Assessment of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Resolution in the Pre and Post-Colonial Era in Nigeria –Igbo Land Example

By

Ebubechineke, Ifeyinwa
Department of Arts Education
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

Knowledge of the traditional ways of resolving conflict which have always been part of human societies, is very much needed at a time and period when people are losing site and abandoning their history and tradition. Non participatory roles of traditional rulers in the present day administration as compared to their roles in managing and resolving conflicts in pre-colonial Igbo land, Nigeria, is accounting mainly for the decades of social conflicts that is manifesting itself in our socio-economic and political circuit. This evolution does not only render traditional rulers and their institutions irrelevant but also create threats to peace, security and stability in the land. This paper therefore provides the overview of the roles of traditional rulers and their institutions in conflict prevention, management and resolution in pre and post-colonial Nigeria, Igbo land in particular. This paper also looked at the roles the traditional rulers played during the colonial and post colonial eras. Suggestions were made for co-opting the traditional rulers into the modern system of governance which in no small measure will reduce the problems that emanated from injustice during reconciliation of conflicts thereby bringing peace and harmony among the disputants.

Keywords: Traditional rulers, assessment, Igbo land traditional conflict resolution, harmonize.

Introduction

In pre-colonial Igbo land in Nigeria, socio-cultural norms and values embedded in traditional institutions remained an integral part of every organized society. These norms and values formed the bases upon which traditional rulers (village councils) exercised governance, power and authority over their subjects. The institution of

traditional rulers was virtually the only institution of governance which played important roles such as being custodians of customary laws, in-charge of communal assets like land and resources; they were also guardians and symbols of cultural values and religious practices, dispensing justice, enforcing contracts and also resolving conflicts.

In traditional Igbo land, conflict may generally exist whenever or wherever incompatible events occurred and may result in win- lose-character. Conflicts are accepted to be inevitable phenomenon in the lives of man. It cannot be completely separated from the inter-relationship that exists among individuals and communities. The resolution transformation and management of conflict may however produce win-win situation too. Truth is that in the contemporary Igbo society, nobody cares about the truth because of bribery and corruption. Therefore, if the Igbo have to put the falling apart values together, her original values must be revisited (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014) adduced. Conflict is as natural as the concept of peace contrary to the global or universal conception. Traditionally, Africans in general and Igbo in particular have ways of handling conflicts and their main aim of handling conflicts is finding a resolution and integrating the disputants into the community and to prevent disputes before they escalate.

Indigenously, conflict is regarded as a struggle over value and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Onigun & Albert, (2001).

In Igbo society conflict takes various forms and dimensions, that is why, conflict is difficult to define from the traditional Igbo perspective. It seems to be part of excitement for networking relationship, whether negative or positive. Conflicts are in the magnitude of rage, rift, misunderstanding, family and market brawls, skirmishes and wars, public insurgence, assaults, chieftaincy and boundary disputes (Onu, 2017). He further argued that, a conflict situation emerges when two or more parties could not agree on an issue. The parties to such conflict may not necessarily be the government or nation or communities. In an incompatible stage among the nation or communities, every part involved seeks to achieve certain objectives, such as security, access to markets, prestige, alliances and the overthrow

of an unfriendly government (Olaniran & Arigu, 2013). They further described conflict as a condition in which identifiable group of human beings whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, socio-political economic, cultural or otherwise is in conscious opposition to one or more other identifiable human group because these groups are pursuing what are to be incompatible goals (Olaniran & Arigu, 2013). More importantly, conflict could arise from the interaction of individuals who have partly, incompatible ends, in which the ability of one disputant to gain his ends depends to a certain degree on the choice or decisions that other parties will take. Conflict could be violent or uncontrollable, dominant or recessive, resolvable or insolvable under various circumstances (afrie.vio.net, 2014). Ajayi & Buhari (2014) argued that conflicts are inevitable wherever severe resources are unequally distributed among competitors and inequity is reflected in cultural and political relationship between groups. With regards to various issues in dealing with conflict, it is important to bear in mind not just overt, physical violence but also they sometimes subtly disguised forms or structural and cultural violence. They further stated that conflict management in general and conflict resolution in particular are almost entirely determined by our understanding of the composition of a conflict and not only by symptoms.

In lieu of this, Wadinga (2013), described traditional Igbo conflicts as phenomenon which are frequently brushed and dismissed as being chaotic or worthy of some vague pity or humanitarian concern but rarely of any in-depth political analysis. He added that the divide and rule policies of colonial administrators assured the docility of different ethnic groups and this shielded them from the menace of insurgency. Therefore, traditional conflict resolution can be seen as the differences in the interests of people or between disputants which could be material, religious, ethnic, ideological and any other things that makes people fight one another. This may provoke wars that result in devastation and destruction of human lives and properties. Then, at the move to cushion the effects of these, hence, a need for its resolution is necessary.

The art of resolving conflict is borne out of a belief that conflict which is inevitable could and should not be left lying. It therefore, needs to be put under control by interacting with relevant parties to develop common generalization or principles

and practices that would return cordial relationship against violence. Pre-colonial African societies, Igbo inclusive, are reputed to hold secrets of peacemaking and conflict resolution embedded in their customs and traditions before the disruptive activities brought about by colonialism (Ezenwoko & Osagie, 2014). Traditional rulers during conflict played significant roles in managing these conflicts informally and arranging peace-making meetings when matters get out of hand. These governance institutions and structures were controlled by certain unwritten laws which formed part of the social structure, and its machinery of enforcing governance was well-organized to manage affairs, administered justice and resolve tension in the society. However, during colonial era, there was a role change as the roles and offices of traditional rulers were either usurped by the colonialists or their subjects. Olaniran & Arigu (2013) postulated that traditional rulers before the coming of the colonialists into Nigeria via Igbo land were the political, cultural, economic and social administrators of their various domains. Onu (2017) stated that the political culture evolved in Igbo societies recognized the traditional ruler as the overall boss and father of the kingdom. He was at the apogee of a royal monarchy of chiefs and statesmen. He was the sacred representative of the supernatural on earth and the personification of his kingdom. Indeed, he was the link between the sacred world and the physical universe, the liaison personality between the gods and the people over whom he governed. The traditional ruler often played pivotal role in the governance of his kingdom. Thus, to enable the traditional ruler play significant role in Igbo society, he was distinguished and invested with specifically distinct royal title symbolic of the history of his Obi. This new governance arrangement granted the colonialists easy access and control of his territories.

The British system of governance was the system of indirect rule. Indirect rule was a system of governing colonies through the use of local chiefs or other approved intermediaries and traditional laws and customs with British officials merely supervising the administration (Olaniran & Arigu, 2013). The British colonialists through native courts, installed and controlled chiefs by warrant as they believed that the Igbo people had to be governed by chiefs in order to maintain the organic unity of the Igbo society (Afigbo, 1972).

These native courts gave birth to constitutionalism where roles and status were clearly defined and differentiated. Constitutionalism refers to as one of the three principal elements to the practice of democracy in any democratic state. Constitutionalism states what powers government had and the responsibilities of traditional rulers as a primary element of rule of law. Thus description shows that the traditional rulers in colonial and post colonial Igbo land assumed a new status and role which have been enshrined in the various constitutions. However, in recent times, there exists the loss of direction in governance, thus, the prevailing state of poverty, the frequent electoral and post electoral strife, and the incessant widespread of ethnic and civil conflicts. These have been described as some manifestations of the failure of the state (Olaniran & Arigu ,2013). They further stated that, this did not mean that conflict did not exist in the pre-colonial era but that pre-colonial Igbo benefitted immensely from the Igbo traditional system of conflict settlement, as a result, crisis based on tribalism, ethnicity and religious settlement were minimized. This paper seeks to examine the roles of traditional rulers in conflict resolution in the pre and post-colonial Igbo land.

Principles guiding conflict resolution in Igbo traditional system and the roles played by the traditional rulers, in the colonial and post-colonial eras in Igbo land.

In the pre-colonial days, there were many principles guiding conflict resolution in the traditional Igbo society. Those who want their conflicts resolved must have confidence in the tribunal that would resolve the disputes. The tribunal includes traditional rulers, elders, ndi nze na ọzọ, priests, priestesses, secret cults etc. The disputants must have confidence in them. They must be ready to submit themselves to the constituted authorities. These conflicts could be interpersonal and inter communal… (Wadinga,2013). He adduced that truth is the major significance of conflict resolution. Both disputants must be truthful. The mediator, arbitrator, judge must also be truthful. The presence of the ancestral forces was also a significant factor. Some may collapse or forced to say the truth because of the presence of the ancestral forces. The mediator, arbitrator and judge must as well be prepared to stand by the truth. Truth is a covenant logo disputants in conflict must not miss. For one of the disputants to have come to the tribunal means that they are ready or have agreed to settle the dispute though not in all cases. Alagoa (2001: 1-

8) involved the following six principles obtained in other Nigerian communities amongst pre-colonial Igbo society as techniques used by traditional rulers in conflict resolution in pre-colonial Igbo. The principles were that:

- The conflict managers should not be partial: Traditional rulers in Igbo society were expected to behave impartially in their offices.
- Fairness: Everyone both the poor and weak, rich and powerful should be treated alike.
- Accommodation: Everyone should be accommodated.
- Reciprocity: Accommodation should be mutual and reciprocal.
- Moderation: Action and response must be at par
- Incompatibility/ separation: where the disputants were not compatible over the resolution taken, should be separated.

In the pre-colonial era in Igbo society, the traditional rulers have some elements as the basis of their authorities other than tradition. These elements made them different from other leaders in Nigerian states and other African countries. Nigerian states had traditional rulers which include Igbo society, and virtually the only people with authority to govern their subjects. During this pre-colonial era, traditional rulers managed affairs, administered justice and resolved tension in their different localities with certain unwritten laws. These unwritten laws found their root in firsthand experience passed on through stories, myths, legend, folklore, rituals, songs etc from generation to generation and formed part of the general social structure which in turn bred order, development, peace and stability in these localities (Madu, 2015).

But this does not mean that during this time that no community was at conflict with another that there was peace in these communities. However, conflicts were put under control by traditional rulers who were seen as the living representatives of their ancestors and believed to possess their authority from spirits of the Supreme Being or God. It is important to note that, the vast knowledge of customs, traditions, myths and the history of the communities, skills as orators as well as the social capital which the traditional rulers had as leaders of these communities, empowered them to handle disputes tactfully. The resolution has its main objective of moving away from accusations and counter accusations, to soothe hurt feelings

and to reach a compromise that may help to improve future relationships of the conflicting parties. This objective in that era was achieved through traditional approaches which were holistic, social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions. This is in accordance with the traditional lifestyles and worldviews in which the different spheres of societal life were hardly separated. It is necessary to note here, the importance of the conventional techniques of the traditional practices such as the use of rituals, symbols and myths were employed to bring conflicts to an end (Brock-Utne, 2001, Best 2006 & Madu, 2015).

Furthermore, the disputants can directly engage in negotiations on conflict termination and in the need for a solution; a third party can be invited to the interest of social groups, extended families, clans, villages, communities and tribes. Individuals are also taken as members of a group they are accountable to that group and the group are accountable for the deeds of each of its members (Boege, 2006). Above all, in the pre-colonial Igbo society, the use of these techniques to settle and to mediate all sorts of conflicts as well as violent hostilities helped to maintain peace, order and stability in an otherwise hostile environment created by social relations. In Igbo society, the family head, the council of elders (the umunna/Amala), age grades, titled men (nze na ozo), the umuada, oracles, according to Basden, (1966), Uwazie(1991) and Olaniran&Origu (2013) are the six indigenous legal institutions that had authorities to serve as mediators, facilitators, negotiators and peace makers over their domain, especially when the issues are conflict ridden. Uwazie (1991) went further to explain that the family head mediates certain marital disputes, cases of delinquency, boundary disputes between households and presides in the resolution of other cases between family members. Basden (1966) explained that if a member defies the family head, the married daughters (umuada) of the family or village are invited to resolve the dispute or to force compliance with the decision. He further adduced that matters affecting outsiders or threatening to disrupt a family and intra-village disputes are usually referred to the Amala or council of elders or village tribunal which are composed of many lineages. If any case are unclear or the offender's identity uncertain, they will resort to an oracle.

Divination was used to identify mysterious cases, heal diseases and manage both individual and group conflict (Madu, 2015). He further explained that when defaulter was found among the conflicting parties as revealed by the diviner who sees beyond the ordinary and explained the supernatural aspect of events, he is sanctioned. Sanctions are confined to social and the supernatural realms. Disputants have the power to reject any settlement that they are not satisfied with. Therefore, conflict solution, according to Olaniran & Arigu, (2013) was based on voluntary consensus and agreement. Everybody including the gods and the spirit of the ancestors have to agree to a solution. Traditional conflict resolution is consensus based which was the fundamental basic principles that guide the systems which include curbing the violence (Legesse, 1973). However, the arrival of the colonial masters to Nigeria and the Igbo land led to the change in status and roles of these traditional rulers. These colonialists thereby brought the different political systems under centralized states that used traditional rulers as intermediaries between the colonial state and the local people. As intermediaries between the colonial state and the local people, chiefs were expected to maintain peace and order within their communities. Consequently, the traditional rulers were assigned constitutional roles as stated in different Nigerian constitutions, according to (Olaniran &Arigu, 2013).

When Nigeria was colonized by the British, they employed the system of indirect rule in governing her as the British did in any country they made colony. The system of indirect rule involves the use of local chiefs or other approved intermediaries and traditional laws and customs with British officials merely supervising the administration (Olaniran & Arigu, 2013). During the colonial era in Nigeria, Igbo land inclusive, the British used this system in governing the communities in Igbo land and the whole of Nigeria. But this system of indirect rule proved abortive in Igbo land. This was because there existed the village democracy and the egalitarian nature of its society. There was an absence of traditional authorities able to command the obedience of their people (Onu, 2017). That's why the slogan, Igbo enwe eze. Therefore, the traditional institutions for conflict resolution were the family (ezi na ulo), amala, ndi eze , nze na ọzọ, umunna, umuada (female daughters of the town but married out), age grades (otu ogbo) assembly of the people, hunters association and oracles (local deities) Ajayi and

Buhari (2014); Onu (2017). Furthermore, Onu (2017) stated that before the advent of the European, Igbo people consisted of over two hundred independent territorial groups divided into villages. The internal organization of these groups rested upon patrilinal (clans and lineages). These groups were autonomous with regards to governmental processes but social bond were strong among them.

On his own part, Madu (2015) noted that Igbo people and African countries in general, possessed indigenous mechanisms and institutions for managing and resolving disputes in ways that preserve societal structures and encourage peaceful co-existence. Igbo traditional societies have historically been patriarchal. The heterogeneous nature of a community can give rise to conflicts of interest. As disagreements arise, so does the need for an institution to help reconcile the divergent interests of opposing groups or individuals. He, Madu (2015) maintains that for the Igbo people, there exists a range of cultural practices for managing their affairs but there are also commonalities that distinguish them from others and make them a recognizable ethnic group in Nigeria. Patriarchy and the dominance of men in decision making and governance are common across all the Igbo groups. Igbo traditional society is governed by system in which members of the community can present their views on a particular issue with the council of elders (the traditional rulers inclusive) acting as moderators. The decision-making authority resides ultimately with the council members (Onu, 2017). Igbo societies are communal in nature. Igbo communalism is expressed in living together and sharing responsibilities. Individuals are subject to and beheld to collective values, norms and practices. The Igbo community effectively owns the decision –making process as a whole (Madu, 2015).

During the pre-colonial era, community squares such as the village square, market square or community's shrines served as venues for Igbo dispute-resolution process. Madu (2015) adduced that, the modalities of the Igbo system of conflict resolution incorporate elements of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication. Igbo conflict reconciliation is closely affiliated with communities' religious belief system. A peace effort begins with a prayer and is accompanied by the breaking of cola nuts, which are indigenous to the Igbo people and the pouring of a libation to the ancestors. These symbolic acts set the tone for the peace making

process and focus the minds of the members of the community on the sacredness of the undertaking on which they are about to embark. This process also compels disputants to respect the mediation process and uphold the agreement reached. In the absence of the disputants reaching an agreement voluntarily, the parties are bound by the decision of the council of elders in such a situation, the council of elders- would invoke the spirit of the ancestors- mmuo ndi ichie which all members of the community are taught to respect. The Igbo people generally tend to accept the decisions made, especially when they are accompanied by an invocation of the spirit of the ancestors (Onu, 2017). As the spirit of the gods and ancestors were invoked, and kola nut broken, the disputants now present their cases while the council of elders act as moderators; after which the community communicate on the cases and give verdict either in favour or against one of the parties or suggest how the case might be settled. The dispute resolution process does not necessarily strive to determine the disputant at fault, is not the ultimate but rather finding solution to their cases and re-integrating them into the community once again.

Strategies employed for peace making.

In Igbo traditional institution for conflict resolution, the use of proverbs and words of wisdom are commonly employed to emphasize the value of reaching compromise to enable the members of the community to co-exist. This involves negotiation between the disputants through mediation by the council of elders. Before the coming of the colonial masters, there was no signing of peace making agreement. The verdicts handed down by the council of elders were reinforced by the authority and sanctity of the Igbo religious belief system. The spirit of the ancestors was involved or taking of oaths at a shrine or making of blood covenant to make the agreement binding on all parties (Ele,2017). The Igbo communities do not like being sanctioned or ostracized for failing to comply with an agreement after the dispute resolution process. Again, they may place curse on someone or his community, this also deters individuals from breaking peace accords.

Then, in recent times modern systems of governance inherited from British colonialism viz-a-viz the state and national government, introduced the notion of palace courts in some states in Igbo land, especially in Anambra and Enugu (Onu, 2017). Other states in Igbo land quickly adopted this modern creation. So in the

contemporary, palace courts are more regularly utilized as venues for decision making and disputes resolutions. The palace court and the community are headed by an Igwe, Eze, Obi, traditional rulers who are also among the council, the custodians of the culture of the community. The Igwe or Obi or Eze is the highest authority in the community and receives his appointment according to the wishes and customs of the community. Igwe / Eze /Obi head the council of elders, consisting of eminent persons and representatives of various clans and kindred in an autonomous community. The council of elders and the Igwe meet to decide crucial matters that affect the community and its citizen which conflict resolution is included. Igwe is the sacred representative of the supernatural on earth and the personification of his kingdom. Indeed, he acts as the link between the sacred world and the physical universe, the liaison personality between the gods and the people over whom he governs. The Igwe often played pivotal role in the governance of his kingdom. Thus, to enable the Igwe play significant role in Igbo society, he is distinguished and invested with specifically distinct royal title symbolic of the history of his kingdom. The Igwe/ Obi/ Eze (council of elders) were so committed to the development of the society such that they were regarded as the ancestors in Igbo society. They had knowledge and wisdom of conflict resolution by the Igbo elders which enabled them to possess in great abundance knowledge from the folklores, proverbs and folktales with which they persuaded parties to the conflict and the crowd of listeners at the venue of conflict resolution (Onu, 2017).

However, as soon as the indirect rule collapsed the newly assumed status the traditional rulers attained during colonial period changed. Their statuses as administrators were replaced with advisers in their different communities. This change eliminated their most significant powers although their prestige was probably less affected. Further, the role of the traditional rulers changed as it has been embedded in the various constitutions from 1944-1954 (Olaniran &Arigu, 2013).

According to Nworah (2007), their roles were upheld. They continued participating in making policy with governors in their regions as members of house of Assembly and House of chiefs. These roles changed as independence constitution of 1960 came into being, where their positions in the Federal and Regional legislatures were

eroded in favour of appointed chiefs. He further expounded that, the republican constitution of 1963 ushered in fresh roles for traditional rulers as members of the parliament which gave them powers to make laws-for the peace, order, good government of the Federal Territory with respect to any matter whether or not it is included in the legislative lists. These roles were reduced to mere advisory in the latter constitution of (1979) of Federal Republic of Nigeria. The traditional rulers were allowed to only remain relevant as members of the council of states at the Federal level without administrative roles. One of their powers was enshrined in advising the governor on any matter relating to customary law or cultural affairs, inter communal relations and chieftaincy matters. Their roles were further diminished by the 1999 constitution in that no role was finally ascribed to them.

The roles traditional rulers played before, during and after colonialism in Igbo society.

Consequentially, no community in the world can achieves development, orderliness and stability without defined norms and values enshrined in its institutions and exercised by its leaders. The pre-colonial Igbo society, had traditional rulers as its leaders who exercised governance, power and authority or influence over their respective communities. Exercising power, authority and influence which had its root in tradition, norms and values, helped them in the aspects of managing affairs, administering justice and most especially resolving conflicts. Pre-colonial Igbo society benefited immensely from these roles played by the traditional rulers as a result, crises based on religious, ethnic and communal sentiments were traditionally resolved.

During the colonial era, these roles of the traditional rulers invariably changed. When the Europeans arrived in Nigeria via Igbo land, they inculcated their religious ideas and values and other forms of ideology such as democracy into the system of governance of their subjects which in turn eroded the domestic policy making process of their subjects. The domestic policy making process enshrined in various institutions of governance in the pre-defined Igbo society, were altered by the British who imposed their hegemony by assigning roles to traditional rulers in the bid to penetrate their subjects. These roles were different from their originally assigned roles in the pre-colonial periods because they ruled in accordance to the

directives of the British (Afigbo, 1972). Olaniran & Arigu (2013), assert that the British instituted Native courts and installed chiefs by warrant that controlled them. They individually explained that, many warrant chiefs solely constituted colonial state. This implied that the domineering roles played by traditional rulers in the pre-colonial era became weakened as their authority was seriously less effective with cost of prestige from their subjects. As the traditional rulers' power was usurped, it remained so till the post colonial era. As a matter of fact, the introduction of Federal constitution in 1954 which brought about an end to indirect rule, was replaced by the new system of local government which supposed to be a turning point for the usurpation of traditional rulers authority in Nigeria (Igbo land inclusive) though this may not be entirely true in all Nigeria states as the British intensified her hegemony by merely replacing her officials with British- trained individuals in the 1940s-1950s with quasi-socialist ideas to manage Nigeria along with traditional rulers in as much as these individuals acted under the auspices of negotiating for federalism and parliamentarianism but the fact remains that their assumption of power did not help the traditional rulers regain back their authority (Olaniran & Arigu, 2013). Furthermore, the traditional rulers was showcased as a relic of a former era, as the British monarch, which they substituted their status from being responsible for local administration and governance in their respective domains during the colonial era to advisers of local government laws. Be it as it may, as Nigeria fell victims to series of military coups and the rather haphazard authoritarianism, the situation however, became different when the military dictators used them as tools to mobilize peoples support for their programmes. As traditional rulers especially the non-elected ones during first constitution of 1954, worked for the military dictators, the traditional rulers derived a kind of prestige in exchange for the legitimacy given to the dictators. Consequently, after Nigeria returned to democracy, the focus of both citizens and elected leaders was on the activities of the few traditional rulers who collided with military dictators in looting public funds for private gain and not on their relevance to the Nigerian society as they did during the pre-colonial era. This implied that, the roles or the traditional rulers in most constitution were on advisory ground and not as the royal fathers of their various kingdom/palace. This brought about failure in governance of the new states. The loss of direction in governance which leads to the prevailing state poverty, frequent electoral and post-electoral strife, persistence of widespread

ethnic and civil conflicts in Igbo land as well as in the new Nigerian states, is the manifestation of the failure of the new Nigerian state. Finding here, shows that the new Nigerian states have neglected the cultural and norms and values which were enshrined in the pre-colonial institutions of traditional rulers. The pre-defined Nigeria, had norms and values that existed within its considerations of the ones they met.

That is why Dove (n.d) noted that, when policy neglects history, culture, social context, huge amounts of effort and resources can be wasted on poorly conceived initiatives. Therefore, in the bid to build and strengthen the new Nigeria and new Igbo land, there is the need to recognize once again traditional rulers and its institutions. This is principally borne out by growing recognition that capable democratic states must be grounded on indigenous social values and contexts, while adapting to changing realities. This will require among other actions aligning and harmonizing traditional governance institution with the modern states especially in the aspect of conflict resolution. However, the abandonment of these highly respected traditions and institutions in favour of modern judicial system that has led to escalation of conflicts between individual and communities, in Igbo society. Unlike in the past, obtaining justice today is usually based on the financial resources available to the parties in disputes. The parties who are able to live the highly reputed attorneys are mostly to get favourable justice.

In order to ensure peaceful co-existence among the various communities in Igbo land, it is the view of this paper that conflicts should involve traditional rulers more in local affairs. This issue of their welfare should also be considered and be accommodated in the budget. By so doing, the institution of traditional rulers will preserve its dignity somehow rather than their sorely situation we presently see where some of them go around with their royal fathers regalia without prestige..

Conclusion

For the fact that, traditional rulers were closer to the people, as the custodians of the tradition of their people, down playing their roles in governance of any society will amount to chaos. The neglect of cultural norms and values embedded in traditional institutions in the modern day Igbo society democracy has in no small

measure contributed to this. The techniques of enforcing governance which was well organized in the pre-colonial era to manage affairs, administer justice and resolve conflicts and tension in the society totally been eradicated. Having a look at traditional conflict resolution techniques in Igbo society, they are closely bound with socio-political and economic realities of the communities' lifestyles. This is because these techniques are rooted in the culture and history of the Igbo people and are in one way or another unique to each community. Therefore, ignoring them in the present day Igbo society will amount to the failure of the society. Harmonizing the norms and values enshrined in traditional institutions which serve as the roles of traditional rulers with the modern system of governance will go a long way in reducing the recent problems facing the society. In the other way round, conflicts resulting from tradition be subjected to the adjudication of traditional judicial system.

References

Afigbo, A. E (1972). *The warrant chiefs*: *Indirect rule in South Eastern Nigeria*. London: Longman.

afrie.vio.net (2014).

Ajayi, A. T and Buhari, L. O. (2014). Methods of conflict resolution in African traditional society. African Research Review: *International Multidisciplinary Journal*, *Ethiopia*, 8 (2) 138-157.

Alagoa, E. J. (2001). Conflict resolution: The Nigerian Perspective" *KIABARA*: *Journal of Humanities*, 7 (1), 1-8.

Basden, G. T. (1966). *Niger Ibos*. London: Thomas Nelson publisher.

Best, S. G. (2006) The methods of conflict resolution and transformation. In S. G. Best (ed) *introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum.

Boege, V. (2006)."Traditional approaches to conflict transformation-potentials and limit" Berghot Research Centr for Constructive Conference Management. First Lunch.

Brock-Utne (2001). Indigenous conflict resolution in Africa. A paper presented at the seminar on indigenous solutions to conflicts held at the university of Oslo, Institute of Educational Research 23-24, Feb.

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.

Dore, D. (N.d). Transforming traditional institutions for sustainable natural resources management: History, narratives and evidence from Zimbabwe's Communal Areas" *African Studies Quarterly*, 5 (3).

Ele, C. O. (2017). Conflict resolution strategies in Igbo Religion. The oath taking and covenant making perspectives. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities reviews*, 7 (1), 35-42.

Ezenwoko, A. F. &Osagie, J. I. (2014). Conflict Resolution in Pre- colonial Igbo Society of Nigeria. Journal of Studies in Social Science 9,(1), 135-158

Legesse, A (1993). *Gada*: *Tree approaches to the study of Africa*. New York: Free Press.

Madu, J. C. (2015). *Understanding peace and conflict studies*: *A hand book in management*, *development and social studies*. Enugu: Madonna University Press.

Nwora, U. (2007). The role of traditional rulers in emerging democratic Nigeria, A paper presented at the 3-day national stakeholders' workshop on the role of traditional institutions in the three tiers of government holding at the Abuja International conference centre. 11-13, November.

Olaniran, O. & Arigu, A. (2013). Traditional rulers and conflict resolution: An evaluation of Pre and Post Colonial Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and social sciences*. 3 (21), www.jiste.org

Onigun, O. & Albert, I. O. (2001). *Community conflicts in Nigeria, management, resolution and transformation*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Onu, A. O. (2017). Conflict resolution in traditional African societies. In Augustine O. Onu, John E. Eze and Kingsley C. W. Udegbunam *Social Science Perspectives to Peace and Conflict* . Enugu: Grand-Heritage Global Communications.

Uwazie, E. (1991).Modes of indigenous disputing and legal interactions among the Igbosof Eastern Nigeria. A doctoral dissertation research at Arizona State University.

Wadina, W. (2013) Post colonial conflict in Africa: A study of Richard Ali's city of memories *International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2 (4), *310*.