TIV and IGBO Conflict Management Mechanisms: A Comparative Study

Charles C. Mezie-Okoye
Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies (CCGS), Port Harcourt
charles.mezie-okoye@uniport.edu.ng

Abstract

The paper did a comparative study of the Tiv and the Igbo traditional conflict management mechanisms. The Tiv and Igbo ethnic groups are in the North central and Southeastern geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Both the Tiv and the Igbo suffered a lot during colonialism as many of their able bodied men and women were sold into slavery. Both were mainly agriculturists and their lands were taken away from them and also monetized. They both had similar traditional mechanisms of resolving conflicts which the colonial masters one way or the other destroyed or made ineffective during their colonial rules. Both the Tiv and the Igbo ethnic groups had no central traditional rulers unlike the Hauses, Yorubas and the Benin kingdom. The study examined the traditional mechanisms of resolving conflict in Tiv and Igbo ethnic groups and did a comparative study of the two and also looked at the effectiveness of the methods in resolving today's conflicts. The study is a historical, narrative and purely qualitative study. Conclusion was made and some recommendations made for holistic effectiveness of these traditional mechanisms of managing conflicts in these two ethnic groups that have a lot in common.

Keywords: Ethnic, Conflict, Violent, Traditional, Management, Resolution.

Introduction

Conflict can be defined as the manifestation of a hostile attitude in the face of conflicting interests between individuals, group or states. The conflicting interests can be over resources, identity, power, status or values. It is generally seen as a struggle between two or more people over the same scarce resources at the same time[1]. In the same vein, it can be said that conflict is part and parcel of every human society. Whenever two or more are gathered in one interaction or another, conflict must surface. Chaplin defines conflict as "the simultaneous occurrence of two or more mutually antagonistic impulses or motives[2]", while Wilson and Hanna described it as "a struggle involving ideas, values, and or/limited resources"[3].

Nigeria with her population of about 140 million and 250 ethnic groups and over 300 languages can be said to the most populous nation in the African sub-region. This also gave rise to multitude of conflicts; religious, ethnic, communal and political fault lines that always erupt into violent conflicts. These conflicts can be due to many factors like; ethnic rivalry, religious violence, dispute over ownership of land, boundaries issues, political elections as well as conflicts that are related to oil production and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta[4].

There have been a number of both ethnic and communal conflicts since late 1990s as well as early 2000. These must have been after the military region and the coming of the democratic government. These conflicts include that of "Ife-Modakeke in Oyo/Osun States 1999; Hausa/Fulani and Kataf of Zango Kataf in Kaduna State, 1999; Ijaw and Istekiris of of

Warri in Delta State, 1999; Igbakwu-Omor, Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State, 1999; Junkun/Chamba and Kuteb, Junkun and Tiv in Taraba State, 1998/1999"[5].

Some of the most prominent conflicts in Tiv land are as follows; the 1947 chieftaincy crisis in Makurdi, Ushongo-Iharev, Isherev-Utyondu, Tiv-Junkun, Tiv-Udam, Inyambuan, Shoja Patali, Atemtyo, and the militia. There are other minor conflicts within the Tiv land that are not as popular as the earlier mentioned[6].

The north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria has experienced an overwhelming number of intra- and interethnic violent conflicts since the 1990s so also were Anambra and Ebonyi States in Igboland. This phenomenon has adversely affected the stability in these two Geo-political zones. Astonishingly, some of these unresolved conflicts involved the Tiv, who hitherto had efficient traditional methods of mediating and resolving conflicts.

However, those methods have either not been exploited to address the surging conflicts or they have proved ineffective in curbing them. This paper interrogates the trajectory of conflicts in north-central Nigeria especially those between the Tiv and their neighbors, and underscores how the Tiv people resolved conflicts in former times. It stresses the factors responsible for the continuation of conflicts in the north-central zone and proffers alternatives for facilitating peaceful coexistence in the region[7].

Violence in these regions relate to ethnicity, religion, disputes over ownership of land, chieftaincy tussle, political authority and fears of domination and marginalization.

There are recent conflicts in Anambra, Ebonyi and other parts of Igboland to mention a few. In Anambra State, there are currently violent conflicts in Umuchukwu (Nkerehi), 2012; Ogbunka and Owerre-Ezukala, 2012; Akpu and Ndiokpaleke as well as Obosi crisis 2012. Communal crisis have gradually become an endemic in Anambra State and it seems all efforts to resolve them have remained elusive. It would seem as if virtually all the over 170 communities in the state are swimming in one form of hostility or the other although some are still in their embryonic stage while others have become rather hydra-headed and more pronounced[8].

The nation on Sunday's investigation reveals that the bone of contention includes land disputes, scramble for leadership and renaming of ancestral communities, amongst others. From Abakaliki, Obinna gives a chilling account of the many communal wars in Ebonyi State since this year[8]. The dawn of December 31, 2011, came to the Ezillo community in Ebonyi State with a full dose of bitterness as some blood thirsty assailants invaded the village. By the time the killers departed, many souls and properties had been wasted. So, as the rest of the world celebrated the birth of 2012 with shouts of joy on January 1, Ezillo community mourned. The worst affected communities in the state include Ezillo in Ishielu Local Government Area, Inyimagu and the Akpo-Amaka in Ikwo Local Government Area.

Africa just like other societies was developing at their own pace with well established mechanisms of managing conflicts before the colonial masters came and distorted everything and sewed their own western adjudication system that are alien to Africans. Africans had their ways of preventing conflicts, peacebuilding, conflicts monitoring, peace education and confidence building[9]. These were destroyed or rendered ineffective by colonialism. The crux of this study is to compare the traditional mechanisms of managing and resolving conflicts in Tiv, North Central and Igbo of South East Nigeria with the hope of finding a lasting peace in these communities.

Statement of the Problem

The trend of conflicts spreading through Nigeria in recent years has intensified since 1999, leaving hundreds of people dead, maimed and thousands displaced or sent into exile to neighbouring villages.

The cause of the incessant conflict among communities in both Tiv land and Igbo land is not other thing than abject poverty, youth unemployment and corruption in the leadership of these places. It is these that gave rise militants and kidnapping in these geopolitical zones. There is hunger and unemployment in the land and man must *wack* (eat). When people are hungry and have not means of livelihood, there is every possibility that they will anything possible to survive and that is some of the reasons these youths got involved in militancy to fight the society that pushed them into this poverty and unemployment. It is these

that led to the forming of militia groups and the forming of these militia groups gave rise to the use of Small Arms and light Weapons (SALWs) which increased the scale and lethality, the degree of intensity, casualties, and the extent of livelihood and wider developmental impacts. These militia groups caused human rights violations, extort money, seize food and other resources from the people and fuel further conflicts. Women and girls were raped and some abducted.

The situation in Anambra State is repeated in almost all the states of the federation. "Ebonyi Communal blood-baths" was the caption of an article in the nation on Sunday, March 11, 2012. The article brought to light the crisis in many communities of Ebonyi State since January 1, 2012. The worst affected communities in the state include Ezillo in Ishielu Local Government Area, Inyimagu and the Akpo-Amaka in Ikwo Local Government Area. Also, in Edukwuachi Agbaja community in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi, more than 17 houses have been destroyed, properties looted, one person seriously injured and over 150 others displaced following another communal crisis that rocked the state in January 2012. Eyewitness account revealed that crisis erupted in the village when the community demanded for a portion of land belonging to the Nwaobegu family for the construction of the community secondary school, which the family objected[8].

There have been debates and controversies over the most appropriate mechanisms for resolving conflicts in Africa. Some scholars believe that the application of western methods in resolving conflicts in local communities may have some limited usefulness[10]. Others, however, believe that the use of traditional mechanisms of conflict management would be most appropriate in addressing issues that are emanating from a socio-economic and political setting that is not completely modern. Yet, others think that a successful tackling of the conflict challenges that abound in Igboland would require a new and novel thinking that would accommodate both mechanisms by according preference to one or the other where it is most suitable[11]. According to Albert[12], the rising tide and persistence of conflict and violence among African societies is an indictment on the western methods

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the hypothesis that African value systems and conflict transformation systems are a viable means of resolving African conflicts today[13]. The use of modern methods of conflict resolution, more often than not, has been resounding failures. Avruch and Black[14] see culture as "a fundamental feature of human consciousness that is constitutive of human reality". They recommended cultural analysis, which seeks to understand the significance of an event within its own cultural context. Nigeria over the years has lost thousands of people and countless properties destroyed through violent conflicts. It is only when potential and actual conflicts in the area are understood in religio-cultural contexts that they can be solved.

Since culture is not static, but changes over time and adapts to new circumstances, it is easy to combine traditional and modern approaches in peacemaking. Boege[15] rightly points out that traditional conflict resolution is targeted at problems in relatively small communities in the local context, like conflict within and between families, within and between villages or clans; and between neighbours. In the case of Mbaduku-Udam, the conflict is between neighbours, while that of Ife-Modakeke is within and between communities[16].

This study adopts the position that there is much to be learned from traditional ways of peacemaking, especially land matters that are deeply rooted in the religious culture of the various groups. A very important reason for being aware of our traditions is that we may draw lessons from them for the solution of current problems. It is obvious that the western approaches to conflict management have failed here in Nigeria in bringing back peace and people even believe that the ongoing conflicts in the country are due to these western systems of adjudication. Traditional mechanisms may not have outlived their usefulness, especially when adapted to modern reality, what need to be done is to integrate the two mechanisms to bring a lasting peace to our communities in Nigeria.

Causes of Ethnic Conflicts

Certain factors have been identified as the major causes of conflict in Africa. Some believe that in almost all the ethnic conflicts in Africa, it is the competition for scarce resources that is the common factor. Ethnic divide that once suppressed European colonial governments in Africa is still ravaging the continent today. This is because some of these colonial masters employed the strategies of 'divide and rule' to manipulate the populace and this created enmity and suspicious among Africans and this has not changed up till now (http://www.africaresource.com/essays-a-reviews/politics).

Tiv and the Igbo of Nigeria both are still suffering from colonialism and white repression, which generated hatred and conflict among different ethnic groups in Nigeria. The task of addressing these seeds of conflict planted by the British has been a complex one. The history of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria also traces back to the colonial transgressions that forced the south and north to become an entity called Nigeria in what was called the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1914. These people forced to become one entity have nothing much in common and this was the major seed of conflict that is still troubling the country today. It denied the people's basic needs of participation, equality and social well-being. Hence, poverty increased and with it, conflict over scare resources.

Causes of Conflicts in Tiv – North Central

Several theories have been used to explain the causes of conflict. The major cause of conflicts in Tiv land has always been the struggle and ownership of land. The conflicts between the Tiv and the Fulani Herdsmen have always been very serious because the Fulani herdsmen have been known to sending their cows to graze in the farmland of the Tiv people. These claimed many lives, destroyed many farmlands and rendered many homeless, with scores of natives displaced.

According to Liberty Oseni, the areas hardest hit by the renewed attack included Tiv settlements at Dooga, Kpata, Lokobi Ajimaka, Ekeae, Giza, Yogbo and Mbagwem communities. Many of the Tiv people were in the farms when the crisis erupted and that led to killing of many Tive Farmers. The Fulani herdsmen who were assisted by the Alagos residing on the border of Benue and Nasarawa States in Doma town laid siege on their villages, shooting and burning their houses and property. The destruction of the Tiv farmland by Fulani herdsmen during grazing also triggers this conflict the more[17].

Most of the Tiv-related communal crises have their origins in the British colonialization of the Tiv, especially the very poor conception which the British had about the Tiv. The Tiv-related communal crises have much to do with farmlands and the exploitation of land-related resources. The crises are therefore linked to the mode of economic production and distribution practices in the society. In the pre-colonial Tic society, land then the major means of production was community owned. Farming, hunting and fishing were collectively done and the proceeds were equitably shared. There was little surplus and therefore no exploitation. The society was egalitarian, and government was gerontocratic[18].

Pre-colonial Tiv society at its communal mode of production was therefore essentially free from land disputes. The Tiv had few intra or inter-ethnic crises in pre-colonial Nigeria. On several occasions the Tiv abandoned former farmlands, in preference for bigger and better ones. The Tiv fought fierce battles in order to acquire or retain farmland[18]. It was indeed the continuous search for more and more fertile lands that brought the Tiv into the Middle Benue Basin (MBB) about 300 years ago.

It is Makar's view that when the Tiv came and met other ethnic groups in the area such as the Ugee, Ugbe, Undir, Ukwese, Ulive, Utange and Iyon[19]. Hembe, G.N., suggest that groups like the Chamba, Jukun and Kuteb were also there at about the same time. However, the Tiv later started fighting her neighbours and took their land, and these groups painted the Tivs black before the Europeans. When the Europeans finally made contact with the Tivs with all the negative stories they have heard from non-Tivs, they hated the Tivs[4]. The Europeans later became convinced that the Tivs are bad and began seizing their land and this made the Tivs shot and killed Europeans at several places such as Agasha, Gbereve, Tiga and Arufu[20]. The Tiv also destroyed and looted European canteens at Abinsi.

Apart from the colonially induced communal crises, trouble often arose from other sources. Today, traditional formers, civil

servants, traders, urban workers are all involved in this fight to privatize what was formally communal lands. Land is seen as valuable sources not only for food cultivation but also for exploitation of aquatic and other products. Land speculation is therefore an important source of communal conflicts today.

Apart from the struggle for ownership of land and the menace of the Fulani herdsmen, population growth is another cause of conflict in Tiv land. There is too much pressure on the few cultivable land and this also cause conflicts between the people especially during the farming seasons. Land is a non renewable resource and with concentration of population growth will lead to conflict.

Another cause of conflict in Tiv land is that of indigeneship. The Jukun claim to be the original owners or the first settlers of Wukari or "indigenes". The Tiv reject this view, on the basis that they too have been living there for several generations and therefore have equal rights; they complain of being marginalized and excluded in Taraba. Both the Jukun and the Tiv are all complaining of marginalization and that they are denied of their rights in Benue and Taraba respectively. The Tiv therefore say they are fighting for equal rights which they believe they are entitled to as indigenes of Taraba state. Likewise, the Jukun minority in Benue also complain of marginalization, lack of employment opportunities, and insecurity and also fighting for equal rights in Benue State[20].

Sources of conflicts in Igbo land – South East

Like the Tiv people of North Central, a major pivotal factor in conflicts in the South East zone of Nigeria is still the ownership of land (ana). This is because of the spirituality surrounding land in the Igbo culture as expressed in the prominence of the deity, 'ana' and the importance of the yam crop. This is because land is a serious issue among the Igbo since it touches both the material and spiritual essence of Igbo ontology. Thus, land is something that is worth fighting and dying for[21].

Other sources of conflict in Igbo land apart from land include chieftaincy tussle, political differences, citing of administrative headquarters of local governments and inter-confessional differences among religious groups. Take for example, Aguleri and Umuleri, they belong to the same ethnic stock, neighbours and have the same ancestral origin (Eri) and also the same Local Government Area (Anambra East) and the same State (Anambra State). They have been living together, farming and inter-marrying long before the coming of the white man.

The major cause of the conflicts that have lasted for more than thirty (30) years is a piece of land called, 'Otuocha'. The two communities have been in court since 1920 and yet no lasting peace has been achieved until 2000 after the 1999 war that claimed many lives. It was pressure on land resulting from a combination of expropriation, monetization of land by the colonial masters, rising population density, degradation and

resurgence of pre-colonial communal competition has raised land into *primal casus belli in* rural[9].

Traditional Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution in the North Central and the South east regions of Nigeria

From our reflections on conflicts in North Central Nigeria, particularly the Tiv and their neighbors, Ife-Modakeke among others, it is clear that Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented wave of various forms of conflicts over ownership and usage of land. The vigor these conflicts have assumed in contemporary Nigeria continues to threaten the continued co-existence and habitation of the different ethnic groups that make up the country. In addition, most of the bitter territorial disputes have erupted among communities that have had strong ties that bounded them together for centuries.

Past efforts to control these conflicts through administrative and bureaucratic machinery, coupled with theories and methods crafted in Euro-American institutions, have failed to yield practical results. The fields of peace studies and conflict management reflect western intellectual traditions, world views, expectations, and the values and rationality embedded in western culture. However, this can be misleading somehow. In the context of Nigeria, according to Oguntola – Laguda: … *the processes of conflict resolution such as mediation, counseling, organizational development, conciliation, quasipolitical procedures, informal tribunals, arbitration of several types and criminal and civil justice system may not achieve the desired result*[7].

Over the centuries, West African societies have built a wealth of experience as well as specific mechanisms and institutions to prevent conflicts, peacefully resolve conflicts once they arise and work through reconciliation processes. The focus of this research has been on traditional mechanisms of managing conflict, and methods used by local communities to reduce and manage and sometimes resolve conflicts at the sub-national level. This range from family heads, the council of elders, or chiefs, religious leaders, leaders of age-grades, local courts, kinship mechanisms, compensatory processes, and healing ceremonies. As it was, the family constituted the lowest court in the traditional African system whereas the King and his council formed highest court of Appeal. They constitute what might be called 'third party intervention' in conflict resolution. In traditional thought, philosophy and religion, the third party is expected to be neutral and possess the capability to diffuse tension, listen to all sides, restore peace and put social mechanisms in place for conflict resolution.

In the same vein, Nwolise, O.B.C., posits that African traditional societies are known to hold secrets of peacemaking and peacebuilding locked in their culture formed from customs and norms before the coming of the colonial masters disrupted them. Even with modernization, these traditional institutions

still hold sway, keeping the heart of the society in harmony. Inasmuch as modern adjudication system is been practiced, traditional methods of resolving conflicts are still alive in our communities. Each people, race, or identity group in the world had (and have) their own ways of doing things especially as it concerns social control and conflict resolution. While in Europe for instance, the police are a means of crime detection, several African societies relied on oath taking, divination and blood covenant in pre-colonial times. Traditional methods of resolving conflict were geared towards restoring peace and not necessarily in punishing the offenders. Emphasis was not on punishment but on reconciliation and restoration of social harmony among the disputant in conflict. Europeans thrive on commissions of inquiries, constitution and court system of lawyers and judges, Africa used council of elders, king's court, people's assemblies, etc for dispute management and justice dispensation. We now look into some traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Nigeria using Tiv in North Central and Igbo of South East Nigeria as a study case[22].

Traditional Conflict mechanisms of the Tiv land

The north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria has experienced an overwhelming number of intra- and interethnic violent conflicts since the 1990s. This phenomenon has adversely affected stability in the zone. Astonishingly, some of these unresolved conflicts involved the Tiv, who hitherto had efficient traditional methods of mediating and resolving conflicts. However, those methods have either not been exploited to address the surging conflicts or they have proved ineffective in curbing them[23].

Traditional Tiv society is described as stateless, dispersed or non-centralized in the pre-colonial period. There was no elaborate political, religious or social hierarchy. There was the *ya* (compound) council in which the oldest male member of the family was the head, while the next political unit was the *iye-ingyor* council, which was made up of the elders of several compounds whose membership depended on close blood relations. The *Ityo* council was made up of representatives from different *iye-ingyor* groups. Some of the major cases tried by it included murder, organized communal labor, witchcraft, land disputes, siting of new markets and construction of bridges. The *Tav* council was the highest decision making body of elders in Tiv land. The council deliberated on major issues affecting the people such as warfare involving other groups, initiation into mystical forces (*akombo*) and burial ceremonies. The office of the *Tor Tiv* (paramount ruler of the Tiv people) came into existence during the colonial era. On 3 April, 1947 Makir Dzekpe was officially installed as the first Tor Tiv[24].

When any of the above institutions meets to deliberate over matters affecting them it is called *jir*. This is an assembly of neighbors and kinsmen which decides disputes from the simplest to the highest level. Bitter territorial disputes were handled by *jir ityo* and the one comprising all the segments of Tiv society, forming a court of judicature. *Jir* is held in the compound or homestead of the person who initiates it; all the elders of his lineage come as guests, to be his judges and mentors. Tiv call this sort of *jir* a "*jir* at home" or *jir* of the agnatic lineage (*jir ityo*). Lastly there is a *jir* that embraces the entire Tivland. In order to have influence in *jir*, an elder must have a good memory of genealogies, for most of the cases touch on genealogy in some way or other. He needs an extensive and sure knowledge of the principles and details of Tiv religion, magic and witchcraft. He must know all the ramifications of personal relationships within his small community, for most of these important factors are not brought out in the case, but are presumed to be known to all hearers. In a nutshell, Tiv elders use *jir* to *sor tar* (repair broken down relationships at interpersonal, community level and in handling cases involving other groups). In this regard, they act as peacemakers and they keep the community running smoothly. *Jir* among the Tiv has two main sets of components: *lôhô jir* (convening) and *ôr jir* (discussing). The latter involves hearing reports from diviners and reconciling them. At least one person or group should consult a diviner before *jir* is convened. The remainder of the *jir* involves discovering how the general situation revealed by the diviner is to be applied to the situation under discussion. In the course of the discussion ones age grade, mother's lineage *pine* (ask) questions to probe further into the case. *Jir* deals almost entirely in terms of *Mimi*, the truth of right social relations. Since much of the suspected wrong doing occurred on a mystical sphere, it could be affirmed by oath. Rituals in the *jir* include *Hamber Ifan* (blowing out the curse), *Bum swem* (taking oath using the *swem* cultic emblem), and *hembe swem* (broken *swem* to dispel evil done). Using these means, the elders could reach a decision accepted by all. There is a *Tia* (fine) in the form of tobacco, chicken, animals, or local gin shared by all. The rituals of oath taking and declaring of innocence symbolized that the elders have discussed and reached a unanimous decision thereby *sor tar* (repairing the country). Bohannan recorded five different cases resolved by *ijir*. While colonialism and Christianity weakened the traditional judicial process, elements of *jir* still exist and in the new dispensation today, there is *jir i tamen* (supreme council of all chiefs in Tivland)[9].

Oguntomisin, G. O. (2004), among the Tiv, covenant-making (*Ikur-yan*) was an important means of ensuring peaceful inter-group relations. The Tiv recognized two types of *Ikur* (covenant). The first was made between two sections of a group with a common ancestor. This did was not involve the use of blood since the groups involved already had natural blood ties. The second and a more elaborate one was made between Tiv ethnic groups and others outside theirs. This involved the mixing of the blood drawn from the veins of elders representing the groups involved in the covenant.

Successful negotiation and resolution of conflicts in Tivland depends on various factors. Previous attempts at conflict negotiation and resolution in Tivland have tended not to yield the desired results because of a lack of confidence in the process of negotiation. As part of confidence in building measures it is

therefore necessary to restore confidence in the traditional institution. The traditional institution must be honest and live above board[9].

Igbo Traditional Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution

The Igbo people, just like the Tiv of central Nigeria, had no chiefs but alter chiefs were introduced during the colonial era. Today, the institution of kingship is well established, with Igwes or Ezes providing leadership, in collaboration with kindred chiefs. Before chiefs were introduced in Tivland, the Igbo used non-centralized forms of government; Elders and the Council of Elders were the most important peacemaking and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States are the five Igbo speaking people of Nigeria. Some are found in Rivers and Delta States. It is one of the three largest ethnic groups of Nigeria's 350 ethno-linguistic groups. The main cause of conflict among the Igbo as I mentioned earlier is land, chieftaincy tussle as well as matrimonial fallouts. The Igbo did not fight total wars or pitched battles in the pre-colonial period and did not celebrate war like most other African countries. Before colonialism, the Igbo did not just jump into social control or wait for conflict to start before control; they rather had institutions for controlling the suppression of weaker person from the stronger. These institutions listed below carried out the task of peace education, peace building, confidence building, peacemaking and peace enforcement as well as conflict monitoring, prevention, management and resolution[25]. These institutions included: i. Ezi (Family), ii. Okpara (elders) man holding ancestral spear, *(alo),* and *ofo)*, iii. Umunna (clan), iv. Umuada or Umuokpu (females born in a clan), v. Amala (Council of elders), vi. Nzuko Obodo (village/town assembly), vii. Oha-na-Eze (meeting of the king and the people), viii. Ndi-isi Obodo (village heads), ix. Ndi-mmanwu (masquerade group), x. Otu-Ogbo (age grades), xi. Otu-ndi nta (hunters association), xii. Ndi chili echichi (titled men, eg Ozo title-holders), xiii. Agbara (oracles/deities).

These institutions handled conflicts at different levels in the Igbo society. However, the basic unit for teaching peace and preventing conflict was the family. The *Okpara* system did much of the conflict prevention. What the *Okpara* could not handle moved to the *Umunna,* or *Umuada,* and if necessary to the *Amala.* External agents were also used by the Igbo in managing conflicts. These were mainly elders from neighbouring villages or towns; and supernatural forces such as deities/oracles from far and near which were noted for their impartiality, and effectiveness in delivering just judgement and instant punishment, e.g. *"Ibinukpabi" (*Long *juju* of Arochukwu), *Igwekala* of Umunnoha in Owerri, *Amadioha* of Ozuzu, *Ekwensu* of Anaku, *Urashi* of Okija, *Ogwugwu Akpu,* and others[26].

There are also ritual treaties and blood covenants among the Igbo people in settling conflicts. These treaties and blood covenants are known as *inu iyi* (known as oath-taking), and *igba ndu* (bond life). This apart from the practice of oath-taking (*inu iyi or idu isi)* is *Igba-ndu* (bond life). *Igba-ndu* is the vernacular name given to bond life by Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria. This concept *Igba ndu* is a covenant between two or more individuals or a group of persons. Here the people involved in the covenant prepare a mixture with blood of each person involved in the pack and every member drinks. It goes to mean that none of these people should not harm each other or see anything that harm any member of such group and allow such to happen[27]. This is one of the integral part of Igbo judicial and conflict management processes and a very effective means of achieving reconciliation between individuals and groups whose relationships had suffered deep and severe strain. Anybody the violates or breaches the terms of igba ndu, which are clearly spelt out during the process, attracts mystical retribution and strong condemnation from members of the community[27].

The Igbo people are predominantly associated with the *Igba-ndu*, but other ethnic groups like Tiv have similar thing but different processes. The concept of *Igba ndu* is always tied to a powerful deities or gods in such each of the communities. In Igboland, there are many deities that are involved, depending on the people concerned. Prominent deities such as, *Igwekaala, Amadioha, Ibinokpabi, Ahiajioku* etc, are some of the deities called upon to witness such covenants[27]. The above mentioned deities are the names given to them by their communities. Apart from the above deities, there are other powerful deities in Igboland that are involved in *Igba ndu* covenants in different communities. In my own town, Oraukwu in Idemili-North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria, we have many minor deities. Examples are, *Nwocha, Idemobi, Nvovo* to mention these few. *Nwocha* is the most powerful of them all. *Nwocha* Oraukwu is female deity protects our people in the olden days from enemies invasion. *Igba ndu* are not only done with the deities and none Christians. Christians also are involved in *Igba ndu*, but with the deities do theirs in their churches and the Reverend Fathers and Pastors with Bible.

Those taking part in the pack normally pronounce punishments which the deities are to exercise on them while swearing. This covenant of *Igba ndu* removes fear from individuals in their dealing with others because trust is now built amongst those that participated in the covenants. In the process of *Igba ndu*, both the ancestors are called upon to be part and parcel of the pack. This is why the covenants take place in the grove since it is believed that the supernatural and ancestors are present in the process of the covenants.

To achieve this elders from both parties met, killed a goat or cow, mixed the meat with blood got from their (elders) veins, cooked the meat and ate. A tree is planted for remembering the event. This blood covenant imposed on each participated member the obligation of peaceful settlement of all disputes, and avoidance of war and bloodshed on the two parties in future.

Conclusion

Conflict is indeed an inevitable aspect of human existence. However, in Nigeria, the age-old animosities between the various ethnic groups arising from conflicts over ownership and control of land appear to have been exacerbated by the ineffectual nature of the Land Use Act of 1979 in the rural areas. While the Act provides that the Governor holds all land in the state in trust for the people, the reality is that traditional forms of ownership are better recognized among the rural populace. Prevention is the best form of conflict management. Africa communities did not wait for conflict to develop before seeking for ways to resolve it. This was the reason for conflict monitoring and peacebuilding. Both in Tivland and Igboland, there were preventive measures and strategies put in place to prevent conflict and war.

In trying to resolve land disputes that are rooted in the religious history like Maduku-Udam, Ife, and Modakeke, among others that are more localized, traditional peacemaking and conflict management are essential ingredients. Blood covenants bonded the groups involved in peaceful co-existence. The resultant obligations compelled one to settle disputes by peaceful negotiations and not by bloodshed. The Igbo just like the Tiv seem to have a similar blood covenants – *Iko mmee* in Igboland and *Ikur-yan* in Tivland. These blood covenants had shown in the past their portents in bringing sustainable peace to these two geopolitical zones in the past.

It is therefore urgently required that traditional education should be restructured to carry the younger generation along in knowing their past, and the happiness in the traditional methods of conflict resolution. I think it high time we go back to our traditional methods of resolving conflict in Nigeria because I believe that they are more effective than the western methods that do not bring lasting peace.

Recommendations: i. Firstly, the traditional conflict methods of these two ethnic groups as well as other groups in Nigeria should be revived. For sustainable peace to be achieved in Nigeria, we should go back to our traditional methods and if possible integrate them with that of modern methods in order to achieve social harmony have a lasting peace. ii. Religious leaders and fanatics should try and separate fetish from traditional ways of doing things. Colonial masters came with their Christian religion that saw everything African as fetish and things to be abolished. Our traditional methods of conflict resolution are not fetish but the traditional of the people of Africa and should be encouraged so that peace will once again reign amongst our people. iii. The federal government of Nigeria should as a matter of urgency do away with this issue of indigeneship in the country. This is the main cause of the conflict between Tiv and Jukun – who settled first. This is the same problem afflicting many ethnic groups in the country. Place of birth should rather be used instead of State of origin in Nigeria so that indigeneship will die a natural death in Nigeria if we are to remain one. iv. The Federal Government should preach oneness in the country and not which geopolitical zones people come from. Awareness campaign should be carried out to spread the news communalities rather than differences between ethnic groups. Also the issue of Fulani herdsmen should be addressed both in the North central and the South-east. Ranches should be built by the owners of these cattle and not allow them to graze in peoples' farmlands. Nigeria should also see that the borders are properly manned because it has been noticed that our country's borders are porous and natives of bordering countries come in at will and rain havoc in Nigeria. It has been proved that some of these herdsmen are not Nigerians but aliens from neighbouring countries. This was said by the Minister of State for Agriculture, Heineken Lokpobiri, during a public hearing on the recent attacks by herdsmen in the country at the National Assembly in Abuja, declared that the marauding herdsmen are not Nigerians. Those arrested cannot speak Fulani or any other Nigerian language. v. State governments should have the political will to implement findings of previous Commissions of Inquiry of Inquiry, control ethnic militias and the spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). The proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria calls for urgent attention given its destabilizing effects on the security of the nation as a whole.

References

1. Wallestein (2002). Understanding Conflict Resolution. Sage, London.

2. Chaplin J.P. (1979). Dictionary of Psychology. Dell Publishing, New York.

3. Wilson and Hanna M.S. (1990). Groups in Conflict: Leadership and Participation in Small Groups. McGraw College, New York.

4. Moti U.G. (2010). An Examination of the Effect of the Tiv-Junkun Conflict of Central Nigeria on Development. *Alternative Perspectives in the humanities and Social Sciences,* JAPSS Press, (26-38).

5. Isa M.I. (2001). The State and Institutional responses to Ethnic conflict in Nigeria: The case of Jukun/Chamba and Kuteb communal conflicts of Takun Local Government, Taraba State. Africa at crossroads: complex political emergencies in the 21st century, UNESCO/ENA.

6. Utsaha J.A.P.B and Stevina (2007). The Dynamics of Conflict Management in West Africa: The case of Violent Conflict among the Tiv people of the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. Proceedings of the Academy of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 12(1), Jacksonville.

7. Aluaigba M.T. (2011). Nigeria: Exploiting the Tiv Traditional Methods Of Conflict Resolution In North-Central Nigeria. *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review*, 1(2), 74-103.

8. The Nation (2012). The Nation on SUNDAY, March 11, 2012. The Nation, Ney work.

9. Nwolise O.B.C. (2004). Traditional Approaches to Conflict Resolution Among the Igbo People of Nigeria: Reinforcing the Need for Africa to Rediscover its Roots. *AMANI Journal of African Peace*, 1(1).

10. Danjibo N.D. (2006). Traditional Mechanisms of Managing Conflicts in Africa: The Role of Mgilo Institutions Among Lelna of Zululand in North Western Nigeria. *Journal of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice,* 1, Ibadan. Stirling-Horden Publishers.

11. Akinwale A. and Olarinde N. (2010). Integrating Traditional Conflict Management Strategies in Nigeria. Dynamics of Peace Processes, Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, llorin.

12. Albert Olawale I. (2001). New Directions in the Management of Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Insights from the Activities of AAPW. Community Conflicts in Nigeria, Management, Resolution.

13. Brock-Utne B. (2001). Indigenous Conflict Resolution in Africa. Weekend Seminar on Indigenous Solutions to Conflicts, University of Oslo, Institute of Educational Research, 23-24.

14. Avruch K. and Black P.W. (2010). Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Settings: Problems and prospects. http://www .beyondintractability.org/ articlesummary//10033/Accessed 30/5/2010.

15. Boege Volker (2006). Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation- Potentials and Limits. www.berghof-handbook.net, Berghof Research Centre for conflict Management, First Launch Jul.

16. Gbenda J.S. (2002). Time and Space in Tiv Traditional Eschatology. *Journal of Oriental and African Studies,* 116.

17. Oseni Liberty (2016). Earth Rights Article. Earth Rights Institute, www.http://earthrights.net., 12/07/2016.

18. Hembe G.N. (1995). The Nv Farmere as key to the food Basket Status of the Benue State. Benue State: The land of Great Potential, Calabar, Rapid Educational Publishers.

19. Makar T. (1994). History of Political Change among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Enugu, Forth Dimension Publishers.

20. Ibeanu, Okechukwu (2001). Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict in Anambra State. University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

21. Oguntola-Laguda, D. (2006). The Role of Traditional Rulers and Religious Leaders in Conflict Management in Nigeria. *the Practice of Religion in Nigeria,* Decency Printers, Ilorin.

22. Luga, A. A. and Tortema, J. K. (1991). Tor Tiv: a Brief Background of the Institution. Sato Press, Makurdi.

23. Bohannan, P. (1957). Justice and Judgement Among the Tiv. University Press, Oxford, London.

24. Toryina, Ayati Varvar (2002). Conflict Negotiation and resolution: The way out of Communal Crises in Tiv land. Communal Relations: Conflicts and Crisis Management Strategy, Aboki Publishers, Makurdi, Benue State.

25. Ekejiuba (1971). Igba Ndu: An Igbo Mechanism of Social Control and Adjustment. *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies*, 7(1), 9-24.

26. Onwuzuruigbo, Ifeanyi (2011). Old Wine in New Bottles: Iko Mmee and the Management of Conflicts in Aguleri and Umuleri, Southeastern Nigeria. African and Asian Studies, Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

27. Alloysius, Duru (2009). Igba Ndu In Igboland Igba Ndu, Igbo Land., www.ngrguardiannews.com/Arts/Article01/ Indexn2_Html, Norwegian Refugee Council, (NRC) 2005.