

**Traditional Method and Conflict Resolution  
Mechanisms in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria**

Ayotunde Michael OYETUNBI

Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

oyetunmibiayotunde@gmail.com

and

Adegboyega Adedolapo OLA

Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Gboyegaola2016@gmail.com

**Abstract**

Conflicts have always been part of human societies. As there is interaction among human being, there are bound to be disagreement as well, due to various conflicting interest among individuals and society at large. For example, disputing issues among families in Ado-Ekiti are majorly interpersonal conflict. The study adopted a qualitative research approach involving a descriptive survey design. A purposive sampling of 15 respondents were interviewed among the three Ado-Ekiti traditional group. The study examined conflicting issues with the family in Ado-Ekiti. It also explored the mechanism used to resolve the crises to the satisfaction of the warring parties. The study posited that conflicts in the family originate from source of income, infidelity, interference

from in-laws and relations, communication gap among others.

**Keywords:** Peace, Conflict Resolution, Traditional Method, Society

### **Introduction**

Prior to expansionism, most African social orders were living collectively and sorted out along family, innate, ethnic and village lines (Bello and Olutola, 2016). Compromise by older folks depends on social and social qualities, standards, convictions and procedures that are comprehended and acknowledged by the network (Ademowo and Balogun, 2014). Conflict is an important portion of human presence and a characteristic piece of our day by day lives (Osei-Hwedi and Rankopo, 2012). Conflicts that take within a society may be the result of several factors. According to Peters (2006) causes of conflict all over the world are mid-wife by unreasonable wants for political and financial focal points, covetousness, sense of self related issues and plain evil. Foul play and discriminatory dissemination of assets perpetually offer ascent to struggle circumstances. Communal living provided essential driving force for compromise and serene concurrence. Clashes and questions can possibly upset the social texture holding

society together. Basically, debates and clashes are a danger to the presence of society and are therefore should be maintained a strategic distance from. Social qualities, standards and convictions set up target dodging clashes, and guaranteeing that in the event that they emerge, they are settled agreeably. Conflict resolution is central to the survival and sustenance of a stable family system in African society at large. Tafese (2016) stated that conflict is one of the social problems in many African societies. Consequently, social problem could be regarded to as the rate at which family conflict occurs in the African society, which is increasingly alarming. Therefore, conflict resolution within the family could be resolved in a traditional method rather than focusing solely on resolving conflict through a legal procedure.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Conflict**

Conflict has its origin in the Latin word "Conflictus" meaning "struck together". Today, it is lexically taken to mean conflict, dispute, a fight or battle, debate or squabble (Enuka, 2015). Viewing conflict from a broad and elastic perspective, Nwolise (2015) observed that the term conflict is rather ambiguous. He identified two kinds of conflict according to their bases. These are conflict of interest and conflict of values. Conflict of interest stems from a situation of scarcity and want. On

the other hand, conflict of values is based on consensus concerning the normative status of social object. In addition, Agunloye (2018) characterizes strife as a battle over qualities and cases to scant status, power, assets in which the points of the adversaries are to kill, harm or take out their opponents. He further stressed that competition leads to conflict when the parties try to strengthen their own position by reducing that of others. Consequently, Ojelabi (2012) states that conflict is a phenomenon that cannot be separated from any form of interactions, being it social, economic or political. Conflict cannot take place without the involvement of two or more parties. Mutually incompatible goals lead to conflict especially in a situation devoid of coordinating or mediating mechanisms. Francis (2006) described conflict as a characteristic and unavoidable piece of human presence. He believes that rough clash isn't an inescapable and as such is an anomaly. He sees strife as the quest for incongruent interests and objectives by various parties. Violent clash is the retreat to the utilization of power and equipped viciousness in the quest for contrary and specific interests and objectives.

### **Family Related Conflicts among the Yoruba People of Ado-Ekiti**

Among the Yoruba, indigenous law gets basically from customs and conventions. Proficiency was not connected

distinctly with the composed word with verbal craftsmanship and recognition. Despite the fact that, the legitimate customs of the Yoruba were to a great extent unwritten, their protection and endurance were done through execution to make them energetic and handily comprehended. Since the customary society introduced an environment favorable for suffering execution, the Yoruba individuals inferred their wellsprings of settling from intelligence and conventional information on the progenitors which were constantly performed (Osi, 2008). In Africa, there were levels or periods of compromise, there were debate goals at the between close to home or family level, the more distant family level and town or town level (boss in board). These levels speak to the political units making up the network. The littlest unit called Idile (Nuclear family) is going by a Bale. The following unit is the Ebi, (more distant family headed by Mogaji who is the most compelling or as a rule the oldest individual in the Ebi. More distant family incorporates all individuals who have direct relations. The last level of the units is the quarter which contains a few family mixes is going by a Baale, (the head of-ward/quarter, while the head of family which incorporates the man's close group of spouse or wives and kids (Albert, 1995). Cases settled by Bale incorporate clashes among co-spouses, siblings and sisters, truants, and road battles including his kids and

his encourage youngsters or dependents (Bello and Olutola, 2016). Strife understood promptly incorporates minor clashes by chiding the difficulty creators and mollifying whoever was annoyed. Compromise advances agreement building, social extension recreations, and the re-establishment of request in the public eye.

### **Research Methodology**

This section of the study explains the research methodology and research methods adopted for this study. Fifteen interviewees were selected using a purposive sampling method. Interviews were conducted and administered respectively among the three Ado-Ekiti traditional grouping which are; OkeEwi, Odo-Ado, Oke-Ila as well as family members in Ado Ekiti metropolis, residents and natives of Ado-Ekiti to share their insights, experiences in relation to the subject matter.

The study elicits information from the participants in order answer the follow questions:

- To examine the nature and extent of family conflicts among the people of Ado-Ekiti in Southwest Nigeria,
- To know whether family conflicts resolutions mechanisms still effective and being utilized among the people of Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

- To assess family conflicts resolutions mechanisms efficient and effective in resolving family conflicts in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

Throughout the hundreds of years, West African social orders have manufactured an abundance of experience just as explicit systems and establishments to forestall clashes, calmly resolve clashes once they emerge and work through compromise forms. The focus of this study is on traditional mechanisms of managing conflict, and methods used by local communities to reduce and manage and sometimes resolve conflicts at the family level in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. The findings and discussions are based on the stated research questions

### **Objective One: Nature and Extent of Family Conflicts among the People of Ado-Ekiti**

Major factors responsible for family conflicts in Ado-Ekiti are socio-cultural factor, economic factor, religious factor, psychological factor and individual behavioural factor. In any family, irrespective of the degree of love and affection among the members, level of education of the husband and wife; conflicts, quarrels, disagreement and misunderstanding occur in-between times. In as much as two people cannot be relied upon to concur on everything consistently and since conflicts in

relationship are inevitable, learning to deal with conflict in a healthy way is crucial. According to a respondent,

We don't usually cause trouble here in this family; but when it occurs, the things that do cause the conflicts are land dispute; everybody owns his or her own land but the boundary adjustment; and this sometimes do cause dispute. Another person may want to claim someone else land and this also causes dispute (Participant 1).

Respondent two also in his assertion;

So many things can cause conflict; Different up-bringing, different ideology, reasoning, greediness search for wealth mis-conception causes conflict; lack of respect and so on. Conflicts in our Family start little by little. The first stage conflict is still hidden, later it is brought to the open and thereafter it will reach the escalating period and then to the climax. It does not just start once. (Participant 2).

From the fore going, it can be deduced that strife is a characteristic marvel in all human relationship, including family relationship. Struggle is therefore a piece of life



and frequently a piece of development and change. We can live with it, which infers finding out about it, settling on decisions and trying to change it in an innovative manner or we can live in it, and permit it to undermine objective or then again become ruinous. The increased rate at which family conflicts occur in the society makes one to wonder at the actions of the spouses, whether they take into considerations the possible consequences on their children and the society at large. Issues of contention that are not settled calmly can prompt contentions and disdain. It is entirely expected to differ with one another every once in a while. Periodic clash is a piece of family life. Anyway continuous clash can be distressing and harming to connections. Depending on the nature of the family conflict, the immediate members of the family first sit together on the issue and find out the root cause of the problem and decide on the solution to that. The value placed on children is very high among the Yoruba. It is believed that one's prosperity depends on the number of children a woman bears.

Also, the value placed on children can also be viewed spiritually, as Thomson (2010) believes that the nature of the immortality of the soul flows cyclically through the lineage and the birth of children. These are therefore two of the numerous reasons infertility was scorned in

Yoruba marriage. Hence, it is a major cause of conflict among couples.

When the husband or wife goes outside the marriage to seek sexual gratification, the other partner may refuse to consummate the marriage out of fear of contagious disease. This situation usually causes strife and loss of peace. For example, when a husband is unable to meet the sexual needs of the wife, there are bound to be conflicts, as when the husband's inability to meet her sexual needs may cause a wife to disrespect him or even cause her to seek comfort in the arms of other men. A nagging and grumbling wife who is intolerant, unforgiving, and unaccommodating can be a source of stress and conflict in the home. Most often, the conflict is resolved within the immediate family members.

### **Objective Two: Family conflicts management mechanisms still being utilized among the Indigenes of Ado Ekiti**

When dealing with dispute, the Yoruba's of Ado Ekiti are worried about reestablishing social agreement between the gatherings in strife, and this is finished by the two gatherings uncovering reality with regards to what turned out badly and who launched the question. Fundamentally, the procedure is viewed as a fact and compromise second and not a lawful court continuing.

The participants noted that to get to the underlying drivers of the debate, the older folks or boss in control guarantee that the procedure is straightforward. Participant two noted that:

*As conflict comes in this family, so we provide resolution to it, as a family head when any of these conflicts happens we first call on the elders in the family to deliberate on how to handle it, thereafter we can then call on the parties involved to hear from them after which we provide a solution to the conflict. As this family is concern, the way we settle it, will be the way the parties take it naturally they all must be happy back to their homes.  
(Participant 2)*

Similarly, Participant one noted that:

*In our family, except the elders, there are the actors who provide solution to the problem for instance, the youth have an execution groups which must have a leader. If the youth are unable to find solution to the challenges, they then claimed it to the elders whom will provide are solution to the said problem.*

According to respondent five who buttressed respondent one “in his opinion:

*There are many roles the youth under take. Youth in this our family have their member and they hold meeting too-just as the elders do. Youths in this family have roles in conflict management. Mostly the conflicts in between the youth occur frequently that the elders. And when it happens it is the youth that will disclose the problem either to their leader or to any of the giant step while managing conflict. Youth decides conflict cases among their services with the notification of the elders the Yoruba will said Omodegbon, Agba gbonlafi dale Ife. With this example, our youth in this family undertakes many responsibilities in family related conflict. (Participant 5).*

From correspondence, direction to simply having a sheltered spot to converse with one another about emotions in the family. Family compromise encourages families figure out how to be steady and deferential again. A family can be thought about, to a four-wheel truck where every one of the wheels is free-wheeling. For whatever length of time that every one of the four wheels' face front the truck moves along easily. In any case, on the off chance that one of the wheels turns itself cross approaches to the next three, we have an issue. A family in struggle need some essential family compromise abilities. These incorporate elective tuning in, self-assured proclamation and clear feeling.

Managing family struggle starts with discovering what the real issue is. The family can by heading off to an intercession administration and by discussing what the vibe is the issue. Each included relative ought to get an opportunity to discuss their sentiments and what they think may be the issue. As everybody gets an opportunity to state what is at the forefront of their thoughts, while likewise starting the recuperating procedure. This is line linewih Coker and Coker (2008) opinion that donflict resolution in Ado-Ekiti is based on the Yoruba ideas of culture (asa); convention (ise); religion (esin); character (iwa); language (ede); and confidence/conviction (igbagbo), which are all interrelated elements of Yoruba tradition.

Most of the respondents believed that conflict resolution is unique in Ado Ekiti, as participant 12 stated that:

*When conflict occurs, I have told you that we do resolve it. When a land dispute happened, I and the elders in the family will go to the farm land and see who is the lying among the two of them. We go there and see the situation of ourselves we don't sit back here and start passing judgement.*

*In this our family, we have immediate nuclear family. We have the head of the family (oloriebi), we have extended family*

*head (olori-ile) and of course we have family head (oloriebi). The heads of both the nuclear and extended family contribute conflict management in our family. The wisdom that these people do use in training the children are also worthy of consideration.(Participant 12)*

Furthermore, participant 8 stated that:

*Strife is regularly comprehended to allude to a wide scope of circumstances. It could be a discussion or a challenge; a difference, a contention, a question or a fight. It could likewise allude to a battle, a fight or showdown; a condition of agitation, unrest or bedlam. A contention could portray the inward passionate and mental condition of the person to connections inside or between various social gatherings, for example, the family, town, states, societies or even civilizations. Struggle could be comprehended as something contrary to cooperation, concordance, accord or even harmony. While clashes are damaging as they are viewed as a social*

*distortion to be evaded, contained and dispensed with, if all around oversaw, they could be solid and could reestablish typical request. (Participant 8)*

Communication for conflict management in Ado Ekiti is centered on customary laws and customs. These laws and customs relied upon the dependence on the gatherings worried to acknowledge the judgment of the individuals and the dread of the parity of nature or of the network. The negligence of either rule prompts the discipline and devastation of the individual or the network on the loose. The most reduced degree of compromise is the family. In any case, questions that are not settled at this level may go to the older folks from the all-encompassing group families. This is the most reduced degree of the standard courts and accentuates intercession forms. The two people may take an interest in the consultations.

The participants noted that the family members of the gatherings included are allowed to join take part in the consultations. The following additional comment were made:

*Here in this family even before our forefathers' elders have been regarded and so much respected. For this reason, elders here have been saddled with many responsibilities in providing resolution to family conflict: hence the elders in this family undertake a tremendous role in family conflict resolution. In our family there are records documentations of many conflicts we have resolved without any reoccurrence of the same conflict. We have recorded numerous conflicts in this family. Is it the one pertaining to land, marriage house disputes inheritance disagreements; workplace dispute to mention a few. In addition, some conflicts are sometimes difficult to manage; if we have such what we do then is to involve the deities. After the deity might have been involved the conflicting parties who have been running after each other will be happy with each other. But they may not know that the act is not ordinary.(Participant 11).*

The narrative of the participant indicates that indigenes of Ado Ekiti accept that judgment of the elders in the family and showed attitude that will improve their associations with each other. The towns comprise of various tribes or family gatherings, with every faction or family bunch headed by a senior of the family known as imoleebi.



### **Objective Three: Efficient and effective mechanisms used in resolving conflicts in Ado-Ekiti**

From the response of the participants, it was deduced that conflicts in Ado-Ekiti are managed by the traditional ruler (Ewi of Ado Ekiti) and his council of chiefs who are seen as the living agents of their precursors and accepted to have their position from the spirits of the Supreme Being or God. It is intriguing to take note of that, the immense information on custom, fantasies and the historical backdrop of the networks; and the abilities as speakers just as the social capital which the customary pioneers had as pioneers of the network, enable them to put strife to an indisputable goal.

The goals which has the essential target of moving ceaselessly from allegations and counter allegations, to alleviate hurt sentiments and to arrive at a tradeoff that may assist with improving future connections of the family as participant 7 stated that:

*It is when the family head could not provide a solution in a particular conflict that it can be referred to the Ewi's palace. (Participant 7).*

Similarly, this participant buttressed the participant above saying;

*There is always conflict in this family. But when these conflicts occur particularly on*

*land we take it to the Ewi's palace. The chiefs listened to all the interested groups and will come to a conclusion that will be pleasant to both conflicting parties. (Participant 15).*

The narrative of the participant showed that conflict could be settled through customary methodologies which were all encompassing, involving additionally social, financial, social and strict profound measurements. This is similar to the position of Brock-Utne (2001) that ordinary instruments isa remarkable quality of conventional practices such as the utilization of ceremonies, images and translations of legends to finish clashes.

Also, majority of the respondents wants this traditional conflict resolution mechanism legalized all over the country. According to the respondent 2;

*It will be great if family related traditional conflict resolution mechanism can be legalized; because as we are competent in this family in resolving family conflict so we have many other families who can handle family related conflict. Family conflict resolution is simple harmless and reliable (Participant 2).*

Conventional methodologies are very important in conflict resolution, but much attention is not shown on it.

This has created a western models of conflict resolution on the people, such as arbitration and litigation on the state. Seeking after a non-state-driven methodology will have a longharmony and agreement. Traditional approaches make conflict resolution and peace building more reliable.

As, respondentsbelieved that civilization has done more harm than good to traditional conflict resolution mechanism. Respondent three in his idea corroborated respondent two;

*Civilization has caused more harm than good, the issue we are supposed to settle amicably here in our family, some people will want to take it far to either court or any other conflict settlement organization claiming to be educated more than the others in the family, civilization has turned many families against the resolves because of civilization so many installed chiefs has caused many problems in the family which will exist from generation to generation. If a wrong person who claim to be civilized is installed the rest of the family will nerce every him because his rule will be different and when people corrected him he will never listen. Many right are list all in the name as*

*civilization, Religion such as Christianity Islam has cause more problem in providing solution. (participant 3)*

Another major issue raised by the respondents is the need to legalize traditional conflict resolution mechanisms:

*Legalization is what we need to make it generally acceptable in Nigeria. if the do-Ekiti medium of conflict management is legalized, then there will be better improvement. All the so called conflicts, challenges, problem is starts from home. And the best way start putting a stop to it from home to home. It discourages partiality, injustice, favoritism, inequality and many of these problems. (participant 4)*

It was believed that unexpressed hatred and dislike for the other party can make it impossible to settle disputes without acrimony. Fear does not create an atmosphere of love, and where there is no love, there is bound to be conflict. So, if fear exists between two feuding parties, the probability of resolving such conflict is slim. The respondents also felt that education creates a gap between two individuals who hitherto had been on the same level. This gap is a potential problem-trigger,

which if not bridged will make it impossible for the parties to subject themselves to the principle of *itunbi-nubi*. For example, couples that belongs to two different religions may also fall into incessant conflicts. If two partners are of different faiths that practice their religions differently, then reconciliation of differences might be difficult. Also, migration creates distance. If those involved in a conflict do not reside close together, the resolution of conflicts will be prolonged, as *itunbi-nubi* requires those involved to be physically present for the hearing.

In times past, it is believed that the extended family was the recognized family system, but with development, the nuclear family has replaced it. The replacement of the extended family by the nuclear family and the change from a patrilocal to bifocal system has resulted in couples not having family members to caution them when they make decisions that are contrary to their well-being.

### **Conclusion**

Conflicts in the family originate from the following sources: poverty, childlessness, infidelity, interference from in-laws and relations, communication gap. Family conflicts have been accepted on the ground that harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and co-operative relations grow out of conflict. Conflict resolution strategies

adopted by husbands and wives are not altogether effective, neither are they adequate. When members of the family members resolve a conflict through the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, mutual agreement will be achieved and individual perspectives towards the conflict might be transformed in a positive way for a longer period of time. In this manner, cooperating to determine family debates can prompt better, more grounded connections and better sentiments about oneself as well as other people. As conflict is not necessarily a negative obsessive condition that can be described as absence of co-activity and peace. But a procedure that flags a requirement for change and transformation of conflict.

## **References**

- Adeoye C.L (2005), *Asa ati Ise Yoruba*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- Agboeze, P.C. (2004). *Conflict Resolution Methods used by Nigerian Women in Settling Disputes in their homes*. Sub-Department of Social work University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Agyeman, D. K. 2008. Managing diversity and ethnic conflicts. In: *Ghana Governance in the Fourth Republic*. Agyeman-Duah, B. (Ed.), Digibooks Ltd, Tema. Pp: 77–96.

- Best, Shadrack, G. ed., (2006) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Abuja: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Boege, V. (2006). *Traditional approaches to conflict transformation: Potential and limits*. Breghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management. <http://www.berghof-handbook.nd>(Accessed on March 10, 2010).
- Dokun-Oyeshola O.P (2005), *Conflict and Context of Conflict Resolution*, Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited: Nigeria.
- Fred-Mensah, Benk. (2005) “Nugormesese: An indigenous basis of social capital in a West African Community”. *IK Notes*, No. 86, November. World Bank.
- Faleti, S.A. (2006). Theories of social conflicts. In: *Introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa: A Reader*. Best, G.S. (Ed.). Spectrum Books Ltd Ibadan. Pp: 35–60.
- Francis, D. J. (2006). Peace and conflict studies: An African overview of basic concepts. In: *Introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa: A Reader*. Best, G.S. (Ed.). Spectrum Books Ltd Ibadan. Pp: 15–35.

- Hammoned, Tooke W.D. (1975). *Command or Consensus: The Development of Transkeian Local Government*, Cape Town, pg 52.
- Idowu, W. (2005). A philosophical analysis of conflicts in Africa. In: *Perspectives on peace and conflict studies in Africa*, Olawale, I. A. (Ed.). John Archers Publishers Ltd, Ibadan. pp: 10–27.
- Isurmona V.A. (ed.) (2005). *Problems of Peacemaking and Peace Keeping. Perspective on Peace and Conflict in Africa*, Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Ltd.
- Jeong, H.-W. (2000). *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Kirby, J. P. (2006). The earth cult and the ecology of peace building in Northern Ghana. In D. KoigiwaWamwere, (2008), *Towards Genocide in Kenya*, Nairobi: MvuleAfrica Publishers.
- Miruthi, T. (2008). African indigenous and endogenous approaches to peace and conflict resolution. In D. J. Francis, *Peace and Conflict in Africa* (pp. 16-30). London: Zed Books.
- Nwankwo, Chimezie A. (2007). *Factors that Induced Stress in Nigeria Families and Its Implication to Social Work Practice*. Department of Social Work, University of Nigeria



Nsukka.

Nwolise, O. B. C (2005). Traditional modes of bargaining and conflict resolution in Africa. In: *Perspectives on peace and conflict studies in Africa*, Olawale, I. A. (Ed.). John Archers

Publishers Ltd, Ibadan. Pp: 152–168.

Okonkwo, I.N. (2007). *Non-violent conflict Resolution in our Home*. Cairo University, Cairo

Egypt. Okorochoa, N.A. (2001) *Marital Instability A case Study of Owerri Municipal*

*Council Imo State* B.Sc. Thesis, ESUT, Enugu.

Olaoba O.B (2002), *An Introduction to African Legal Culture*. Hope Publication: Nigeria.

Omotosho, M. (2004). Evaluating Conflict and Conflict Management: A Conceptual

Understanding in Africa, *Journal of International Affairs and Development*, vol.9

Osi, C. (2008). Understanding Indegenous Dispute Resolution Process and Western Alternative

Dispute Resolution: Cultivating Culturally Appropriate Methods in Lieu of Litigation.

*Cardojzo Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 10, 163-31.

Peters, Ifeanyi (2006). *Conflict Management, Prevention and Resolution*. The Institute of Medical

Research and Training, University College Hospital Ibadan.

P.J. Eze and F.U. Mbah (2004). *Social Work and Social Worth* vol.II Lifegate Publication

Enugu, Nigeria.

Roberts, F. O. N. (2004). Traditional Rulers, Governance and the Post Colonial State. In O.

Vaughan (ed.) *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Book

Craft Ltd.

Scott, M.S. (2008). *Conflict Resolution Skills for healthy Relationships*. The Counselling and

Mental health centre at the University of Texas at Austin.

The Shepherd Newspaper (2003). A monthly Newspaper published by the social communications commission of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka.

Warah, R. (Ed) (2008). *Missionaries, mercenaries and misfits*, Central Milton Keynes: House UK

Ltd.

Waruta, D.W. (2005). "Marriage and family in contemporary African society: challenges in

pastoral counseling" In Waruta, D.W. and Kinoti, H, W. (Eds.).

Zartman W.I (eds.) (2000), *Traditional Cures of Modern Conflicts: African Conflict "Medicine*.

Lynne Reinner Publisher: London.