The Role and Challenges of Traditional Political Institutions in Conflict Management in Nigeria

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Abstract

The magnitude in which conflicts explode in the contemporary Nigerian state has necessitated the intervention of various institutions and stakeholders such as Non-governmental organizations (NGO's), as well the traditional political institutions in conflict management. The significance of traditional political institutions especially resulting from the level of respect they command and the loyalty they enjoy among their subjects warrant them the authority to broker peace and engage in conflict management processes. This study is primarily driven with the major objective of assessing the role played and challenges encountered by the traditional political institutions in conflict management in Nigeria. Library research was adopted as a methodology of the paper, while the theory of Authority expounded by Wax Weber was used as a theoretical framework. The study discovers that the relative peaceful atmosphere enjoys in various emirates and kingdoms are direct results of various factors notable among is the sterling effort by the traditional political institutions in conflict management. Hence, it concludes that the conflict management styles/approaches adopted by traditional councils result in promoting peace and security throughout most of the emirates/kingdoms. The study recommends that capacity-building and leadership trainings in peace and conflict processes in general should be encouraged by the state government among the traditional rulers.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management, Legitimacy, Traditional Authority, Traditional Political Institutions

Introduction

Traditional political institutions are the patterns of political and administrative structures established in according with cultural heritages and practices of people, which have predated the arrival of the colonial rule. They enjoy the legitimate loyalty of their subjects, and hence wield enormous authority over their areas of control. In view of this traditional African societies, had well organized and well established systems of administration where public order was provided and maintained; where laws were made and implemented; were inter-communal and intertribal conflicts were settled. This indicates that traditional political institutions have been a significant feature of the people and commanded a large degree of loyalty and respect among them. The traditional rulers’ stool was a great symbol of power, leadership and authority in the good old days. It commanded the respect and loyalty of the peoples of their different kingdoms. It was almost a taboo to speak ill of a traditional ruler or to flagrantly flout his orders. In some of the kingdoms, the traditional rulers were not just monarchs but theocrats as in Northern Nigeria. There seems to be a general belief that in the modern time traditional rulers have no constitutional roles or place in a democratic

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dispensation whereby only the elected are permitted to rule (Erero, 2005).

However, the indispensable role they play in the administration of justice and promoting peaceful coexistence among the inhabitants of their respective domain have earned them a stipulated role in the general administration of the state. The spate of violence and criminal activities and the frequency at which they occur resulting from land disputes, religious disturbances, farmers/herdsmen clashes, and various forms of terrorist and criminal activities as well as crises relating to divorce, inheritance and youth restiveness, in the contemporary Nigerian societies have shown that modern democratic structures cannot effectively alone contain the challenges of these violence and promote lasting peace and security in Nigerian societies respectively and the Nigerian state in general. This necessitates the involvement of traditional political institutions in the process of conflict management.

**Conflict Management**

Conflict management has been used as a generic term to cover the whole gamut of positive conflict handling. It represents in a more limited way the settlement and containment of violent conflict. This is the process of reducing negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. It covers the entire area of handling conflicts positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflict, by being proactive. The term is perhaps an admission of the reality that conflict is inevitable, but that not all conflicts can always be resolved; therefore what practitioners can do is to manage and regulate them (Best, 2004, p.95). It encompasses negotiation, conflict limitation, conflict resolutions, containment and litigation and conflict prevention.

In conflict management emotion plays an important role, because it has the potential to play both a positive or negative role in negotiation and the entire resolution processes. During negotiation, the decision as to whether or not to settle rests in part on emotional factors. Negative emotions can cause intense and even irrational behavior, and can cause conflicts to escalate and negotiations to break down, while positive emotions facilitate reaching an agreement and help to maximize joint gains. Angry negotiators plan to use more competitive strategies and to cooperate less, even before the negotiation starts. These competitive strategies are related to reduce joint outcomes. During negotiation, anger disrupts the process by reducing the level of trust, clouding parties’ judgment, narrowing parties’ focus of attention and changing their central goal from reaching agreement to retaliating against the other side (Virtual University, 2010).

Conflict management is another way of controlling conflict before or during and after it has occurred. According to Otite and Albert (1999, p.11) it is more elaborate and wider in conception and application, when necessitated; it involves conflict resolution and transformation. It is more of a long-term arrangement involving institutionalized provisions and regulative procedures for dealing with conflicts wherever they occur.

**Types of Conflict Management**

Conflict management takes various forms and the most common form is conflict resolution which includes: negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, as well as alternative dispute resolution (ADR). These has been summarized by, (Virtual University (2010) as follows:-

**Negotiation:** This is a discussion among two or more people with the goal of reaching an agreement. Broadly speaking, it is an interaction of influences, which include the
process of resolving disputes, agreeing upon courses of action, bargaining for individual or collective advantage, or crafting outcomes to satisfy various interests. Thus, it is a form of alternative dispute resolution which involves two basic elements: the process and the substance.

The process refers to how the parties negotiate the context of the negotiation, the parties to the negotiation, the relationships among these parties, the communication between these parties and the tactics used by the parties. While, the substance refers to what the parties negotiate over, the agenda the issues, the options, and the agreements reached at the end.

**Mediation:** This is a voluntary and confidential process in which a neutral third-party known as a facilitator helps people discuss difficult issues and negotiate an agreement. Basic steps in the process include gathering information, framing the issues, developing options, negotiating, and formalizing agreements. Parties in mediation create their own solutions and the mediator does not have any decision-making power over the outcome.

**Conciliation:** This is the least intrusive of third-party processes. A neutral person agreeable to all parties is selected to serve as conciliator. The conciliator serves as a go-between. Typically the conciliator meets separately with each party in attempts to persuade the parties to proceed with each other. Thus, the conciliator’s primary role is to re-establish or improve communication between the parties. When the parties are too angry to speak with each other, a conciliator may be all that is needed.

**Arbitration:** This is a process in which a third-party neutral, after reviewing evidence and listening to arguments from both sides, issues a decision to settle the case. Arbitration is often used in commercial and labour/management disputes. (Virtual University, 2010).

**Adjudication:** This is the legal process by which an arbiter or judge reviews evidence and argumentation including legal reasoning set forth by opposing parties or litigants to come to a decision which determines rights and obligations between the parties involved. Three types of disputes are resolved through adjudication:

a. Disputes between private parties, such as individuals or corporations.

b. Disputes between private parties and public officials.

c. Disputes between public officials or public bodies, (Virtual University, 2010).

**Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):** This is an umbrella term encompassing various techniques for resolving conflict outside of the court and can generally be classified into six types: negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation, collaborative law and early neutral evaluation. With the exception of arbitration, most forms of ADR are a type of facilitated settlement. The ‘alternative’ aspect is that, in theory, these types of facilitated settlement do not require any involvement of the legal system and so the approach to achieving settlement will not depend on reference to the legal rights or merits of the dispute. The most critical feature of all forms of ADR is that they are conducted in private; in terms of both the process and outcome. Alternative Dispute Resolution is a mechanism of solving a dispute out of court. It is a collective description of process or mechanisms that parties can use to resolve disputes rather than bringing a claim through the formal court structure (Dutta, cited in Nyamasege etal, 2017, p.3).

It is composed of fields such as: mediation, arbitration, negotiation, reconciliation, fact finding, expert determination, private judging. These methods are cheaper and faster to resolve contrary to court processes. Alternative
Dispute Resolutions (ADRs) is also a technique used to settle disputes in a non-confrontational way and it usually operates outside the courtrooms. This approach ranges from negotiations between affected parties, multiparty negotiations, mediation, consensus building, to arbitration and adjudication. Traditional Dispute Resolutions (TDRs) focuses on communities resolving conflicts amongst disputants. This application was live before the advent of colonialism and techniques applied varied from one community to another. Importantly, both mechanisms have been used to manage conflicts since they are effective and closure to the people (Nyamasege et al, 2017, p.3).

ADR is modern version of an ancient set of practices. Traditional societies in all parts of the world have featured variations of third-party arbitration and mediation. Western societies saw these practices subsumed by the rise of modern judiciaries. The increased complexity of these processes, however, saw reduced satisfaction with legal outcomes among disputants, leading to a rediscovery of ADR in the 1970s in many parts of the world.

According to Law Reform Commission (2010, p.7) ADR is a broad spectrum of structured processes, including mediation and conciliation, which does not include litigation though it may be linked to or integrated with

... [a] set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past.

Literally, therefore tradition refers to age-long, old, customary and established historic ways of doing something while institution means a system or organization that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people. Tradition refers to custom or belief which is a long established action or pattern of behavior in a community or among a group of people, often one that has been handed down from generations. Traditions presuppose body of customs i.e a body of long-established practices and beliefs viewed as a set of values by a culture. Thus, traditional institutions are those social, economic or political organizations/bodies which derive their power, legitimacy, influence and authority from the traditions of a particular people.
According to Adewumi and Egwurube (1985, p.20) traditional leaders are the sometimes refers to as tribal leaders/rulers. They are individuals occupying communal political leadership positions sanctified by cultural mores and values, and enjoying the legitimacy of particular communities to direct their affairs. Their basis of legitimacy is therefore tradition, which includes the whole range of inherited culture and way of life; a people’s history; moral and social values and the traditional political institutions which survive to serve those values.

Similarly, His Royal Highness Erediauwa, the Oba of Benin in Nigeria (cited in Aborisade, 1985, p.vii) opined that Traditional ruler means the traditional head of an ethnic community whose stool conferred the highest traditional authority on the incumbent since before the beginning of British rule.

According to Crook (2005) Traditional political institution refers to all those forms of social and political authority which have their historical origin in pre-colonial states and societies, and which were incorporated by colonial rule into what is now an African nation.

Four important aspects about Traditional Political institutions can be gleaned from this definition.

Firstly, Traditional Political institutions existed prior to colonialism. Pre-colonial Africa was organized into various nation-states which had their respective forms of institutions for governance. These institutions wielded legitimate power over Africans for centuries prior to colonialism.

Secondly, these institutions have generally been classified two categories: (a) decentralized systems of authority and (b) centralized systems of authority. These decentralized institutions are largely based on consensual decision making. Conflict resolution in such systems involves narrowing differences through negotiations. Participation in these types of systems is often based on age-set. The centralized systems consist of power being placed in the hands of specific leaders such as kings or monarchs. In these centralized systems, rulers are selected primarily on the basis of heredity. In some cases, the rulers exercise absolute power. In other cases however, the power of the rulers is restrained to a certain extent by councils. Thirdly, many of these institutions were incorporated into colonial governmental systems. This was particularly relevant for the British colonial practices of indirect-rule but was also done to different extents by the French, Portuguese ad Belgians. Under this policy, the colonialist sought cheap ways of governing their territories, particularly the hinterlands of these territories, without being forced to heavily involve themselves. This incorporation into colonial governments had varying effects on the different systems of institutions. In the case of the decentralized systems, the colonial state often tried to impose hierarchical rule (Asare, 2011, p.7-8). In cases where traditional rulers resisted incorporation, it was not uncommon for them to be pushed out of power and replaced with rulers appointed by the colonialist.

According to Orji and Olali (2010) By traditional political institutions, we refer to the indigenous political arrangements whereby leaders with proven track records are appointed and installed in line with the provisions of their native laws and customs. The essence of the institutions is to preserve the customs and traditions of the people and to manage conflicts arising among or between members of the community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people.

Traditional Political institutions are the custodian of their people’s norms, cultures and practices. In most African setting, just as it is
obtainable in most kingdoms and emirates in Nigeria, selection of persons into the offices of Traditional Political institutions is hereditary or by selection or election by the instrument of relevant traditional methods. This is a case throughout the Northern Caliphate in places like Kano, Katsina, Daura, Sokoto, Gwandu among others. However, the mode of selection varies in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular from ethnic groups to ethnic groups or communities to communities. Traditional Political institutions are symbols of indigenous peoples’ rights, privileges, laws, customs and traditions which include but not limited to paramount rulers and their councils.

In African traditional setting, in general, conflicts are usually managed and resolved based on the customs and traditions of the people. Traditional political institutions have different approaches to conflict management and resolution, depending on the community. Thus, what is suitable in one community may not be to another. This is mainly due to cultural and religious differences. Boege (in Nweke, 2012, p.206) agrees with this position when he argued that traditional approaches to conflict resolution and management vary considerably from society to society, from region to region, and from community to community. In addition, Boege (ibid, p.207) further affirms that there are as many different traditional approaches to conflict transformation as there are different societies and communities with a specific history, a specific culture and specific custom even in the global south just like any other. However, one common trend that characterizes them is they tend to adapt to alternative dispute resolution as a strategy of dispute settlement and conflict management among their various communities.

According to Malami (1978) and Orji and Olali (2010) Traditional political institutions, it refers to the indigenous political system or arrangements whereby leaders with proven track of records are nominated, appointed and installed in accordance with the provisions of their native laws and customs. The essence of the institutions is to preserve the customs, traditions and cultural heritage of the people and manage conflicts and violence arising among or between members of the community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people (Abdulqadir, 2016, p.2).

The power of traditional authority is rooted in tradition; given its deep root in group beliefs and values it powers is not to be underestimated because it is intricately attached to spiritualism or cultural level of giving meaning to people’s lives, of allowing them to experience a sense of belong (Akume, 2013). Hence, traditional authority derives its powers by appealing to customs and tradition.

Traditional authority is hierarchical ordered and structured on the basis of status; it is a compound of factors such as honour, prestige, standing and power. It is characterized by the person’s role, rights and duties in relation to the other members of that order. Given the distance between the Nigerian state and the people arising from continued government arbitrariness and neglect of the needs of the people Nigerians have strong affiliation to traditional authority for protection.

According to the Dasuki Committee (cited in MAMSER, 1987, p.147) A traditional ruler is a person who by virtue of his ancestry occupies the throne or stool of an area and who has been appointed to it in accordance with the customs and tradition of the area and has suzerainty over the people of the area. Reflecting closely on the definition offered above it is evident that one can only become a traditional ruler only through inheritance. Consequently, only members of the traditional ruling families can legitimately aspire to become traditional rulers. Since, it is a hereditary office those who do not belong to that tradition group or do not have a traditional political institution cannot become traditional
ruler of a given locality or ethnic group even if he possess better rulership qualities than members of the member of the ruling or royal families. While this definition assures privileges for some it at the same time results in the exclusion of others.

Determining the exact origin of traditional political institution remain elusive but it is certain that most of the nation-state scattered across the then territory now named Nigeria had traditional political institution that played a significant role to their growth, influence, development and dominance of other society. At the head of ever traditional political institution sits the traditional ruler who exercised sovereign power over the people. In pre-colonial era most of the traditional political institutions had wellstructured system of the traditional head of an ethnic group or clan who is the holder of the highest primary executive authority in an indigenous polity, or who has been appointed to the positioning accordance with the customs and tradition of the area concerned by instrument or order of the state government, and whose title is recognised as a traditional ruler title by the Government of the State.

In general, in the pre-colonial Africa, the set of people who control, direct and superintend over traditional institutions are called traditional rulers and their subordinates like provincial chiefs, princes, ward heads, etc. Indeed, the power, authority and legitimacy of traditional rulers were derived from traditions. This is why the African monarchs were and are still referred to as traditional rulers. Traditional rulers refer to the set of rulers of the various Nigerian peoples and communities before these people were brought together by the British colonial rulers in the establishment of Nigeria. In modern Nigeria, the categories of traditional rulers include the Mai/Shehu of Borno, the Habe and Emirs rulers in Hausaland, the Oba in Yorubaland, the Attah in Igalaland, the Etsu in Nupeland, the Obi and Eze in Igboland, etc. These traditional rulers occupied and still occupy important positions among the peoples of pre-colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Their positions were/are sanctioned by the traditions, history and culture of their respective peoples who hold them in high esteem and reverence.

Finally, these institutions continue to exist today. Though several of these institutions grappled with considerable changes during colonialism and through the period of independence, several of them were able to persevere, in many cases reinvent themselves adapting to their new surroundings, and continue to make claims to legitimacy. Many Africans continue to adhere primarily to the authority of Traditional political institutions. What is important about these traditional political institutions is that they wielded legitimate power prior to colonialism, existed in varied capacities through the colonial period, and continue to exist today (Asare, 2011, p. 7-8).
Theoretical Framework
This study adopts Theory of Authority associates with the influential sociologist Max Weber (1958). He proposed this theory of authority towards understanding how authority is legitimated as a belief system in the course of human interactions and societal life.

The major assumption of this theory is that legitimate order and authority stems from different aspects of a single phenomenon that is the forms that underlie all instances of ordered human interaction. There are two fundamental components of order, norms and authority, which are rest upon orientation to a rule and compliance to commands.

Based on the norms and authority Weber identified three types of authority which are traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational authority. Traditional authority is legitimated by the sanctity of tradition. The ability and right to rule is passed down, often through heredity. It does not change overtime, does not facilitate social change, tends to be irrational and inconsistent, and perpetuates the status quo. In fact, “The creation of new law opposite traditional norms is deemed impossible in principle”. But, in both cases the system of authority does not change (Weber, 1958, p. 4).

Charismatic authority is found in a leader whose mission and vision inspire others. It is based upon the perceived extraordinary characteristics of an individual. Weber saw a charismatic leader as the head of a new social movement, and one instilled with divine or supernatural powers, such as a religious prophet. Weber also thought charisma played a strong if not integral role in traditional authority systems. Charismatic authority is routinized in a number of ways according to Weber: orders are traditionalized, the staff or followers change into legal or estate-like (traditional) staff, or the meaning of charisma itself may undergo change (Weber 1958).

Legal-rational authority is empowered by a formalistic belief in the content of the law (legal) or natural law (rationality). Obedience is not given to a specific individual leader whether traditional or charismatic but a set of uniform principles. Weber thought the best example of legal-rational authority was a bureaucracy (political or economic). This form of authority is frequently found in the modern state, city governments, private and public corporations, and various voluntary associations. In fact, Weber stated that the “development of the modern state is identical indeed with that of modern officialdom and bureaucratic organizations just as the development of modern capitalism is identical with the increasing bureaucratization of economic enterprise (Weber, 1958, p.3).

Weber’s theory of authority is very rich and intricate. The three authority types may be reinforced by traits that differentiate them from other types. Traditional authority is impersonal (unlike charisma) and non-rational (unlike legal-rational). Charismatic authority is dynamic (unlike tradition) and non-rational (again, unlike legal-rational). Finally, legal-rational authority is dynamic (unlike tradition) and impersonal (unlike charisma). Conversely, this means that traditional is un-dynamic, charisma is personal, and legal-rational is rational.

This theory is relevant to this study on the following ground: Firstly, the type of authority acquired by the traditional political institution is a traditional type. The power of traditional authority is rooted in tradition; given its deep root in group beliefs and values it powers is not to be underestimated because it is intricately attached to spiritualism, historical and cultural realities of people’s lives, and allow them to experience a high sense of belonging. This explains the degree of legitimacy these traditional political institutions enjoy and the tremendous influence they exercise in their chieftdom like in Daura Emirate which has
been tagged as center of Hausa civilization. This is line with Weber’s argument that traditional authority is legitimated by the sanctity of tradition. The ability and right to rule is passed down, often through heredity. It does not change overtime.

Secondly, given the legitimate nature of the traditional political institutions based on the sanctity of culture and tradition, and the level of confidence, mutual trust and understanding reposes on them by their people, despite the absence of stipulated constitutional role in the modern Nigerian state, people still refer to for dispute settlements and resolutions as well as conflict management in general. One in unique issue is that in most cases whenever and wherever they pass judgement their people tend warmly accept their judgement without protest or appeal.

The Role of Traditional Political Institutions in Conflict Management

Traditional political institutions are custodians of the traditional religion, arts and culture of the people of the land and they enjoy the trust of the people. As such they play tremendous role in the society particularly in the areas of conflict management and brokering peace between and amongst people in their respective emirates or chiefdoms. They served as a link between that rural people and the government. They assist the government in political education and socialization of the rural people.

In addition, the traditional rulers perform amongst others the role of making or contributing to law making and judgment, adjudication in disputes in their communities. In view of the political administration, traditional rulers have been given limited authority to settle minor disputes and make peace within the community and with neighbouring communities. These efforts can be seen clearly in the role play by Sultan of Sokoto, Ooni of Ife, Shehu of Borno, and Emir of Kano among others in advocating and preaching for peace and peaceful coexistence among people especially during civil tension and unrest. They also maintain peace, order and security.

Ibrahim (2010, p.241) agrees with the view above when he noted that when violence erupted in Nigeria in 1997 the Sultan of Sokoto and other top traditional rulers were called upon by the government to visit the affected areas and appeal for calm. In a similar vein, Kaduna state Council of Emirs and Chiefs were actively involved by the State in the successful control of 1986 Kafanchan and 1992 Zangon Kataf Crises.

The role of traditional rulers in the management of conflict and security maintenance has been summarized to include the following:

1. Membership of emirate, district, village and ward security; observation, surveillance and maintenance and the weekly meeting
2. Security of village, ward, district and emirate/chiefdom vigilante committees
3. Security surveillance reports pass to relevant authorities.
4. Head of security, safety and protection enlightenment campaigns
5. Sensitization and enlightenment of individuals and groups, on what citizens need to know i.e. do and dont’s on security tips in form of vigilance, surveillance etc.
6. Watchdogs in numbering all houses to know their occupants and their general conduct. (Orji and Olali, 2010, p.402).

Traditional rulers of modern times perform vital roles in their domain like embarking on awareness campaign or the sensitization of their community populace on epidemic diseases, the construction of classroom blocks and providing learning materials in school to help develop education system, provision of medical facilities and the building of the community health centre. They have also
succeeded in boosting community development through the provision of boreholes, rural roads, formation of cooperative societies, setting up of markets, construction of culverts, construction of earth dams, mobilizing people for health programmes and resolving disputes within their domains.

Even though, there is no clearly stated constitutional role for traditional institution in Nigeria, their functions are purely advisory and include but are not limited to following as contained in FGN (1976). *Local government reform*:

a. formulation of general proposals and advice to local government;
b. provision of advice on religious matters;
c. support for arts and culture;
d. chieftaincy matters and control of traditional titles and offices;
e. mobilization of people for self-help projects;
f. assistance in the collection of levies and local revenue such as head and cattle taxes;
g. making representations to government on matters referred to council by government (cited in Blench et al., 2006, p.5).

According to Osakede & Ijimakinwa (2015, p.38) The roles played by traditional political instutions can be separated into three categories: First of all, they have advisory role to government in administration at both national and sub national levels. Secondly, they play developmental role by complementing the efforts of government in revenue and resource mobilization sensitization of their subjects to government’s programmes on health issues like immunization and HIV/AIDS campaigns, voter registration etc. Thirdly is their role in conflict management. This has been proven across traditional rulers; they also broke peace between the people and the state in cases where misunderstanding exists as a result of communication gap.

Maintaining peace is among the main roles played by traditional elders in many African societies. Their influence goes a long way in resolving disputes between family members, within and among communities, and occasionally across state lines. But as the nature of conflict changes, their ability to lead effectively is threatened. The leadership systems that empower them originate in pre-colonial times and vary from one society to another; some leaders trace their roots directly to God, some serve as proxies for infant kings, and some are queens who have proven to be just as effective as male leaders (Walker, 2012).

Naturally, traditional rulers have a huge role to play as custodians of the culture and tradition of their people. This position confers on them some unique authority to help mould public opinion on strategic issues. Nobody is closer to the people than the traditional rulers. The peace and security of their communities revolve around them. Because, of their close affinity to their people determine, to a large extent, how things are done in their communities. Thus, the government always find them more expedient and reasonable to use them to reach important decisions which they pass on to government for implementation. Through this medium government passes useful information for dissemination to their respective communities such as information about voter information, immunisation against communicable diseases, census, and maintenance of law and order (Kalu, 2016).

There is no clear identification and discussion on the role of traditional political institutions in conflict management as the heading suggested, so update this section in that direction (please refer to the first and second and the seventh paragraphs in this section as highlighted in red font above).
The Challenges of Traditional Political Institutions in Conflict Management in Nigeria

There is no doubt that traditional rulers in Nigeria have gradually witnessed the erosion of their powers, from depending upon British colonial administration to dependence upon elected politicians in the post-colonial period. Hence their role can be narrowed to the key factors they have contributed which are among others as follow:

a. Moral decay in the society which manifested in forms of lack of respect for elders and constituted authority including traditional institutions. This coupled with appointment of the young, bold and restless people into traditional institutions and their brash manners which further eroded the public’s confidence in traditional institutions.

b. Abuse of privilege: This manifested in terms of giving chieftaincy titles and honours to less deserving members of the society has created a society with false values, and negative role models.

c. Conflict of interests between State and local government authorities and traditional rulers, and a need to clarify who should do what in local community matters. Which sometime results in the removal of traditional political office holders such as the cases of Emir of Kano and Emir of Gwandu.

d. Politics: Party politics especially as characterized by zero sum resolution and financial inducements have been played in manners that undermine the influence of traditional rulers over local voters. This coupled with dwindling sphere of influence that is creation of new states and local government areas, these have further balkanized the chiefdom overseen by the traditional rulers.

e. The Economy: Dwindling economic fortunes which also affected the traditional rulers have further eroded their influence and authority, a situation where some traditional rulers ride on Okada motorcycles, as well as asks for favour especially in rural areas. This indeed affects the integrity of the institution they represent.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that traditional rulers are very important in any traditional setting. They play a very significant role in informally managing conflict and arranging peacemaking meetings when matters get out of hand. In view of this it can be concluded that the peaceful atmosphere enjoys in the emirate/kingdom in Nigeria is a direct results of their sterling effort in conflict management. Also, the conflict management styles/approaches mainly alternative dispute resolution adopted by these traditional political institutions have been accepted by the people and hence result in promoting peace and security throughout the country.

The study make a number of findings and they can be summarized as follows:-

- The traditional rulers are highly respected, trustworthy and influential in their communities. The People of the emirate/kingdom consider their leaders as both political and religious leaders and they are closer to their community members.

- Despite the influence of the traditional political institutions and the loyalty they enjoy, people do not usually engage them in conflict management or in mediating disputes especially between farmer and pastoralist communities until after the crisis has happened and sometime even escalate.

- Most conflicts in the Emirate/kingdom occur over marriages, inheritance and sharing of inheritance, inter and intra-marriage conflicts, family conflicts, conflicts between neighbours, boundary disputes, witchcraft allegations, and perhaps, political
and religious disagreement among sects, farmers-pastoralist conflict, access to land, land boarder conflicts, custom service/smugglers conflicts and above all natives/ settlers daily disputes.

Recommendations

- The position hold by the traditional institution is sacred and recognition based on culture and tradition of people and despite the waning of their constitutional role they still exercise tremendous political influence, hence this status quo should continue the way it is.

- Recognizing the reliance of traditional forms of conflict management and local forms of dispute resolution should be strengthened and utilized in national reconciliation processes as well as integrated into the formal legal system. That whatever, resolution they passed should be recognised by the law.

- Capacity-building and leadership trainings in peace and conflict processes in general should be encourage by the state government among the traditional rulers, in order to prepare them meet the challenges and new technicalities of conflict management and resolution as well as peace and conflict processes in general.

- There is also dire need to empower the traditional institutions financially through logistics support and any other relevant material resources needed in the processes of conflict management and dispute resolutions in general.

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