light to the Fon's palace. When the musician arrived Bereje quarter which was the seat of royalty in Oshie, people could be heard shouting from all the nooks and crannies of the community. As people hastened to the Fon's palace to witness the unfamiliar bright light, elderly men recoiled back home while the young ones proceeded to the Fon's palace. Although the youths in Oshie, were already acquainted to the tune of local wooden drums and fluting.⁶⁵³ When the guitarist finally arrived the Fon's palace, the entire population became so amused with the exuberant melodies that led them yelling in excitement and appreciations. The euphoria and commotion awoked those who were already in bed to have a climpse of the Tilly Light and the guitarist. In the main, the atmosphere in the palace was convivial and provided a pleasant sentiments of happiness to the organizers danced to the melody of the music awaiting for Fon Etunyi Anyangwe to honour the occasion with his welcome address. When Fon Etunyi Anyangwe finally came out from his apartment, he moved directly to the court yard where the Tilly Light was hung.⁶⁵⁵

Prior to the commencement of the dance, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe thanked the organizers of the guitar dance in Oshie together with the guitarist. In his address, he wished that the guitar dance and the Tilly light should remain in Oshie for eternity. He further encouraged the Oshie indigenes in Mbengwi to maintain their ambitions as actors of social transformation in Oshie in order to change the society and develop the community as a whole.⁶⁵⁶ After his remarks on the event, the entire court yard was merged into dancing to the

⁶⁵² Interview with Angyingi Obed, 70, Retired teacher, Oshie, 12 July, 2015.

⁶⁵³ Interview with Adang Lucas, 55, Agric Teachnician, Oshie, 14 October, 2016.

⁶⁵⁴ Idem.

⁶⁵⁵ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.120.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

next day. As a result of the guitar dance and the Tilly Light in Oshie, many youths in oshie went to Meta to practice the mechanism of playing the guitar music. In the course of time, indigenes from Oshie organized themselves and formed musical groups during social gatherings without necessarily going to Meta to look for a musician. The advent of the guitar dance and the Tilly Light in Oshie brought a lot of social change within the community.⁶⁵⁷

In all, the Tilly and guitar dance traditionally was symbolic in that, it acted as a mode of reconciliation between lovers, place of courtship for men and women and enforcement of chiefdom bond. This dance equally brought about chiefdom oneness and portray inter-cultural diversity as the people of Oshie often compete with dancers from the neighbouring communities. The Tilly light and guitar dance provided the people of Oshie, direct connection with their roots while enforcing ancestral link amongst them. It was equally backing our oral history.⁶⁵⁸

By the year 1950, the guitar dance was replaced by the introduction of gramophone record players in Oshie. They were introduced in Oshie through the effort of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe who encouraged traders who were trading with the Nigerian markets to acquire modern musical equipements that could replace the guitar dance. The presence of the gramophone record players in Oshie revolutionized many social activities in the community. During the early 1960, record changers became common in Oshie. This was during the period when manufactured products were in full circulation in Oshie coming from the Nigerian markets and also from Oshie indigenes who had served in the coastal region. When the road between Acha Tugi hospital and Oshie was constructed, the link between Oshie and Bamenda became operational. People bought musical sets from the Bamenda markets with generators that could supply lights in large areas. Social activities in Oshie witnessed a lot of transformation through the encouragement of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe alongside the trader. There exist a variety of folk music in Oshie nowadays. According to Oshie oral history, these folk music dates back from the colonial period. They were gradually handed down through the succeeding generation of the people. Music in Oshie was and is still used for rumination during ritual ceremonies such as during the Anangkobi dance festival.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Atambele Daniel 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie July 2015.

⁶⁵⁹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places and Events p.106.

4.4 Basel Mission in Oshie

The traditional rulers of Oshie welcomed the christian religion and thus promoted formal education in the chiefdom of Oshie. The introduction of Christianity in the chiefdom of Oshie took a dramatic twist with the coming of Basel Mission station in Mbengwi in 1930.⁶⁶⁰ Although Christian religion had long established in Meta before the construction of a Mission station in Mbengwi in 1930. According to Williams, Assessment Report of 1924⁶⁶¹, the Ngunu tribal area present day Njikwa sub-division was the most primitive region in the then Bamenda Division. It had no schools and no christian converts. Missionary documents of the period refered frequently to inhabitants of Ngie and Ngunu as human devourers. The Basel Mission had long established in Bali, Mbengwi and Bafut, but the Ngunu area and Oshie in particular had not been reached. This delay was perhaps due to the geographical location of Oshie and also because of the outbreak of the First World War. Indeed, during this period, the British government suspended Missionary activities in the Bamenda Division.⁶⁶² The First World War ended with the outburst of the Basel Mission in the region who were of German Nationality. By the year 1926, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe requested that the Basel Mission should extend their activities to Oshie. Through the influence of the first catechist Abraham Gwa from Meta, the Basel Mission was establish in Oshie led by European missionaries such as, Rev. Adolf Valhueur, Rev. Frist Stuaale and Rev. George Tisehh who were all Germans from the Basel Missionary Society in Switzerland.⁶⁶³

The journey from Meta to Oshie took many hours due to the hilly topography which rendered movement difficult. The area consisted of very thick forest with savannah grass that was very difficult to penetrate. Harmful insects such as tse-tse flies and wild animals acted as barriers to penetration into the area including large streams that were too rapid to cross with no bridges.⁶⁶⁴ Another challenge of the Basel Mission intrusion into Oshie was the strategy through which the indigenes were to be converted, since the people were fully involved in traditional religion. When the Basel Mission arrived Oshie, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe enabled

⁶⁶⁰ Jonas N. Dah A Century of Christianity in the Grasslands of Cameroon, A Centenary Publication, Bamenda 1903-2003 p.53.

⁶⁶¹National Archives Buea, File No Ab/32(a)/1924: Ngunu Tribal Area (Bamenda Division). Assessment Report;1924.

⁶⁶² Andigema Evelyn The Oshie of Njikwa Subdivision 1998 p72.

⁶⁶³ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie 2008 p.47.

⁶⁶⁴National Archives Buea, File No 32:3 and 5.

them to build their station in Bereje quarter of Oshie and organized catechumen and elementary classes with the indigenous population in Mungaka.⁶⁶⁵

In the course of time, they set up a local church at Achaki's household in Bereje quarter. When the number of converts increased, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe as an opened minded ruler determined to learn new ideas, welcomed them in Oshie. To facilitate their establishment in the area, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe provided them a piece of land at Azani quarter to construct their house of worship. It was first constructed in red earth, roofed with thatch and grass. Their doctrinal classes consisted of preaching against traditional religion such as; witchcraft, polygamy and ancestral worshiping.⁶⁶⁶ In fact, the Oshie society was characterised of such obnoxious practices when the Basel Mission arrived the area. It was difficult at the beginning for the indigenes of Oshie to abstain from such traditional practices to adhere to the new religion. It took the Basel Mission several years of persistent dogmatic preaching before they succeeded in converting many Oshie indigenes to the Christian religion.⁶⁶⁷

In spite of the persistent preaching against traditional religion, witchcraft and other aspects of traditional religion still continued although at a low pace. The problem of Missionary personnel was also another head ache, that is trained catechists to enable them disseminate the gospel to the Oshie indigenes were absent. The only catechist they brought from Meta could not carry out the task and as a result it became so difficult for the Oshie indigenes to be trained as catechists. In the midst of these difficulties, the Basel Mission succeeded in implanting their Christian religion in Oshie. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe further encouraged many Oshie indigenes to be trained as catechists, thus, the pioneer catechists that were trained included people such as; Achaki Sarimon and Joseph Okanimba, Solomon Ozughen, Anengwang and Takwi Ozimba.⁶⁶⁸ They were taught in Mungaka where they later became local preachers of the gospel to the newly recruited converts. The first Native pastors created by the Basel Mission were Abraham and Jonas Shurufor.⁶⁶⁹

They were dynamic individuals gifted in convincing and converting other recalcitrant Oshie people, even though they had acquired very little formal education but they proved to

⁶⁶⁵ Mungaka was and is still the language spoken by the people of Bali Nyonga. When the Basel Mission arrived in the Grassfields, the only language they used in the preaching and dessimination of their gospel was Mungaka. This was because the Grassfields indigenes were able to understood Mungaka more than English language.

⁶⁶⁶ Ngri Walter "Slavery and Slave dealing Among the Oshie people of Njikwa subdivision (North West region) 1902-1930 p.106.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Pa Ozughen Solomon, 82, Patriarch and retired catechist, Oshie, September, 2004.

⁶⁶⁹ Idem.

be resourceful. Their activities were underpinned by the coming of an ordained pastor in the 1940. In this light, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe further requested many indigenes to be trained as catechists in Bali, Mbengwi and Bafut where the Basel Mission had long established its stations. Among those who were trained were Takwi Solomon Ozughen, Noah Nkinyam, David Awaza and Benjamen Anganga Kumba.⁶⁷⁰ They returned home and carried out evangelical activities in Oshie as well as in neighbouring chiefdoms.

Moreover, through these preachings, children became more interested in their activities than the traditional practices. The women folk as well were largely involved in the activities of the Basel Mission than the men because, the men were still deeply entrenched in traditional practices. Singing constituted the most integral aspect of the preaching that attracted the women and children alike. Fon Etunyi Anyangwe though a traditionalist became a convert together with his children and was given the Christian name Mathew. Through their lectures in vernacular language, the Basel Missionaries were able to co-operate with the local chiefs as they extended their religion to other areas.⁶⁷¹

In this regard, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, embraced the proselytization of the Basel Mission and became a full Christian. He attended church services exclusively on Christmas days, purposely to disseminate some important information to the indigenes. He sat on a reserved and special seat in the church, adjacent the officiating pastor.⁶⁷² During sermon, when the pastor mentioned the birth of Jesus Christ as the king of kings, he would doze off and feign not to have heard that part of the sermon. He did this purposefully in disapproval of the existence of another king after him. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe in the course of time maintained fair collaboration with the Basel Mission and encouraged most indigenes to become Christian converts in the Basel Mission. The pioneer consecrated house of God was built at Azani quarter by the Oshie people through communal labour with stones, cement, painted with white clay soil and roofed with zinc. By the 1999, the church edifice was enlarged as the population of converts increased. Plate 29a and 29b below depicts an evolved structure of the Basel Mission church in Bereje Oshie when it was taken over by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

⁶⁷⁰ National Archives Buea, File: No 321:15.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁷² Martin, Oshie People-Places-Events 2010 p.36.



Plate 29a: An Evolved Presbyterian Church in Bereje Oshie.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Bereje Oshie, March 2015

The plate above and below portrays when the pioneer church house which was demolished and the new one below constructed.





Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Bereje Oshie, March 2015.

The Basel Mission church Bereje with its imposing structure stands out to be the mother church that gave birth to other sub branches in Oshie.⁶⁷³The structure of the old Basel Mission church Bereje was replace by those seen below as the population was increasing. By the year

⁶⁷³ Carlson Anyagwe, *The Judicial System in Cameroon* p.59.

1952, the Ngie Ngwaw Mission District Presbytery was created with headquarters in Ngie.⁶⁷⁴ This Presbytery was to cover the villages of Ngie, Njikwa and Menka respectively. The number of Christian converts increased tremendously and the Ngie-Ngwaw presbytery was split into two.⁶⁷⁵ According to the presbyterian report of 1952, the number of catechists in the Ngwaw area was twenty four. In 1957, the PCC in Cameroon obtained its independence from the Basel Mission in Switzerland and became known as the Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon (P.C.W.C) and later changed to Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (P.C.C). The P.C.C authorities started within the same year and became very strong which led to the increase in its converts. It was thanks to this vigour that the first pastor of Oshie origin was ordained in the year 1960.⁶⁷⁶

His Royal Highness Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe further allocated a piece of land for the construction of other churches in Oshie that were administered by catechists such as; David Awazi of Barimbong quarter, Yakob Atongu of Fringyen, Daniel Tino of Bereje quarter Oshie, Petro Nji of Nyebai quarter, Sakaria Ngu of Fumebei quarter and Petro Sabum of Tugi Tuochop quarter. In 1960, the Ngie Ngwaw presbytery became too large and problems such as low enrolment in converts were recorded in other churches. This created long distance trekking for the catechist. The P.C.C in 1973 after reviewing the situation decided to split the main presbytery into Ngie and Ngwaw presbyteries.⁶⁷⁷ In all, the Basel missionary activities in Oshie witnessed a lot of set backs because the traditional religion they preached against were still in practice although they gradually gave way as more indigenes were converted to the christian religion.

In the domain of education, in order to promote rapid social change, schools were created by the Basel Mission with the financial assistance of the colonial administrators who looked to these schools for trained personnel. The first school was opened in Bamenda in 1922 followed by a native authority school in 1923 and by the year 1925, the Basel Mission schools were revitalized. By the year 1937, there were 76 unassisted secular schools, four mission assisted schools, two catholic, one Basel and one Baptist. Few of these schools

⁶⁷⁴ Ajeagah, B.A "The impact of the Activities of the Presbyterian church on Ngie from 1957-1990".Dissertation (DIPLEG II) Yaounde 1996 p.39.

⁶⁷⁵ Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Annual Report 1968.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Annual Report 1968 p.56.

⁶⁷⁷National Archives Buea, File No 321:1960 Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Annual Church accounts for Ngie-Ngwaw Presbytery 1960.

⁶⁷⁷ Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Annual Report 1968 p. 71.

provided a full primary education. The school produced educated men who joined the administration but played a very little role in native administration that was centered on using only traditional elite. The education of the natives was seen by the Missionaries as the best instrument of social transformation.⁶⁷⁸

The entire education of the natives was entrusted to the Missions who produced an elite of interpreters, Messengers, Clerks and Teachers on whom the administration depended. The Missions received financial assistance from the administration for their schools which were subject to government regulations. In October 1932, the Basel Mission at Bali was extended to Mbengwi. This was because the pupils showed great interest in primary eductation and the medium of instruction was Mungaka and English.⁶⁷⁹The Ngunu area particularly Oshie had no schools and was reached by the year 1926. The Basel Mission in Oshie established their station in Bereje quarter, where they held lectures with the Natives and gave them elementary lessons in Mungaka.

It was only by the year 1940 that an elementary school was opened in Oshie. But prior to this period, many pupils in Oshie who went to school had to trek to Mbengwi to obtain education. Mbengwi was the first place where the Basel Mission first established in Momo Division and opened a school for the entire area before they started expanding to other areas. As a result, the Oshie indigenes who attended school in Mbengwi returned home and introduced activities such as games and concerts which they learned from their new environment. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, through his collaboration with the Basel Mission although haven't acquired western education, promoted formal education in the chiefdom of Oshie. In that direction, he requested Roaflaub who was acting as the supervisor of the Basel Mission schools in Buea that, he was ready to provide land for the construction of an elementary school in Oshie.⁶⁸¹ On March 10th 1942, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe received a memorandum from the Manager of the Basel Mission schools in Bafut granting an elementary school in Oshie.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁸ National Archive Buea File No 883: Ngie-Ngwaw Presbytery Minutes (1962-1970).

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶⁸¹Regional Archives Bamenda File No B/2171/1942/3: Basel Mission Elementary School at Ngwaw (Ngunu Area).

⁶⁸² Regional Archives Bamenda File No B/2198/194/1: Basel Mission Elementary School at Oshie-Ngwaw area; opening of.

In July 22 1942, the Native court in Ngwaw also wrote a letter to the District Officer in Bamenda to inform him that, the village had opted for the provision of a portion of land for the school. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe in this reflection, provided land at the site adjacent the German settlement area on top of the Azani hill for the construction of the Basel Mission school in Oshie. For the fact that, the spirit of hard work and co-operation was already embedded in the people of Oshie, the people of each quarter were to organise themselves into what was known as *Komiti* (communal labour) made up of mainly men. By the year 1942, the people of Oshie dug stones and constructed the Basel Mission School alongside the Mission workers. The school buildings were first constructed with bambos, plastered with mud and roofed with thatch and grass but as the population of school pupils increased, the thatched grass was replaced by structures built with stones by local builders from Oshie.⁶⁸³

In the process of construction of the Basel Mission School, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe who knew the importance of education and for the fact that it was the pioneer school in the area, encouraged the Oshie indigenes to supply labour by digging stones while, the construction work was done by local technician employed by the Basel Mission. According to information obtained from my informants, the supply of labour during the construction phase of the school was mostly done by the Oshie indigenes of Bereje quarter as earlier mentioned, mostly the male folk while the women folk supply mud.⁶⁸⁴ After the completion of the school, a number of pupils that were enrolled rose in infant 1 from 35 to 45 by the year 1943.⁶⁸⁵Most of the pupils were boys because only few parents considered that their female children also needed to be educated, eventhough the idea of school was still generally not very welcome. Through the establishment of the Basel Mission School in Bereje quarter, Oshie became an academic centre in the entire Ngunu area. Pupils from various areas such as Tugi, Nyebai, Fumebei, Konda, Ngwo atteded school at the Basel Mission School Bereje. By the year 1960, other Mission schools were opened in Ngwo area as a whole and the manager of these schools was stationed in Mbengwi. The Basel Mission school was the first to establish in Oshie and remained the only for a long period of time before other branches were opened. Plate 30a and 30b is a depiction of the Basel Mission School Bereje Oshie. 686

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie 2008 p.50.

⁶⁸⁵ National Archive Buea, File No B2171

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

Plate 30a: Basel Mission School Edifice in Oshie (1942)

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Bereje Oshie, March 2016.

Plate 30 b: An Evolved Basel Mission School in Bereje Oshie.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Bereje Oshie, March 2016.

Note, When the Basel Mission School was changed to Presbyterian school Bereje Oshie. The structures of the school stood out as the vestiges of the Basel Mission School that moulded many educated elites in Oshie and the entire Njikwa sub-division at large. The new structure beside the old school building was constructed when the government took over control of the Presbyterian primary school Bereje Oshie in 2011.

By the year 1943, the number of pupils that were enrolled in infant one rose from 35 to 45.⁶⁸⁷ Most of the pupils were boys since the idea of education was still generally not welcomed by the people of Oshie. In fact, the education of the girl child was not regarded important at the time. Girls were kept at home to work with their mothers in the farm. The only elementary school in Oshie at this time meant that children from neighbouring villages had to trek for long distances to attend school in Bereje Oshie. Amongst many of the young school pupils with brilliant ideas was Abraham Ifughe. He was recruited as a teacher in the Basel Mission School Oshie where he taught children in vernacular. He also translated the Lord's prayer from Mungaka to Oshie language. In the same light, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe appointed him to serve as a Clerk in the Oshie Council.⁶⁸⁸

He worked in that capacity to render the task of the village council easy to the Ngunu Native Court authority. When the Native authority surveyors left Bamenda to demarcate the Oshie boundaries with the surrounding villages, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe designated Abraham Ifughe to work with them to determine and establish the boundaries of Oshie and her neighbouring communities.⁶⁸⁹ By the year 1960, other mission schools were opened in the Ngwaw area and the manager of the schools stationed in Mbengwi.⁶⁹⁰ Informal education was still part of the society at large since all the parents were not able to sent their children to the Basel Mission School. Most of the children were taught on traditional and socio-cultural etiquettes. There were places where young people were trained on how to send vocal messages through the wooden drum, played music using the standing drum and participate in traditional dances.⁶⁹¹

The young people were drilled in the art of playing on traditional instruments, by the elders.⁶⁹² Cultural and traditional activities in the society were taught informally to the young ones up to when formal education was fully established in Oshie.⁶⁹³ By the time when western education was instituted in Oshie through the effort of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe and the Basel Mission, some ill-fated conservative traditionalists who were still clung to tradition

 ⁶⁸⁷ National Archives Buea File No B/2171/1942/3: Basel Mission Elementary School at Ngwaw (Ngunu Area).
 ⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

⁶⁸⁹Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.16.

⁶⁹⁰Presbyterian Archieves Buea, File No 321:1960 Presbyterian church in Cameroon Annual Church Accounts for Ngie-Ngwaw Presbytery 1960.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Interview with Egute Samuel, 71, traditional elder *Okum*, Oshie ,10 July, 2015.

⁶⁹³ Interview with Angono Moses, 70, Farmer, Oshie ,10 August, 2015.

disapproved of the white man's education. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe encouraged many parents to send their children to the Basel Mission School in Bereje Oshie.⁶⁹⁴

His Royal Highness Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe due to his ambitions in western education, sponsored his children and other children in Oshie in school because he knew its importance, despite the fact that he had not obtained formal education. As a dynamic ruler, he had some locally trained police force who were meant to arrest recalcitrant young men of school age whom he deemed to be of a promising future and enrolled in school.⁶⁹⁵ According to Oshie oral history, a certain Bang from Oshie, at his youthful age was arrested on the way to the raffia palm bush to tap palm wine for the father. He was conveyed to school where he continued his education until he completed from the Basel Mission School. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe succeeded to send female children to school. The first female to obtain First school leaving certificate (F.S.L.C) was her daughter.⁶⁹⁶

The chiefdom of Oshie was renowned through the effort of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe to have had PhD holders, in professional domains such as; engineers, Accountants, Lawyers, Medical doctors and pharmacists.⁶⁹⁷ He also subsidized the education of many children in Oshie and encouraged some of them to adopt his name to facilitate their career in education. A majority of the parents emulated the policies of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe and began educating their children in schools. His reputation was outstanding because he was widely known and revered in the Ngunu area and in the Bamenda region during the Appeal court sessions presided over by expatriate. In this light, he used such opportunities and handed over to the white men any Oshie child who was enthusiastic to attend school. To facilitate the educational career of the children he encouraged them to adopt his name as their father.⁶⁹⁸ An example Oshie indigene who was funded in school by Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe was Martin Oyebog. He actually bears the name Anyangwe both in primary and secondary school in Sasse. His contemporaries in Sasse College called him Anyangwe, in fact the only Secondary school that documented the names of all its graduates in the national Gazettes.⁶⁹⁹

The document bears his name as Anyangwe but after the completion of Junior and Senior Cambridge examinations, his proper names were restored before he entered the

⁶⁹⁴ Idem.

⁶⁹⁵ Interview with Asaah Moses, 68, Assistant traditional elder Ngyeh, Oshie, 11August, 2015.

⁶⁹⁶ Idem.

⁶⁹⁷ Interview with Ndakwi Robert, 58, Teacher, Oshie,15 July, 2015.

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Oburi Joseph, 51, Farmer, Oshie, 13 June, 2016.

⁶⁹⁹ Idem.

University of Ibadan in Nigeria. According to Oshie oral history, the parents of Martin Oyebog were not really impressed with the action of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe for sponsoring their son in school. As for them, their son would have rendered assistance in the farm and also tap palm wine for the family. His mother was said to have appeared in the Fon's palace on several occasions with a rope to strangulate herself if the son was not brought back.⁷⁰⁰ Years later, Martin Oyebog returned home after completion of his studies. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe was held with great esteem by the parents of Martin Oyebog in particular and the people of Oshie in general.⁷⁰¹

Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, also encouraged Martin Oyebog to use his expertise in agriculture to open up agricultural plantations in Oshie. His pioneer station as a Senior Agricultural Officer was in Bamenda Division in the then West Cameroon government. Serving in such capacity he became the chairman of cultural organisation in the North West province.⁷⁰² To implement the practical nature of his profession, he embarked on opening agricultural plantations in Oshie and Bambui where he introduced the cultivation of cash crops such as coffee, bananas, peas and the planting of Eucalpytus trees. Many Oshie indigenes were employed to work in the plantations during that period.

According to information obtained from informants, a meeting was organized in Bamenda by some Oshie elite. During the meeting, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe was encouraged through a motion letter addressed to him by the elite to admit the Roman Catholic missionary into Oshie and allocate them land to build their church. The appeal letter to the Fon was read and interpreted to him by Frederick Anyangwe, one of his son who was in standard two in Basel Mission Bereje Oshie.⁷⁰³ Apparently, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe discovered the challenging nature of the appeal letter thus granted the request. But as to whether the church went functional was another issue, in a rural community where every mother was a regular church attendant in the Basel Mission and also where every child followed the parents to the farm.⁷⁰⁴ The out come was that the Roman Catholic mission was closed down.

The first generation of educated elite from the Basel mission school in Oshie who emerged during the 1950s was that of the teaching profession. In the course of that period,

⁷⁰⁰ Interview with Ndakwi Robert, 58, Teacher, Oshie, 15 July, 2015.

⁷⁰¹ Idem.

⁷⁰²Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.9.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid* p.61.

⁷⁰⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.111.

other mission schools were opened in Oshie and Ngwo. It was pride for every family in Oshie during that period to have a son in the teaching profession. Most teachers were men who had received only a full primary education and few had done professional courses.⁷⁰⁵ Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe also encouraged his brothers and other Oshie indigenes who were graduates from the Basel Mission with the grade III certificate to become teachers. These teachers inturn taught many Oshie elite who held many positions of responsibility in Cameroon.⁷⁰⁶

After the period of independence, there were approximately twenty primary school teachers in Oshie who became teachers through the encouragement received from Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe. Beside, these generation of educated elite, there were also a few who had received a full secondary education and who were immediately absorbed into the Administration as soon as they left school. The number of university graduates in Oshie during this period were about four, who were absorbed into the West Cameroon government. Table 3 below portrays the number of Oshie children who attended Vernacular, Primary, Secondary and University education before and after independence.

Years	Institutions	No of Attendants
1926-1930	Vernacular Classes in Mungaka by the Basel Mission Bereje Oshie	15 Catechists
1942-1945	Basel Mission School Bereje Oshie	35 to 45 pupils
1949-1956	C.P.C Bali and Saint Joseph College Sasse	4 Students from Oshie
1959-1968	1-Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology(NCAST) Enugu	-1 Student from Oshie
	2-University of Nigeria (Nsukka)3-University of Ibadan Nigeria	-1 Student from Oshie -1 Student from Oshie

 Table 3: Number of Oshie School Children before and after Independence in 1960.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Initiative, adapted from Tilly Light in Oshie, September 2015.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid* p.124.

There were few university graduates in Oshie who served as nurses, pharmacist, Directors, Senior Agric officers in the West Cameroon government who acquired such educational status due to the effort of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe.⁷⁰⁷ These educated elite acted as an impetus of change in matters of development in the chiefdom of Oshie. While a majority of young men in Oshie aspired in western education, very few of the young girls went to school as well. The pioneer girls who attended secondary education were three in the early 1960s.⁷⁰⁸ The progress in education in Oshie since independence increased tremendousely in that, there was a remarkable increase in the number of Oshie boys and girls who attended primary, secondary and university education. The few Oshie indigenes who attended university education before and after 1960 were through the influence of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe who from early days had realised the importance of education.⁷⁰⁹

Prior to the period of independence of Cameroon, the all Bamenda students' union that grouped students from all over the Bamenda Grassfields studying in various institutions in Cameroon and abroad. Established in the 1950s its membership began to dwindle as students from the different tribes broke away in order to form their own tribal unions.⁷¹⁰Other communities emulated this break away from the all Bamenda students union. In the same vein, the Oshie students who were in C.P.C Bali decided to form their own student union. It was not until 1973, that the ideology came into fruition. The think-tank to form the association comprised of few students from Bali College. This was during the summer holiday of the year 1973. Through several encounters with Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe on the idea to form the student union, because of his knownledge in the scholarisation of Oshie elite. On his invitation, the first meeting was held at the Oshie market place at Money-Hards bar and it recorded a resounding success.⁷¹¹ During the inaugural meeting, participants brainstormed on a number of issues and agreed inter-alia to integrate teachers who were mature to help the association to grow in financial and numerical strength.⁷¹²

The second meeting took place at a certain Asaah hall alongside students and teachers. The first set of primary school teachers that joint the association included J.N Samba, Itambi Simon, Egute Samuel, Bind Oliver and Mbaringong Paul. The third and final meeting was

⁷⁰⁷ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.51.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid* p.55.

⁷⁰⁹ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.206

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.102.

⁷¹² *Ibid* p.112.

held at the same venue in which the name of the association and the Executive members were adopted.⁷¹³ During the election of executive members, J. N Samba emerged the pioneer President of Oshie Students and Teachers Union O.S.T.U. The Oshie Students and teachers Union O.S.T.U was formed with an initial population of 35 members comprised of mainly C.P.C Bali students and those of the Presbyterian Teachers Training College Batibo. The major objectives of the creation of OSTU was to encourage parents to send their children to school. This was because they looked upon education as one of the factors that could uplift them from poverty. The union emphasized on the respect of elders, the assistance of parents while on vacations and the maintenance of high standards of moral behavior among its members.⁷¹⁴

During that period, the number of children in Secondary schools and Teachers who were registered as OSTU members were just few. In the course of time, its population increases tremendously. In this direction, many Oshie people residing out of the chiefdom started sending their children home during holiday. Although some parents in Oshie, who believed that girls were meant only for cooking, farming and later for marriage still clung to the idea. Because of this, parents preferred only their male children to be educated. The union therefore supported the efforts of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe in encouraging the education of the women folk. Though with difficulties, some parents started sending their female children to schools, especially in the commercial schools such as Longla Comprehensive College LCC and City College of Commerce CCC Mankon and Presbyterian Secondary School Batibo.⁷¹⁵

Furthermore, following the motivations from the Oshie Students and Teachers Union (OSTU), and its successes recorded during that period, many Oshie people acknowledged the importance of female education. With the allocation of Government Secondary school in Njikwa sub-division by the government in the mid 1980s, the first classes were held at Government School Ngwo at an area known as Etamo field as the temporal site.

In the course of time when the population of the school increases, there was need for accommodation and the Njikwa administration allocated the disputed area of Oshie, Ngwo and Ekweri Banya for the construction of the school. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe fought very

⁷¹³ Interview with professor Tafah Edokat vice chancellor of the University of Bamenda and one of the founder of the Oshie students and Teachers union, Bamenda, September 2015.

⁷¹⁴ Inerview with Mbaringong Paul, 72, Retired Teacher and one of the pioneer founder of OSTU, Bamenda, 10 September, 2015.

⁷¹⁵ *Idem*.

hard and the Government Secondary School Njikwa was allocated on the Oshie side of the disputed area known as Fun that was in the chiefdom of Oshie. Although prior to the period that the Secondary School was finally granted by the government, the provision of the school generated a lot of dispute among the elite of Oshie and Ngwo on the site to construct the school. After a series of deliberations between the authorities of the area, it was unanimously agreed upon that, the secondary school should be constructed at its present site which today serves as the border between the chiefdom of Oshie and Ngwo. In this light, education was brought nearer to the people of Njikwa sub-division.⁷¹⁶

The pioneer students of the Government Secondary School Njikwa were mostly youths from Oshie, Ngwo, Konda and other neighbouring communities in Njikwa subdivision, but in the course of time, many students from distant areas in Momo division and North West region at large attended the school.⁷¹⁷ When it was up graded to a High School by the year 1990, the population increases tremendously with students from Njikwa and beyond. Plate 28 portrays a cross section view of the pioneer batch of students of Government Secondary School Njikwa with HRH the Fon of Ngwo village⁷¹⁸

Plate 31: Pioneer Batch of Students of Government Secondary School Njikwa (1980).



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015.

⁷¹⁶ Idem.

⁷¹⁷ Idem.

⁷¹⁸ Idem.

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The Government Secondary School from creation comprised of both male and female students from Oshie, Njikwa sub-division and North West region at large. Nowadays; there are no gender differentiation in education in Oshie students. But the general evidences indicate that the females supercedes the males in education as seen in the plate.

The Basel Mission in collaboration with Fon Etunyi Anyangwe acted as instruments of social change in that, the missions were responsible for the social and educational development in Oshie in particular and the Grassfields societies at large. Inspired by their doctrinal passion, they preached the gospel of human equality. They completely opposed to polygamy and fought enormously to discourage it as earlier mentioned. They were totally against native beliefs and practices in this way, Christian values were more projected than the traditional values. With the discouragement of polygamy, this made it impossible for many young men to earn money for bride wealth, because women were considered as a source of wealth in the family.⁷¹⁹

The gospel of social change that the Basel Mission preached to the people of Oshie was so instrumental in eradicating many traditional practices. They were responsible for the emergence of a new class of educated elite. The new rules and doctrine they taught the pupils in school further encouraged many parents to send their children to school.⁷²⁰ The self-esteem of man and Christian image of woman preached by the Basel Mission greatly encouraged the education of girls. Many women from Oshie were proud of the achievements of education. Some of them, hold positions of importance in the civil service nowadays due to the influence of western education introduced by the Basel mission. The ancestral worship and other obnoxious practices which the church preaches against nowadays in Oshie are no longer in practice. The Oshie society of today is comprised of many Christians who are of the Basel mission. Many people in Oshie now observe Sunday as the sabbath day, religious holidays such as Good Friday and Christmas celebration are jointly worshipped by christian and non christians as the day that Jesus Christ the saviour of humankind was born.⁷²¹

Through the preaching received from the Basel Mission, the people of Oshie buried their deaths in a more decent way such as, in cemetery of the church rather than in their compounds. Children obtain good conducts from Sunday school doctrine and became obedience to their parents. The promotion of western education by Fon Etunyi Mathew

⁷¹⁹ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.120.

⁷²⁰ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.169.

⁷²¹ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p.14.

Anyangwe in Oshie contributed greatly in moulding the elite of the area. The Basel Mission School that was transformed to the Presbyterian school Bereje Oshie today stands out to be the birth place of many Oshie educated elite.⁷²² What dominates in Njikwa sub-division nowadays as a whole and Oshie in particular is the Presbyterian schools in Cameroon.

The Basel Missionary activities in Oshie made many people to abandon their traditional ways of living. As a result of this, many people turned to the Christian doctrine and looked upon the almighty God in heaven as their saviour. Education became the main outlet to socio-cultural progress of the people. The Basel Mission succeeded to an extent to put an end to some of the obnoxious practices of the people of Oshie in an effort to transform the old society. Many of the indigenes did not completely abstain from such practices. They were those caught between following Christian religion and still clung to traditional religion. A complete abandonment of their traditional religion was tantamount to the destruction of the traditional society as they held. Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe as a conservative was one of those who did not completely refrain from traditional practices. This was because he was the epitome of tradition and custom in Oshie and was not obliged to abandon the traditional values of his subjects.⁷²³ In the main, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe alongside the Basel Mission was largely responsible for social change in the chiefdom of Oshie and other areas in Njikwa sub-division.⁷²⁴

4.5 Provision of Basic Social Amenities

The traditional rulers of Oshie demonstrated great dynamism in the provision of basic social amenities in the chiefdom. These basic social amenities include facilities such as the installation of pipe borne water supply network, provision of land for the construction of health services and playing ground and stadium. The Advanced Learners Dictionary defines health as "a state of being well and free from disease." But the World Health Organisation defines it as "a complete state of physical mental and social wellbeing of an individual and not merely the absence of disease. During the reign of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, the non avalaibility of health facilities was the major problems that attracts a lot of attention within the administrative set up of Njikwa area. Amongst the health facilities that served the people of Oshie and other communities in the area was the Acha Tugi Hospital built by the Presbyterian mission by the year 1959. The distance that separated the health service and Oshie was too

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p.15.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

long resulting to rampants deaths in Oshie. Moreover, prior to this period, the entire Oshie community suffered the profound effect of health services. The people had to trek for long distances from Oshie to Njikwa to obtain medical services in the unique dispensary that was opened by the mission in the area.⁷²⁵

To overcome issues of health, the indigenes resorted to local traditional treatment of common diseases in the society. Though the government at that time often sent medical team with vaccination equipements to eradicate diseases in the rural communities but that was not enough. The indigenes of Oshie were adamant to such health services because they held that the vaccination process was to augment disease propagation in the community. A majority of the pregnant women obtained maternity treatment through traditional method from traditional doctors. By the year 1975, when Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie, he undertook measures to provide health facilities to the Oshie community. To realise such an endeavour, he lobbied with the officials of the Ministry of Public Health in Yaounde for authorization to create a rural health centre in Oshie. He exposed the difficulties faced by his subjects in obtaining medical services and the number of kilometers that separated them from the location of medical facilities. He also portrayed the enclaved nature of the area with hilly slopes that hindered accessibility to the Presbyterian Hospital Acha. The population of Oshie was also taken into consideration.⁷²⁶

By the year 1980, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to construct the health centre exposed the difficult situation faced by the people of Oshie to obtained medical facilities to the officials of the Ministry of health. In this way, the necessity for a health service facility was thus eminent, as a result, an authorization was offered by the Ministry of Public Health for the community to construct a health service in the area. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through self-reliance development scheme, encouraged the people of Oshie to supply sand and stones for the construction of the health centre.⁷²⁷

In the course of that year, the Oshie developed health centre was constructed. In this way the number of people from Oshie that were often taken to Acha Tugi Hospital reduced. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also provided an Ambulance that transported cases of delivery and

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ By the year 1980, the indigenes of Oshie suffered tremnedously due to lack of basic social amenities such as medical services. The people resorted to the traditional method of treatment of illnesses, the only medical service that served the people was the Acha Tugi Hospital. Due to its distant location from the Oshie people, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through his self-reliance projects design and provided the people with a Heath Service centre. ⁷²⁷ *Ibid*.

operation to the Acha Tugi Hospital. The Health centre was administered by the Oshie cultural and development Association OCA but in the course of time, the administration of the health centre became ineffective because of lack of edequate medical personnel.⁷²⁸ There was also the problem of non avalaibility of nurses and a visiting doctor with a pharmacy.⁷²⁹ Coupled with such situation, the Oshie cultural and development association found it difficult to run the administration of the health service. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on in 1997, the Oshie health centre witnessed a lot of set backs. The few medical personnel that were avalaible in the health centre after the exit of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe could not administer the health service because of lack of subvention, this called for the attention of the OCA association. The OCA association took over the administration of the health service up to when the government took over the control.⁷³⁰ Plate 32, portrays the pioneer structure of the Oshie health centre, when it was administered by the Oshie cultural and development Association OCA.





Source: Adapted from Adang Benedict Private Album, Oshie, October 2015.

The pioneer structure of the Oshie developed health centre was constructed through the communal development initiative of the indigenes who made provision for stones and sand. This effort was piloted by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in collaboration with the Oshie cultural and development Association OCA. Indeed, the construction phase of the Oshie health service

⁷²⁸ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p. 41.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

was mostly carried out by technicians from Oshie with labour provided by the indigenes in supplying sand and stones. After its completion, it was named the Oshie developed health centre administered by nurses employed by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe together with the Oshie cultural and development association as earlier mentioned. The creation of the Oshie health centre help to reduce the number of patients from Oshie and other neighbouring communities of the area from attending the Acha Tugi hospital. Cases of new borne babies and suggery were carried out in the health centre, infact this reduce the mortality rate in the area tremendously. By the year 2008 during the reign of Fon Ercisyrol Yande Anyangwe, the Oshie health centre witnessed a lot of setbacks due to the cheftaincy crises that erupted in the chiefdom. Issues of inadequate medical personnel was the order of the day, infact, the deplorable state of the health centre enable the Oshie elite to request for the government to take over the administration of the health service which was later upgraded to a Cottage Hospital with a resident medical doctor. This was thanks to the initiative of Anyambod Emmanuel, the then President General of Oshie cultural and Development association. Plate 33 depicts the Oshie health centre when the government took over its administration.

Plate 33: The Oshie Integrated Health Centre.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Album, Oshie, October 2015.

The above structure indicates when Oshie health centre was administered by the government, equipped with adequate medical personnels. From the inception of the Oshie health centre, the indigenes were able to receive medical services without difficulties. Epidemic diseases such as small pox, chicken pox, measles and malaria were now treated at the medical service. Moreover, pregnant women now gave birth at the medical unit. The issue of long distance

trekking to receive medical services in Acha Tugi Hospital no longer existed in Oshie except critical cases that warranted operation. It was evident that before the World Health Organisation launched the campaign of (a) provision of Health to all through Primary Health programmes (b) Supply of portable water to rural communities. The chiefdom of Oshie was already in provision of the afore-mentioned facilities. This was thanks to the dynamic development policies of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. The Oshie Health centre, nowadays handles health issues from indigenes of Oshie and the neighbouring communities in Njikwa sub-division at large.⁷³¹

4.5.1 Portable Pipe Borne Water

The traditional rulers of Oshie were behind the establishment of portable pipe borne water in the chiefdom of Oshie. Water can be defined as a clear liquid without colour or taste, which falls from the sky as rain, spring and other sources. Water supply development Organisation was the foremost agents of development in the Grassfields region and Cameroon at large. The emergence of these water supply development Organisations in the Grassfields societies revolved around the late 1970's and early 1980's. The absence of water supply schemes in most of the communities in Cameroon that was to have been provided by the government, led the local indigenous population to undertake such endeavours to provide their communities with such basic amenities. Where the government failed to provide, the people resorted to self-help development efforts. Faced with such challenges, most elite took the initiative to provide their people with the basic amenities.⁷³²

In order to realise such development objectives, the elite contributed money for the realization of the projects in their areas. There was also the provision of services such as manual work and material contribution. These populations carried stones, sand and dug trenches for water supply network. This was done on fixed days set aside as community work days by the Fon. Recalcitrant members who refused to participate were sanctioned by the quarter heads. This was the same case with the water supply scheme in Oshie, initiated by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe during the early 1985's. Prior to the establishment of pipe borne water supply in Oshie, the indigenes resorted to the consumption of water from streams, brooks, springs and gazers around farmlands, raffia bushes and forest gallery.⁷³³

⁷³¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.31.

 ⁷³² Anyanwu.C Community development, The Nigerian perspective. Ibadan: Gabesther Educational Publihers
 1992 p.92.

⁷³³ Ibid.

His Royal Highness Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the search for good health and better living conditions for his people, implemented the political philosophy of self-reliance development propagated by President Ahmadou Ahidjo to promote UN-WHO slogan of "Health for all by the year 2000." where he identified water as the priority of priorities for the Oshie people. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe during his self reliance development projects in Oshie designed and carried out pipe borne water supply network in the entire Oshie community. The water supply network covered almost all the quarters in Oshie. It was designed to flow by gravity that did not require any expensive running costs such as pumping from the water catchment point and required no treatment from its natural state.⁷³⁴

To begin with the water supply development project, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe invited an International Organisation such as the Swiss Association for Development and Cooperation (SATA), specialised in the construction of rural water supply schemes in Oshie during the year 1986. The (SATA) association then carried out the studies together with estimates of quantities and costs. They also collected samples of the water in Oshie from the ear-marked water sources and analysed it in specialized laboratory in Switzerland.⁷³⁵ The sources were all springs from areas that water swells or comes out from the earth. The laboratory result from Switzerland indicated that, the water in its untreated form was pure and free from health contamination.⁷³⁶ Armed with the (SATA) file, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe further lobbied for financial aid from the officials of the Embassy in Yaounde. His dream became successful when they promised to assist him financially and materially.⁷³⁷

The International Non Governmental Organization provided materials such as digging equipments and technical expertise in the form of supervision of the water project in Oshie. Back at home, Fon Adi Lucas Anyagwe held several council meetings with all the quarter heads to mobilize the people to contribute their quotas such as; all Oshie indigenes that resided within the village were to carry out all the communal labour, such as the excavation of trenches for the network of water pipes. All Oshie elite who served in government services not withstanding where ever they were, were obliged to pay a financial levy equivalent to their income. The campaign was strongly carried out in Cameroon particularly in the C D C

⁷³⁴ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.33.

⁷³⁵ Ibid p.34

⁷³⁶ Foreign visitors or guests to Oshie who depended on bottled water elsewhere in Cameroon, consumped Oshie pipe borne water in its pure state without fear of health hazards.

plantations where a bulk of Oshie elite that served in the entire plantation stood at about 3000 inhabitants, excluding the dependants.⁷³⁸

In the construction phase of the pipe borne water system, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ear-marked the Togokweni hilly area of Oshie. This was because it comprised of gallery forests with many spring water sources. With the availability of working tools supplied by (SATA) association, the quarter head of each quarter further mobilised the indigenes to participate in the excavation of the water sources. This was done alongside the SATA technicians and the local technicians. When the water sources were all dug and water catchment points built at all the sources. The water network system was put in place to link the Baiku quarter where the collection chamber was built. It was channelled directly to the Presbyterian school Bereje hill where the main distribution tank "Reservoir" was built. The men dug trenches for water network and women carried sand, while the SATA technicians alongside the local technicians constructed wash hands basin taps and single taps in all the quarters, road junctions, and market place.⁷³⁹ Plate 34a and 34 b portrays some single and washed hands basin water taps in Oshie constructed through the development policies of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. Maintenance of the water supply network system was carried out on monthly bases by the trained technicians recruited in Oshie alongside the SATA technicians.

Plate 34a: Single Pipe Borne Water Tap in Oshie in 1980.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection from Field Work, Oshie, October 2016.

⁷³⁸ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p.67.

⁷³⁹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p. 13.



Plate 34b: Wash Hand Basin Tap in Oshie in 1985.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection from Field Work, Oshie, October 2016.

The SATA strategies for water supply management included the development of local groups and technicians through training programs and the designing of projets. In this direction, most of the local technicians in Oshie benefited from these training policies. During the first phase of the distribution of pipe borne water to the entire Oshie community, almost every quarter was supplied with water. But with an exception of Togobeku present day Nyebai quarter of Oshie and the Barimbong quarter. This was because of the elevated topography and distant location from the water distribution tank. The inhabitants of Nyebai quarter were so disgruntled that women folk went fine-tuned songs which they sang in the open during the Anangkobi dance festival, to manifest their contempt.⁷⁴⁰ In fact, all the quarters in Oshie were supplied with pipe borne water, which became the main source of drinking water. Streams and brooks that were used by the indigenes as sources of drinking, bathing and the washing of dresses were abandoned.⁷⁴¹

Through the self-reliance development projects in Oshie, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe further exposed other ear marked development projects in the community to the Swiss and German Embassies for technical assistant. Hence, financial aids was provided to Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe for the realization of the water supply project. The provision of pipe borne water in the entire community of Oshie thus restrained majority of the indigenes from the

⁷⁴⁰Interview with Fondeh Samuel, 49, Builder, Oshie, 15 July, 2016.

⁷⁴¹*Idem*.

consumption of water from streams and rain. Through the development policies deployed by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, the chiefdom of Oshie witnessed many development projects that changed the wellbeing of the indigenes.⁷⁴² Since the inception of pipe borne water supply network in Oshie, every quarter was supplied with pipe borne water supply taps.

When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on in 1997, the maintenance system of the water supply network dwindled, and as such adequate care on the water supply system in Oshie was almost abandoned. This was due to the fact that there was no constant supply of funds to pay the technicians. In fact, from the establishment of pipe borne water supply system in Oshie, the purity of the water had stood the taste of time and had continued to serve the entire community up to present. To ensure an adequate and continuous maintenance of the pipe borne water supply system, the OCA association took over its control.⁷⁴³ Indeed, nowadays in the chiefdom of Oshie, there is constant water supply for domestic usage and this has gone further to reduce water borne diseases in the community and this has also instigated many wealthy individuals to install water supply system in their households.

4.5.2 Oshie Playing Ground and Tourist Home

The traditional rulers of Oshie were actively involved in the construction of social facilities and recreational centres such as Oshie playing ground and tourist home. Following an increase in the population of Oshie during the reign of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, the chiefdom was not opportuned to have a playing ground for the manifestation of socio-cultural activities such as the youth day celebration. By the year 1970, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe allocated an area that served as farm land for the construction of the play ground. It was here that all socio-cultural activities in the chiefdom such as, youth day celebration by the Mission schools took place. The celebration of the *Anangkobi* dance festival was also moved from the Fon's palace to the Oshie playing ground. The Mission schools also used the play ground to organize games with other Missionary schools in the area.⁷⁴⁴

The Missionary also used the play ground to organize church activities such as singing and Presbyterian zonal rallies. Although, the playing ground was limited in a way that it could not contain the increasing population at the time. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe ascended the throne of Oshie in 1975, he renovated the playing ground to encompass the large population at the time. By the year 1978, he changed the location of the stadium and enlarged

⁷⁴² Interview with Agyingi Oscar ,71, Retired Civil Servant, Oshie, September, 2015.

⁷⁴³ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie p.26.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

the dimension of the playing ground to incorporate the increasing Oshie population during important socio-cultural activities. Through his self-reliance development policies, communal labour was organised in which the people of Oshie from each quarter took turns to work on the playground and stadium.⁷⁴⁵ In order to realise the project, financial contributions were made by the Oshie elite who served in government services in Cameroon including those in the diaspora.

During the inauguration ceremony of the play ground and grand stand in April 1979, the Senior Divisional Officer for Momo Division, Gabriel Bambod Sikod remarked that the grand stand was the best in the North West province. Visiting expatriates who came to Oshie during the *Anangkobi* dance festival also appreciated the Oshie grand stand and the effort of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe.⁷⁴⁶ During vacation the Oshie students and Teachers union OSTU took turns in the maintenance of the play ground. They supplied and mounted iron poles at the goal post and also chopped the grass on the pitch. It was here that the Anang kobi dance festival of Oshie was and is always organised at the end of every year. Plate 35a and 35b portray a lay out of the Oshie playing ground and the giant stadium.

Plate 35a: Side View of Oshie Playing Ground and Stadium.



Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection, Oshie, October 2016.

⁷⁴⁵ Interview with Itambi Thadeus, 62, Teacher, Oshie, 11 October, 2015.

⁷⁴⁶ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.32.



Plate 35b: Front View of Oshie Playing Ground and Stadium.

Source: Walter Ngri Achombong Research Collection, Oshie, October 2016.

Prior to the exit of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe from the throne of Oshie in 1997, the playing ground had served and continue to serve the elites of Oshie community and Njikwa subdivision in socio-cultural activities such as games, Presbyterian zonal rallies and the *Anangkobi* dance festival. The Oshie playing ground stands out as the most outstanding pitch in the entire Njikwa sub-division and Momo Division at large. The renovation and realizations of the playing ground and stadium was thanks to the development policies of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. In this regard, each quarter in Oshie took turns on monthly bases to keep the playing ground and it's environ clean.⁷⁴⁷

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also undertook salient development projects in the domain of tourism. Tourism is regarded as one of the oldest forms of travel in the world.⁷⁴⁸ This aspect is based on satisfying the curiosity of tourists who wish to view other people in their authentic environment. It is also aimed at discovering the physical manifestations of their life styles through their arts and crafts, music and dance.⁷⁴⁹ Many people travel not only for leisure and pleasure but to have a deeper understanding of the culture of their various destinations. The multicultural aspect of Cameroon has enabled tourists to visit the country, thus making it famous.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ Adams, G.D,Cultural tourism :The arrival of the intelligent traveller, Museum New, December 1995 p.32-35.

⁷⁴⁹ Winsconsin Heritage Tourism Program 1999 p.3 Available:http://torc.linkbc.ca/torc/downs 1/Artcl-Power cultural Tourism-GL.Pdf Accessed 23 August 2016.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

Through his self-reliance development programmes, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe coupled with his knowledge in surveys and town planning, designed and constructed a Tourist home in Oshie. His popularity at home, in the North West region, Cameroon and the diaspora at large enabled him to construct a Tourist home to host his guests during important occasions in Oshie. In fatc, during the *Anangkobi* cultural dance festival, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe often invited foreign guests such as the officials of Swiss and British Embassies in Yaounde. In the course of their visit in Oshie, they were lodged at the Tourist home. It was also opened to Tourists who visited Oshie to have a view of the area and culture of the people.⁷⁵¹ The vision he had was to expose Oshie as whole to these foreign bodies in order to lobby for funds to boost up development projects in the community. After his exit from the throne, the Tourist home had been accorded little attention due to the fact that the number of tourists that visit Oshie annually had reduced.⁷⁵²

4.6 Revitalization of Oshie Cultural Activities

The traditional rulers of Oshie played a great role in the revitalisation of cultural activities in the chiefdom. The revival of cultural activities in the chiefdom of Oshie by its rulers was carried out in respect to the changing societies during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. By the year 1980, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe undertook measures to revive and modernized the *Anangkobi* dance festival to its annual and present day status. Envelop in this reflection, he made it to cover two days which include socio-cultural activities like choral, folk music and traditional dances. The first day of the *Anangkobi* annual dance was dedicated to choral, folkloric music and the traditional dances while the second day was devoted to the *Anangkobi* dance proper. It was organised in a way that, the Fon's entourage on the first day of the *Anangkobi* dance comprised of palace princes and princesses, along side the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. His suite at the playing ground consisted of the royal family, invited guests and other important personalities in Oshie and Njikwa subdivision.⁷⁵³ Plate 36 depicts a cross section of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe with other invited guests at the Oshie village stadium during the *Anangkobi* dance festival.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Interview with Anjoneck Joshua, 70, farmer, Oshie 2015.

⁷⁵³ Idem.
Plate 36: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe Sitting with some Dignitaries during the Anangkobi Dance Festival in Oshie 1980.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015

The people seated were visitors from European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Dutch and Britain based in Yaounde. They were invited to Oshie during the *Anangkobi* dance festival by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. This was due to the fact that, the foreign guests often provided foreign aids to the people of Oshie in the form of, materials for the construction of roads alongside food stuffs like rice, tin beef, dry milk, sugar and groundnut oils. These items were shared to all the household in Oshie during the Christmas period. In this light, the living conditions and life style of many Oshie indigenes were enhanced as they looked upon Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe as their saviour. Through his diplomatic relations with the European countries, Oshie was known all over the North West region and Cameroon at large.⁷⁵⁴

His Royal Highness Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also organised the Anangkobi dance in a way that, the second day of the annual dance festival was devoted completely for the *Anangkobi* dance proper. On such a day, the dressing formalities were purely traditional. The Fon and his close associates, the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* appeared in the Grassfields traditional out-fit known as *Togho*, along side the notables, princes and princesses. Other titled men also put on the traditional out-fit and hats or *Mbotis* especially the traditional elders *Okum* with the chief priest. The traditional hats carried

⁷⁵⁴ In the domain of traditional diplomacy, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe strengthen relations with the Oshie neighbours and created relations with European countries such as Germany, Britain and Switzerland. Officials of these countries were often invited in Oshie by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe during the *Anangkobi* dance festival.

traditional insignias such as red feathers and porcupine quils decorated on the hats by the Fon according to their order of importance. Those who could not afford the traditional hat along side the women put on bamboo pith ropes round their heads.⁷⁵⁵ Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in his encouragement for the subjects to put on the Bamenda Grassfields traditional cloth Togho was exhibiting traditional African culture during the Anangkobi dance festival. This was similar to their counterparts in Bali during the Lela festival and Nso during the Ngonso festival.

They all carried long sticks decorated in zebra color accompanied by fly-whisks made from animal tails especially that of the horse or cow or artificial ones.⁷⁵⁶ The Fon's suite on the second day was incorporated with an *Abuh*, a feathery masquerade and the traditional elders *Okum* who moved in a convoy with the Fon from the palace to the ceremonial ground. The Fon was led by special men blowing the elephant tusk trumpets, closely followed by the princesses carrying the royal throne and other royal accessories such as the leopard skin, the royal bag and a number of embroidered wine calabashes. The major activities of the second day of the *Anangkobi* dance festival was and is the manifestation of the *Anangkobi* dance proper by the entire community.⁷⁵⁷

The arrival at the ceremonial ground was well organised and synchronised by the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* alongside the *Agwee* or *Nyangnyang* masquerade or the village police. Movement from the palace to the village ceremonial ground consisted of the Fon, the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* together with the princes and the princesses and the Agwee blasting the trumpet. Entry into the ceremonial ground was done in the form of an indian file by the dancers from all the quarters in Oshie, heralded by the Fon and the traditional elders *Okum*. Plate 37 portrays the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival of 1984, second from the left was Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe with his Messenger Fokala Lucas carrying the Fon's royal bag alongside the traditional elders *Okum* moving from the palace to the ceremonial ground.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁵ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.54.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid p.16.

⁷⁵⁷ Interview with Takwi Godfred, 52, farmer, Oshie, july 2018.

⁷⁵⁸ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p.17.

Plate 37: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in a Royal Convoy with the Traditional Elders *Okum* moving from the Palace to the Ceremonial Ground during the *Anangkobi* Dance Festival.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015.

Moving beside and behind the Fon were other palace Messengers and the royal family carrying the royal stool and other royal accessories alongside the traditional elders *Okum* as mentioned above. The *Agwee* masquerade or village traditional police together with the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* firing guns and chanting war songs as the procession moved from the palace to the ceremonial ground. As the entire population made up of all the quarters assembled on the ceremonial ground. The sacrificial Lamb was slaughtered by the traditional elders *Okum Obeg* to purify the people from evil ailments and also fortified the land from any evil incursion before the *Anangkobi* dance proper was set on the pitch.⁷⁵⁹

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also performed his priestly functions to his subjects at this juncture. Rituals were carried out alongside some incantations by the village traditional doctors together with the Fon holding the royal spear as they moved round the ceremonial ground. There were some rituals performed under the direction of the Fon through the traditional elders *Okum* and the village traditional herbalists charged with such responsibilities. Nkwi captured such situation when he stated that, the priestly and ceremonial role of the Fon was actually the beneficent and protective aspect of Kingship.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid* p.60.

⁷⁶⁰ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.53.

The purification rite of the entire community during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival were performed by, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*. As the chief priest and intermediary between the gods and people, he was involved in rituals which were fundamental for the promotion of fertility, health, prosperity, peace and justice in the chiefdom. His ritual performances protected the basic needs of his people and the stability of the social order. The exercise of his priestly office was practical and useful because the royal ritual during annual festivities did not only bring fertility to the land and its people, health, prosperity and successes but it was also performed to purged away evil incursion from the community.⁷⁶¹

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe as the custodian of tradition of the people of Oshie was at the centre of the secret cults, most of which were performed by the traditional elders *Okum* and the chief priests. All the traditional rites were carried out in his name for the welfare of the land. Indeed, the purification of the entire population during the *Anangkobi* dance festival prior to the dance proper was performed by, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe together with the traditional elders *Okum*. This was done through the slaughtering of a sacrificial lamb with its blood used in cleansing the entire population from any evil attack incurred inadvertently by the indigenes in the community. Plate 38 depicts the traditional elders *Okum Obeg* together with Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe slaughtering the lamb during the *Anangkobi* dance festival.⁷⁶²

Plate 38: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe and the Traditional Elders Okum Obeg Preparing to Slaughter the Sacrificial Lamb During the Anangkobi Dance Festival in Oshie.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.17.

Above was Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe giving instructions to the traditional elders *Okum Obeg* in preparation to slaughter the sacrificial lamb. It was a general phenomenon among the Bamenda Grassfields chiefdoms that the Fon had to supervise important rituals at the end of the agricultural cycle, which is after harvest of yams and during important festivals in the kingdom. He had to make offerings to his ancestors and requested their blessings. This was done in the middle of the dry season, towards the end of December. If the offering were accepted, the blessings of the ancestors were transmitted by sacrificing a lamb to appease the gods and also to cleanse the community. That was why Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe during his reign, at the end of each annual year organised the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival to commemorate the culture of the people of Oshie by purging away evil happenings in the entire community and also to welcome the New Year. This was done by slaughtering a lamb during the *Anangkobi* dance festival. Plate 39 depicts the traditional elders *Okum Obeg* slaughtering the sacrificial lamb during the *Anangkobi* dance festival.

Plate 39: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe with the Traditional Elders Okum Obeg Slaughtering the Sacrificial Lamb during the Anangkobi Dance Festival in Oshie.



Source Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015

The slaughtering of the sacrificial lamb by the *Okum Obeg* together with the Fon marked the peak of the *Anangkobi* dance festival. This was done in respect of the tradition and culture of the people of Oshie when the *Anangkobi* dance was created during the yam season between October and November to celebrate the advent of peace after the First World War. After the slaughtering of the lamb, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, together with the *Abuh* feathery masquerade and the

chiefdom medicine men moved round the dancing arena to perform some ritual before the dancing proper. It was during such moments that the spiritual authority of the Fon was manifested through the use of the royal spear accompanied with some incantations. The drums were fixed at the centre of the dancing ground decorated with raffia palm fibres. They were played by elders who had a mastery of the *Anangkobi* dance rhythm. Singing and dancing was done in a synchronized manner piloted by the traditional elders *Okum* as they moved round the pitch together with the Fon.⁷⁶³ Plate 40 and 40b depicts Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe together with the traditional elders *Okum* at the point of moving round the pitch for ritual enactments during the *Anangkobi* dance proper.

Plate 40a: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe with the Traditional Elders Okum Preparing to begin the Purification Rite before the Anangkobi Dancing Proper.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedicks Private Archive, Oshie 2015.

The spiritual purification of Oshie indigenes during Anangkobi annual dance festival as describe above was a common phenomenon among the Westetern Grassfields chiefdoms at the end of each year. It was an aspect that was equally carried out during annual celebrations by their counter parts in Bali during the *Lela* festival and also in Nso during the *Ngonso* festival.

⁷⁶³ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.18.

Plate 40b: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe together with the Traditional Elders *Okum* Moving Round the Crowd of people as they prepared the Ground for Dancing proper.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015.

The drumming during the *Anangkobi* dance festival was often monotonous because the musicians were either two or three to warrant variations without interrupting the continuity of the dance. However, the dancers were not tied down by hard and fast rules. There were moments of high tempo and jostling of the zebra decorated sticks alongside fly whisk in the crowd of dancers and ululation known as the war dance where every body was involved in dancing. This was performed alongside the Fon and everybody in the community, the Agwee or Nyanyang masquerades were the forerunners who leads the crowd of dancers during such moments. Indeed, one simply devised one's style in compliance with the rhythm.⁷⁶⁴ Infact, this was the general picture of the costume of Anangkobi dance of Oshie, which was equally an image of what was carried out in other chiefdoms and fondoms of the Western Grassfields. The Fons often played tremendous role in the organisation and functioning of the annual dance. Plate 41 portrays Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in a dancing posture together with the traditional elders *Okum*, during the *Anangkobi* dance festival.

⁷⁶⁴ An Annual Publication Magazine Oshie, p 22.

Plate 41: Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe with the Princesses and Traditional Elders Okum in a Dance Posture during the Anangkobi Dance Festival in 1989.



Source: Adapted from, Adang Benedict Private Archive, Oshie, October 2015.

The *Anangkobi* dance festival in Oshie involved every kith and kin in the community during its dancing proper. The dressing was often assorted with men putting on traditional out-fit while the women folk put on gowns as depicted on the caption above. Dancing went on non stop during such moments with individual negotiated refreshments as earlier mentioned. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also revived the Etchepi dance which was almost disappearing among the cultural manifestations in the chiefdom of Oshie. The dance was refered to the pinching of someone with the finger nails for love intentions. It was a sign of expressing love to the opposite sex. The *Etchepi* dance was created by the women folk of Togobei quarter during the *Anangkobi* dance festival, to pinch the love of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe greatly encouraged the manifestation of the dance during the *Anangkobi* dance festival. Hence, *Etchepi* dance became one of the famous women dance in Oshie that was performed during important occasions. The costume of the dance was changed as regard the past where the costume was purely traditional. It was performed solely during important ceremonies in the chiefdom and during the *Anangkobi* dance festival.⁷⁶⁵

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also encouraged the organisers of the various dance groups in Oshie to modify some aspects of the dance to reflect the culture of the people. He also reorganised the manifestation of funeral celebrations that encompassed the *Akati* dance which was performed during such celebrations. He made it to look more of a Christian dance that

⁷⁶⁵ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.19.

involved both the women and the men folk. The women were those who performed during such dances since they were not involved in most of the male dances. The songs sang during the *Akati* dance expressed deep feelings of sorrow and agony. According to the tradition and custom of the people of Oshie, death unites people and the ancestors together and provides good luck to families.⁷⁶⁶

The good functioning of any human society determines the wellbeing of its subjects. Traditional practises of any society that still operate nowadays had been greatly modified in structure and function. They do not play any significant roles as they used to do during the colonial period in village affairs. Most of them exist merely as a recollection of the past.⁷⁶⁷ Some have either been revived in their functions according to the changing world and modernity or by their traditional rulers to match up with the changing societies. With the advent of Christianity, many people became alienated and cut off from traditional practises which was seen as a threat to their new faith. This movement of cultural revival gave rise to modern practises which were not or had little connection with the traditional patterns.⁷⁶⁸ The socio-cultural development of most societies of the Grassfields during the colonial and post colonial period greatly revived some of these traditional practises. This was the more reason why Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe embarked process to revived and modernise the traditional pattern cultural practices in Oshie. He revived most of them to be in conformity with the tradition and culture of the people, whereas some were completely abolished.⁷⁶⁹

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe through his self-reliant development policies in the chiefdom of Oshie, provided a new face-lift to the traditional practices of his people. He revived some of the traditional practices that were and are still part of the people up to the present day. This was done to meet up with the modern standard of traditional practices in other chiefdoms. Some of the traditional aspects that were revived include the act of circumcision of male children at home without adequate medical care that was in fact common among the people of Oshie. Indeed, it was largely practiced because, prior to the ascendancy of Fon Adi Luas Anyangwe on the throne, there were no adequate medical

⁷⁶⁶ It is common within the chiefdoms of the Grassfields and Oshie in particular that when a person dies,the deceased is being mourn for some days which later culminates on the final death celebration fixed by the deceased family.

⁷⁶⁷ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.71.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ Interview with Anjoneck Joshua, 70, farmer, Oshie, July 2015.

facilities where by male children could be circumcised after birth. The people thus recorted to a rudimentary method of circumcision when a male child attained the age of five.⁷⁷⁰

It was unlawful for a male child in the family to be circumcised if his father had not been initiated into the cult of circumcision. When the Oshie Development Health centre was constructed, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe put an end to this rudimentary method of circumcision and people no longer circumcised their male children at home.⁷⁷¹ The act of unconventional circumcision of male children and the organisation of circumcision feast came to an end because it entailed enormous expenditure for individuals to be initiated into the cult. Pregnant women in Oshie during the colonial era often put to birth at home with no ample medical care, but when the Oshie development Health centre was constructed, women no longer put to birth at home rather in the health services. Some went as far as the Presbyterian Acha Tugi hospital where their male children were circumcised immediately after birth.⁷⁷²

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe also revived the method in which bride price endowment was carried out in Oshie. In fact, the requirements for bride price endowments were reduced into two. Marriages were no longer contracted at home but were signed at the village council. Men were also cautioned not to practice polygamy in other to reduce birth rate among families. The expenditure in funeral celebration of deceased persons known as *Oseh* was also adjusted by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. Food items such as pigs and palm wine that were provided by the family of the deceased were shared by the uncles in an equitable manner.⁷⁷³

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to examine the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in sociocultural development in the chiefdom of Oshie from the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe to that of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. In the exploration of facts related to the various socio-cultural aspects in this section of our study, the chapter shows that the Oshie traditional rulers demonstrated great dynamism in socio-cultural development of the chiefdom such as the provision of basic social amineties (pipe borne water supply), Oshie playing ground and Tourist home, the Oshie Health Service, re-organisation of marriage institutions, revitalisation of the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival. Lastly the chapter reveals that, the development of

⁷⁷⁰ Idem.

⁷⁷¹The circumcision feast of male children was largely practiced and respected by the Oshie people right up to the early 1980s when adequate medical structures were not yet avalaible. It was only through the initiative of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe that these obnoxious practices came to an end.

⁷⁷² Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p. 112.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

formal education in the chiefdom was promoted by the traditional rulers through their collaboration with the Basel Mission. The last chapter will be focused on the challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership

CHAPTER FIVE CHALLENGES TO THE DYNAMISM OF OSHIE TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the challenges Oshie traditional rulers faced in their governance of the chiefdom. The chapter begins with an overview of major challenges such as, European interference in Oshie traditional administration, Post independence government meddling in chieftaincy institution, Oshie royal throne succession dispute, royal stool crisis and challenges to the achievements of Oshie traditional rulers.

5.1 European Colonial Interference in Oshie Traditional Rulership

During the European colonial period in the area, the traditional rulers had some challenges. It was practically sound to refer to Oshie as a chiefdom whose hegemony was hardly challenged. With the exception of the punctuated tribal wars she had with her neighbouring communities during migration and settlement, the hegemony of Oshie had a clean record of successful victory. The internal squabbles within the royal family and those who dared to challenge the Fon were responded to, with outrightly.⁷⁷⁴ The Germans and later, the British in the name of colonialism imposed institutional and structural modifications which had profound repercussions on Oshie hegemony within the sub region. It should be noted that in almost every aspects the colonialists sought to mastermind Oshie traditional authority under their colonial administration. In this connection, they endeavoured to fine-tune the traditional structures and institutions of administration to suit their philosophy of governance. It therefore became clear that in the course of time, rulership and control of the traditional administration was to be relegated to the background.⁷⁷⁵

The pioneer challenges confronted by the traditional rulers of Oshie began when the Germans arrived Oshie by the year 1913 on horseback while their luggages were transported on head load by employees from Bali. Due to their cruel nature, hard labour and brutality, as a matter of fact, when the Germans arrived the area, according to Oshie oral history, Emamba was the spiritual leader of the Oshie people. His close associates were the traditional elders *Okum* who assisted him in the local administration of the people during that early period.

⁷⁷⁴ Interview with Adi Richard, 65, Farmer and Plumber, Oshie, July 2016.

⁷⁷⁵ Idem.

Their arrival in Oshie caused Emamba to escape with his descendants to their huts in the forest to escape from the German administration and forced labour.⁷⁷⁶ Such challenges rendered his leadership position worthless in the face of the Germans since he could not succumb to their administration. Though the German administration in the area was so brief, his absent from the scene created an avenue for Adang Engu Anyangwe to assume the throne momentarily. When the First World war broke out in 1914, the Germans were defeated and ousted from Cameroon by the year 1916. The defeat of the German forces in Cameroon by the joint Anglo-French Forces known as WAEF necessitated a change of administration from the Germans to the British. The British compared to the Germans had a more docile and pragmatic approach to the traditional authority and rulership.⁷⁷⁷

The first British Divisional Officer to Bamenda known as Podevin in 1917 deposed chiefs not loyal to German rule and replaced them with those he could easily control. He was aware of the delicacy of avoiding traditional or natural rulers in administering the chiefdoms and fondoms of the Grassfields and thought it wise to co-operate with them. In this direction, the British used the same policy of (Indirect Rule) like the Germans to administer the Grassfields.⁷⁷⁸To properly install this policy that constituted a significant reduction of the powers of the Fons, the British seemed to have been encumbered by the same kind of problems which Lombard describes in the following words. " L'organisation politique ancienne afin de conserver lorsqu'elle appliqué l'indirect rule le maximum de souplesse au Fonctionnement des institutions traditionnelles"⁷⁷⁹Deschamps puts this more clearly when he asserts that it was motivated mostly by;

La confiance dans les institutions et se méfie de construction apriori son point de vue est celui du Biologiste. Une institution est un être vivant qui se développé naturellement. On doit respecter cette vie se contenter de l'orienter et de l'utiliser pour le mieux. Comme le roi et les lords en Angleterre on conserve donc les chefs indigènes en veillent seulement a en faire auxiliaire du développement économique.⁷⁸⁰

These paints some scenes of the application of Indirect Rule in all of Africa including the Grassfields. The substance of all this in Cameroon was that, Britain ensured maximum use of

⁷⁷⁶ An Annual publication agazine, Oshie 1984, Speech by late fon A.L Anyangwe p.10.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ According to this evidence the reasons which motivated Britain to apply the same policy like the Germans were motivated by the same factors. This ranged from lack of funds and personnel's as well as the existence of traditional semi autonomous states with frontline leaders who could be used and assigned to carry precise tasks. For a more detailed comprehensive understanding of the reasons for the application of the direct and indirect rule in Cameroon.see Ngoh. *A Hundred Years of History* p.23, Fanso, *Cameroon History* vol II, p.25 and Rubins *the Cameroun Mandate.p.45*.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.66.

⁷⁸⁰ H. Deschamp."et maintenant Lord Lugard" in Africa vol 33 pp.293-306.

the traditional rulers but equally submerged them to play the functions of administrative auxiliaries though with less pressure on them.⁷⁸¹

It was equally in this way that, when the British colonialists arrived Oshie by the year 1918, they occupied the German station at Azani quarter but never stayed there for long. This created another challenge on Emamba who retreated to the legendary hide-out in the forest thinking that the Germans were back on the scene. The British met Adang Engu Anyangwe who welcomed them and succumbed to their administration. They collaborated with Adang Engu Anyangwe as earlier mentioned and provide him gifts and, recognised him as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. Adang Engu Anyangwe as an intelligent and courageous person used the talking drum and communicated to Emamba in the forest that the new set of white-men were peaceful and friendly.⁷⁸²Adang Engu Anyangwe was thus recognised by the British as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie, because of his courageous nature. He also proves to the people of Oshie that he could rule the people and that a leader was some one who could defend his people against any danger. Upon this, he thus assumes himself as the traditional ruler of the people of Oshie. With the power already in Adang Engu Anyangwe, it became difficult to relinquish traditional authority to Emamba. This situation however created an atmosphere of power tussle between Emamba and Adang Engu Anyangwe.⁷⁸³

The major challenges was that, each of them wanted to be the custodian of *Iku* a demi god that was said to protect and keep vigil over the entire community. According to oshie oral history Emamba went to Adang Engu Anyangwe palace one day and insisted on collecting the *Iku*, when he did not succeed to convince Adang Engu Anyangwe, he attempted to take away his life by strangulation, as earlier seen in the course of the study. The refusal degenerated into a conflict because, Adang Engu Anyangwe wanted to take full authority over the Oshie traditional religion. According to information obtained from my informants, Emamba mysteriously resorted to witchcraft malevolence that resulted to some mysterious attack on the Anyangwe family. In effect to this, many people died in the Anyangwe's family.⁷⁸⁴ The British continued with their Indirect Rule administration in Oshie and hoisted their flag in the

⁷⁸¹⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.10.

⁷⁸³ Interview with Pa Ozughen Solomon, Patriarch who witnessed the days of Chief Adang Engu Anyangwe of Oshie, he was among the first ordain catechist in Oshie, 2004.

⁷⁸⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.25.

premises of Adang Engu Anyangwe in Bereje quarter which became the seat of royalty in Oshie up to the present.

The transition of traditonal rulership from Emamba to the Anyangwe dynasty, brought a lot of challenges on the traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie.⁷⁸⁵ In the course of time, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe alongside the traditional elders *Okum* instituted a hereditary traditional rulership in Oshie. From that inception Oshie was ruled by the Anyangwe dynasty.⁷⁸⁶ Due to the persistent resistance from Emamba, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe organized consultative talks with the two families alongside the traditional elders *Okum* and the British colonialists with the aim of resolving the conflict.⁷⁸⁷ To overcome future dispute, it was concluded that Emamba should be the head of the kingmakers and custodian of tradition, while Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe was in charge of the village administration.⁷⁸⁸ To mollify these challenges, the Fon was required by tradition to designate his heir before his death. The successor to the throne was to be of the royal family, born on the Tiger skin. Peace reigned in the Anyangwe royal family up to when Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, passed on and was succeeded by his son Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe.⁷⁸⁹

During the reign of Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, the rulership dispute resurface again although was resolve through an intervention of the Native Authorities of Ngunu Area. Another challenges to the authority of traditional rulership in Oshie was for the fact that, D O. Podevin invited the Fons of Bamenda Division to their station in Bamenda.⁷⁹⁰Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe this time knew so little about the British administration in the region and elsewhere in Cameroon. Through such invitation, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe found it profitable to collaborate with the Whiteman. He responded to the invitation of the District officer with little doubts by trekking from Oshie to Bamenda. For the fact that Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe was made to trek from Oshie to Bamenda was a challenge to his traditional authority and fonship. Under normal circumstances the D O. needed to tour the

⁷⁸⁵ The pioneer traditional ruler of Oshie was Adang Anyangwe, but as a symbol of honor and respect, the appellation Engu referring to papa was accorded to his first name to be an honorific form of calling the Fon.But Engu got adapted to the order of the names of the Fon.

⁷⁸⁶ The notion of chief never existed in Oshie. The people were organized and headed by the *Okum*, who earned these positions or titles through their bravery in warfare, the only criteria for leadership. 287 March 2010 Parallel Places Figure 57.

⁷⁸⁷ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People Places Events p. 57.

⁷⁸⁸Ibid. ⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁰Nkwi, *Traditional Government*, p.142. The reason why Podevin asked the Fons who were mostly ilitrates brings in some elements of confusion. We wonder how such men of honour could effectively handle or appreciate the administration through"book keeping" It reveals however that, Podevin was less informed or even confused about their status.

region to meet the authorities at their base. There was equally the situation whereby the D O asked the Fons to continue to rule as it was in the days of the Germans but to record all their activities and actions in their books which was equally a challenge to Fon Etunyi Anyangwe because he had not received formal education and could not read or write. What the D O meant in essence was that, the Fons were to be completely accountable to the British Officials who were believed to have the valiant openness in their administration. Decision makers became decision executors which was against traditional norms of the land.⁷⁹¹

Furthermore, by accepting to assume tax collection and to deliver the tax quotas to the British Resident in Bamenda, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe believed that he was courting the support of the British to maintain cordial relations with them and to make his reputation known as far as the collection of revenue was concerned. To some extent he was right because when the people of Barimbong quarter in Oshie located close to the Mundum villages were deceived by the chief of that village to pay taxes to him, he submitted a complaint to the Ngwo Native Court adjudicated over by the District Officer in Bamenda for justice to be rendered. This served like a lesson to other chiefdoms who could have been dreaming of such ventures. The District Officer was the agent of improvement with the aid of funds from taxation. Infact, some chiefs betrayed others to gain favour just to avoid torture from the foreign administrators.⁷⁹²

The policy of the government was that chiefs should govern their people, not as independent, but as auxiliaries of the government. The orders of the government are not conveyed to the people through them, but emanate from them in accordance, where necessary, instruction received through the resident. While they themselves are controlled by government in accordance with that policy by the people themselves. A political officer would consider it as irregular to issue direct orders to an individual, native or even a village head, as a general commanding a division, would do to a private soldier, except through his commanding officer.⁷⁹³According to Lugard, the essential feature of Indirect Rule was that the native chiefs were constituted;

.....As an integral part of the machinery of the administration. There are not two sets of Rulers-British and Native working either separately or in cooperation, but a single government in which the native chiefs have well-defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with British officials. Their duties should never conflict, and should overlap as little as possible. They should be complementary to each

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ Michael Crowder, West Africa Under Colonial Rule, London; Hutchinson, 1986 p. 217.

other, and the chief himself must understand that he has no right to place and power, unless he renders his proper services to the State.⁷⁹⁴

Fon Etunyi Anyangwe encountered some chanllenges with the British resident in Bamenda when he collected tax revenue in Oshie and consumed. Such an act betrayed his credibility and reputation in the face of the British resident in Bamenda though as a Native Authority, the British officer found it unnecessary for him to refund the money. Another handicap to the personality and authority of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe was that, he had not received any formal education that could enable him strengthen his collaboration with the British resident in Bamenda. Although, he had a grasp of many issues in the chiefdom and had a mastery in the local administration of his people. In fact, during the chiefs' conference organised in Bamenda, his messages were construed in English by a man from Ngie since he could not read nor write although he was able to collaborate with them in pidgin language. Indeed, language was a barrier between the traditional rulers and the British Resident easily manipulated over them to their advantage.⁷⁹⁵

5.2 Post-Independence Government and Chieftaincy Institutions

The traditional rulers in Cameroon faced a lot of challenges during the post-independence period especially those of the chiefdom of Oshie in particular. In July 10th 1960, a law was enacted which recognized the existence of traditional rulers along lines determined by the government in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, following the state of confusion that reigned between traditional authorities. Ahidjo modified the law on the 2nd of June 1972 and 9th of May 1975 earlier enacted in 1960. It was the 1977 Chieftaincy re-organization law that gave wider definitions and attributions to the powers of Fons and Chiefs.⁷⁹⁶ The law had one central message which was that; traditional rulers were auxiliaries of the administration and as such were called upon to execute instructions as handed down to them by the hierarchy.

According to article 2 to 5 of this law, Chiefs and Chiefdoms were classified into; First class chiefdoms: These were chiefdoms whose area of jurisdiction and competence covered at least two second class chiefdoms. Second class chiefdoms were those whose geographical limit does not extend more than a division. Second class chiefdoms were those chiefdoms that could encompass two Third class chiefs whose area of jurisdiction and competence were not supposed to go beyond the limits of sub division. Third class chiefdoms were smaller units

 ⁷⁹⁴ Lugard, "Principles of Native Administration," in Robert O.Collins,(ed) *Problems in the History of Colonial Africa* 1860-1960 (Englewood cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1970 p. 97.
⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ Law of 2nd June 1972 and that of 9th May 1975 at the Bamenda Regional Archives.

which could be large villages, quarters in urban centres. The 1977 decree made it abundantly clear that all chiefdoms were placed under the authority of a chief and as a result, chiefs or Fons could also be classified into the 1st, 2nd and 3rd class chiefs. First class chiefdoms were recognized by a circular of the Prime Minister, 2nd class by the Minister of Territorial Administration and Third class by the Divisional Officer.⁷⁹⁷

The guidelines of the circular insinuated that first, second and third class chiefdoms and chiefs could still be appointed or carved out by an agent of the administration to perform special administrative needs. Regardless of the class, chiefs or Fons during the British era were assigned the duties of tax collection, limited justice and discipline within their areas of jurisdiction. In return, they were to be compensated with some salaries and monthly dashes as deemed fit by the administration. The administrative Officers were to closely watch over the comportment of chiefs in the execution of the functions assigned to them by the D.O. This meant that administrative officers were the ones who could determine the practical functioning of any chief and in that capacity, could even defy tradition to dismiss or dethrone them. The grades of sanctions to be meted on the failure of a chief to submit to the administrative Official as defined by the law were equally spelt out in this Decree.⁷⁹⁸

The law created some challenges to Oshie rulership. Firstly, the introduction of some forms of salaries to chiefs made Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to abandon his government services in Yaounde. He moved to Oshie and assumed his office of traditional ruler. Although such a situation was more of his personal interest. This situation is captured by Nkwi, who asserts that, the Grassfields chiefs like their European peers had lost most of their sources of power. Most traditional rulers had dual roles in the nation state structure and the other in the traditional setting.⁷⁹⁹ But it turned out that, the allowances promised chiefs were low during the 1980s and 1990s, due to the economic crisis that hit the country. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to overcome the situation of low income wages, created what was known as Njikwa Funds Union. This union was made up of the various third class chiefdoms of the area, with the objectives of raising funds to support the chiefs. Thirdly, the law stated clearly that the administration represented by the D O. or Sub D O. were to ensure a conducive

⁷⁹⁷ Nkwi, Traditional Government and Social Change p.227.

⁷⁹⁸ Law of 2nd June 1972 and that of 9th May 1975 at the Bamenda Regional Archives.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

working atmosphere for the chiefs (Fons) and the use of all the elements of discipline within the ambits of their administration to protect them.⁸⁰⁰

Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe further encountered challenges during the year 1990 when the S D F party was launched in Bamenda. As a natural ruler in the CPDM party and in his capacity as auxilliary of the government, he deviated from the main party to militate in the S D F opposition party. When the Presidential elections were organised by the government in 1992, he offered a vehicle to the S D F party to carry out campaigns in Bamenda and other regions. His political dream was to achieve a renowned position in the government in the event of the S D F party becoming victorious in the Presidential election, but his vision was not realised due to the failure of the S D F opposition party. In 1996, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe decided to play the political chameleon, he moved from the S D F party and reinstated his position in the C P D M party. This carpet crossing was due to the fact that, during the council elections of 1996, the opposition party recorded an overall defeat. In this light, the ruling C P D M party captured an absolute majority of seats in the parliament. The Fons began to think twice and to adjust their political view. Many Fons who had only been paying lip-services to the C P D M began to be more genuine in their support, while those who had sat on the fence took definite positions in favour of the ruling party. This trend was motivated by the fact that, the rulling party philosophy of giving food to the children first before allowing the crumbs to the dogs convinced the Fons that they should side with the governing party, if they wanted to attract development projects to their areas.⁸⁰¹

In order to overcome such a political viewpoint, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe managed to grapple with this new demands in an attempt to foster development projects in the chiefdom of Oshie. The government on its part managed to fulfil its own part of the promise but it should be noted that the respect of such orders depended on a number of variables which included: the honour of the administrative Officers in place, the availability of funds and budgetary estimate. In the main, the government succeeded to provide an enabling environment for the functioning of the Fons. Inspite of these developments, the liberalization laws of the 1990s that came with the re-introduction of multi party politics brought challenges on Oshie traditional rulership.⁸⁰²

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸⁰¹ V. B. Amaazzee, Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History p. 84.

⁸⁰² Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Places, Events p.97.

The authorities of the traditional rulers in Oshie was largely affected by the reintroduction of multi-partism. The Presidential Decrees and the civil disobedience, reintroduced multipartism in Cameroon and there was a number of liberalization Laws that provided freedoms in many aspects of public and private life including a call for an improvement in Cameroon Human Rights record. While Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe yearned for the return of those days when only the D O. challenged their powers. Many people had either abandoned the Fons on their own or, did not see the need to pay any tribute to them. There was wide spread poverty and most people who depended on the palace for their livelihood resorted to other means to survive.⁸⁰³ To surive such situation, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in his administration instituted the payment of compulsory development fees where part of it was kept in the palace coffers.

Moreover, with the formidable economic hardship, it became difficult for the Fon to impose his decisions on his Palace guard. It also became difficult for the traditional elders *Okum* to pay regular tributes to the Fon. This only helped to produce repeated clashes and gross disobedience which continued to undermine Oshie traditional rulership. Indeed, the occultist society that Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was alleged to have involved himself in it, helped to weaken the grip of the Fon on his people. Against this back ground, the Fon remained mute and only continued with his self-reliance development policies in the chiefdom of Oshie. In fact, the attempt by the indigenes to tarnish his repute were overshadowed by the development projects he initiated in the chiefdom. Prior to his exit from the throne of Oshie in 1997, he has reinstated his membership in the ruling CPDM party alongside a majority of the people of Oshie.⁸⁰⁴

5.3 Succession Dispute to Oshie Royal Throne

One of the main challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers was the royal throne succession dispute. Following the disappearance of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe from the throne in 1997, the royal family in Oshie was plunged into chaos as to who was to replace the deceased Fon. From the inception of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie, chieftaincy succession was made hereditary within the Anyangwe dynasty. According to the traditions and customs of the people, before the death of the Fon, he was required to choose among his sons the next heir to succeed him. After choosing the heir, the Fon informs the kingmakers who preserve the secret up to when he finally passed on. The succeesion rite was

⁸⁰³ *Ibid*.

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid* p. 101.

also carried out through the process of the "will" where the Fon designated who ever was to succeed him through a written note or memorandum. Moreover, another way a Fon could ascend to the throne of Oshie was through a special selection among the princes carried out especially by the kingmakers. This was done in respect to when the Fon failed to appoint his successor before his death. In a situation where the deceased Fon had only one son, the selection was easy but in the case of many sons, the selection was complicated. In this direction, the selection of a successor to replace Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe created a dispute among the princes. In fact, there was serious disagreement within the princes of the royal family on who was to succeed the deceased father.⁸⁰⁵

The princes disputed among themselves because it was purported that, the father did not designate his successor before he passed on. In order to seek for solution to the succession dispute, the princes and princesses of the royal family held an *ad hoc* meeting in Douala. According to information obtained from informants, the meeting took place alongside a lot of peril and coercion from the royal family members on who was to be enthroned as Fon. Some members of the royal family had masterminded ill-fated ideas to enthrone Ercisyrol Anyangwe as the traditional ruler of Oshie. The decision to enthrone Ercisyrol Yande Anyangwe as Fon of Oshie was unanimously agreed upon. The traditional elders *Okum* who never supported this choice were courted by some princesses and princes of the deceased Fon to accept the choice of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. Meanwhile the designated traditional ruler put in place by the elite in what was known as the Bafoussam Declaration was overwhelmingly rejected because it was not in line with the tradition of Oshie.⁸⁰⁶

According to the content of the declaration and as stipulated by tradition, a new Fon was obliged to be humble, intelligent, have a good knowledge and mastery of the Oshie dialect.⁸⁰⁷ He was obliged to have a good working knowledge of the traditional institutions and be available in the chiefdom at all time to carry out his duties. He was to be physically and mentally fit and capable of expressing a unifying influence within the royal family and the entire community. In fact, the choice of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe posed a lot of challenges within the royal family cycle due to the fact that, he was not welcomed by all the members of the royal family. There was also disagreement on what was presented as the fathers "will" as to who the deceased father had designated to succeed him. It was largely rumoured that, the

⁸⁰⁵ Interview with Atambele Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie, July 2015.

⁸⁰⁶ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, prince in the Oshie royal family and eye contender in the chieftaincy succession dispute in Oshie, june 2017.

⁸⁰⁷ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p.221.

said "will" was alleged to have been forged to reflect on the choice of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe.⁸⁰⁸

The succession dispute of Oshie royal throne further created a division among the members of the royal family. In fact, during the enthronement ceremony of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe as the traditional ruler (Fon) of Oshie, there was disagreement propagated by the deceased Fon first wife. She was steadfast that Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe be enthroned as the Fon of Oshie, meanwhile the other members of the royal family were not in accordance with the choice. The traditional elders Okum were wooed by the supporters of Ericsyrol Anyangwe to uphold that Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe who was based in the United States of America would solve their financial lot. The divergent opinion within the royal family marked the beginning of an eminent chieftaincy crisis that later erupted in the chiefdom of Oshie. Despite all the challenges, Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was enthroned as the traditional ruler of Oshie in the year 1998 by the traditional elders Okum, the king maker and members of the royal family. The enthronement ceremony was attended by various Fons of the neighbouring chiefdoms of Njikwa sub-division.⁸⁰⁹ The enthronement ceremony was as well attended by the Senior Divisional Officer of Momo representing the Minister of territorial administration⁸¹⁰ and his name was thus, inscribed in the register of Grassfields traditional rulers of Cameroon.

The choice of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was received with a lot of reactions from the Oshie traditional hierarchy but since the choice was made by the royal family, they went ahead and installed him. The reaction from some of the members was very hostile and most of them openly expressed their disapproval on the choice of the Fon. Questioned on how the enthronement ceremony was welcomed and appreciated within the entire family were purely in doubt. One realizes that the decisions of the royal family was accepted with mixed feelings within the chiefdom. From the above evidence, it was also clear that the choice and investiture of Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe for reasons best understood by the princes and princesses in the royal family planted the seeds for the erosion of the Fons powers. It created a real problem within the Oshie traditional set up and produced two camps one in support of the Fon and the other against. The succession dispute to the Oshie royal compound became an

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ An Annual publication Magazine Oshie p.25.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid.

intractable issue within the chiefdom of Oshie and beyond in that these challenges became evident during the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe.⁸¹¹

5.4 Internal Challenges to the Administration of Fon Ercisyrol Anyangwe

The administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe also brought a lot of challenges in the chiefdom of Oshie. This was due to the fact that, as he ascended to the throne of Oshie, he began his administration through the appointment of closest aides to administer the chiefdom in his absent. However, to carry out such a task, he appointed one of the royal princes in the palace to pilot the administrative affairs of the chiefdom and report back to him in the case where there was a problem. For the fact that, the interim ruler was residing during this period in Limbe, this became difficult for him to meet up with the village administration bestowed on his custody. Serving as a teacher in Limbe, he found the duty inappropriate to relinquish his job to assume his functions as a mentor in the Oshie palace. One of my informant affirms that, he had prearranged to complete the academic year before he returned to Oshie. But when he failed to consummate his duty as set forth by Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe, a year after he was replaced by another prince in respect to the norms Oshie tradition and custom.⁸¹² This situation, coupled with his absence on the throne generated a lot of challenges in his administration.

Conversely, the administration of the first regent put in place by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was not felt by the people. This was due to his irregular absences and nonparticipation in village council meetings and decision making processes. In this regard, no development projects were carried out in Oshie during the period. But during the reign of Anyangwe Francis, it was purported that, he provided farm land to the Bereje women folk at the Fon's farm land to cultivate crops. He also negotiated with the traditional elders *Okum* to bring back the exiled persons in to Oshie. Unfortunately, he passed on without an adequate completion of his mandate. With the ineffective nature in the administrations of the regents put in place by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, he further designated another regent by name George Anyangwe who was residing in Bamenda. His absences in the village as well, led to many challenges in the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe which later contributed to chieftaincy crisis in the chiefdom.⁸¹³

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

⁸¹²Interview with Anyangwe Margeret, 52, princess of the royal family in Oshie, 23 July, 2016.

⁸¹³ Idem.

Other internal challenges to the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe occurred when Rev Anyambod Emmanuel was at the helm of Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA. His tenancy at the OCA premiership witnessed some major challenges in development projects in the Oshie community. These development issues included, the state of the Acha-Tugi Oshie road was in a deplorable state for many years. Banditry and general insecurity was at its peak and this was the period where government services were allocated in Oshie. Many development projects were realised in Oshie through the effort of OCA alongside the maintenance of Acha-Tugi road. The Oshie health centre was upgraded to a Cottage hospital with a resident medical doctor. There was also the construction of classrooms at Government school Nyebai and Bereje and the creation of Governemt Secondary school Oshie and police post with the provision of police van. Donation of beds to the Cottage hospital by the Edom sub group. Intensification of relations with the administrative, politico-traditional and religious authorities.⁸¹⁴ During this period, many development projects in Oshie were bestowed to the OCA Association. This situation led Rev Anyambod Emmanuel, the then President General of OCA to relinquish his office to another aspiring contender, due to the futile administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. He overtly condemned the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe during the OCA General Assembly with the following remarkable declaration;

We condemn in the strongest of terms the cheap and senseless machinations of the Fon, which are designed to break up the Oshie people and hence create confusion and fratricidal conflict among the Oshie people. We do not understand why this Fon hates his own subjects to the extent that he is prepared to sacrifice them on the alter of mammon and still pretend to be caring. It is absolutely diabolical that the Fon will tell the Oshie village council that..., we would like to remind ourselves that the office of the Fon is not elective by our tradition. Honour and glory naturally flows out to the leader who carries out his royal assignment in a noble, dignified and satisfactory manner. But one who sets out for wanton destruction of his people and one who lacks the capacity to unite his people will certainly experience the scarcity of the out flow of glory and honour to him. It must be made known here loud and clear to break up Oshie and especially OCA, the force that unites Oshie people.⁸¹⁵

For any one whosoever addresses the Fon in these words was considered as acting against the tradition of the people. An aberretion or sacrilege according to the tradition of the Oshie people. But the degenerated state of affairs in Oshie was urgently longing for a solution.⁸¹⁶These actions and declaration were not strange enough from the Oshie elite. In fact, in Africa, Cameroon and the Grassfields societies in particular, a traditional ruler was fully accountable for his actions at all times. A traditional ruler was said to rule for life as long as his subjects were loyal to him. Although as long as autocratic a traditional ruler was

⁸¹⁴ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People Places Events p.176.

⁸¹⁵See Rev-Prof Anyambod speech of 22nd March 2008 during the OCA General Annual Meeting, GAM.

⁸¹⁶Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People Places Events 2010 p.100.

permitted to appear, he ruled by the consent of his people. There was a balance between authority on the one hand and obligation on the other.⁸¹⁷ The traditional ruler would be abandoned, removed from office or in the worst case be a victim of ritual murder if he did not perform according to the demands of customs and traditions or if his people so wished. This situation of the role of a traditional ruler was captured by K. A Busia, when he describes the circumstances leading to the customary dethronent of the chief in Asante in the following manner;

The Ashanti [Asante] had a constitutional practice which ensured that the will of the people was given consideration. They had ultimately the constitutional right to destool a chief. As the fundamental principle was that only those who elected a chief could destool him, a destoolment required the consent of the elders. Sometimes they initiated a destoolment themselves when, for example, a chief repeatedly rejected their advice, or when he broke a taboo, or committed a sacrilegious act...A chief was also destooled if he became blind, or impotent or suffered from leprosy, madness, or if his body was maimed in a way that disfigured him⁸¹⁸

In most African societies, natural disasters such as droughts, famine and epidemics were generally attributed to the fact that the chief had not ruled well and thus should be deposed whereas the situation in Oshie was largely that of ineffective administration of the leader and abandonement of the village for a long period of time, consequently leading to chieftaincy crisis.⁸¹⁹

In the face of the provocation and pro-action against the Fon, tension mounted and tickled various reactions from those concerned with the Oshie traditional administration. Some of these people were princes and the traditional elders *Okum*, modern traditional elite as well as a good number of them representing those in the civil service. In order to discuss the matter in an appropriate forum and to seek a lasting solution to it, the Fon was asked to maintain his stay in the chiefdom and carry out his duties without going to the United State of America. The fact that Princes and Princesses in a good number proved unable to produce a solution or a platform for the resolution of this problem equally helped to demonstrate the complex nature of the problem and how its varied consequences weighed on Oshie traditional rulership. After deliberating on the issue and considering its impact on the future of the chiefdom, the Fon remained steadfast in his position about the issue but the hand writing was

⁸¹⁷See Guy Martin., African Political Thought Palgrave Macmillans, New York, 2012 p.12.

⁸¹⁸ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People Places Events p.14.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

clear enough on the wall that his authority was under serious criticism hence a direct challenge to Oshie traditional rulership.⁸²⁰

5.4.1 Royal Stool Crisis in the Chiefdom of Oshie

Another challenges to the administration of Oshie traditional rulers was the royal stool crisis. In fact, the royal stool crisis erupted in the chiefdom of Oshie due to the ineffective administration and the vacuum created on the throne by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. The royal stool crisis erupted in 2009 when the people of Oshie decided to dethrone Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe from the royal throne due to his irregular absences in Oshie and enthrone a new Fon. In fact, the Oshie elite in the diaspora were like yearning for such an opportunity to know how possible it could be. Information obtained from our informants indicates that a certain member of the royal family whose name was refused to be revealed to us on Friday 16th January 2009, went on the internet and alerted with prophetic note, as follows;

The Oshie tradition is very silent, but very effective and can act when it wants to. Power is good but tradition is stronger than power and you cannot use power to fight tradition. Whosoever had to succeed Fon A.L Anyangwe must have been delivered on a tiger skin. No more no less. It is indeed an urgly situation but which cannot be avoided. Some people might view this event as a violation of the tradition. I want to say that tradition was already violated ten years ago with the coronation of HRH Ericsyrol Anyangwe. Why do I say so? At 57 or 58 as one who grew in the village, especially in the palace with the late Fon Etunyi Anyangwe II, as one whose mother was one of the oldest princesses, and as one whose grandmother was the oldest in the palace during our generation, I came to know so many things concerning our tradition which many of us are not aware. If the Oshie kingmakers had listened to the elite. We would not have found ourselves in this situation.⁸²¹

In a document titled "The Bafoussom Declaration" the Oshie elite highlighted the qualities of the Fon of Oshie for the new millennium. This was done with due respect to Oshie tradition and custom, but the kingmakers ignored it. According to the declaration it was stated that;

In the tradition of Oshie and in most traditions of the North West region, nobody is made chief who was not born on the tiger skin. Only he who is born when the father was on the throne can lay claim to the throne. This was not the case with our present Fon...the tradition was grossly violated.

After three years following a General Assembly of OCA held in Oshie, he was clearly told to resign, due to the many irregularities in his functions as Fon of Oshie. The Fon retorted that his post was not elective and as such he could not resign. The following year, he was again told to resign or abdicate the throne, he again refused. In the last OCA General Assembly held within the same period, he was asked to rule the people or be ruled by the people. After close to 10 years of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe absent on the throne due to his permanent residence in the United State of America. It was but evident that he could not physically

⁸²⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸²¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie People Plces Events, 2010 p.12.

perform the duties bestowed on him by tradition. Although, due to his absent from the throne, the administration of the chiefdom was piloted by regents put in place by him, although he was not present on regularly bases in Oshie.⁸²²

The vacuum created on the royal throne by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe for a period of ten years, led to the collapse of almost all the traditional governance institutions in Oshie. As a result, the village administration dwindled drastically, because of the void created on the throne. By the year 2007, the members of the royal family, the traditional elders *Okum* alongside the kingmakers and the members of Oshie cultural and development association OCA mounted pressure and compelled the Fon to voluntarily relinquish the throne. In this regard, the traditional elders *Okum* distanced themselves from him in their circular letter dated 23rd December 2007 signed by the head of kingmakers, *Kum* Awanayah Wilfred. Furthermore, on the 11th of April 2009, he was dethroned from the position of traditional ruler (Fon) of Oshie and relegated to the position of traditional notable in the palace. In fact, these were the scenes that dramatized internal challenges to Oshie traditional rulership in the early 2009. Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe and his administration became a victim of accusation and castigation although he managed to brave the storms as will be seen as the study progress. The Oshie royal stool crisis boiled down and peace was restored though people continued clamouring for the enthronement of a new Fon. ⁸²³

5.4.2 Enthronement of a New Fon

The chiefdom of Oshie by the year 2009 witnessed the enthronement of a new traditional ruler after the dethronement of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. The new traditional ruler by name Lawrence Anyangwe who had served as a regent during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was enthroned as the Fon of Oshie. It was alleged that the enthronement ceremony was masterminded by the members of the royal family together with members of the Oshie Cultural and development Association (OCA) due to his inability to administer his people. Although the investiture into function of a new Fon in the chiefdom of Oshie was received by many people with mixed feelings, it was but necessary that such a thing should occurr. The people involved in the enthronement ceremony were the king makers, royal family members, quarter heads and members of the OCA association. It was apparent that, OCA is involvement in the enthronement ceremony was as a result of implementing the responsibilities assigned to her by the king makers and the royal family. The OCA branches in all the nooks and cranics

⁸²² Interview with John Asoh Emboat, 62, Vice Chairman of the OVC, Oshie, 15 Match, 2015.

⁸²³ Idem.

of Cameroon were mobilized to this effect and their members were obliged to contribute funds for the realization of the objectives.⁸²⁴

In preparation for the enthronement of a new Fon, the OCA executive members held preparatory meetings in Oshie to draw the programme of the enthronement. During the executive meeting of the various OCA branches the activities to be carried out during the enthronement ceremony were equally drawn.⁸²⁵ On the enthronement day, the OCA association was acting as a watch dog because the enthronement rites were carried out by the kingmakers together with the royal family. Although, prior to the enthronement day of a new Fon in Oshie, the Divisional Officer (D.O) for Njikwa Sub-division acknowledged having received a letter from the royal family in Oshie alongside the kingmakers requesting for a change of the Fon on the 11th April 2009.⁸²⁶

In addition, within the same year, circular letters were sent to all the OCA branches requesting the Oshie elite to organize their various dance groups and associations for the enthronement of a new Fon. Invitations were equally sent to the traditional ruler's (chiefs) of Njikwa sub-division, the Divisional Officer (D.O) for Njikwa sub-division and the Senior Divisional Officer (S.D.O) for Momo Division. The enthronement ceremony took place from the 4th to the 11th April 2009.⁸²⁷ On 11th April 2009, Lawrence Anyangwe V was enthroned as the new traditional ruler (Fon) of Oshie to replace Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe IV who was resident in the United States of America. The ceremony was attended by all the members of Oshie Cultural and development Association (OCA) resident at home and out of Oshie together with some members of the royal family, traditional elders *Okum* and the kingmakers.⁸²⁸

It was generally agreed by the king makers that, from the day of enthronement, the new traditional ruler (Fon) of Oshie would assume his functions. For the fact that, the D.O for Njikwa sub-division, the S.D.O for Momo Divsion and the traditional rulers of Njikwa sub-division were not present at the enthronement ceremony, indicated the illegitimate nature of the ruler. To challenge the administrative machinery put in place by Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, the newly enthroned traditional ruler from the 12 to the 17 of April 2009, held series of meetings with people of different shades of opinion at the palace hall. During the

⁸²⁸Idem.

⁸²⁴ *Idem*.

⁸²⁵The Post News paper 2009 p.5.

⁸²⁶Ibid.

⁸²⁷See speech by OCA president during Oshie Anniversary, Oshie Cooperative Hall, 4th April 2009.

meeting, he disclosed a platform on how he was to administer the chiefdom.⁸²⁹ From the month of April to September 2009, to challenge the administration of his predecessor Fon Lawrence Anyangwe V began an inter-quarter visit. His first visit was to Nyebai quarter where he was warmly welcomed by the indigenes of that quarter, alongside traditional dances. He later carried out visits to other quarters of Oshie in order to make his present feld in the community.⁸³⁰

Fon Lawrence Anyangwe was more interested in the reincarnation of the spirit of development in Oshie partly because of the need to alter the administration that was put into function during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. To put his ambition into a practical perspective, the Fon assembled the traditional elders Okum, and all those who held important positions in Oshie and presented his development policies. One of the key issues which he raised was the restoration of the traditional governance institutions in the chiefdom that were neglected during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. Indeed, in his quest for development projects in the chiefdom, he instituted a compulsory development levy to all the indigenes in Oshie and beyond, in order to rebuild the declining state of the chiefdom. According to the development scheme, all the male folk were obliged to build a house in the village. No adult male was allowed or authorised to organise any death ceremony, initiation into secret society unless he had paid the development levy, duelly signed and indicating the amount. The Oshie traditional council and the quarter heads were to entertain land disputes between parties only on condition that the persons have paid their development dues. No sale of land to non-indigenes was to be carried out without the approval of the traditional council.⁸³¹

The administration of Fon Lawrence Anyangwe faced a lot of challenges in that, in reaction to his activities as the new Fon of Oshie, the Divisional Officer for Njikwa subdivision Andre Ndinbeng in a memorandum dated 7th September 2009, requested the new Fon to discontinue his activities in Oshie.⁸³²According to the D.O for Njikwa sub-division and the S D O for Momo, "There was no vacancy in the chiefdom of Oshie that permited any one to act as the Fon of Oshie from this date" the D O warned.⁸³³ On September 12th 2009, the

⁸²⁹The Post Newspaper p.6.

⁸³⁰ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 47, Prince of the Oshie Royal Palace, Bamenda, July, 2016.

⁸³¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Events, Places p.211.

⁸³² Circular letter from Andre Ndinbeng DO for Njikwa subdivision 10 September 2009.

⁸³³Peter Kins Manyong.Oshie fon"Receptues Throne: Suspends Cultural Association,"in the Post, No 01132, Monday March 15th 2010 p.15.

Divisional Officer for Njikwa sub-division sent a warning letter to all who received and enthroned Anynagwe Lawrence as the traditional ruler (Fon) of Oshie to restrain from such act. The Order reiterated that there was no vacancy in the chiefdom of Oshie, recognizing a new person as the Fon of Oshie.⁸³⁴According to the deputy Mayor for Njikwa rural council after the D.Os Orders, those who were involved in the enthronement of Anyangwe Lawrence as the traditional ruler of Oshie began operating clandestinely out of Oshie. Some of the agents were the traditional elders *Okum* (kingmakers) resident at home, members of the OCA association and some members of the royal family.⁸³⁵

In addition, the tone and content of this memorandum attracted varied forms of worries among the traditional and modern elite in Oshie and beyond. The advocates of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe alongside some princes determined to "squeeze blood" from any body that attempted to desturb the peace of the Fon and to use all forms of force to dethrone the new Fon. Against this background, the D O for Njikwa sub-division received various delegations from Oshie and beyond who gave him varied forms of advice or counsel on the impending issue.⁸³⁶

To overcome such challenges, within the year 2009, Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe after a long stay in the United States of America returned to Oshie provoked by the enthronement of a new Fon on the royal throne. He arrived Oshie at the time Fon Anyangwe Lawrence was carrying out inter-quarters visits to unite the people and the reorganisation of the local administrative machinery in Oshie such as the traditional elders *Okum*, the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, and the Oshie traditional council.⁸³⁷ On arrival in Oshie, Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was warmly welcomed by the elite from Edom and Bereje quarter alongside a lot of jubilation piloted by the king maker Awanayah Wilfred. It should be noted that the head of the king maker contributed to the challenges faced by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe in that he participated during the dethronement of Fon Ericsyrol Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe which was a taboo to African tradition and still reinstated him to the throne when he returned from the United State of America.⁸³⁸

According to the demands of the traditions and customs of the people of Oshie, he was the one who enthroned Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe on the royal throne. When crisis erupted in

⁸³⁴Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.15.

⁸³⁵ Ibid

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷Interview with Fondeh Theres, 38, University of Bamenda, Bambui, 4 July ,2015.

⁸³⁸ Interview with Atambele Daniel, 69, Retired Teacher, Oshie, July 2015.

the chiefdom, he in turn conspired with the OCA to dethrone the Fon and enthrone a new Fon. In this regard, when Fon Ericsyol Yande Anyangwe returned to Oshie, he allied with him and publicly reinstated him on the throne as mentioned above. In the main, the institution of traditional rulership in Oshie was degraded without respecting the norms put down by the traditions of the people. In an effect to this, some of the traditional elders *Okum* on their part distanced themselves from him for the reason that they had allied with Lawrence Anyangwe while some were in support of Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe received him back on the throne of Oshie.⁸³⁹

The Senior D O in Mbengwi, signed a Prefectural Order banning the activities of the new Fon in Oshie for the period of three months. The order meant in essence that the sub D O was administratively superior to him. Although the prefectural order made it abundantly clear that the need to ensure peace and stability within Oshie in particular made the newly enthrone Fon and the supporters of his scheme felt indicted and humiliated. Scenes of the poor treatment of people in Oshie during the royal stool transition still fresh in the Fon's mind, coupled with the fact that, the order equally stipulated that the Administration was prepared to deploy means within its reach to ensure that the order was respected which was not in line with the laws of Cameroon, except orderwise the people of Oshie. Those who harboured grievances against Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe saw and interpreted the order as a timely or prompt action to keep the Fon in his rightful place as an administrative subordinate. The frustration of the illegitimate Fon about the order was really enormous but the persuasion of some intimate friends and family members helped to calm him down.⁸⁴⁰ The supporters of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe jubilated and continued to undermine and mock at the allies of his contender.

A few days after the return of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe in Oshie, he convened a General Council meeting in the palace attended only by the councillors loyal to him. In other to reinstate the village administration back to its functions, Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe reenacted the Oshie council and put in place new members. In this reflection, he appointed a new regent to run the village administration during the period of his absence in the chiefdom. This situation led to a split between the allies of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe and those of Anyangwe Lawrence. Moreover, those who allied with Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe were

⁸³⁹*Idem*.

⁸⁴⁰ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie p.93.

the kingmakers who played a double role by taking part in the investiture of Anyangwe Lawrence, alongside the traditional elders *Okum*, the elite of Bereje and Edom quarter.⁸⁴¹

Those who allied with the new Fon were the royal family, some of the traditional elders *Okum* and the elite of Nyebai quarter. The OCA members and the entire Oshie elite at home although some were in support of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe with the reason that tradition cannot be violated. Due to the prevailing situation and division among the Oshie people, Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe decided to ban all the activities of the Oshie Cultural and development Association (OCA) in Oshie calling for a reconciliation between the two factions. In order for him to portray his authority as the legitimate traditional ruler in Oshie, many development projects that were designed by OCA association were stopped by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe until the challenges on traditional rulership in Oshie were resolved.

5.5 Futile Administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anayangwe

Another challenge to the dynamic policies of Oshie traditional rulers was the futile administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. During the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe at the helm of Oshie, many challenges were recorded in his administration. Moreover, the traditional rulers of Oshie were regarded like the absolute monarchs of the early European Feudal Age. They were questioned by no one else but the gods and the spirit of ancestors.⁸⁴² As divine appointees they were answerable only to the gods of the land and to the spirits of the ancestors, they were equally the supreme commanders of the armed forces and attorney-generals in the supreme courts of their chiefdoms and Fondoms. They were also venerated, feared and respected by all. The effectiveness of the rulership over his people depended to a larger extent on his legitimate authority. Legitimacy was derived from the general acceptability of the ruler by his subjects. The traditional recognition as well as his respect for the established traditional governance institutions and their goals. But this was not the case with Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe.⁸⁴³

The traditional or natural rulers nowadays do not act as their predecessors in the past, whose role revolved around the cardinal theme of guiding, protecting, defending and providing for the needs of the people. Rulership was predicated on a set of norms and

⁸⁴¹*Ibid*.

 $^{^{842}}$ It was a sacrilege in traditional diplomacy for subjects to question the action of their leaders for they were believed to be acting ever and always in the best interest of their subjects.

⁸⁴³ Interview with Ndika Stephen, 71, farmer, Oshie, October 2015.

mechanisms exercised in regard to tradition and custom of the people. But such a situation was different in the case of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. In fact, his reign was characterised with a lot of laxity and no self-help activities and development projects. Indeed, he had no initiatives in establishing development programmes that could improve on the welfare of his people as his predecessor did. In the chiefdom of Oshie, The qualities of the traditional rulers of Oshie depended on the behaviour and respect of traditional governance institutions but this was a contrary situation during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe.⁸⁴⁴

To ascend to the throne of Oshie, according to the traditions and customs of the people, one was obliged to have a good mastery of the dialect and command of his subjects. He was expected to be available all the times in the chiefdom, to carry out his duties rather than through the intermediary of a regent. He was also expected to be capable of expressing a unifying influence within the royal family cycle, and fine tuning development projects in the entire community. But this was not the case with Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe during his reign at the helm of Oshie, though he canvasses for the installation of mobile telephone network in Oshie. His regime became pregnant with a lot of challenges which created chieftaincy dissension in Oshie. In his local administration of the chiefdom, he achieved little or nothing in the domain of socio-economic and cultural developments of the chiefdom due to his strained relations with the Oshie cultural and development association OCA. For the fact that, tradition demands that a traditional ruler was not supposed to be seen in the public nor seen drinking with his people, the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was characterised by such activities which of course taint the repute of Oshie traditional rulership as a whole.⁸⁴⁵

Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe during his period in the United States of America according to information obtained from one of my informant, visited Oshie exclusively during the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival. When his people threatened to replace him with another Fon due to his irregular absences at home, this created a lot of challenges to his personality and fonship. His traditional rulership status in Oshie was characterised with a lot of recklessness. He was addicted to the consumption of alcoholic drinks such as spirits, whisky and opium. In fact, during his reign at the helm of Oshie, very little or nothing as far as development was achieved in the entire community. This accounts for the reason why his

⁸⁴⁴ Idem.

⁸⁴⁵ E.A Akob, "The Role of Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA in the Development of Oshie 1990-2006 p.57.

reign was referred to as a period of ruined in the traditional rulers of the Anyangwe dynasty. Some of the visible challenges of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe were incurred through the consumption of illicit drinks that led to poor health, loss of self control in movement and speech. But inspite of such attitude, he still sustain an adequate administration in the chiefdom as the traditional ruler of Oshie.⁸⁴⁶

5.6 Other Challenges to the Dynamism of Oshie Traditional Rulership

The traditional rulers of Oshie witnessed other challenges apart from the ones examine above, which included, the looting of cultural artefacts and other royal accessories in the palace museum. In this regard, on the 15^{th} of October 2009, the head of Oshie village Council issued a memorandum suspending all development projects and cultural manifestations in Oshie until the damages in the Fon's palace were reinstated. The princesses and princes together with the wives of the deceased Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III equally abandoned the palace. The traditional governance institutions such as the traditional elders *Okum*, assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, and other regulatory organs were not functioning. In fact, the entire administration was in a state of confusion during this period. The institution of chieftaincy in Oshie that was held with great esteem by the neighbouring Polities and Fons of Njikwa sub-division lost its cultural values and repute.⁸⁴⁷

According to His Royal Highness Fon Anagho Hans of Ngwo village, the dethronement of the legitimate ruler and enthronement of a new Fon in Oshie was a challenge to the traditional rulership of Njikwa sub-divsion and that of the Western Grassfields chiefdoms and Fondoms at large. Moreover, prior to the year 1998 and after, the people of Oshie at home and out of the village were often levied compulsory annual contribution levy for development projects by the Fon. This levy ranged from two thousand francs to twelfth thousand francs depending on the annual income of each person. The tariff was usually collected and managed by the Oshie Cultural and Development Association.⁸⁴⁸ Apart from the compulsory levies, other OCA branches and individuals contributed huge amount of money to carry out development projects in Oshie. From 1996 to 1998 the association raised an aggregate sum of 9,632,893 FRS from the sale of membership cards and annual dues.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Interview with Itambi Thadeus, 51, Teacher, Oshie, October 2015.

⁸⁴⁸E.A Akob, "The Role of Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA in the Development of Oshie 1990-2006 p.57.

⁸⁴⁹ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 47, Prince of the Oshie Royal Palace, Bamenda, July, 2016.

The funds raised was used in the maintenance of development projects such as water supply network, roads, bridges, employment of teachers in the primary schools and medical staff at the Oshie health centre. In 1998, a total of eight teachers were employed and distributed to the primary schools in Oshie.⁸⁵⁰ As a result of the succession dispute to the Oshie royal throne a lot of challenges resurfaced and the maintenance of the development projects stopped. Many Oshie elite especially those that were against the chieftaincy crisis became resented and reluctant to carry out their obligations. Moreover, the different branches of OCA association began indicting members to contribute funds towards the enthronement of a new Fon due to the fact that, the legitimate Fon had abandoned the throne and was resident in the United States of America.⁸⁵¹

The OCA association further suspended the contract of new teachers. This was an indication that the association ran out of funds to pay the teachers. Funds meant for development projects were deflected by OCA Executive to subsidise the enthronement of a new Fon in Oshie on 11th April 2009. Indeed, the succession dispute to the royal throne affected development schemes put in place by the OCA in Oshie in a way that many development projects that were earmarked by different groups and associations were terminated by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. Among these projects was the construction of a computer laboratory at Government Secondary School Oshie, the construction of a multipurpose hall, Museum and Archival centre by the OCA USA. A project to construct modern handball, volley ball and long tennis court at the Oshie central stadium by the Oshie Students and Teachers Union OSTU.⁸⁵²

By the year 2008, the Oshie elite in the United States of America under the patronage of the Oshie cultural and Development Association OCA suspended two development projects to be achieved in Oshie. According to the President of OCA USA, the projects were suspended due to the disagreement among the members of the main OCA branch over the succession dispute to the Oshie royal throne. To him the members were no longer assertive in the management of the funds. Apart from the development projects achieved through the financial contributions, there was also community labour that was aimed at the maintenance of village roads, hygiene and sanitation. These projects were usually designed by the Oshie village council OVC and coordinated by the various quarter heads. Due to the succession

⁸⁵⁰ Idem.

⁸⁵¹ Idem.

⁸⁵² Interview with Fondeh Theres, 38, University of Bamenda, Bambui, 4 July ,2015.

dispute to the Oshie royal throne, a new council of executive was put in place by the new Fon and this engendered challenges to the regime of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. This led to a squabble between the council executives.⁸⁵³

A division occurred among the council executive members in that the council executive members put in place by Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe became accountable to him, while the other council Executive were answerable to the new Fon. Consequently, development projects in Oshie were not realised as compared to the past. The most affected aspect in Oshie caused by the succession dispute to Oshie royal throne was the *Anangkobi* dance festival, an annual dance that unites the indigenes together at the end of the year. Due to the chieftaincy crisis in the chiefdom of Oshie, the offering of sacrifices to the gods of the land and the manifestation of traditional dances stopped. The annual dance that unites the Oshie elite from all the nooks and cranics of the country at home was affected. It equally brought about a drop in development projects in Oshie and the *Anangkobi* dance that pulls foreigners from all over Cameroon was relegated only to the Oshie people at home.⁸⁵⁴ The source of unity of the Oshie people lost its value and the social and economic assistance that were usually offered by foreign bodies to the chiefdom came to an end.

The traditional governace institutions made up of the traditional elders *Okum* and the assistant traditional elders Ngyeh put in place by the Oshie rulers to aid in the administration of the chiefdom lost its reputation due to the chieftaincy crisis. For the fact that the traditional elders were people considered to be of good moral standards and the custodian of Oshie custom and tradition, they were obliged to uphold the tradition and custom of Oshie with great esteem. But due to their involvement in the chieftaincy debacle, the high standard of their traditional offices was challenged alongside the repute of the Fon. Inspite of the fact that they were not united over the chieftaincy issue, the village traditional institutions were weakened and abandoned.⁸⁵⁵ In this light, the *Aken* secret cult and their descendants were no longer treated with reverence by the Fon for the simple reason that the administration of Oshie was in a state of anarchy. This situation therefore dramatized the challenges to the dynamism of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie, consequently its effects were felt beyond Njikwa sub-division and the North West Region at large.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵³ Idem.

⁸⁵⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p. 113.

⁸⁵⁵ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events p. 170.

⁸⁵⁶Minutes of Njikwa Fons Union Meeting held at Ekwebo Fons palace,9th November 2009.
The administrative unit of Njikwa sub-division comprised of nine villages, with two second class chiefdoms which are Oshie and Ngwo. The rest of the seven villages are third class chiefdoms. The second class chiefdom played a major role in coordinating and influencing the administrative machinery of the third class chiefdoms and the sub-division as a whole. Traditional diplomacy enjoyed by the traditional rulers of Oshie with their peers in neighbouring chiefdoms was jeopardized as a result of the chieftaincy crisis in Oshie. The trade relations established by the Oshie traditional rulers with the neighbouring Polities such as Ngwo, Ekweri Banya and Konda witnessed a lot of challenges due to the chieftaincy crisis that provoked disunity among the people. In this direction, trade links between Oshie and the neighbouring chiefdoms seized to function for sometime up to when the problem was resolved. The situation also affected Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe alongside the administration in an effort to bring lasting solution to the chieftaincy crisis.⁸⁵⁷

5.7 Challenges to the Development Projects of Oshie Traditional Rulers

The development projects of the traditional rulers of Oshie also witnessed a lot of challenges as a result of their exit from the throne. In the chiefdom of Oshie according to the tradition and custom of the people, a Fon never dies, he was said to be missing. No public announcement was made during such period and news about the missing Fon was observed with solemnity alongside a disfunctioning of all the activities in the chiefdom.⁸⁵⁸ Within this period the traditional elders, and the assistant traditional elders goes to the palace to prepare the mortuary ceremony of the deceased Fon. No body in the chiefdom was obliged to go to the farm, during the days of public mourning declared by the traditional elders *Okum*.⁸⁵⁹ He was buried in a special way known only to the traditional elders *Okum* and the king makers. Women were required to harvest food from the farm for a week before it was announced to the public by the traditional elders.' After the burial, mourning was then declared by the traditional elders *Okum* for a period of two weeks that involved every body in the community.⁸⁶⁰

During the colonial era as earlier mentioned, the pioneer traditional ruler of Oshie encountered challenges as a result of traditional rulership transition from the reign of Emamba

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁸ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.44.

⁸⁵⁹ It is a tradition within the chiefdoms of the Grassfields and Oshie in particular that when a Fon is missing,the entire community is forbidden to mourn or to work in their farms. The whole of that period people only stay at home until the Fon is sent to joint the ancestors, before any activity could take place in the village. ⁸⁶⁰ *Idem*.

to the Anyangwe dynasty. These challenges resulted to the death of Emamba due to the rulership tussle with Adang Engu Anyangwe over the custodian of the god of *Iku*. A demi god that was believed to have some supernatural strength and authority and maintained permanent vigil over the spiritual welfare of the entire chiefdom. In the course of time Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe who kept the demi god, got involved in a dispute with Emamba. As result of this, many deaths were recorded in Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe palace thereby posing a lot of challenges within the royal family.⁸⁶¹ Although, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe survived the mishap until 1924. He later passed on within the same year when he had achieved just a little in the administrative set up of Oshie.⁸⁶²

When a Fon was said to be missing or lost, according to tradition, he was only temporarily absent from his functions. During such a period, a successor was designated from the royal family. It was often said that the Fon designated his successor when he was approaching the old age. The designation depended not on age but on qualities such as honesty, impartiality and sense of organization.⁸⁶³ In spite of the challenges from the Emamba' s family during the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe and many deaths in the royal family, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe was succeeded by his son Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe by the year 1925 to maintain the hereditary succession line in the Anyangwe dynasty. ⁸⁶⁴

On like his predecessor, Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe achieved just a little in the economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. In fact, his reign witnessed a lot of challenges from ill-fated individuals in the chiefdom. He passed on from the throne of Oshie under mysterious circumstances when he had not yet arrived the peak of his achievements. It was alleged that the Fon was bewitched when he passed on in the month of November 1974. The Oshie people believed that a Fon never dies, he is said to have gone on a long journey of no return. According to information obtained from some of our informants, Fon Etunyi Anyangwe attended a funeral celebration of one of his subject wife, on his returned to the palace, the next day he was found dead.⁸⁶⁵ This set the entire Oshie community in a state of muddle due to his popularity in Njikwa area and beyond.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶¹ Martin., Oshie People-Places-Events p.26.

⁸⁶² *Ibid*.

⁸⁶³Journal of the Ministry of Information and culture, Discover the North West Province of Cameroon Yaounde: Minic:1984 p.182.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁵ Interview with Nyambi Mathias, 70, farmer, Oshie, June 2015.

⁸⁶⁶ Idem.

He was said to be missing and no body was allowed to mourn in the palace including his children. The village was administered by the traditional elders *Okum* who were subordinated to him. As tradition demands, he was buried by the traditional elders *Okum* in a Grass house located at the centre of the palace where his predecessor was buried. The traditional grass house in the Oshie palace represent a place where deceased Fons were and are buried. From that period, the grass house in Oshie palace has stood as the burial grounds of deceased Fons in Oshie up to the present day. Prior to the mortuary phase of the traditional ruler in the chiefdom of Oshie, traditional rites are performed in strict conformity to the demands of tradition, which requires cutting the hair of the deceased Fon and nails mixed together in some concoction of herbal medicine that is conferred on his successor to empower him.⁸⁶⁷

It was a common characteristic among the Fons of the Grassfields societies that when a Fon dies or is said to be missing, his death is attended to by other neighbouring Fons to pay homage to their departed colleague. For the fact that Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe was a member of the Ngunu Native Court Area, he was well known and respected every where. He gained his fame in the days during the Appeal Court sessions in Bamenda, although had some challenges in that he had not obtained formal education but was able to arbitrate on cases in Pidgin English to the whitemen.⁸⁶⁸ When he passed on in 1974, his funeral was attended to with pomp and hue by dignitaries in Momo division and North West region at large. There was as well the presence of the Fons of Ngunu Native Authority Area accompanied by their palace masquerade known in Oshie as *Abuh*. According to the right of ascendancy to the throne of Oshie, any male child of the royal family born on the tiger skin when the father was on the throne, had the legitimate rights to succeed the Fon. Hence, a year after Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe was succeeded by his son Adi Lucas Anyangwe in 1975.⁸⁶⁹

Chieftaincy succession in Oshie according to the customs and traditions of the people is hereditary and derives from the Anyangwe royal family dynasty. The designation and eventual enthronement of the Fon follows a time old pattern where by the deceased Fon proposes a new Fon and the royal family scrutinizes and subsequently appoints and hands over to the traditional elders *Okum*. The ruling Fon is required to name his successor before his death. The successor to the throne is to be from royal family with royal blood. He was to

⁸⁶⁷ Interview with Anyangwe Lawrence, 44, Prince of the Oshie royal Family, Bamenda, June, 2017.

⁸⁶⁸ Due to the dynamic nature of Chief Etunyi Anyangwe in dealing with people, he was able to play his way out in matters concerning his Village, and cases that regard his concern despite the fact that he was not learned.

⁸⁶⁹ Interview with Simon Ado, 65, farmer, Oshie, July 2016.

be the son of one of the deceased Fon, delivered on a Tiger skin when the father was still on the throne (See Appendix III). In a case where the ruling Fon fails to designate his successor, the traditional elders *Okum* with the help of the princes and princesses choose the new Fon. A new Fon is enthroned a year after the death of the predecessor.⁸⁷⁰

By virtue of Oshie culture and tradition, when Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on after accomplishing a lot in the domain of economic and socio-cultural development in the chiefdom of Oshie, his deceased body was confined solely in the custody of the traditional elders *Okum*. The information announced to the public was that, the Fon was "missing"⁸⁷¹no body was permitted to mourn, even members of the royal family. He was buried in the grass house at the centre of the palace where his predecessors were buried by the traditional elders *Okum*. After the burial the mourning was then declared to the entire community by the traditional elders. The Fons of the Neighbouring chiefdoms in Njikwa Sub-division took turns to pay last respect to their departed colleague.⁸⁷² His funeral was attended by people of all shade of live in Njikwa subdivision, North West region and Cameroon at large. In fact, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on at the time when the chiefdom of Oshie was at the peak of development, thus after his exit from the throne, the glories of the chiefdom of Oshie were plunged into chaos when Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe succeeded him.⁸⁷³

The hereditary succession line of Oshie traditional rulers witnessed a lot of challenges during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe. There was a succession dispute to the Oshie royal throne by the princes of the deceased Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe concerning who was to succeed the father. After a series of concerted meetings held in Douala and Oshie amidst perils and coercion from the princes and princesses of the royal family, the choice to enthrone Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe as the traditional ruler of Oshie was agreed upon. The investiture of Fon Ericsyrol later sowed a seed of discord in the serene hereditary succession line of the Anyangwe dynasty and this eventually resulted to chieftaincy crisis in the chiefdom of Oshie.⁸⁷⁴

Other challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership, during the period of independence and after, was that two elite classes emerged that registered significant changes on the Oshie traditional rulership. On the one hand, there were the western educated elite who

⁸⁷⁰ Idem.

⁸⁷¹ Interview with Ozimba Stephen, 65, Farmer, Oshie, 12 October ,2015.

⁸⁷² Idem.

⁸⁷³ Idem.

⁸⁷⁴ Binda, Tilly Light in Oshie, p.47.

had studied in the Basel Mission schools in Oshie and Mbengwi. Though most of them were conversant with the role of traditional rulership, they were also ready to play active part in the administration of the chiefdom, which at times kept them at odds with their traditional obligations as dictated to them by Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe. Closely related to this group, were the teachers who were really literate but were aware of their new roles reqauired for the growth of the chiefdom. The third group was made of the Christianized churchmen and women including a majority that was non Christians. The educated men were unenthusiastic to take and execute orders from the Fon and his traditional elders *Okum*, due to the fact that they were all considered as traditionalist.⁸⁷⁵

On the other hand, there was another class, referred to as pure traditionalists who were still holding tight to the sanctity of tradition, wishing and fighting to protect it from internal decay. This class was therefore standing completely at odds with the other different classes of educated and christain elite and sometimes against the Fon and his dualist frame of traditional administration. The educated elite were also determined to change the phase of the native administration. Their saying was that the new educated school men would have to replace the traditional elite in the process of change and development of the chiefdom. Western education had produced men of social change in the chiefdom of Oshie. The new elite that were emerging from the Basel Mission schools and churches were full of new ideas and aspirations. Christian converts were rejecting traditional religious beliefs and practices. This was due to the fact that, the Basel Mission had initiated into these men new level of aspiration and expectation which could only be satisfied by social change.⁸⁷⁶

The development projects put in place by the traditional rulers of Oshie to provide a modern face lift in the chiefdom, witnessed a lot of challenges in the course of time due to lack of attention. For the fact that, the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe was likened to the enlightened despot of the age of Enlightenement in Europe, where they carried out reforms such as drained marches, built roads and bridges. The achievements of Fon Lucas Anyangwe were also likened to those of the enlightened despots in Europe. Through the self-reliance development initiative deployed by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, the Oshie community benefited from many development projects. Such projects included, the provision of basic social amenities such as pipe borne water supply which he designed in collaboration with SATA (Swiss Association for Development and cooperation). The water supply network

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁶ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie-People-Places-Events, p. 25.

covered all the quarters in Oshie. In the main, the water supply scheme had served generations of the Oshie indigenes for many years and was considered as the diamond of the Oshie people, as it curtailed majority of the indigenes from the consumption of water from streams. But after the exit of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe from the throne in 1997, the water supply network had been accorded little or no attention due to lack of funds for adequate maintenance. In fact some of the water supply taps in the various quarters and road junctions nowadays are non-functioning because of the absent of technicians to cater for them.⁸⁷⁷

Another problem faced by the development schemes of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the chiefdom of Oshie which was of long lasting was the inter quarter roads network. The road network helped to disenclave the quarters and open up the narrow route paths and interconnected the various quarters together, alongside the construction of bridges and trenches. He also expanded the roads linking the neigbouring villages of Oshie, notably the road linking Oshie and Fringyeng village in the eastern sector. Although the Oshie sector of Fringyeng was carved out by the administration for political reasons and attached to Meta, the map of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon indicates that Fringyeng was a quarter in Oshie. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in his development schemes linked up the two villages to avoid losing the Oshie indigenes residing in Fringyeng. When Fon Adi Lucas passed on and was succeeded by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, the inter-quarter road networks that were in constant maintenance during the reign of his predecessor were accorded little attention due to his inability to unite the people in development matters. The communal labour organised on weekly bases by the quarter heads to maintain the roads in Oshie seized to function due to his ineffective administration and irregular nature in the chiefdom. In this regard, some of the inter-quarter roads and culverts are dug out by erosion due to lack of attention.⁸⁷⁸ The people of each quarter in Oshie in order to overcome such challenges, organised themselves through the patronage of the quarter heads into groups to clean the roads on weekly days.

Other challenges to the development projects of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the chiefdom of Oshie was the village playing ground and stadium which was and is of long lasting to the entire community. During the inauguration ceremony of the stadium in April

⁸⁷⁷ It was an obligation during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe that each quarter in Oshie took turns in the clearing and maintenance of the water supply taps alongside the technicians but when Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe ascended the throne, the water supply network was given little or no attention.

⁸⁷⁸ In the annals of the Grassfields Traditional rulers and Oshie in particular, the Fon symbolised a leader who leads his subjects and a guarantor of all the development projects carried out within the community, but when such qualities are absent, the entire community is bound to collapse. This was mirrored during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe as far as road maintenance and bridges was concerned.

1979, the Senior Divisional Officer for Momo praised and described the playing ground and stadium as the best in the then North West province. In this direction, visitors and tourist who visited Oshie especially during the *Anangkobi* dance festival admired the play ground with a lot of credits accorded to Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. It was at the village playing ground that the *Anangkobi* dance festival of Oshie was and is still organise at the end of each year. When Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on and was succeeded by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe in 1998. The play ground and stadium in the course of time was not accorded any proper care in spite of the fact that it was meant for the *Anangkobi* dance festival and other socio-cultural activities.⁸⁷⁹ In order to overcome such challenges, the youths of all the quarters organised themselves and cleared off the grass on the play ground to carry out their sporting activities.⁸⁸⁰

Another issues faced by the development venture of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the chiefdom of Oshie is the non refurbishment of the palace. Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in order to provide a modern faced lift to the Oshie palace changed the colonial structures put in place by his predecessor and replaced them with cemented housing infrastructures with iron zincs. In order to fill the houses in the palace, he inherited all the wives of his father and actually made children with two of the wives. In fact, the palace was full with the Messengers, princes and princesses alongside close and distant relations of the wives. The palace as the royal seat in the chiefdom of Oshie during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe commanded a lot of reverence. The Fon received visitors in the palace on regular bases every day through his diplomatic alliances with the Fons of other chiefdoms in Njikwa sub-division and beyond. When he passed on in 1997 and was succeeded by Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, due to his long absence in the chiefdom and less attention paid on the palace women, this led to a dispersion and consequently desertion of the palace. Although to overcome such a situation he got married to a girl from Oshie but the matrimonial home was full with a lot of challenges. In fact, very little or nothing was achieved in the domain of housing infrastructure in the palace as his predecessor did.⁸⁸¹

The traditional rulers of Oshie also faced challenges in the domain of diplomacy in that, during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe the people of Oshie expected him to

⁸⁷⁹ The Oshie playing ground and stadium stands out as the central arena in the area and Njikwa subdivision at large where football matches and other socio-cultural activities were and are organised. But it has assumed an urgly image due to lack of attention and maintenance.

⁸⁸⁰ Idem

⁸⁸¹ Martin Anyangwe, Oshie, People, Places, Events, p.34.

strengthen relations with the neighbouring communities but rather the relations were strain. In fact, the glories recorded by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe in the field of diplomacy in Oshie, Njikwa sub-division, North West region and Cameroon at large were all disappeared. Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe was rather focus on his job in the United State of America with little or no attention at home. This created a division among the traditional elders *Okum* and the entire battery of traditional institutions which was not the case during the reign of his predecessor. In the same vein, the Oshie palace infrastructure that was provided with a new face lift by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe as seen earlier mentioned was abandoned during his reign. He did little or nothing to continue where his father ended. The cooperative hall and the tourist home which his predecessor had constructed alongside the indigenes to boost up their economic lot was accorded no attention during his reign.⁸⁸²

The major challenges to the traditional rulers of Oshie rested on the fact that, since the disappearance of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, the polity has not been able to designate a new consensus ruler embedded with the required rulership qualities as set forth by tradition. Failure to attend to such goals, degenerated into squabbling, feuding among the elite, traditional elders *Okum* and the royal family. As it was difficult and dicey to fill the vacuum left by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III, the royal throne was filled by a leader who tended to negate and downgrade the achievements of traditional rulership in Oshie. The state of anarchy that occurred in the chiefdom was welcomed by some and paved the way for them to commit acts or cause omissions for which they were accountable for. Some preferred to have a rather broad base chieftaincy whereby they considered themselves as micro-chiefs and as a result were ready to act or play the role of the Fon to fulfil their personal or selfish aggrandizement at the expense of the community.

There were also challenges created by the thoughtful misperception of the traditional elders *Okum* who by design failed to designate a successor but rather heap the blame on the royal family for failure to cooperate in the matter. In the midst of this, the royal family whose indifference and nonchalance in the chieftaincy succession question opened new horizon characterised by heightened family squabbling and strife, where each of the princes attempted to secure or influence the chieftaincy for himself. In the face of such blatant failure to agree on a unique choice, they largely blamed the traditional elders *Okum* to be the underlying cause of the collapse in the procedure. But they were only sheeps in wolve clothing because

⁸⁸² Ibid.

according to tradition, the designated Fon was made to reflect the desires of the traditional elders *Okum*, and the chiefdom at large.

5.8 Conclusion

This Chapter has attempted to examine the challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership beginning from the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe to Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe in 2009. In the exploration of facts based on the evidences at hand, the chapter has demonstrated that, the dynamic policies of the Oshie traditional rulership in the economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom went alongside enormous challenges. These included European interference in Oshie rulership, Post independence government meddling in chieftaincy institution, ineffective administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, succession dispute to Oshie royal throne, chieftaincy crisis and dethronement of the legitimate ruler and challenges to the achievements of Oshie rulers. The chapter asserts that, the non respect of the canons set forth by the tradition and custom of the people of Oshie by some of its rulers and other internal squabbles within the royal family alongside the elite equally contributed to undermine the dynamism of Oshie could be seen to have survived in repute. Although the respect accorded to the dynamism of the rulers had gradually dwindled, but the economic and socio-cultural achievements were of long lasting effect in the chiefdom.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study has examined the dynamism of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie, from the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe to that of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. It begins with European colonial influence in the area that created a transition from the reign of Emamba, the then spiritual leader of the people of Oshie to the Anyangwe dynasty. Adang Engu Anyangwe through his collaboration with the British colonialists instituted a hereditary traditional rulership in the Anyangwe dynasty. The transition of traditional rulership degenerated into leadership tussle between Emamba and Adang Engu, which was resolved by Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe in collaboration with the traditional elders *Okum* alongside the British colonialists.

The work affirms that from the inception of hereditary succession of traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie, the Polity had been administered by traditional rulers from the Anyangwe dynasty such as, Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe, Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe, Adi Lucas Anyangwe and Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. In order for the traditional rulers of Oshie to build up mechanisms for local administration during the colonial period, there was the creation of a number of traditional governance institutions that work in conjunction with the Fon. These traditional governance institutions included the traditional elders *Okum*, assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, traditional council and the judiciary institutions that were well tailored to ensure an effective internal administration of the chiefdom.

The traditional elders *Okum*, the assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* and the *Aken* secret cult are responsible for the running of the chiefdom's administration together with the Fon. The traditional government in the chiefdom of Oshie had at the pinnacle of its hierarchy the Fon who delegated powers to these traditional governance institutions who were in turn answerable to him. It was also recognised that the traditional rulers of Oshie had sacred and secret qualities and in such capacities, were not questioned by ordinary mortals but the gods and the ancestors of the land. It was equally observed that the Oshie traditional rulers demonstrated great dynamism in regional diplomacy as seen in the way they collaborated with their neighbouring communities through long distance trade. In this regard, the Oshie traditional rulers had well established diplomatic components which ensured effective diplomacy in many aspects during the reign of Fon Etunyi Anyangwe and Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. An important aspect of regional diplomacy equally presented in the second part of chapter two is the cordial relation that was carried out by the traditional rulers of Oshie in the

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form of royal marriages, royal bag, mortuary celebrations of the death of friendly Fons and diplomatic envoys and the royal emblems whose effectiveness were meant for traditional religion. These emblems constituted the bedrock upon which Oshie traditional rulership rested.

It was this diplomatic enterprise that helped to strengthen relations between Oshie and her neighbouring chiefdoms. It was also necessary for the pursuit of peace between these chiefdoms. In this way, a rich profile of alliances were also carried out which were sustained by the exchange of royal visits. Cultural festival also enhanced inter-chiefdom relations between Oshie and her neighbouring chiefdoms. Cordial and friendly ties were cemented during cultural celebrations. We equally identified instances where during the *Anangkobi* dance celebration, Fons from neighbouring chiefdoms were invited by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe to participate in the annual dance celebration. In this light, brotherly and friendly ties were established through traditional diplomatic contacts. Taking into consideration that no tradition in the Grassfields chiefdom forbid the royal prince to get married to a princess from another chiefdom, inter-chiefdom royal marriages were also carried out by the traditional rulers of Oshie, which strengthened diplomatic relations between Oshie and her neighbouring chiefdoms.

We also identified in the chapter that hostile relations in the form of land and boundary disputes also constituted part of the relations between Oshie and her neighbouring communities of Njikwa Sub-division. When we examined these conflicts, we were tempted to assert that the location of Oshie remains a menace to peace in Njikwa sub-division. Oshie is surrounded by nine villages that make up Njikwa sub-division and these neighbours have been disputing over land and boundary issues with the people of Oshie right back from the colonial days.

After presenting the traditional governance institutions and the regional diplomacy carried out by the traditional rulers of Oshie with their neighbouring communities in chapter two, our focus in Chapter three was to examine the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in economic development of the chiefdom. We observed that the traditional rulers of Oshie played a central role in the economic development of the chiefdom. There was also the construction of houses with the use of local materials such as bamboo, mud and thatch grass. In this direction, the economic and infrastructural enterprise introduced by the Oshie traditional rulers aided in introducing the youths into income generating activities. We equally observed that there was the introduction of development projects such as the initiation of community development association by Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe in the various quarters known as *Komiti*.

We equally identified that, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe used his knowledge in town planning and survey to map out inter-quarter road networks in Oshie and built bridges, renovated the palace structures, the initiation of community development projects, introduction of new concepts of economic development programs, that is self-reliance development initiatives, construction of the Oshie co-operative hall and promotion of other economic activities such as agriculture and trade. It was observed that trade relations between Oshie and other palm oil producing chiefdoms were to safeguard continuous supply of palm oil in the chiefdom of Oshie and also ensure a comparative cost advantage over the other. We also observed in the chapter that, the creation of women cooperative associations and the Oshie cultural and development association OCA through the initiatives of the traditional rulers, has been the main impetus behind the economic development of the chiefdom up to present.

We also observed that, the traditional rulers of Oshie initiated self-reliance development projects that entailed creation of quarters and market, renovation of the Oshie palace from its colonial structure, Inter-quarter roads network alongside other long lasting development projects which helped transform the pristine society into a quasi modern chiefdom. The spirit of hardwork in the people of Oshie people that rendered them tied down to mother earth led the traditional rulers to expose the economic backbone of Oshie in North West region in particular and Cameroon at large. The chapter asserts that the self-reliance economic development projects deployed by Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe were accountable for the internal development of Oshie.

The study further examined, the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. In the exploration of facts related to the socio-cultural and development issues in Oshie, the chapter indicates that, the traditional rulers of demonstrated great dynamism in socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. We also observed in the chapter that, the traditional rulers of Oshie promoted formal education in the chiefdom through their collaboration with the Basel Mission. The section of our study equally portrayed that the traditional rulers of Oshie demonstrated great dynamism in the development of socio-cultural issues such as the provision of basic social amineties (pipe borne water supply), Oshie

playing ground, the Oshie Health Service, re-organisation of marriage institutions and other traditional practices in the chiefdom. We equally identified that, there was the revival of socio-cultural activities in the chiefdom of Oshie by the rulers such as the *Anangkobi* annual dance festival which has been the major aspect that has projected the culture of the people of Oshie.

We also noticed in the chapter that Fon Etunyi Anyangwe ascension to the throne created many socio-cultural and development associations such as the *Anangkobi* annual dance. The intrusion of the Basel Mission in Oshie transformed the Oshie traditional society and belief system. This new religion offered to the people a new form of Christian ethics in place of the traditional religion. This enabled the people to abandon their ancestral ways of worshipping and turned to the new way of worship introduced by the Basel Mission. The chapter also indicates that, the intrusion of the Basel Mission in Oshie by the year 1926, and its transformation to Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, has remained the major leading religious denomination in Oshie and the entire Njikwa sub-division up to the present.

Fon Etunyi Mathew Anyangwe in welcoming the Basel Mission to establish in Oshie played a tremendous role in transforming the Oshie indigenes in to a more civilized elite. The promotion of western education by the traditional rulers of Oshie, gave rise to a new class of educated elite who emerged in Oshie and were proud of their status. Thus, the educated elite were responsible for the development of the chiefdom. Moreover, many Oshie elite who held responsible positions in Cameroon nowadays were educated in the Basel Mission School Bereje that acted as academic centre in Oshie. The educated class of elite in Oshie have been the architects behind the development projects in Oshie modern society. By the year 1956 Oshie was already proud of Secondary school and University graduates who were products of the Basel Mission School in Oshie.

The last chapter, examine challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers beginning from the reign of Fon Adang Engu Anyangwe to the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. According to the evidences from information in this section, the chapter demonstrates that, the initiatives of the traditional rulers of Oshie in the economic and sociocultural development of the chiefdom went alongside enormous challenges. These included European interference in Oshie rulership that created a traditional rulership tussle between Emamba and Adang Engu Anyangwe. Post independence government meddling in chieftaincy institution, ineffective administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, succession dispute to Oshie royal throne, chieftaincy crisis and dethronement of the legitimate ruler. The chapter affirms that, the non respect of the canons set forth by the traditions and customs of the people of Oshie by some of its traditional rulers, alongside other internal squabbles within the royal family and the decision of the elite who challenged the authority of the rulers, equally contributed to undermine the dynamism of Oshie rulership.

Another challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership observed in the study, was when Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe passed on in 1997. It was not easy to designate a new traditional ruler to replace him, this failure degenerated into a dispute between among members of the royal family. In an effort not to downgrade the great achievements of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, this state of near anarchy was welcomed by some elite because it allowed them to commit acts or cause omissions for which they were unaccountable for. Some preferred to have a rather broad based chieftaincy rule whereby they considered themselves as micro-chiefs and as a result played the role of the chief in order to fulfill their ego and self aggrandizement at the expense of the satisfaction of the masses.

There was equally the confusion created by the traditional elders *Okum* who failed to designate a successor in Oshie but rather heaped the blame on the royal family for failure to cooperate with them. The royal family whose indifference and nonchalance in chieftaincy matters rather opened up a completely new chapter characterized by heightened family squabbling and strife, where each one was seen to secure or influence the chieftaincy office for himself. In the face of such blatant failure to agree on a consensus choice, they laid their blames on the traditional elders as the underlying cause of the collapse in the procedure. It was factual that the designated traditional ruler had to reflect the desire of the traditional elders *Okum* (kingmakers), the royal family and the people at large.

Other challenges to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership include the ineffective administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe in Oshie due to his permanent residence in the United States of America. Coupled with the tight schedule of his job which was hardly affording him time to come to Oshie and commune with his people, this resulted to the abandonement of traditional rulership bestowed upon him by tradition. Consequently, he became an absentee Fon for over ten years. This vacuum led to the dysfunctioning of virtually all the traditional institutions in Oshie. The pressure from the royal family, the traditional elders (king makers) and the Oshie cultural and development association OCA forced him to voluntarily relinquish the throne. As a matter of fact, his subordinates the traditional elders *Okum* distanced themselves from him and on 11th April 2009, a new Fon was enthroned as the traditional ruler of Oshie.

The situation greatly undermined the status of traditional rulership in Oshie which later degenerated into chieftaincy crisis in the Chiefdom. We equally observed that to overcome the chieftaincy tussle in Oshie, the administration in Njikwa sub-division reacted promptly by ordering the new Fon to discontinue his activities in the chiefdom. The reinstatement of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe on the throne led to a division of the elite into two factions, those who were for or against the administration of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. Due to the chieftaincy crisis, many set backs were recorded in the social and economic domain in Oshie. This also tarnished the repute of traditional rulership in Oshie, Njikwa sub-division and North West Region as a whole. In fact, the chapter equally examined the challenges to the development projects of Oshie traditional rulers and particularly during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe whereby no economic development project was carried out in the chiefdom but rather his reign attempted to disrupt the development projects put in place in the chiefdom by his predecessor. However, at the background of these challenges, the traditional rulers in Oshie could be seen to have survived these challenges. Although the respect accorded to the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers in the development of the chiefdom had gradually dwindled.

(I) Prospective for Oshie Traditional Rulership

The study out rightly dismisses the idea proposed by the proponents of the "Zero-Sum School" that traditional rulership has outlived its usefulness and is by such perception, too obscure to be in existence. This is because African states, no matter their geographical size today, were built on traditional states structures. Regardless of the criticisms meted on them by the modern governance, it remains clear beyond any reasonable doubt that traditional rulership and governance was part and parcel of the past, the present and will continue to exist in a predictable future. We have seen how the institution of traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie from the intrusion of European colonialists in the area witnessed a lot of changes within Njikwa sub-division. While advocating a significant re-adjustment on the part of traditional administration and modern governance, we continue to advocate like, Sama in ''Traditional Rulers(Chiefs) in Anglophone Politics'', Foupossi Evariste in *Faut-il brûler les chefferies traditionnelles*, and Divine Ngwa forthcoming in ''Fons, Chiefs and People of Bafut *in* Conflict'' that, the natural rulers are still potent forces of administration that brings

together a surmountable degree of cohesion and integration if allowed to function on their own and within their own framework.

There is need to note in our study that the concept of traditional rulership should be redefined. This is because the evolutions in the field of politics and socio economic elements and structures have rendered some of the traditional institutions and practices out-moded. The Oshie traditional rulership needs to be both aware and ready to adjust to meet these changes. The adjustment will surely need a great deal of sacrifice and high display of a mastery of tradition and the execution of regional diplomacy that involves royal gifts and marriages. This is because the strength of any institution or society depends largely on the quality of the center. The center here is the Oshie central administration that is headed by the Fon and the traditional governance institutions. In the colonial days, Oshie traditional rulership was sustained by both cordial and hostile relations. This is the process through which the chiefdom of Oshie gained its fame over other chiefdoms of Njikwa subdivision. There was a great deal of inter chiefdom relations and the Oshie central authority with all its entire traditional apparatus which ensured the security of the chiefdom.

These were practices and concepts that could only be effective in the past where royal absolutism in the Grassfields was at its peak. Modernism and technological advancements have made the world a global village where the action of each and every individual, Fon or subject could be questioned at will. The sacredness and the definitive powers of life and relations of Fons over their subjects have all been relegated to the museum of antiquities. Force and fear of the unknown have been replaced even in the traditional setting by an outburst of more assuring opportunism. The limits of the traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie in particular and else where in the Bamenda Grassfields, are visible everywhere and the units that constitute these communities are falling into minor bits. Indeed, the support that came from the traditional rulers to sustain the Oshie traditional economy and the socio-cultural development of the chiefdom have dropped tremendously. The youth from this area are interested in adventurism in the rich world of opportunities so as to obtain the basic needs. The reputation of the traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie, has been gradually tilted away from complete loyalty to deserted traditionalism.

The strength and reputation of the Oshie traditional society depended largely on wealth which is no longer measured using the traditional machinery but on money, education and other rare elements. The present of a huge population of western educated elite who are either not interested in traditional issues or have their own philosophy on how the chiefdom can be administered have helped to fashion out the image of Oshie society. More still, the presence of a thick population of church men and women most of them having a completely different philosophy of life have all propounded change.

True enough, the council hall and the grass house at the palace in Oshie including other magnificient structures are important in depicting the colour and valour of a true African society, but this study strongly holds that most of the structures at the Oshie palace have been abandoned to fate. The housing infrastructures in the Oshie palace appears more like historic relics reminiscent of a glorified ritual past but in our view, are largely irresponsive to present demands. There is need for structures, like a modern design but traditionally decorated reception hall having spacious capacity and plaza. This will, besides restoring the dignity of the traditional rulers of Oshie and equally provide an avenue for the reception of guests.

Secondly, it holds that, the sources of the Fon's wealth or palace economy are grossly inadequate and need to be extended and made potent enough to give the Fon the status and chance to engage in Chiefdoms relations without any handicap. It was possible in the colonial period in Oshie for the Fon to survive on gifts from his subjects, traditional elders, princes, palace retainers, quarter heads and tributes of all sorts. The Fon had goats, sheep and games from hunting expeditions not even to talk of the booty that was amassed from those who acquired titles, decorations and other forms of fines and traditional taxes.

There was a constant inflow of food from the Fons' farms and above all, the Palace guards under the direct command of Nchinda's or palace stewards and the traditional elders *Okum* who were men of integrity. They were very concerned with the palace, alongside the economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom and in this direction, protected the Fons assets. In fact, the Fon's wives and younger Princes of the blood and even beyond had enough to eat, store and share. Everything was done to ensure that the palace as the seat of traditional authority truly represented the land of the plenty. It was for this reason that the royal farming season was a duty of all and sundry within the chiefdom of Oshie. The Fon royal hunt was equally organized to provide him with booty in form of meat variety to provide for his people. As representative of people, he was not expected to trek over long distances. He was accompanied by the traditional elders *Okum* and his Messengers to important occasions that necessitated long trekking.

With the coming of the colonial masters, the need for the respect of human rights and technological advancements, many things regarding the Fon's, economy have changed in focus or direction. The princes, princesses, palace wives and all the heads of traditional institutions that used to reside permanently at the palace have decreased tremendously. The Fon is required to have a viable source of finance to take care of his subjects and to carter for his health. In fact, with a general rise in the standards of life and comfort, the Fon has a right to educate his children, provide oil, shelter and clothes for his wives, take charge of their health care as well as sponsor the marriages of the close associates. In addition, interchiefdom methods of royal marriages as seen in the study, have almost died down. Even women given as tributes to the Fon have been technically made to remain a pattern of the past. If the Fon wants to get married many things are now required. The representative of the Fon will need to court both the parents of the girl and the girl in question. A form of bride wealth will be paid and further, the Fon will be required under normal conditions to be responsible and romantic enough to handle the girl in material needs.

On the other hand, the Palace is a whole big traditional enterprise that needs to be sustained by a battery of income generating enterprises with adequate checks and balances. With increasing demands from all angles, the Fon can no longer depend on meagre contributions from the nooks and crannies of the Oshie territorial ground. Those traditional rulers who could not conform to this pattern of allowances simply abandoned the Palace in search of more secure and gainful opportunities elsewhere, such as the case of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. Indeed, the financial remuneration promised by the 1977 Chieftaincy decree to the Fons and its subsequent enactment was not only too tiny to gather any wealth for the Fon but is reported to be depended especially from 1997 on the people's support to the party in power. That was the more reason why Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe created the Njikwa Fons union to contribute revenue in order to aid the Fons financially.

According to the reflection of the German Philosophical Historian Leopold Von Ranke that 'to history alone has been assigned the high office of questioning the pasts, of instructing the present for the benefit of the future" to assert that, the present trend of the depreciation of the traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie needs to be understood from its autonomous past. It equally views that the bases of these challenges are rooted in the ineffective administration of the traditional rulers of Oshie and the non respect of the norms set forth by the traditions and customs of the people. In fact, human societies such as that of Oshie for instance, are made of structures called traditional institutions which are technically designed to pilot the admininistration of the chiefdom. According to our study, because of differences in values and rationales, opposing forces are always part and parcel of any given society, such as the division between the traditional elders *Okum* witnessed during the traditional rulership tussle in the chiefdom of Oshie.

The study has equally provided us with the basis to conclude that the structural functionalism theory operated only in cases where there was no abandonement of the structures, for where the later occurred, the concept was either handicapped from functioning or forced to malfunction. This is typified in the mutations between Oshie traditional rulership and traditional governance institutions. Most of them were rendered almost mute during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. This ultimately led to the display of the conflict theory where the Fon and the royal family and the OCA association competed with each other. This in turn, affected relations between the Fon and the traditional elders *Okum* who were held as the pillars of administration. All of these points to the fact that, certain conditions on the functions of the Fon were to be made more real and idealistic.

Another prospect of the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership was that, we stand in a position to argue that the situation of the fading destiny of the Oshie traditional rulership in the chiefdom of Oshie is just an episode in the general drama of the dwindling tides of African traditional rulers and kingdoms in the face of change. Though it was very certain that this can be replicated in other fondoms and chiefdoms faced with the same situation, it was plausible to conclude that irresponsible traditional rulers like the case of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, whose internal administration was made up of a lot challenges, taking note of the fact that kingship, Fonship or rulership still remain potent forces though playing auxiliary roles within the modern administrative framework.

The Fon and his high profiled traditional elders *Okum*, should be made to know or be reminded that they occupy positions which tradition and the people still hold in high esteem. At best, they are seen as symbols of unity and the important link between the living and their ancestors. By such prescient, they still command a form of real and fictive respects within the chiefddom's populace. They should therefore use the glories of traditional rulership in the past and the warmth it shared with neighbouring chiefdoms as points of inspiration and instigation. These demands require that each institution should endeavour to re-adapt its methods of operation to suit the evolving context. The traditional rulers of Oshie and their 'etats majors

should know that effective rulership in the present context requires responsible conduct which was pregnant with negotiation and constant communication. All of these also require an appreciable amount of tact in approach. From our point of investigation, we find the need for the traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie to redefine the essence of rulership along side mutual understanding and interest. It was possible that through the respect of the norms put in place by traditions and customs the people, traditional governance institutions and rulership in Oshie can still be revitalized and triumphed within the forces of change.

We also recommended that with the demands of change in functions and responsibilities of the traditional rulers, there is an urgent need for systematic training of the future Oshie traditional rulers in order to avoid the errors of the past. Though the royal palace which we identified exists as training grounds, succession to traditional rulers simply follows the hereditary rite and respect of tradition of the people of Oshie. In this regard the morale and habits of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe apparently was never put to test or even questioned before he ascended the throne. Coupled with imposed single parent upbringing, this nonchalance has given a kind of absconding impunity to those who come to power or are in the process of becoming the traditional ruler of Oshie.

Western education is now very indispensable for any future or present rulership. There is a dramatic shift from an era when traditionalists considered education to be for the weak and the stubborn. In all its content, form, and upshot, Western Education is no longer a decorative venture reserved for the traditionally unprivileged few as it was during the advent of colonialism. It is a form of training that enables each individual to develop a fearless sense of self discovery, mastery and evaluation that rather help us to master our tradition and give it a competitive and marketable value. It helps us to master our past and future and places us comfortably situated and communicable in the concerts of chiefdom evolution. Without a minimum level of education of these heaven bestowed natural rulers (Fons) and its entire setup will continue to appear absurd and therefore out-dated in the present dispensation.

Even traditional societies today operate on statistics and records which require a minimum level of education. The traditional rulers of Oshie were supposed to keep adequate records about their subjects and tradition of the people. If such statistics were to be kept by literates' traditional rulers, then we expected Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe to have had a good tract record of the functions of traditional rulership but that was not the case. In fact, informed rulership or rulers will be aware of events out of their jurisdiction and will be at

some comfort to discuss their ideas and to communicate with the wider world. In defining dynamism in the early part of the introduction we identified that it was a general feature of most traditional rulers of fondoms and chiefdoms of the Western Grassfields. Where these dynamic qualities were lacking, the Fon was always misconstrued or even misconceived. It was therefore the duty of stake holders of traditional rulership in Oshie to ensure that future traditional rulers were trained both traditionally and morally by the traditional elders *Okum*.

There was need to make it abundantly clear to all the sundry that any traditional ruler who does not respect the norms put in place by tradition was not worth its salt in the present context. Some of the flaws of Fon Ericsricsyrol Yande Anyangwe during his reign at the helm of Oshie were centered on his inability to fill the palace with women as his predecessor did. The Fon was required to inherit the widows of his father except his own mother and to have children with them. It was therefore obvious that the amount of success of a traditional ruler depended largely on the magnitude of his palace and the number of women in his possession. This was a contrary view with Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe. During his reign he lived all alone in a deserted palace void of palace women with his close associate made up of wrong advisers who rather than guiding the Fon on sound administrative procedures, helped to ruin him.

Admittedly, the Fon of today cannot act in the same way his predecessors behaved. But this does not mean that the Fon has no meaningful role in the modem era. Fons have the moral obligation to contribute to the lives of their individual citizens in particular, and to the nationals of their country. These days, the traditional rulers of Oshie are expected to lead his people in organizing self-help activities and projects, and take the initiative in establishing institutions and programmes to improve the welfare of their subjects in the economic and social domain. The modern Fons, who do not take into cognizance the role of tradition in addressing issues regarding the local administration of their chiefdoms and fondoms are stripped off from the esteem bestowed on them by their subjects. In this reflection, it was my considered opinion that the disrespect of traditional governance institutions during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Yande Anyangwe, contributed vehemently to the rulership crisis in the chiefdom of Oshie.

We saw in the study that topical among internal factors responsible for the challenges to Oshie traditional rulership was the futile administration of its present ruler that generated to chieftaincy crisis within the Royal Family. This crisis and its ramifications were only helping to reduce the powers of the Fon and his grip over his subjects. Those implanting and propagating this crisis should know that as a large family, conflicts and diverging views were bound to exist. As a family on whom rulership was traditionally bestowed, they should stop washing their dirty leanings in the public squares. The way these conflicts have been handled and the role of the Fon, in the entire drama leave images of doubts in the sacred wisdom of the Fons. We strongly recommend that they should form a truth and reconciliation committee which will guarantee that those to inherit the royal throne are not only the right persons by virtue of age but also men of substance. In our sense, substance should be seen through moral uprightness, clairvoyance and sound judgment.

Another action which should be kept out or which the traditional ruler of Oshie should distance themselves from is medling in Party Politics. As a father of all, a guarantor of traditional values and a custodian of the gods of the people, the Fon should know that for what ever development purpose, he was not supposed to be a militant of a political party like what occurred during the reign of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe. J.P. Warnier aptly describes the Fon as a container capable of storing all without regards of its source. In such capacity, the Fon was supposed to understand that heaven made him a militant of tradition and that as auxiliaries of the administration, they can still perform their functions without necessarily being militants of political parties. A quick look down on the Oshie historical memory lane has shown that even during the one party system, Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe militancy in the CPDM and then the SDF party reduced him to the level of an ordinary mortal and even scorned at in many occasions without achieving his goal. This helped not only to cast shadow of doubts on the ability of the Fon to make sound judgments but equally jeopardized the survival of the sanctity of traditional rulership as an institution.

As representatives of the people, any attempt by the Fon to militate with a party has most often only brought disgrace and sometimes division within the core of the central decision making body. In fact, as rulers bestowed with righteous powers and wisdom Fons are supposed to guide the choices of their subjects through broad orientation in traditional administration and lucrative opportunities. In this respect, there is a possibility that, they can sympathize with one political opinion at the detriment of the other. Indeed, with very few exceptions, most of the Grassfields traditional rulers openly throw their seats at the rulling party on the account that, they will pull development projects to their fondoms. Those who behaved otherwise had their monthly allowances stopped or suspended. The rulers of smaller chiefdoms succeeded in this venture in that, they were able to orientate their people. The situation failed in larger chiefdoms and kingdoms like Bafut, Mankon and Bali where the people voted against the wishes of their Fons as their natural rulers. Though the Fon of Oshie did not openly become a member or militant of the C.P.D.M. as it was in Mankon, his political ambitions in the opposition party were not realized.

For Oshie traditional rulership to regain its colonial weight there is need for the advisory team of the Fon to be diversified to include both the traditional and Western educated elite. While the traditional elite will manage the traditional affairs and keep tract of the constitution, the western educated elite will place the Fon abreast with the opportunities provided by the changing conditions of the modern world and place the Fon along the lines of this gainful opportunism. In fact, western educated elite who are members of the Royal family, needs to implicate themselves in Oshie traditional administration. While it is true that they may not depend on the Fon for fame and protection, it was equally true that despite the significant erosion of Oshie traditional rulership within Njikwa sub-division, Oshie Fon still represents a rallying force and will continue to remain a home for the entire Oshie tradition and technically purge out the repugnant elements that hinder growth and progress as well as revive those that are capable of sustaining growth and development.

In order for this to be realised, a great deal of compromise is required. They will need a lot of tact to convince both the Fon and his traditional elite. After this persuasion, they will require both time and resources to educate the latter on the necessity of change and far more, on a need to introduce new development concepts that are responsive to practical real needs. In our opinion, Oshie traditional rulers within the context of our study, can only be revived if there was a responsible and selfless mixture of ideas between the traditional elders *Okum*, assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh*, king makers and the royal family. This was because they are the ones who have a profound mastery of the palace paraphernalia and its inner sanctuary. By right of birth or blood, they are traditionally closer to the Fon than any other notables and traditional elite. In this way, they can carefully identify the areas that require new arrangements within the palace as well as the important elements that can be improved to revive Oshie traditional rulership.

In our opinion as well, the traditional rulers of Oshie needs to be provided with an administrative secretary who was well grounded on administrative issues and protocol. He

should be the one to receive all correspondences, read and study them with other recognized informed notables and react accordingly. For this correspondences to be having a balanced weight, the Fon should be having a legal bench in the palace which should be made up of functional active or retired lawyers. This way, the legal implications of the Fon's actions and correspondences will always be looked into before they are made public. Also it will go further to maintain checks and balances partaining to issues of succession dispute as witnessed during the reign of Fon Ericsyrol Anyangwe.

In order to ensure that the palace artefacts are not swindled away by unscrupulous individuals, there was need to recruit security officers who are men of substance and moral rectitude to keep records and carter for the chiefdom property. The alace should be having a project committee that will study, write and propose projects. The Oshie sons and daughters in the U.S began a project of modernizing the chiefdom and this, like many other projects in Cameroon, ended up somewhere. We encourage that such lofty projects should be revived to make it in such a way that a befitting cultural centre, and a palace museum that will equally host the library, and other facilities be constructed in the chiefdom. The traditional rulers of Oshie should work with the various traditional rulers of Njikwa subdivision in order to acquire rulership skills to administer his people. He should should be open minded, dynamic and be able to reconcile with the royal family, traditional elders *Okum* and be able to assume his responsibility over the throne.

To the best of our knowledge, if these structures are erected and an accountable management committee put in place, the standards of comfort of the Fon, the Princess and princesses alongside those of his close aids would be improved upon. Accordingly, we find it useful that, recreational facilities and other income generating facilities be put in place to sustain the Palace economy. It was very clear that if these changes are to be effected some of the old and in-depth structures, personalities and ideas that sustain the present depreciating states of the Oshie palace would be swept away. This was certainly the prize different political, economic and socio cultural shades will need to pay to keep themselves at par with the trends of current dispensation. The study further holds that the Fon and his administrative representatives should harness and tailor their methods of administering and managing people and resources to suit the current changes without compromising their inherent qualities.

In this regard, royal insignia and traditional rulers should be valued and as such, treated and used as sources of inspiration and not mockery and scorn. Respectable traditional

titles should be conferred prestige and regard reminiscent of the past without being trapped in it. Oshie elite are called upon to safe guard the decomposing powers of the Fon by keeping them at reasonable distance. The traditional rulers of Oshie from the earliest settlements have not condescended to such levels of misdeeds but there are strong indications that most people are shifting their loyalty away from the Oshie palace and traditional order because of the chieftaincy crisis. The dwindling image of the Fonship can comfortably be restored if there is general reconciliation with the traditional elders *Okum* and the OCA association.

An in-depth assessment of the origin of chieftaincy crisis in the chiefdom of Oshie and its manifestations portrays that; if the following measures are implemented, future crisis could be avoided. The traditional rulers are obliged by tradition to live permanently in their area of jurisdiction so as to understand the problems and difficulties faced by their subjects and how to better manage them. This can be done by carrying out regular annual consultative meetings with the people, through inter quarter visits and constant meeting with the quarter heads, traditional elders *Okum* (king makers), assistant traditional elders *Ngyeh* (peace makers), other groups such as the different branches of OCA association in Cameroon. In the case where the Fon resides out of the chiefdom which of course is not obliged, he should collaborate with the governance institutions of the chiefdom to select a regent that would work according to the norms put in place by tradition not single handedly appointed a regent. In this way, the subjects will hold the regent with great esteem. The regent should work closely with the traditional elders *Ngyeh* and the quarter heads.

Cultural associations that are made up of the elite of Oshie should work towards the development of Oshie not meddling in traditional issues. OCA as the mother association of the people should work hand in glooves with the Fon and the traditional council to ensure peaceful development of the chiefdom. OCA should uphold the image of Oshie and take it as a challenge to sensitize and educate the people on the need for dialogue and reconciliation in times of differences and difficulties regarding the community. The traditional elders *Okum* (kingmakers) should take into consideration that except a Fon was "missing" or declared "lost" before another legitimate Fon is enthroned. Before the investiture of a new Fon on the throne, he should be a son of the late Fon, born on a tiger skin when the father was still on the throne. The new Fon should have a good working knowledge of the traditional institutions in Oshie, master the tradition and customs of his people, ability to unite and administer his

people and master the local dialect. As tradition demands, he should be available at all times in the chiefdom, in other to carry out his duties personally rather than through the intermediary of a regent. He should be capable of expressing a unifying influence within the royal family and the entire community. We also recommend that there should be a revival of the Njikwa Fons Union as it was during the period of Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe, such that issues of chieftaincy crisis in Njikwa Sub-division will be solve without any problem.

Substantial information has been provided on the history of traditional rulership among the people of Oshie, it was more suitable to say that, the status of the chiefdom has diminished dramatically. Oshie traditional rulers has fluctuated within the realms of success and ultimate failure. There were however, visible signals that the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulers needs a complete over haul. Without an urgent action which will redefine Oshie in the realm of regional diplomacy with her neighbouring communities in a new and evolving concept, its relations within its sub setting would continue to dwindle down to the lowest ebb. It has also identified the factors or areas responsible for the triumph and failure of Oshie traditional rulership emphasizing that, irresponsible rulership and lack of psychic power and far sightedness on the part of the Fon has produced unimpressive results. These results were responsible for the weakness as of the dynamism of the traditional rulers.

We cannot however claim that this study has completely covered the themes of Oshie traditional rulership within its time scope. It strove to investigate, analyze, trace, account and describe the dynamism of Oshie traditional rulership in the economic and socio-cultural development of the chiefdom. Attention and focus have also been made to situate the Oshie traditional rulership and relations with her neighbouring communities during the colonial and post colonial era. This is an area of urgent research not only for historians but equally for all the fields of social and human sciences. We have managed in our own way to present the relations between the chiefdom of Oshie and her neighbouring communities, but a more elaborate study of this relation will still reveal interesting areas of traditional diplomacy. Indeed during 1985 to 1997, the chiefdom of Oshie had undergone significant changes and modifications with a series of economic development projects alongside the revival of traditional practices by its rulers. Moreover, there is a small but not negligible population of Fulani people in Oshie that have influenced Oshie traditional rulership in many ways.

We find it constraining to argue that this work handles a multi dimensional model of chiefdom relation where the traditional rulers in the chiefdom of Oshie, like those of other traditional chiefdoms and fondoms are expected to adjust and to tolerate foreign influences. The modern system of governance on its part within this set up is expected to accept and tolerate traditional facets of government and come to a compromise on how they are supposed to match with each other. Multi- dimensional model in our sense, is a system which presupposes that each government; big or small, traditional or foreign, operates within the limits of multiple frontiers having its merits and demerits. For this concept to succeed there should be a considerable deal of responsible rulership, communication and mutual respect of other views. Practically, this principle can help to revive and to edify Oshie traditional rulership and governance institutions within its jurisdiction.

We hereby recommend that other researchers should venture in studies on these natural rulers Fons and Chiefs. This is simply due to the fact that, studies on natural rulers have increasingly gained space in scholarly works in the history of Africa and Cameroon and the Grassfields at large, viewing the role and frequent intervention of these institutions of traditional offices in all fields of human knowledge. Furthermore, offices of traditional rulers have rotated from its primordial position of a pure traditional institution to take a central place in modern state relations and forms of governance. It is apparent that in modern day chieftaincy institution, a few Fons have succeeded to emerge as veritable rulers of modern states while a majority of them have been rendered in a state of disappointment. Traditional rulers in chiefdoms and Fondoms rather than to be pushed into position of impoverished remnant of the past, they should be taken as the true representatives of their people.

A growing number of scholars have recognised chieftaincy as, a force to be reckoned with in contemporary politics in Africa, especially with increasing claims for recognition by cultural and ethnic communities. Whether or not a colonial creation, chieftaincy as a political and cultural identity representation should be studied in school curriculum, not dismissed. Neo-traditional titles should maintain a strong link with their indigenous communities. In Nigeria for instant, investment in chieftaincy has become a steady source of symbolic capital for individuals. Chieftaincy institutions need to be handled as an institution which has been adapted to the contemporary socio-political setting of societies in other to amalgamate tradition and modernity.

Nyamnjoh affirms that, Africans were simultaneously modernising their traditions and traditionalising their modernities. In South Africa, chieftaincy remains part of the cultural and political landscape, which is constantly negotiating and renegotiating with new encounters

and changing material realities. Being African is a matter of modernity and citizenship. In Ghana despite the reversal position created on chiefs by the various Ghanaian head of state, by banning them from party politics, the chiefs have been accorded diverse political functions in the government. They are represented in the council of state (the highest advisory body to the Ghanaian President), the land commission that is responsible for the allocation of public lands for private use; they are involved in Ghanaian politics through their non statutory function as rulers of communities, who facilitate development.

The idea that, traditional rulers were marginalised and reduced to local level politicians or auxiliaries of the administration was a question to reckon with, although this was during the one party system than it was today. Some Fons, especially pro-government were so powerful that they act as if they were above the laws of the state. Increasingly Fons were part and parcel of modern elite and so were victims of manipulations. In issues of land and boundary disputes, traditional rulers should be constantly kept abreast to respect their boundaries in their various chiefdoms. In this view, the functions of Fons should fall within the jurisdiction of settling disputes, ensuring law and order, peace and discipline, bringing local development in their areas, caring for the well being of their subjects, mobilizing, gathering and organising, as well as being custodians of the land and tradition of the people.

An elaborate system of checks and balances should be put in place to ensure that the power and authority of traditional rulers of the Western Grassfields chiefdoms and, Oshie in particular be strictly circumscribed. In exercising their functions and discharging of duties as ultimate political, legal and religious authorities in the maintenance of law and order and the management of public affairs for the welfare of the community, the traditional rulers had to take the advice and counsel of the advisory bodies such as the inner or Privy Council and the council of elders. The inner or privy council represented the aristocratic class and constituted the inner circle of the Fon's, relatives as well as prominent members of the community. This work is therefore not complete due to some difficulties, although a solid platform has been created for subsequent researchers to plough on

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

Name	Age	Profession	Place	Date
Abongwo Lucas	71	Councillor	Oshie	16/9/2015
Abu Ewala	52	Palace Messenger	Oshie	28/11/2015
Achato Anthony	68	Member of Nyanyang group	Oshie	15/6/2015
Adi Richard	62	Member of Kwifuh Society	Oshie	11/7/2016
Adang Lucas	55	Agric Technician	Oshie	14/10/2017
Adang Benedict	51	Farmer/photographer	Oshie	18/9/2017
Akob Gregory	49	Banker	Yaounde	15/1/2016
Ambele Peter	76	Traditional Doctor	Oshie	15/9/2015
Anyangwe Lawrence	44	Prince of the royal family	Bamenda	15/6/2017
Andigema Peter	75	Famer/cattle grazer	Oshie	17/9/2015
Angono Robert	58	Secondary school teacher	Oshie	14/10/2017
Anyangwe Robert	62	Member of royal family	Oshie	16/10/2015
Anya Joshua	63	Farmer	Oshie	17/7/2015
Anjoneck Joshua	70	Farmer/carpenter	Oshie	17/7/2015
Anyangwe Christopher	55	Member of royal family	Bamenda	02/9/2017
Andongkobi Moses	65	Traditional Doctor	Oshie	21/7/2017
Angeme Asaiah	71	Traditional elder Okum	Oshie	22/6/2015
Angono Moses	70	Farmer	Oshie	11/6/2015

Anjang Henry	55	Farmer	Oshie	18/10/2017
Anyangwe Tambe	48	Secondary school teacher	Bamenda	15/1/2016
Apoh Mary	70	Farmer	Oshie	19/8/2017
Atambele Daniel	69	Retired Teacher	Oshie	12/7/2015
Aweneg Lucas	71	Farmer	Oshie	21/8/2017
Asondo Jeremiah	70	Farmer	Oshie	10/7/2015
Asaah Moses	70	Assistant traditional elder Ngyeh	Oshie	11/7/2015
Angyingi Obed	70	Retired teacher	Oshie	12/7/2015
Ataah Simon	51	Banker	Yaounde	13/1/2017
Asaiah Samba	72	Farmer	Oshie	2/10/2015
Anjoneck Elizabeth	70	Farmer	Oshie	21/11/2018
Awah Williams	46	Water plumber	Oshie	8/10/2018
Andongma Eprika	72	Traditional elder(Okum)	Oshie	25/6/2015
Binda Godfred	68	Farmer	Oshie	19/10/2015
Egute Samuel	71	Traditional elder (Okum)	Oshie	10/7/2015
Itambi Thadeus	51	Teacher	Oshie	11/10/2018
Itambi Andrew	52	Mayor of Njikwa Subdivision	Oshie	13/10/2015
Moses Njenwick	73	Family head	Oshie	21/5/2015
Mbaringong Paul	70	Retired Teacher	Bamenda	10/9/2018
Fondeh Elias	65	Retired Teacher	Oshie	11/9/2017
Ndambi Mathias	71	Farmer	Oshie	15/7/2015
Ngwaku Mathew	55	Secondary school Teacher	Oshie	15/7/2015
Ndika Stephen	71	Assistant traditional elder	Oshie	2/10/2016
Ndakwi Robert	58	Teacher	Oshie	15/7/2015
Mbakwa Michael	65	Farmer	Oshie	26/10/2016
Onari Stanley	55	Traditional elder(<i>Okum</i>)	Oshie	12/10/2015

Ozimba Simon	65	Traditional elder (Okum)	Oshie	16/6/2017
Onya Moses	71	Retired Civil servant	Bamenda	25/11/2015
Onari Samson	70	Farmer	Oshie	16/10/2017
Ozimba Stephen	65	Farmer	Oshie	12/6/2015
Slyvester Anjang	57	Farmer	Oshie	8/6/2016
Rev-Prof Anyambod	58	Protestant University Yaounde	Yaounde	28/10/2015
Simon Tayong	68	Traditional elder (Okum)	Oshie	10/10/2017
Simon Ado	65	Palace Steward	Oshie	26/7/2017
Simon Ateghe	52	Secondary School Teacher	Bamenda	16/11/2015
Takwi Godfred	52	Business man/Farmer	Oshie	7/7/2018
Tatoh Takwi	80	Retired Civil Servant	Oshie	10/6/2015
Tah Regina nee Anyangwe	75	Mafor (Royal family)	Bamenda	17/11/2016

APPENDICES

APPENDIX: 1

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WEST CAMEROON CHIEFS CONFERENCE held at Bafut on the 15th and 16th December 1961

Opening: The meeting was declared open at 11 a.m. by the President general His Highness the Hon.Fon of Bafut and prayers were said by the Hon.Chief Endeley.

2. Presidential Address:

a) A written address signed by the president general was read by the Secretary and translated into PidginEnglish (see annex 1)

b) A written vote of thanks by His Highness the Hon. Fon of Bali was read by him and translated into pidgin English (see annex II)

c) Many chiefs spoke in support of the presidential speech and the vote of thanks. In the course of their speeches, some wished that the meeting shouls last one day while some wished that it should last two days. However no vote was taken. Those who spoke included Hon. Chief S.B. Oben; the Hon. Fon of Mbot; Hon. Chief F.B. Manga Williams and the Hon. Fon of Mankon.

3. Central Account: Statement of account by the secretary treasurer was submitted in writing.(see annex III).

4. Percentage of Mamfe and Kumba Registration Fees: It was emphasised that Mamfe and Kumba Divisions should do all they could to pay percentages of their registration fees as soon as possible to the Central Secretary Treasurer.

5.Nkambe Division: An amount of £6.6.d (six pounds and six shillings) was paid by Nkambe Division as percentage of registration fees for 24 chiefs who have paid 21/-each. This amount of £6.6/-is $\frac{1}{4}$ of their total fees of £25.4/-and the Fon of Mbot is to submit the names of these members later.

6. Donations: Nil.

7. Letter from the Hon.A.N.Jua.

a) After a break which lasted from 1.30 p.m. to 3 p.m the meeting took note of a letter from the Hon.A.N.Jua received that very afternoon stating that he Jua would address the conference at 8.30 a.m on the 16/12/61 on behalf of the Prime Minister.

b) After agreeing on how to conduct the meeting of the 16/12/61 before and after the address by the Hon A.N. Jua, the meeting adjourned till 7 a.m.on the 16/12/61.

8. Attendance: see annex IV.

9. Address by Hon.A.N.Jua on 16/12/61:

a) The Hon.A.N.Jua speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister the Hon.A.N. Foncha said that the Chiefs should keep the Government constantly informed of all that they the chiefs are saying and doing about the country.

b) He appealed for peace and said that the chiefs were more responsible for peace than anybody else.

c) House of Chiefs:The House of Chiefs is in the federal constitution of the Republic of Cameroon.Members of the House of the House of Chiefs are entitle to salaries at the same rate with members of the House of Assembly as from the 1st October 1961.Both Houses have the same tenure.Membership of the House of Chiefs is still the same.The question of increase is left to the House of Chiefs itself to raise by motion in the said House.The House of Assembly has no right to make regulations for the House of Chiefs.

d) Traditional rulers: The Minister said that the position of the traditional rulers in relation with the day to day life is unique. It is improper to mix up tradition with politics. Anything which may tend to make tradition disrespectful should be deplored.

e) Response: The Bambalang chief thanked the Minister.Chief of Kulabei supported and wished to know the power of the chiefs to arrest false propagandists.Chief Kumbongsi commented and wondered how the rumour came that the House of Chiefs was cancelled when the Foumban conference had decided in favour of the House of Chiefs with the endorse of the president of the Republic.

f) Question by Chief F.B.Williams: Does anything in the law forbid a chief to contest an election?

g) Answer by Minister: Nothing apart from tradition.

10. Resolutions:

i) That the conference shall optimistically continue to up-hold the existing state and Federal Cameroon Republic constitutions in respect of the west Cameroon House of Chiefs unless and until there are substantial proofs to think otherwise.

ii) That the conference shall be strongly opposed to the participation by any chief in party politics.

iii)That the conference is strongly against any chief who contests or may contest any parliamentary general elections with his subject or subjects, a non-chief or non-chiefs for reasons which are too obvious and numerous to enumerate here and that the conference should do everything within its power to maintain this resolution traditionally and legally as much as possible.

iv) That the chiefs should continue to maintain their neutral fatherly positions above party politics in connection with the forth coming general elections to the west Cameroon House of Assembly provided that they as traditional authorities and natural judges shall reserve the right and power to ensure peace and order, to encourage fair play and to respect the free and popular wishes of the masses in keeping with section 3(c) of the west Cameroon conference constitution.

v) That a well intentioned urgent delegation should convey the synoptical views of the conference to the west Cameroon Prime Minister before twelve midnight on Sunday the 17th December 1961.

11. Place of Next Meeting: It was agreed that the next General meeting should hold at Kumba on a date to be fixed by the President General.

12. Fixed place of General Meeting: This item of agenda was deferred

13. Closing: The meeting finally closed late in the afternoon.

(Sgd.) A.W.Daiga,

Secretary Treasurer.

APPENDIX 11

Presidential Address delivered by his Highness the Fon of Bafut President General of the west Cameroon chief conference at Bafut on the 15th December, 1961.

My Dear Natural Rulers, representatives and all those concerned.

I am very happy to welcome you all today here in Bafut in this number. I am pleased and proud of you because you have patiently taken pains and have suffered in various ways at this very busy period to come here. This is an indication of your great interest and concern in the affairs of the west Cameroon Chiefs conference, the west Cameroon people, the west Cameroon Government and the west Cameroon itself in this Federation. Let this very good spirit lead us all to conduct this meeting nicely and successfully in the interest of ourselves, our people, our government and our country.

2. This special meeting has been convened partly in keeping with the decision of the Nkambe meeting of the 18/9/61 and partly in keeping with our long standing practice in view of the fact that we will soon be going to the polls. It is necessary therefore for us to put two and two together and see how far the result will guide us; our people, our Government and our country.

3.(a) I and the Fon of Bali founded this conference about the year 1954.Some of our colleagues the Fons of Bikom and Nsaw cherished the idea and co-operated nicely at the initial stage.But not long after,the whole weight was left on my shoulders and the Fon of Bali.We bore it patiently,hopefully and publicly for and on behalf of all the chiefs and all the people till many other chiefs joined us from time to time and the conference has now come to this state after achieving for you and me many good things which I consider needless to enumerate here.

b) I am happy that this conference has at least once in every Division of the west Cameroon before we met achieved independence and I appreciate the decisions which you took at the Nkambe meeting of the 18/9/61 in my absence. I hope that this special meeting at Bafut here shall also take other relative or new decisions but not conflicting ones.

4.(1) It is my desire that before rising, this meeting should either make a statement or express its option about the following:

- a) The place of Natural Rulers in Politics
- b) The forthcoming general elections.

2) I have requested the west Cameroon Prime Minister or his accredited representative to make a categorical statement at this meeting on the present state of the west Cameroon House of Chiefs i.e. its life, status, amenities etc,and I believe that we all are very keen and concerned in this matter and should treat same wit every seriousness.

5.)Permit me to seize this opportunity on behalf of mysef and the entire Bafut population to thank you all for honouring this town and its ruler by holding this very first meeting of the Independent west Cameroon Chiefs Conference here.We pray God to crown this conference with success, bless you all with happy times in Bafut and safe return to your homes.We also wish to seize this unique opportunity to wish you and your people a merry Christmas and happy New year in advance.Last but not the least, we pray God to guide all persons and issues connected with the impending elections to proceed peacefully and amicably from the begining to the end.Amen.

(Sgd.) Achirimbi

APPENDIX III

The President General, my colleagues, Representatives and all those concerned,

Sir,

While thanking you and while appreciating the very impressive presidential address which you have just delivered, I wish first of all to acknowledge your hard earned experience dynamism and relentless interest in the affairs of this country. This inspiring speech of yours is so precise, so true and so meaningful that any attempt to analyse it may prolong the proceeding of this meeting for many days.

2.In addition to any other points which may be raised sooner or later, I wish to say that one of the main reason why we decided to hold this first Independent meeting of the west Cameroon Chiefs Conference in your own domain here was to report to your Highness as follows:

a) That the Conference which your Highness worked so hard to form and to maintain has gone successfully round the whole country.

b) That the Conference has achieved very many important and woe very many victories which history and posterity may live to enumerate and long to remember.

c)That your leadership, has deserved admiration and glorification.

d) That you can now impart your fatherly blessing on this mobile Conference before its fixed location is decided.

3.I wish to associate myself very closely with all the points raised in the address and I wish to appeal that in order to keep pace with the important events of these days which are moving so fast, we shall be doing justice to ourselves if we shorten our speeches through out this meeting and attend to first things first according to their order of importance and necessity.I would like us to finish the meeting today if we could.

4. (a) I am very happy to note that your Highness has appreciated the decisions of the Nkambe meeting which took place in your absence.

b)Before taking my seat,I wish to say,many happy returns of the xmas and the New year in advance to your Highness and all the Bafut people.

c) While wishing all those present God's blessing and the best of luck, I beg to take my seat.

V.S.Galega II.

APPENDIX IV

ATTENDANCE BAMENDA DIVISION

Wum Division1.Fon of Bafut

- 1. Chief Ngah2.Fon of Bali
- 2. Chief Bua Nja3.Fon of Mankon
- 3. Chief Knji4.Fon of Bali Kumbat

Nkambe Division5.Fon of Bafreng

- 1. Fon of Mbot6.Fon of Mbu
- 2. Chief Kumbongsi7.Fon of Nsongwa
- 3. Chief of Waal8.Fon of Mbatu
- 4. Chief of Mbah9.Fon of Bamunka
- 5. Chief of Wowo10.Fon of Guzang
- 6. Chief of Njimnkang11.Fon of Anong
- 7. Chief of Mbipgo12.Fon of Tuanyang
- 8. Representative of Sen 13. Fon of Akulabei

Mamfe Division

1. Chief S.B.Oben

Victoria Division

1. Chief G.M.Endeley

- 2. Chief F.B.Manga Williams
- 3. Chief Fritz Mukete

14.Fon of Esum
15.Fon of Tebeng
16.Fon of Ngen Mbo
17.Fon of Bambui
18.Fon of Bamuseng

19.Ardo Jaki of Sabga

Kumba Division	20.Fon of Oshie		
1. Chief Ebanga	21.Fon of Pinyin		
2. Chief Epie	22.Fon of Akum		
3. Chief Daniel Mbo	23.Fon of Baba 1		
4. Mr.J.Mukete-Representative of chief A.Mukete	24.Fon of Bambalang		
Representatives // // // // // // //			
5. Mr.Simon Ngwe-Representative of chief B.Abene	e 25.George Asanga of Mbei // // // //		
2	26. Zacharia Tanto of Mbili // // // //		
2	27. Frederick Nsaka of Oku // // // //		

28. Doctor Mukum of Baba II // // //

2. Mbusah representative of chief Anagho

APPENDIX: V

Questions Guide

A.Pre-colonial period, the origin, migration and settlement of the Oshie people

1) Who were the leaders of the Oshie people when they left their place of origin?

2) When they left their cradle land, what were their various migratory and settlement sites?

3) After their migratory and settlement sites where did they finally settle?

4) Who were the first European to arrive Oshie?

5) How did they came? b) Where did they settle, and what was their approached to rulership role in Oshie?

6) The British came after the Germans, what was their approached towards rulership role in Oshie?

7) Who was the first traditional ruler of the Oshie people and through what circumstances was he crown the leader of Oshie?

8) How was the transition of rulership role in Oshie carried out by the British colonialists?

9) How was chieftaincy role instituted in Oshie?

10) Were there no problems of leadership transition in Oshie when the Europeans came?

11) How were political and judiciary institutions organized in Oshie during the colonial period?

- 12) What was the role of the Aken secret society?
- 13) How was justice administered to defaulters during the colonial period?
- 14) Where was the first palace in Oshie built?
- 15) The political components of the Fon of Oshie consist of what, and their functions?
- 16) Where was the first market place of the Oshie people located?

THE REIGN OF ADANG ENGU ANYANGWE (1918-1924)

- 1) How was Adang Engu Anyangwe crown the leader of the Oshie people?
- 2) What were the circumstances that led to his accession to the rulership position of Oshie?
- 3) How was the traditional life of Adang Engu Anyangwe?
- 4) How was colonial Oshie society organized?
- 5) Was there any cause of movement of the first Oshie market to another place?
- 6) How were the Oshie people washiping God during the colonial period?
- 7) How were the varrious quarters in Oshie created?

8) How was farming ang hunting expedition organized in Oshie during the colonial period? What was the role of men and women folk?

- 9) What was the role played by Diviners and traditional herbalists in the society?
- 10) What was the significance of superstition and belief in spirit world by the Oshie people?
- 11) What was the Kwifuh cult and its significance?
- 12)How did the Anangkobi dance of Oshie came about?
- 13) Of what importance was the Anangkobi dance to the Oshie people?
- 14) What are some of the traditional religion in Oshie and how were they practiced?
- 15) What was the worshiping of Ifoung and of what importance was it to the families?
- 16) How are funeral rites organized in Oshie?
- 17) What are shrines Ozip and how was the cleansing of the shrines performed?
- 18) How was the celebration of births performed in Oshie, and how were twin babies treated?
- 19) How was the practice of polygamy carried out in Oshie?

OHIE AND HER NEIGHBOURS DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

- 1) What relationship exists between and Meta during the colonial period?
- 2) What were the causes of tribal wars between Oshie and Ngwo?
- 3) What were some of the consequences of these wars?
- 4) What relationship exists between Oshie and konda?
- 5) How was peace established during this period?

6) What were the causes of boundary disputes between Oshie and Ngwo, Oshie and Konda, Oshie and Beba?

7) What circumstances led to the death of Adang Engu Anyangwe?

THE REIGN OF CHIEF ETUNYI ANYANGWE II (1925-1974)

- 1) What circumstances led to his succession to the throne of Oshie?
- 2) How was his traditional life?
- 3) Was he involved with politics during the British era and the Ahidjo regime?
- 4) How was the political and administrative organization of Oshie during his reign?
- 5) Who were his palace retainers and what was their role?
- 6) How did he bring about the following community practices?
- a) Communual labour
- b) Quarter committee meetings
- 7) How did he welcome and encouraged the Basel Mission in Oshie?
- 8) How did he encourage western education in Oshie?

9) What were some of the realationship between the Chief Anyangwe with her neighbouring chiefdoms?

- 10) How were inter-village relations with other communities performed?
- 11) How were friendly alliances cemented between Oshie and her neighbours?
- 12) What role was played by Chief Etunyi Anyangwe in the Ngunu native Court area?
- 13) How was the collection of tax performed?
- 14) How were royal marriages performed in Oshie and other Chiefdoms?
- 15) What was the role played by the diplomatic envoy?

- 16) How was trade network organized during this period?
- 17) How were the following aspects carried out between Oshie and her neighbours?
- a) Enthronement of Fons
- b) Funeral rites of Fons
- 18) What were the circumstances that led to his death?

THE REIGN OF FON ADI LUCAS ANYANGWE (1975-1997)

- 1) What were the circumstances that led to enthronement as Fon of Oshie?
- 2) How was his academic profile and professional career?
- 3) How was his political life?
- 4) How did he re-organize the following political and administrative institutions?
- a) The palace
- b)The palace retainers
- c) The councillors
- d)The quarter heads
- 5) How did he achieve the following self-reliance development projects in Oshie?
- a)Inter-quarter link roads and bridges
- b) The health centre
- c)The ceremonial stadium
- d)The cooperative Hall
- e)The Rest house
- f) Oshie pipe born water
- 6) When and how was the Oshie Cultural and development association created?
- 7) What significant role have the OCA played in Oshie
- 8) How did Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe revived the Anangkobi dance festival in Oshie?
- 9) How did he modify the following traditional institutions?
- a)Bride price endowment
- b)The feast of circumcision

c) Maternal delivery

10) How were inter-village relations carried out?

11) What were the circumstances that led to his death?

THE REIGN OF FON ERICSYROL YANDE ANYANGWE IV (1998-2009)

12)What were the circumstances that lead to his enthronement as fon of Oshie?

13)How was his academic and professional career?

14)How was his internal administration of Oshie polity?

15) What were the circumstances that lead to chieftaincy crisis in Oshie?

16) How was the new fon enthroned, what was the role played by the royal family, king makers and the entire Oshie people?

- 17) What was the reaction of the administration?
- 18) How was the legitimate fon reinstated into his functions and under what circumstances?
- 19) What was the impact of chieftaincy crisis in Oshie?

Thank you very much for your kind attention

Ngri Walter Achombong

APPENDIX: VIII

THE OSHIE TRADITIONAL CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION

THE 1997 OCA DECLARATION

PART ONE: THE PREAMBLE

Since the disappearance of H.R.H Fon Adi Lucas Anyangwe III on April 26, 1997, the shock and grief that hit everyone and in particular the Oshie community have persisted to this day. The grief has even deepened because it has not been easy to designate a new consensus leader to replace him, which failure has degenerated into squabbling and feuding among the ttraditional elders Okum, the Ngyehs, the Ongang, the Royal family, the Bughen clan, and has now engulfed the entire village.

As it has become extremely difficult and dicey to fill the vacuum left by this great leader, and since *matter abhors a vacuu*, the void has to be filled by unforeseen matter that has tended to negate and downgrade the great achievements of the late Fon.

This state of near anarchy is welcomed by some because it allows them to commit acts or cause omissions, for which they can for the time being, go unaccountable for.

Some have preferred to have a rather broad base chieftaincy whereby they consider themselves as micro-chiefs and as a result can act or play the role of the chiefs in order to fulfil their personal and selfish aggrandizement at the expense of mass satisfaction.

I.We also note with utter dismay the deliberate confusion created on the hand by:the traditional elders who,by design,have failed to designate a successor but would rather heap the blame on the Bughen clan for the failure to cooperate in the matter, and on the other hand by;

ii. The Bughenclan whose indifference and nonchalance in this primordial matter has opened up a completely new chapter characterized by heightened family squabbling and strife, where each one is seen to attempt to secure or influence the chieftaincy for himself. In the face of such blatant failure to agree on a consensus choice, they have sought escapism by heaping blame on the traditional elders as the underlying cause of the collapse in the procedure. But they cannot fool anyone for it is common knowledge that the Fon-designate must reflec the desire of the *triumvirate* namely the traditional elders, the Royal family and the subjects at large.

In view of the aforegoing, and mindful of the mediating and pacifying role we have been playing as concerned Oshie people who have a keen interest to see their village succeed:-

•Mindful of the need to maintain the unity of Oshie as one and indivisible entity;

•Mindful of the importance to sustain the development effort began since 1975;

·Mindful of our role in the sustenance of the latter developments momentum;

 \cdot Mindful of the enviable position Oshie occupies in Njikwa, Momo and the North West Province;

•Mindful of the vacuum which has persisted since the disappearance of our Fon on April 26, 1997;

•Considering the ultimate disintegration of our Fatherland if the succession machinery is further delayed;

 \cdot Conscious of the fact that we are answerable to more than 80°/_o of the village population who constitute the Oshie Cultural and Development Association,OCA,do hereafter declare as follows:-

PART TWO: HISTORICAL PRECEDENCE

ARTICLE ONE: THE PALACE

The palace is an institution which is the common heritage of all Oshie people. It was built by the collective effort of all Oshie people and year after year has been revamped and maintains by the same common effort.

ARTICLE TWO: CHIEFTAINCY AND SUCCESSION

Succession to chieftaincy, as per the Oshie tradition is hereditary and derives from the same ancestral origin.

ARTICLE THREE: DESIGNATION OF THE FON

The designation and the eventual coronation of the Fon follow a time old pattern whereby the late Fon proposes, the Royal family scrutinizes and subsequently appoints and hands over to the Okum, each one in his specific area of competence, for coronation and presentation to the enire public.

ARTICLE FOUR: RIGHT OF ASCENDANCY

Can aspire to the throne any male member of the Royal family who was born when his father was the reigning Fon that is to say, he was born on the **Tigerskin**.

ARTICLE FIVE: THE PALACE ATTENDANT

(TSANGNIDEI)

The designation of the Fon and his subsequent coronation is invariably accompanied by the designation of a palace attendant and right hand man of the new Fon. This designation is done by the Okum following certain traditional rules and rites.

ARTICLE SIX: BASIC QUALITIES

Subjects to the provisions of other articles, an aspirant to the throne is expected to possess the following:

I.To have a good command and mastery of the Oshie dialect;

II. To have a good working knowledge of the traditional institutions;

III.Is expected to be reasonably avalaible at all times in order to carry out his duties personally rather than through the intermediary of a **REGENT**;

IV.To be capable of expressing a unifying influence within the Royal Family,the Bughen clan and the entire village;

V.To be willing and predisposed to respect the traditional institutions with all its ramifications.

DEDICATION

We the undersigned representatives of the Oshie Cultural and Development Association OCA, do hereby affirm our commitment to these principles and objectives and do sincerely believe this to be the way to a brighter, happier and more prosperous future for all of our people and fatherland.

Done in Bafoussam this 24th Day of October 1997

<u>Signatories</u>:Oliver Binda,Ayangwo Jonathan,Ndambi Ephraim,Angabo Abiyah,Agyingi Oscar,Takwi Mathew,Ndambi Paul,Binda Noah,Tafah Edokat,Bayere Isaiah,Tafah Simon,Anja Agwara,Agwara Moise,Greg Suna,Abungwo Binda,Mbaringong Paul,Agheneza David,Abiyah Lucson,Awanga Zacharia.

Source; Data collection, Martin Anyangwe "Oshie, People, Events" 2010 September 2015

APPENDIX: XII

ROYAL SYMBOLS OF FONS IN THE CHIEFDOMS AND FONDOMS OF GRASSFIELDS

BAMBOO STAFF

One of the first symbols given to the fon and which he carries in his hand before appearing in public is a long bamboo staff in which the red turaco feather has been implanted. The political symbolism is forward straight: Only one chosen as the new ruler can carry 'this staff. It would be considered treasonable for another person to appear in public with a similar insignia and he would be severely punished by the fon. In Bafut, it is generally believed that when the fon dies, he goes to dwell in a deep place in a stream. The dead fon sends the bamboo staff of office to indicate to the palace that he lives in a particular pool of water. This bamboo staff has \cdot a high political significance, it is only when the population sees the new chief carrying it in his right hand, and accompanied by the king-makers, that they recognize him as their new monarch. In Bafut only one red feather is stuck to the top of the bamboo staff: After the enthronement ceremony, the bamboo staff is kept in the fon house \cdot



RED FEATHER

The red feather (the feather of the turaco bird, has a high symbolic significance in the Bamenda Grassfields. It is worn only by men of royal origin, nobles and others who have been promoted to high social rank. No commoner is allowed to wear the red feather. The red feather implanted at the top of the bamboo staff of the new chief symbolizes royalty, to signify that he will henceforth occupy the highest political post in the chiefdom. The red feather is often stuck to the caps of those entitled to wear it. The red feather is often worn in a conspicuous way by those who have the right to wear it: either on their caps or at the top of the bamboo staff that is held by the new monarch during the ceremony of enthronement. To earn the red feather, one must have performed a valiant deed, such as killing a ferocious animal. During the time of inter-tribal wars a person who brought back the head of an enemy was often knighted by the fon, by being awarded the red feather. This symbolized social promotion. A person so promoted then enjoyed certain prerogatives, such as being able to talk to the fon directly, or sitting and drinking with the nobles.



NDOROE LEAVES

These are leaves worn around the neck of the chief as a symbol of peace during his enthronement. It signifies that the new king will rule his people in a peaceful .manner. This plant is cultivated around the fon's palaces. In Bafut, Ndoroe a wreath of leaves is hung around the new fon's neck. It is placed around his neck by Mboajim, Nchotu and Awambeng, three members of Ndah Ndoroe, who carry out the ceremony of putting the Ndoroe leaves around the neck of the fon in the presence of the other members of the house. After the stoning ceremony the fon eventually reappears in public wearing the Ndoroe leaves. His body is bare but he wears a large loincloth folded in the way that is referred to by the Ngemba as the Ntum. He then mounts his throne and is acclaimed by his people who organize vigorous dances to his honor. The wearing of the Ndoroe is not exclusive to the thn. Other nobles wear it during their own enthronement ceremonies. In Mbaru, Nsongwa, Chomba, and Mankon, mothers of twins have the right to wear the Ndoroe. It is therefore a sign of distinction for it is not just any person who can wear Ndoroe leaves. Such a mother wears the 7Vdoroe because twins are revered and considered gods in Ngemba society.



TIGER SKIN OR LEOPARD PELT

In the villages of the Bamenda plateau sub-region, either leopard or tiger belts, or the pelts of these animals are frequently worn as a symbol of power. A long and flat waist belt made of either the skin of tiger or leopard is worn by a person in authority. The belt is allowed to hand over and away from the wearer's body. In other instances, the person in power sits on an elevated throne and the skin of either the tiger or the leopard forms a rung for his feet. The putting of feet on a leopard or tiger skin during public ceremonies is the exclusive prerogative of the ruler fon of the chiefdom. No other person has the right to rest his feet on a leopard skin. Some persons who have the status of sub-chief do wear leopard skin belts. For example, in the Ngemba chiefdom of Mbatu such important nobles as Awasum and Atangamuwah possess leopard belts. People of lower social status cannot wear the leopard belt.



NDOBO CLOTH

This cloth is generally referred to in the Grassfields as the "traditional cloths that is to say, the cloth that was brought from Ndobo, a locality in North Cameroon from where most people in the western Grassfields are said to have originated. The wearing of this cloth is not exclusive to the chief 'and his nobles. Anybody who can afford it i\$ allowed to wear it, but there are other ways in which people are not allowed to use the Ndobo cloth. For example, when the chief appears in public during important ceremonies the place where he sits is usually decorated with Ndobo cloth. A long piece of cloth is usually put across the wall or the fence just behind the I7bn's throne. No other person is allowed to do this.



ROYAL THRONE AND ELEPHANT TUSK

The fon's throne should look different from the chairs of the other people, consequently it is either carved in a particular way, bearing, for examples, the image of an animal such as the leopard, or it is higher than the other chairs. In Bafut, the fon 's throne is covered with traditional beads, the only, chair in the chiefdom so decorated.



Fon's use elephant tusks as foot rests during grandiose public ceremonies, and blow them to produce the deep sound that heralds the coming of fon during a public ceremony. The possession and use of the ivory tusks symbolizes nobility and leadership, and only chiefs are allowed to use elephant tusks (Ntang in Ngemba) in public. Any other person may procure an elephant tusk but cannot use it during ceremonies. To do so would be considered treasonable. The possession of an ivory tusk by the fon symbolizes wealth, it is usually placed on a leopard skin for the Fon to rest his feet on. Ivory bangles are also used but wearing them is not the exclusive prerogative of the fon, since other nobles can also wear them. Not distinction depends on the quantity worn. Depending on his wealth a chief can wear ivory bangles on both wrists. In Bafut, the fon used to wear them in this manner during important ceremonies. But an ordinary noble may wear an ivory bangle only on one wrist.

TRADITIONAL GOWN

On important occasions such as the annual dance held at the palace around December or January, the I7bn dresses in a large Grassfields gown. Other people may wear similar gowns but that of the fon and his nobles is distinguished by particular marks. On the back of the Fon's gown are three concentrically placed "moons" in the middle, just below the shoulders. No other person is allowed to wear a gown with three concentric moons. High nobles of the inner council are allowed to wear gowns with two concentric "moons". Lower order nobles wear gowns with only one "moon". The "moons" symbolize social distinction. The right to wear such a gown can be granted only by the fon. Usually a person desiring such a distinction would bring a goat, palm wine and food to the fon. On that day, the nobles assemble at the palace. The fon pours wine into his cup, takes a mouthful and sprays it on the gown. By this ceremony one moon is obtained. As a person continues to live in Bafut society he is observed by the fon. If his character is satisfactory, he can be promoted to have two "moons" on his gown. People with two "moons" on their gowns are usually the kingmakers (in Bafut, Bayonjb). Those who have one "moon" are the ordinary nobles (Bukum babang dong).



FLY WHISK

One of the symbols used by the I7bn in public is the Asang, a huge fly whisk made of the tail of either a cow or a dwarf cow (Mbong in Ngemba). The ownership of the Asang is not exclusive to the fon, is usually bigger. In Bafut, the handle of the fon's Asang is covered with royal symbols, which distinguishes it from the other Asang. Since Mih is rather rare, not everybody can have it on the handle of his Asang. In Ngemba chiefdoms such as Mankon, Ndzong, Mbaru, the Mafo 'also .possesses the Asang, which she carries during important ceremonies as a symbol of her nobility in society in general and among womenfolk in particular. She is the highest person in the female hierarchy and thus normally should carry the Asang to reflect her high social and political rank.



ROYAL SPEAR

When the fon appear's in public during grand ceremonies, such as the annual dance, a bundle of spears (Mukong ma abin or Mkong mefbr) is leaned against the wall behind him or held by a servant who stands behind him. These spears are often considered as royal spears that reflect the power of the fon. When the fon is making an important announcement he can take out one of the spears and hold it in his hand. These spears have deep significance attached to them

since they symbolize the coercive authority of the I7bn'over his people. In this respect, therefore, no other person within the chiefdom displays spears during ceremonies such as the .fon does. In Bali-Nyonga the bundle of spears (Dingwasak) is always beside the I7bn during the Lela ceremony. Spears are weapons and so reflect the military capability of the chief who can divide them among his subjects and order them to fight the enemy.



ROYAL CAP

In most chiefdoms the fon may wear the same type of cap as the rest of the people but it will bear distinctive decorative marks. The fon may affix to it a red feather and the long, sharpedged, strong hair which falls off the skin of the porcupine. These are the two symbols of nobility that are often affixed to a hat in the Grassfields area. In Bafut, the fon has three kinds of caps, Mesang me nse, Acheatube taboeko, andAche tumenjangare. Ofthese the Mesang mense can be worn only by the fon \cdot Other nobles, especially kingmakers, have the right to wear the Ache atube taboeko and the Achetu menjcrgare.



ROYAL CALABASH

The fon's calabash may not be in anyway different from the ordinary man's calabash in design or structure but the manner of corking shows the difference. The fon's calabash is usually corked with ordinary raffia palm leaves (Nchare), If a person encounters a calabash of palm wine corked with raffia palm leaves, he would automatically know that the wine is destined for the fon. In gatherings, only the fon's calabash is corked with the raffia leaves. No noble may have his own calabash corked in a similar way. If a fon, such as the fon of Bafut, is sitting in public with minor chiefs who pay allegiance to him, the palm leaves corking the fon's calabash must be longer, to distinguish his calabash from those of the minor chiefs.

ROYAL CUP

A general regulation in Grassfields chiefidoms is that no person has the right to drink from the same cup as the Ibn. Not even the highest titled noble (kum) has the right to drink out of the fon's cup. Only another friendly lion, a person with the same socio-political status, can drink from it. Before the introduction of glasses, people drank either from cups made of calabash heads or from a variety of animal horns. To distinguish the fon's drinking horns from those of his subjects, the horn of a rare animal was sought for the lion \cdot During important assemblies, the fon could drink from a buffalo horn or another horn that had been further decorated (sometimes with Niih) to make it look different from other cups. The fon was not allowed to drink from very common cups, such as those made from cow horn or calabash. In certain societies the lowest he .could go, was to drink from the horn of a dwarf cow (Mbong in Ngemba) in public.



BEADS

Nobles and other rich people in the chiefdoms, after dressing in the voluminous Grassfields gowns would wear large beads (Musanga) around their necks. R) fons used to wear these beads too. But in some bigger chiefdoms such as Bafut, the fon used to wear the threaded teeth of the tiger or leopard (Musong munangwe) to distinguish between himself and others and also as a sign of power. Only the fon was allowed to wear tiger or leopard teeth because he alone possessed that prerogative and even the appellation of tiger. Should any person insist on wearing such a necklace his entire family could be eliminated through witchcraft or a common curse.



DISTINCTION FOR ROYAL WIVES

The fon's wives must be distinguished from the other women in the village through the wearing of cowries. In certain chiefdoms, such as Bali-Nyonga and Nso, the cowries used to be worn around the waist. In which case I7bn's wives were obliged to go naked so that the cowries could be easily visible. When clothes were introduced, .Fon's wives wore the cowries around their heads and later only around their wrists. Like the majority of the other symbols, only Fon's wives are allowed to wear cowries. Even the most important noble is not allowed to let his wives wear cowries, since to do so would be tantamount to indicating that the noble proclaimed himself chief. Even in Bafut the wives of the sub-chiefs of Bawum and Mambu do not wear cowries; they wear white buttons to indicate that they are wives of sub-chiefs.



Source Soh Bejeng Pius, Senri Ethnological studies, Institute of Human Science Bamenda 1984

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