

## STRATEGIC ROLE OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the strategic roles of traditional institutions in conflict prevention and resolution in Nigeria. The research is aimed to determine the strategic role that predisposes the prevention and resolution of conflict in Nigeria. The study made use of the Role Theory propounded by George Herbert Mead (1931) as the theoretical framework. The study relied on descriptive research design. In-depth interviews were conducted on the Traditional Rulers within the eleven electoral wards across Sanga Local Government Area Council of Kaduna State to investigate the strategic role of Traditional Institution in Conflict Prevention and resolution. The eleven traditional rulers were visited and interviewed to ascertain the strategies engaged in settling conflict and also how to prevent further occurrences. Views were collected from the eleven traditional rulers of the eleven electoral wards and the published and unpublished records of conflicts resolved and the one prevented. The research revealed that traditional institutions in Sanga Local Government Area Council plays significant role in conflict prevention and resolution which ensure peaceful mediation among warring communities. The study also found out that majority believes that there are opportunities and challenges facing the use of traditional institutions in conflict prevention and resolution. These challenges include, political, religious, ethnic and economic. The study thus recommended that a constitutional role be given to the traditional institutions in order to strengthen the multidimensional strategies to tackle conflicts in Nigeria and also recommended is for extensive consultation and giving audience to the victims of the conflicts so as to punish offenders and settle the victims of such offensive act.*

**Keywords:** Tradition, Traditional Ruler, Traditional Institution, Conflict

### INTRODUCTION

There are vital research agreeing with the resiliency, legitimacy and relevance of Nigerian traditional institutions in the socio-cultural, political and economic lives of the people, particularly in the rural communities. Placing side by side with this is sometimes parallel “Modern State”, vested with enormous authority in rule making, application, adjudication and enforcement. As Nigeria seeks to build and strengthen capable states, there is the need to recognize and address this “duality” in full. Principally, this is borne out by a 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 institutions with the modern state.

The role that traditional leaders can play in the process of conflict prevention and resolution can broadly be segmented into three: first, their advisory role to government, as well as their participatory role in the administration of regions and districts, second, their development role, complementing governments efforts in mobilizing the population for the implementation of development projects, sensitizing them on health issues such as promoting education,



encouraging economic enterprises, HIV/AIDS, inspiring respect for the law and urging participation in the electoral process; and third, their role in conflict prevention and resolution, an area where traditional leaders across Nigeria have already demonstrated successfully. Thus, the question is not whether the traditional and “modern” systems of governance are competing against one and another but how to synergize the two systems more efficiently and effectively in order to ameliorate the living condition or standard of the citizens in term of representation and participation, service delivery, social, and health standards and access to equity and justice.

In ensuring the institutionalization of traditional institutions in governance in modern times, the regime through the requisite constitutional conference, promulgated the 1989 constitution, which a step further than the 1979 Constitution in providing a defining role for the Traditional Institutions in governance by establishing of the Traditional Council at the Local Government level. The provision for a Traditional Council in the 1989 Constitution is in addition to the 1979 Constitution subsisting provision for the membership of Traditional Institution in the National Council at state and the, State Council of Chiefs. The roles of the Traditional Council as explicated in the Fourth Schedule, Part 2, Section 8 and Sub-section 1 of the 1989 Constitution consist of: giving general advice to the Local Government Council concerned, advising the Local Government Council concerned on proposed developments, subject to the Law of the state dealing with and advising on chieftaincy matters and traditional titles and offices, assisting in collection of taxes as may be required, promoting advising on arts and culture, advising on religious matters where appropriate, deliberating and expressing opinions to any organization on any matter which it deems to be of importance to the area as a whole or which may be referred to it by the government or other organization, assisting in the mobilization of human and material resources towards self-reliance, community development and welfare within the area, and such other roles as the Local Government Council may from time to time refer to it.

Akpoyibo (No date) and Itodo (2014) discusses the strategies of Traditional Institution in conflict prevention and resolution in Nigeria in consonant with the provision of the Nigeria Constitutions Sub-section 2 of the above provision came with a caveat: “Nothing in this Schedule shall be construed as conferring any executive, legislative or judicial power on a Traditional Council”

Nigerian states are characterized by fragmentation of various aspects of their political economy, including their institutions of governance. Large portions of the rural populations, the overwhelming majority in rural communities, continue to adhere principally to traditional institutions. The post-colonial state on the other hand, essentially emulates western institutions of governance, which are often at odds with traditional Nigerian cultural values and the regions contemporary socio-economic realities. Fragmentation of the institutions of governance, along with economic and social fragmentation, has contributed to Nigerian’s crisis of state-building, governance, and economic development.

Despite huge success in some states, the post-colonial state has been unable to establish right-based political and economic system of governance that would facilitate consolidation of state-building and promote economic development. To a large extent, this has been due to its detachment from the institutional and cultural values of its constituency. The prevailing state of poverty in Nigeria, the persistence of widespread ethnic and civil conflicts, and frequent electoral and post-electoral strife are some manifestations that characterized the failure of the state. The persistence of traditional institutions as a parallel system of governance, which provides some level of refuge for the rural population, often alienated by the state, is also another factor of the colossal failure of the post-colonial state.

On the other hand, Nigerian traditional institutions are also not equipped to compensate adequately for such failure of the state. Additionally, their local orientation, many of these institutions faces various limitations, especially in the areas of accountability and gender equality. Many are also hampered by their inability to define and secure property rights, thereby raising the transaction costs of resource allocation of their constituencies. Moreover, the growing economic

diversity and complex division of labour, which mark the present era of globalization, are largely beyond the scope of traditional institutions.

These institutions are, thus, unlikely to be able to cope with poverty alleviation among their constituencies without the stewardship of the state. Nigeria's deepening crisis is therefore, unlikely to be reversed under the existing duality of institutions. The formal institutions of the state, i.e, rules regulating the structure of polity, property rights, and contracting, cannot be effective if they disregard or contradict the customary rules of the traditional institutions, which govern the lives and livelihood of large segments of the population. For example, the state is unlikely to succeed in the state-building and in mobilizing the cooperation of large portions of its citizens for socio-economic development without connecting itself to and harmonizing its political apparatus with the institutions, cultural values and interests of all its constituencies, including rural populations.

The task of reversing Nigeria's general crisis and realizing the concept of "Nigerian solutions to Nigerian problems or issues", and other homegrown developmental objectives are likely to require integration of the parallel institutions of governance so that they can complement one and another. Harmonizing the dual sets of institutions, in turn, requires reform of both in ways that would make them democratic and amenable to integration into a coherent and effective system of governance. This vision provides the imperative for the study which seeks to explore the role of traditional leaders in conflict prevention and resolution in Nigeria in ensuring the peace and harmony to the people. This objective can be achieved only through careful analyses of the role of traditional leaders in order to gain insight into their actual and potential contributions to democratic governance and economic transformation of the citizens. This exercise will be particularly of benefit as traditional leaders in Nigeria are largely understudied and misunderstood.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION TRADITION**

The concept or term "tradition" from which the word traditional connote can be seen in different angles. A philosopher in Britain called, Acton, HB views the concept tradition to mean "a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and it's acceptable as authoritative, or deferred to, without argument". In another vain, Samuel F (2000) defines the word as "a set of customs passed down over the generations, and a set of beliefs and values endorsing those customs". In another perspective, however, a Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame, G (1998) recognizes the value of tradition, but argues that in practice tradition is often-questioned and modified by its adherents over time, so that it remains dynamic. In line with this view Gyekye presents a new definition of tradition as "any cultural product that was created or pursued, in whole or in part, by past generation and that, having been accepted and preserved, in whole or in part, by successive generations, has been maintained to the present; we can infer that the concept traditional is something done or respected according to custom from generation passed to generation to come.

### **Traditional Ruler**

A traditional Ruler is a person who by virtue of his ancestry occupies the throne or stool of traditions of the area and whose throne has been in existence before the advent of the British in Nigeria.

State government gave the definition of traditional Ruler to mean, the traditional head of an ethnic unit or clan whom is for the time being the holder of the highest traditional authority within the ethnic unit or clan and whose title is by the government of the state.

The indigenous source of authority is traditional authority in traditional society which imbibes all the social, religious, political, economical, cultural value to the society.

### **TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION**

According to Itodo (2014), Charles (2014) Atedoga (2023) viewed the concept of Traditional Institution generally to mean or refer to those instruments of political organisation and socialization such as chiefs, clan leaders, kings, clan or chief assemblies, accountability structures, and systems of dispensing justice that evolved out of particular communities and predated the colonial era. Traditional institutions in this discourse specifically refer to all those forms of social and political authority which have their historical origins in the pre-colonial states and societies and which have been found as still relevant in contributing to the governance of the modern state.

The definitions given above are very imperative for therein lies the key to comprehending the importance of traditional leaders. Traditional are the guardians of traditional norms that are respected in particular communities from generation by generation. These norms could be outlooks on life, ways of relating or of resolving misunderstanding, institutions etc, and as such traditional leaders are an imperative or useful channel through which social and cultural change can be obtained.

### **CONFLICT**

According to Abdullahi, M. (2017) opined that conflict is any situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions, or behaviours lead to disagreement or opposition between two or more parties. Most communities, villages or societies will admit that conflict is inevitable and that not all conflict is negative. Several studies revealed that individuals typically avoid conflict. Other studies have showed that even when the “devil’s advocate” provides creative, innovative ideas, he or she is the first individual to deselect from groups. In the light of the foregoing, conflict can be seen as a mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, and external or internal demands. Where there are people, conflict is inevitable.

They are usually regarded in a negative association. However, thus is inaccurate as conflicts are necessary for healthy relationships. It all depends on the approach or how it is viewed on how conflict is resolved.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDING A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE TRADITIONAL LEADER IN CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE**

There are many research shown or indicated that the traditional institutions are indeed at the cross-roads of governance in modern Nigeria. The people are bound by both modern law and traditional values, even if political theorists and leaders of republican institutions take objection to certain traditional values and seen to find cumbersome over whether or how to formally integrate traditional authorities into the realm of the republic. Traditional authority resonate a reassuring institutional stability and certainty to which elected officers do not provide in republic citizens institutions. The great majority of the population feels distant from the concept of “republic” as grassroots level, which traditional authority remains the de facto institution of local governance. As a result on empirical finding that highlight the important role that traditional authorities play in local development. Apparently, traditional authorities should be formally integrated into the Republican Institutional by effectively constituting the first level of decentralized institutions of governance (Akpoyibo, No date). In view of the foregoing, there are different opinions on the possibility, or plausibility of involving our traditional institutions in the modern process of governance geared towards sustainability of the institutions of the state and the promotion of good governance. In the opinion of Itodo (2014) the pro-traditional institutions or “ neo traditionalist school” contended that the traditional institutions of leadership are compatible with modern democratic governance because it possesses certain democratic elements. The holders of this opinion posit that though the traditional institutions, have hierarchical structures or succession patterns that may seem apparently undemocratic of exclusive, their operations in the pre-colonial past and

even now are very transparent and geared towards the common good as their powers and the exercise of its was and is largely dependent on the citizens they rule over. In accordance with this opinion, traditional leaders have aided to maintain a system of government based on accountability, consultation and decentralization. The concluding summary of this position is therefore that there already democratic structures inherent in the traditional institution that can be grafted into contemporary system of governance.

Thus, these observations aforementioned above the democratic nature of traditional governance notwithstanding, some researchers have argued against the involvement of traditional governance structures in modern day governance structures because to them by its very nature, traditional authority compromises the democratic project underway in many states of the federation of Nigeria. Among the arguments of this opinion are that chieftaincy was eminently corrupted by the colonial masters and by the clienteles of the post-colonial mode of governance, the populations under traditional authorities live as “subjects” rather than as “citizens” of the state and democratic governance to exist; and that traditional institutions impede the pace of development as they reduce the relevance of the state in the areas of social services and moreover heighten primordial loyalties. This group thus refuses any notion of accommodating traditional leadership in a modern democracy.

### **RELEVANCE OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA**

In the quest for finding a Strategic Role for Traditional Institutions in the Nigerian Constitution, some vital facts have surfaced to show more weight to the relevance of Traditional Institutions in the Nigerian contemporary governance which are worth furthering. These factors can be mentioned as follows:

1. Emergence of clear cut advisory, participatory, developmental and mediation roles of the traditional, institutions in the governance of the modern Nigerian State.
2. Increasing realization of the institutional duality of governance in Nigeria with the tangential inclusion of the traditional institution in active governance at the local, regional and national levels in varying strands in some Nigerian States.
3. Increasing need to find home grown initiatives to tackle modern governance and developmental challenges and renewed interest in finding a place (role) for indigenous knowledge and institutions in the polity.
4. Resilience of the traditional institutions and its governance structures in the face of an unexpected and inexplicable change since the time of colonialism.
5. Failure of both the socialist and neo-liberal development related as members of a substitution class which had given no role to the traditional institutions to drive development in Nigeria Nation-State (Itodo, S.M, 2014)

Thus, it is thus, significant for the subsisting traditional institutions in Nigeria in general to be closely re-examined in order to mine their strengths, refine their capabilities and position them for a proper role-playing place in the governance of the contemporary Nation-State.

### **THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TRADITIONAL RULERS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA**

In Nigeria traditionally had a large number of traditional authorities and rulers who have played vital role in community relations and traditional justice systems, especially in the Northern and Central Sections of Nigeria. During the colonial period, the positions of existing authorities were recognized, and new chiefs were created to cement the system. Although this system has persisted until the current day, the rise of alternative poles or place of power, in particular the local and state government has tended to undermine the powers of such individuals or councils.

As may be expected from this study, traditional institutions in conflict prevention and resolution in Nigeria as opined by Adedoyin (1959:104) strategically classified into five headings (a)



Elders/Privileged Groups (b) Self Aid (c) Peer Group Assembly (d) Games Solution (e) Village Council

### **1. Elders/Privilege Groups**

Communities in which authority follows the gerontocratic tenets repose a lot of confidence on the council of elders in both the governmental and legal spheres of activity. The main rationale is that in environments where experience and wisdom tend to be correlated with age, decision making by the elderly hire the best to be expected. The Nigerian communities dominated by secret societies also deserve solutions to thorny issues through these exclusive and privilege organizations. It is a well known that even in some centralized, polities for instance in certain Yoruba Kingdoms, the apical authority settles serious conflicts only after consulting the Ogboni. The Ekpe among the Efik and some Cross Rivers Igbo societies groups Eastern Nigeria exert a lot of influence in conflict prevention and resolution.

### **2. Self-Aid**

Self-aid here includes all the sanction mechanism whereby society allows and indeed, expects an injured person to take action on his own to address the wrong done to him. This strategy is most pronounced in uncentralised societies.

Self-aid actions include resource to satirical songs and various other forms of ridicule, frequently utilized. Also included under this heading are various physical acts of self defense found all over the world as well as blood feud associated mostly with societies organization around the tenet of lineage segmentation.

Self-aid may be the only source through which some communities resolve conflict. Therefore, everyone is secure justice in many situation in which his person, property or interest has been violated (Gulliver in Gibbs, 1965). In this process he may of course call on aid from his kinsmen. On the other perspective are not permitted to get redress through self aid or vengeance since such a course of action is a denial of group cooperation upon which the community's solidarity rests.

Even in communities which encourage the use of self aid there are mechanisms such as the intervention of neutral person the leopard-skin chief among the Nuer, for example, which ultimately stop the feud albeit through mediation rather than coercion.

### **3. Peer Group Assembly**

Conflict prevention and resolution method is mostly associated with communities based on age grades. In some other uncentralised communities such as among some Igbo groups certain offences involving women are reviewed by women's group in the first instance. It is only when such steps peer groups admit inability to resolve the issue that the wider society steps in the guiding assumption in the reliance on peer groups in conflict resolution is that such groups best understanding the intricacies of issues in which members are involved. This assumption is strongest when both parties are of the same group. Peer groups are also believed to provide the least inhibitive atmosphere for members to air their grievances.

### **4. Games Solution**

The Nigerian societies invariably adopt this strategy of preventing and conflicts resolution. The game solutions provide for litigant to argue their cases before neutral officials and witnesses are allowed in the process of sifting evidence. Judgment follows well-known procedures. The system is well defined and predicable of all the strategies this is the one which most resemble the western judicial machinery, with graded systems of courts, specialized advocate judges and laid down procedures. The game solution is widely utilized in Nigeria nation-states in which the Supreme

Court is the highest court, to which anyone may appeal, several of the game-solutions are also used in many other press of the country.

The strategies so far discussed may be adapted singly or in combination by given communities in different or even in the same case.

### **5. Village Council**

This is strategy provides for the whole society to listen in to the problems under contention and offer suggestions for the prevention and resolution of the conflict. Though a few influential persons may swag the decision, village's councils allows room for intervention by contestants, their kinsmen and other allies. The settlements are arrived at in a public setting although it is a time consuming strategy for conflict prevention and resolution.

### **ROLES OF TRADITIONAL RULERS**

The Traditional Rulers in Nigeria both in the Traditional and Modern period perform the following functions:

1. The chief assists the government in political education and socialization of the rural people.
2. The chiefs articulate and aggregate the interest and problems of the rural people and made same known to the government for appropriate action.
3. The chiefs serve as link between the rural people and the government.
4. The chief were the custodians of the land and held the land in trust for the people.
5. They were the judges in disputes.
6. The chiefs bestow honour in the form of a chieftaincy on any citizens
7. The chiefs are symbols of unity and it is their duty to unite the people.
8. The chiefs act as the custodians of the traditions and culture of the people. They explain the custom and try to preserve it.
9. The chiefs serve as link between the dead and the living e.g. the people regard them as the father of the communities.
10. The chiefs maintain peace, order and security in the community e.g. anybody who threatens peace in punished by him and he presided over customary courts.
11. The chiefs aid to make law in their communities.

### **TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND CONFLICTS**

According to Sani (1966) opined that there is no shortage of classifications of conflict, but they usually address the broader concerns of political science rather than the Nigeria situation. However, if a strategy is to be developed that is both predictive and pre-emptive then something more local needs to be on hand. With this in mind, four main underlying themes of conflict can be identified as: political, religious, ethnic and economic.

Economic is a broad category that can include protests over petrol prices and disputes over access to grazing land. Any conflict can include multiple elements and in particular one type of conflict can morph into another; a political dispute can develop into religious confrontation. Another element is scale; conflicts can range from a momentary outburst of anger in a market, soon resolved, to national riots, seen on television and multiplied by revenge attacks. Another way of thinking about conflict is their relative predictability; long-running land disputes or trade conflicts between communities will surface regularly.

These actually appear as 'copycat' riots; urban radicals learn of some imagined offence to Islam on the radio or television and immediately incite rootless urban mobs to riot regardless of actual circumstances. It would be hard to predict something like the 'Miss World' riots in 2022 (Sani, 2010), born out of what was clearly an offhand flippant remark in a newspaper column. Similarly, the cartoon riots' in 2006 (Sani 2010) were a reaction to international events with little or no relevance to Nigeria. Such spontaneous events are virtually impossible to predict and prevent;



the only strategy to counter them is effective policing, not something associated with Nigeria. The 'cartoon' riots also reflect the gradual internationalization of riots in Nigeria that has ever seen the cartoons in question, and they were simply used as a justification for mayhem. As the International Islamic Community has increasing access to the international media, it becomes even more sensitive to perceived slights to their religion and sequential rioting is increasingly common. Another key element of the civil disorder is reprisal riots. Many seemingly minor conflicts can set off large-scale violence.

Issues such as allocation of market stalls, control of the Lagos slaughterhouse, taxes levied on vehicles registered elsewhere, OPC activities, and perceived slights to religious or community holidays can trigger such violence. The Oodua People's Congress (OPC) is a militant socio-cultural Yoruba nationalist organization formed in 1997. The Southern Nigeria based group opposed the late Sani Abacha, and was originally at the forefront of the political struggle to restore democracy. But it also supports Yoruba nationalism and a strong Federal System in Nigeria and its large membership make it vulnerable to infiltration by radical elements. In early 1999, the dissident Oodua Liberation Movement (OLM) faction becomes more militant. By contrast, the OLM opposes Nigeria's Federal system, and wants the southwest part of Nigeria to secede and create a separate Yoruba homeland.

A ricochet riot effect between Lagos and Northern cities, frequently Kano, spreads violence from one area to another. The Oodua People's Congress (OPCs) robust organization adds both a risk and an opportunity in this area, as this Yoruba group can mobilize many members, whether to spread violence or to calm communities. This was seen in Lagos in October, 2000, when members of the Yoruba Oodua People's Congress (OPC) vigilantes suspected a Hausa man of harboring a criminal. The dispute became ethnically polarized and led to riots. Comparable disputes have flared over rights to stall in market, levying local fees on vehicles registered in other states, parking rights for tanker trucks, and respect for ethnic holidays. Typically, a community attacks one another after a small dispute and once the news reaches other parts of Nigeria, there is a corresponding attack on the minority community of the original aggressors. Between June and August 1999, for instance, in the early days of the return to democratic rule a series of reprisal riots in northern and southern cities left more than a thousand people dead (Sani 2010).

A clear change that has come about in Nigeria that has a strong relation to weak governance is the relative violence of conflicts. Armed only with spears and bows and arrows, the followers of Mai Tatsine were still able to kill significant numbers of their imagined opponents. However, in the last few years, guns and more powerful weapons have spread widely through many communities, especially into rural areas and as a consequence, outcomes of conflict are likely to be ever more fatal (Blench et al., 2004).

Finally, conflicts can be classified according to the nature of response. Most small-scale local conflicts are settled locally often by traditional leaders. Anything on a larger scale usually involves the police and army, and they are unsubtle implements, burning down villages and often taking personal revenge for incidents in a highly unprofessional manner. Not all conflicts are actually communal; some are merely banditry disguised as conflict. The late 1990s and early 2000s were characterized by a series of incursions, apparently from Niger and Chad by groups of unknown origin and motivation, who had possibly been financed by shadowy figures in the Northern States (Ademola, 2010).

These groups seemed to roam areas of the Middle Belt, killing individuals and burning down villages. Sometimes, a political or religious motivation was claimed for these groups, but it seems they may have simply been bandits, intent on robbery. Disaffection can lead to the growth of militia groups to protect all kinds of interest. Johann Harnischfeger (1997) writes that, "there is too many gangs, and in addition, weapons and military expertise to make them dangerous and readily available" "acquiring any brand of firearm in Nigeria is as easy as purchasing toiletries from any





provision store". Retired army officers, many of them still young and enterprising, are training ethnic militias for 'boundary wars' with hostile neighboring communities. Among the Tiv, in the Benue region of Nigeria, ex-officers were accused by the ministry of defence of training a paramilitary force of 6000 men. Tiv leaders denied having armed such a huge number of warriors, but at the same time they threatened the central government with a military confrontation: "We are giving the Federal Government an ultimatum to withdraw the soldiers from Benue we would like to remind the Federal Government that we have 280,000 demobilized soldiers, and most of them are able and willing to fight for Tiv Land". Sani, (2010)

Apart from demobilized soldiers, potential recruits for militias or vigilantes can also be found among area boys, gangs of unemployed youth that can be easily mobilized in case of ethnic and religious clashes: With a few crates of beer "you can send this crowd running to whichever direction you want". Most members of militias and vigilantes are recruited from the lower strata of society but there are also many academics involved in crime and other gang activities. As a Nigerian researcher observed: "youth with secondary and even tertiary education roam about their villages aimlessly", they have no interest in farming, so they look for other opportunities to make money. Rival militias, security guards and vigilantes have to operate within the same territory. This makes it difficult to evade each other or to reach stable arrangements about their spheres of influence. Nigerians who were interviewed about ethnic militias did not expect them to develop harmonious relations. Most respondents assumed that the coexistence of armed groups would lead to a "balance of terror". With such a system, based on intimidation, attitudes towards violence will change. Groups that feel threatened by others have to demonstrate their strength and brutality in order to restrain rivals. When bureaucratic organizations like the police are being replaced by gangs, then power becomes personalized, revolving around gang leaders. Opposition against such leaders can hardly be institutionalized. (Babawale, 2003)

Rival leaders often break away with their followers and try to establish a new group. In order to keep the loyalty of their henchmen and attract new ones, they have to operate successfully, generating income and improving the status of the group. This may force them to seek alliances with politicians or traditional rulers, with oil companies or liberation movements. Such alliances, however, are fragile. They only last as long as both sides profit from them. As the behavior of militia leaders is unpredictable, depending on their changing fortunes, they come to resemble tricksters (Harnischfeger, 1997).

## **THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Role Theory propounded by George Herbert Mead (1931) argued that, roles are not inherent or fixed but are shaped by social interactions and expectations, that society assigns certain roles to individuals based on their status, position, and relationships. The theory is efficient in examining the strategic role performs by Traditional Institution as responsibilities. It contends that, roles come with a set of expectations from government and citizens, and rights are attached to them.

However, certain behaviors and tasks associated with these roles are expected to be performed by Traditional Institution charged with these responsibilities, and they also have certain rights and privileges within those roles. For example, when a group (Traditional Institution) is stigmatized, alienated, and politically excluded as a result of their inferiority status, political affiliation, financial status, ethnic, religious etc. it will not be correct to blame it on structural problems, rather, it should be regarded as failure of individuals who were assigned such role responsibility according to constitutional provisions (Laakso 2007). The theory focuses on the individual constitutionally assigned role responsibility for a better society, than looking for blame somewhere else. The Traditional Institutions have been consciously excluded from the political process irrespective of the role which the play makes no meaning to encourage the Traditional Institution participate



through reducing of certain agreed percentage of monetary commitment. In the bid to outsmart one another to grab political power, people adopt various means and patterns in connivance with personnel constitutionally assigned to be fair to all in the discharge of their responsibility, to perpetrate such acts of exclusion which eventually will jeopardizes their cultural, economic, social and religious rights, the refusal to recognize and guarantee political rights of participation of traditional institution, is the refusal of the right to work, the right to educate, the right to physical and mental health, the right to religious liberty (Mac-Ogonor 2003).

The role of implementing personnel in a political system is very imperative, it is imperative to state that, political exclusion is the foundation upon which other forms of exclusions that violates human rights occur, most imperatively, economic, environmental, cultural and social. Agbonifo (2009) noticed that, the Nigeria Federal System of government have not structurally relegated the minorities, the permitted injustices were the handiwork of implementing officials who are charged with role responsibilities but refused to discharged the with utmost efficiency. How best they discharge their duties in the context of political institutions, determines how inclusive these institutions will function for the good of society. These institutions which include traditional institution, electoral umpire, political parties, judiciary, media and the security are expected to perform optimally for the betterment of society. According to Nickerson (2022) who referred to society a complex whole that becomes orderly and stable as a result of efficient personnel (Traditional Institution) discharging assigned role responsibilities with interconnected structures and social patterns that operate to meet the needs of individuals in a society. The desire of every civilization is that, material objective and custom are personnel driven, which is very important to aid express and fulfill vital functions of society. Thus, overcoming the ills of political exclusion to guarantee human rights protection is the function of personnel discharging assigned role responsibilities according to constitutional prescription.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper employed the descriptive research design in which an in-depth interview on the Traditional Rulers were conducted within the eleven electoral wards that constitute Sanga Local Government Area Council of Kaduna State in order to investigate the strategies of Traditional Institution in conflict prevention and resolution. Thus, the eleven Traditional Rulers were visited and interviewed to find out the strategies engaged in their various communities (wards) in conflict prevention and resolution across the Local Government Area Council. Secondary data were also obtained through their record of their annual meetings in respect to conflict prevention and resolutions were also revealed. The data techniques collected was the purposive data technique. Evidentially, data collected revealed that substantial conflicts were prevented while some were resolved across the Local Government Area Council of Kaduna State.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study revealed that the traditional institutions in Nigeria plays significant role in managing the crisis in the eleven electoral wards that made up of Sanga Local Government Area Council of Kaduna State communities were the respondents as the stated notion in the research questions of the study. This is an indication that the traditional institutions in Nigeria significantly play a role in crisis management and ensure peacefully mediation between the warring communities.

The study also found out that the majority believe that there are opportunities and challenges facing the use of traditional institution in crisis management in Nigeria. This is an indication that even if traditional institutions in Nigerian communities play some role in managing the conflict, the



challenges exist and as well as opportunities exist in ensuring lasting peace process sustained between the two warring ethnic groups. They study also found out that there are ways in which the traditional institutions can be strengthened in preventing and resolving conflict. Managing crisis requires multidimensional approach and effective crisis management demands such approach, thus if traditional institutions in and around the Nigerian communities are strengthen in a multidimensional way to tackle the conflicts they will perform effectively and ensure peaceful coexistence between the Nigerian communities.

## CONCLUSION

The strategies of traditional institution in conflict prevention and resolution in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. That is why it is always very imperative for traditional to learn the best approach in mediation, and ensuring peaceful coexistence between various ethnic groups in the society. This only gives the traditional institutions and leaders the needed opportunity to maintain cordial relationship between the institutions and people in the communities. Based on the findings the following conclusion were drawn, that the traditional institutions in Nigeria significantly play a vital role in conflict prevention and resolution ensuring peaceful mediation between citizens, communities and societies in Nigeria, that there are opportunities and challenges confronting the use of traditional institutions in conflict management in Nigeria. This is an indication that even if traditional institutions play some role in preventing and resolving conflict, the challenges exist and as well as opportunities exist in ensuring lasting peace process sustained between warring ethnic communities.

Managing conflict demands a multidimensional strategies and effective conflict prevention and resolution demands such approach, thus if traditional institutions in and around Nigeria are strengthen in a multidimensional strategies to tackle the conflicts, they will perform effectively and ensure peaceful coexistence between citizens of Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The traditional institutions in and around Nigeria are to be constitutionally strengthen in a multidimensional strategies to tackle the conflicts, such as providing enough security personnel; creating awareness on peaceful coexistence in the country; organizing group consultations and get together programmes to douse the tension between the warring communities; to compensate the victims and punish the perpetrators of the conflict. When all these are put in place, the traditional institutions will perform effectively and ensure peaceful co-existence between citizens of Nigeria.
2. The traditional institutions in Nigeria should go beyond mere mediating between the warring ethnic communities to actually asking questions and finding solution to the crises through extensive consultation and giving audience to the victims of the crises to hear their complains and inviting an inter-governmental consultative forum involving the traditional institutions and the local government/state government institutions to investigate and stem the conflict. While the perpetrators or crimes are punished, the victims should be compensated and reoriented to avoid reprisal and revenge attacks on the supposed perpetrators of the crime that brought the warring communities into conflict and carnage.

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