



Traditional Institutions and Conflict Resolution Strategies in Nigerian Local Governance

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Abstract

This study investigates conflict resolution strategies of traditional institutions in Nigeria, with a focus on Adamawa State. The primary objective is to examine the nature, effectiveness and challenges of these institutions in promoting peace and stability. Adopting a case study design, the research relied on secondary sources of data collection and purposive sampling, subjected to rigorous qualitative analysis. Anchored on mediatory theory, the study explores the role of indigenous institutions in fostering dialogue, mediation, and community-based decision-making. Findings reveal that these mechanisms remain vital for addressing local disputes and sustaining social cohesion. However, their effectiveness is increasingly constrained by political interference, diminishing cultural authority, and the dominance of modern governance systems. The research concludes that while traditional structures continue to play an indispensable role in conflict resolution in Adamawa State, their legitimacy and reach can be strengthened through systematic collaboration with formal governance frameworks. It is recommended that government actors mainstream traditional mechanisms, foster synergy between customary and modern approaches and cultivate mutual trust. Such integration would not only safeguard cultural heritage but also advance peacebuilding processes in the region. More broadly, the findings underscore the enduring relevance of indigenous wisdom in addressing conflicts in post-colonial societies like Nigeria.

Keywords: Conflict, Governance, Resolution, Strategies, Traditional Institutions

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Introduction

The predominant consensus is that the first recognized form of human government was kingship. Monarchs in contemporary Africa are designated as traditional rulers in two distinct ways. Primarily, they constitute a segment of the cultural heritage of the populace, since they are sovereigns who have evolved in alignment with their legal frameworks and customs. Secondly, it is used in contrast to the modern system of governance or regulation introduced by European colonialists in Africa (Mohammed, 2006). Before colonial rule, Sultan, Emir, Obi or the Oba represented individual sovereignty of their respective territories and this was because the majority of Nigerian civilizations in the pre-colonial period operated under a monarchical form of administration, with the exception of certain cities in the Middle Belt and the eastern region of the nation (Mohammed, 2006). Before the Jihad of 1804, the Hausa in precolonial Northern Nigeria had a clearly defined local civil administration system under Habe authority. The new Fulani rulers retained a significant portion of the political framework instituted and developed by the preceding regime, even subsequent to the establishment of the caliphate and the deposition of the Habe monarchs (Abolarin, 2017). These traditional institutions have continued to play significant roles in governance and conflict resolution, especially at the local level.

Traditional institutions remain a core component of local governance and dispute handling across Nigeria's multi-ethnic landscape. These institutions operate in legal pluralism where statutory, customary and in some places sharia systems coexist. Orimaye et al (2025) opined that traditional institutions are embedded in indigenous knowledge systems that emphasize reconciliation, social harmony and community cohesion as their conflict resolution strategies are guided by cultural norms and moral authority rather than formal legal codes. This means that traditional institutions place community-based approach as priority because they are best suited for resolving interpersonal and communal disputes. The resilience of these institutions can be traced to their legitimacy among local populations. This is because traditional leaders are seen as custodians of customs and mediators of social morality, their pronouncements often carry more weight than government authorities (Fatile 2010). Moreover, the accessibility and cost effectiveness of traditional institutions make them attractive alternatives to formal courts which are frequently perceived as expensive, slow and alien to the indigenous realities (Nwauche 2022).

However, the evolution of colonial to modern state structures, the rise of democratic governance and the plural legal environment have reshaped their roles, raising debates on

their relevance, effectiveness and alignment with contemporary governance principles (Adeoye, Lasisi & Benson 2023). The colonial indirect rule system redefined their powers, making them intermediaries between the colonial state and the indigenous population. Also, post independence constitutional arrangements further eroded their formal judicial powers, confining them largely to advisory and ceremonial roles (SSCR 2025). Despite these limitations, they remain active participants in local governance through councils of traditional rulers and informal dispute resolution forums that coexist with statutory institutions.

In many Nigerian communities, traditional rulers and elders handle disputes related to land, marriage, inheritance and communal boundaries. According to Orimaye et al (2025) their methods often involve mediation and arbitration sessions held in palaces, village squares or community halls where elders listen to both parties and encourage compromise. It has been observed that often times, these proceedings are public, participatory and consensus driven which in return strengthens communal ownership of outcomes. Nonetheless, there are assumptions that the effectiveness of traditional institution faces several challenges in conducting conflict resolution in contemporary Nigeria. For Fatile (2010), the growing politicization of chieftaincy institutions has compromised their neutrality, as state governments frequently appoint or depose traditional rulers based on political loyalty. In corroboration of the above, Jooji (2022) stated that sometimes the interference by state actors can compromise impartiality and turn traditional leaders into extensions of political power rather than neutral arbiters. This undermines the capacity of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to handle disputes credibly especially in politically sensitive contexts. There also exists the problem of formal enforceability as some customary rulings lack it therefore making them vulnerable to disregard in complex or disputes with high stakes. This also means that they enjoy considerable legitimacy locally (Ashiru-Badmus & Oyeboode 2025) but it does not translate into transparent governance or accountability.

In the light of the above, the study seeks to identify the conflict resolution strategies employed by traditional institutions, examine the challenges faced in the resolution process and assess the effectiveness of these strategies within the framework of Nigeria's local governance system using Adamawa as the case study.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the conflict resolution strategies employed by traditional institutions in Adamawa State?
- ii. What are the challenges faced by traditional institutions in resolving conflicts in Adamawa State?
- iii. How effective and community acceptance-base is traditional institutions' conflict resolution strategies in Adamawa state?

Operational Definition of Term

Traditional Institutions

Traditional institutions are the most organized, well-structured institutions that exist, especially in rural areas. They are the purveyors of traditional ways of solving societal problems, conflicts, and disparities. In conflict resolution, traditional institutions play an essential role among different societies of the world. They are established institutions in every society to regulate the behavior of the members. Traditional institutions, as locally defined entities, are the best informants as far as local rules and norms are concerned. They are the institutions trained and respected to settle disputes that arise in any institution or community far better than any outside formal mechanism. These traditional mechanisms have helped to ensure social control in communities and have largely contributed to peace and security in society.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. It's about having an open dialogue, listening to others and being able to empathize with varying points of view to find common ground. The aim is to have everyone win, encourage harmony and enjoy positive relation. Mediation, conciliation or compromise are often used to promote understanding and harmony among the parties involved. Skilled conflict resolution they argue is not only able to address the immediate issue but can reduce the likelihood of future conflict by creating trust and enhancing communication. Patience, emotional intelligence and willingness to work together to make sure all have voiced their opinions and have been respected. By using conflicts as opportunities for growth, people and businesses can build more effective and healthier organizations and communities where differences are resolved nonviolently.

Scope of Study

The study focuses on the conflict resolution strategies employed by traditional institutions in Adamawa state between 2015 and 2024. The chosen timeframe is deliberate as it coincides with the peak of Boko Haram insurgent activities in Northern Nigeria, during which Adamawa state experienced widespread displacements, killings and destruction of property. Also, curfews were imposed, which further aggravated family and communal conflicts due to limited movements in those places. In this period, both formal and informal institutions were compelled to play crucial roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Furthermore, the timeframe aligns with significant political transitions and shifts in governance and security policies in Nigeria which had direct implications for grassroots mechanisms of peace and local conflict management.

Methodology

This study adopted a case study research design, which allowed for an in-depth examination of traditional institutions and their conflict resolution strategies in Adamawa State. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten (10) key respondents drawn purposively from among high-profile members of the state's traditional institutions who possess substantial knowledge of local governance and peacebuilding. Secondary data were obtained from relevant books, journals, reports, and credible online sources to complement and validate the primary findings. The purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that only individuals with direct experience and expertise were selected. Data collected through interviews were analysed using content analysis, enabling the researcher to systematically interpret and derive meaning from the respondents' narratives and other qualitative materials. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, challenges, and effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area.

Theoretical Framework

This research study adopted Johan Galtung's theory of Mediator theory of 1996. Mediator Theory is a theory in the fields of peace and conflict studies that presents mediation as the most powerful and effective way to transform deep-rooted, intractable conflicts. It stresses

the importance of going beyond managing or resolving shallow disputes over scarce resources to the deeper interests and needs driving the conflict (Brummans et al., 2022). Applying mediation theory thus highlights both the strengths and inherent problems of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms in Adamawa. The theory explains the effectiveness of these institutions at the local level through their culturally resonant neutrality, skilled communication management, attention to underlying interests and relationships and robust social enforcement of outcomes (Stulberg, 2021; Noll, 2001). However, the theory also provides a lens for critically exploring their limitations. Questions emerge about the real neutrality of mediators embedded in hierarchical social institutions, especially in contexts of power imbalances tied to gender, age, or minority status (Krüggeler, 2015). The boundary between social pressure ensuring participation and coercion may be narrow. Furthermore, mediation theory helps frame questions about the scalability of these interest- and relationship-based approaches to more complex modern conflicts involving large-scale violence, political actors or cross-community resource disputes (McCorkle & Reese, 2022). It also draws attention to possible tensions between customary dispute-resolution outcomes and universal human-rights standards, particularly with respect to vulnerable groups (Stulberg, 2021). Ultimately, mediation theory reveals that the traditional institutions in Adamawa are not archaic but sophisticated, culturally adapted mediation systems vital to sustaining social cohesion and whose relevance endures because they fulfil core mediation functions in their specific governance and cultural context.

Structure of the Traditional Institutions in Adamawa State

The formal aspect of traditional institutions in Adamawa comprises several layers of political organization. The first layer is the village square, a segmented society. This is followed by the ward council and the Local Council Development Area council. The informal structure of the traditional institutions revolves around different warfare/traditional associations and constructive youth movements (Muchaku, 2020). The people in this category are without portfolio but with an active role to play in society. There is also a class of people living in the urban area but holding traditional positions in their districts. The leadership structures of the hierarchy in chieftaincy of the local government area are the village ward heads; they are in charge of decision-making, security administration, and day-to-day administration. Chiefs, intermediate between district heads and village heads, administer the laws and general aspects of the community. The District Head is in charge of day-to-day development, administration, land and security.

The various leadership of the hierarchy enjoys support from their lineage or kinship group, as their selections are based on their lineage, and the societal norms and cultural heritage will not warrant any individual who is not part of the lineage to be selected to represent them. The leadership style is based on consensus and not individual choices. They must listen to the yearnings of the people they are called to serve and not that the people must serve them. The traditional institutions are male-dominated with only a few titles could be reached by women (Bishu & Headley, 2020). Women are believed to serve as merit mothers to the community and must not become members of the traditional institutions because when there is any discussion, it is believed that every father, through the mother, can participate through the husband. In relation to gender roles, males are the officials of the traditional institutions.

Adamawa State in Nigeria is known for its rich traditional institutions that play a significant role in the cultural heritage and governance of the region. The traditional institutions in Adamawa State are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the region, serving as important pillars of governance and community life. These institutions play a significant role in the maintenance of peace and order within the state, upholding traditional values and customs that have been passed down through generations. They serve as pillars of cultural preservation and governance, ensuring the continuity of age-old traditions in Adamawa State (Ribadu et al. 2021).

The traditional institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria, are widely respected for their significant impact on the cultural heritage and governance of the region. The traditional institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria, are widely respected for their significant impact on the cultural heritage and governance of the region. These institutions play a crucial role in preserving the traditions and values of the diverse ethnic groups in the state. Traditional institutions in Adamawa State are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the various ethnic groups residing in the region (Musa et al. 2024). These institutions play a significant role in governing the social, political and economic aspects of the communities within the state. They serve as custodians of traditions, resolving disputes, and preserving cultural heritage (Ogbanga & Bukie, 2024).

The traditional institutions in Adamawa State play a vital role in preserving the cultural heritage and maintaining social order within the community. The traditional institutions in Adamawa State play a vital role in preserving the cultural heritage and maintaining social order within the community. They are known for their unique customs and traditions that

have been passed down through generations. These institutions serve as the backbone of the community, providing guidance and leadership in times of need. The traditional institutions in Adamawa State play a crucial role in maintaining the cultural heritage and identity of the community. They uphold customs, rituals, and traditional practices that have been passed down through generations. The traditional institutions in Adamawa State play a significant role in maintaining the cultural heritage of the people. They serve as custodians of history and traditions, ensuring that they are preserved for future generations to learn from and appreciate. In the Adamawa State, traditional institutions play a vital role in upholding the rich history and cultural heritage of the region. Traditional institutions in Adamawa State are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the region, serving as pillars of community governance and cohesion (Abdullahi et al, 2022).

Data Analysis of the Strategies of Traditional Institutions in Conflict Resolution in Adamawa State

Conflict Resolution Strategies Employed by Traditional Institutions in Adamawa State

R-vii, (2025) gave the details of an elaborate conflict resolution formula that has been honed over many centuries. The first step is problem identification. This entails the complainant taking the case to the relevant traditional authority who is usually the ward head. This early reporting tends to be ad hoc, in keeping with the community's favoring of low-key starts to sometimes controversial topics. Another respondent stated that the importance of the information gathering stage is done to not only identify the issue but know the individuals are to be brought in for questioning. A few elders politely question each one separately in order to hear them out before starting any formal proceeding. This may include talking with witnesses, going to contested locations (especially in land or property disputes), and researching the history of similar past disputes. This process of investigation, he said, can take days, and even weeks, because "we don't rush into things in our culture like that, to make judgments in things like that" (R-viii, 2025).

R-i (2025) described the hearing as a Kangaroo arrangement which he was aware of was staged managed. Parties are called to appear in front of the council of elders at a neutral location, such as the village square or the headman's home. The process begins with a series of ritual formalities which includes prayers, the sharing of kola nuts and the recitation of appropriate proverbs to establish the right mood. The Kaura described how each side is then allowed an opportunity to make its case, with strict rules against interruption during testimony. Similarly, (R-iii, 2025) emphasized the doing the role of elders during the period

of deliberation, during which the old men retire to consult together, conjuring the spirits that are called in to assist in the settlement of the dispute with two of them seated on the doorstones of the house. This is where the law of custom and precedent are so critical. Elders draw upon their collective memory of previous resolutions and may cite particular proverbs or ancestral knowledge relevant to the issue. R-iv (2025) acknowledged that these discussions are generally enriched by creative new solutions that are founded in traditional concepts as understood in the context of our current situation.

According to (R-v, 2025), the announcement of the verdict whose pronouncement always goes public to confirm transparency and affirmation by the community, was narrated. The apology may offer both material redress and symbolic gestures of reconciliation. The Jakada is particularly concerned with operationalization, that is the practical stage of adhering to Healthism, a process in which elders supervise compliance and may punish for non-compliance. The follow-up ensures that the reconciliation sticks and wounds are healed.

R-x (2025) ended by explaining this is all meant to work together toward addressing issues by serving justice to aggrieved parties, rehab for offenders, repair of relationships, and reinforcement of social norms. As we have seen, the participatory nature of the process guarantees widespread acceptance of the result and its flexibility makes it possible to respond to the specific conditions of each case. The Adamawa traditional model of conflict resolution is complex as it has been developed over years, said that there is inter-sectional system of the conflict resolution, which he called multi-level tradition and Coutu's. At its heart is the principle of restorative justice which not only punishes offenders but also healing relationships and renewing harmony in the community. The process usually starts with the victim taking the matter to the Mai-Unguwa, where reporting the matter confers the first access to justice. These early-stage interventions are commonly held in an informal mediation setting where each side is encouraged to present their grievances candidly (R-ii, 2025).

In the same vein, (R-iii, 2025) explained the function of "Majalisar Dattawa" the councils of elders, which are the grassroots foundation of the traditional judiciary in the state. These are groups of elders who are well connected in the community and who possess an in-depth understanding of traditional law. They use a mix of mediation, arbitration and reconciliation ceremonies. An unusual feature is the adaptation of proverbs and tales to moral ends, sometimes to emphasize the correct solution of a dispute. The concept of "Sulhu," a traditional peacemaking process that commonly contains symbolic elements such as the

exchange of kola nuts or the breaking of bread with one another is also serve as a way to demonstrate reconciliation (R-iv, 2025).

R-v (2025) explained the way these courts treat different nature of disputes. In disputes between individuals, negotiations are usually based on more conciliatory principles, whereas in conflicts over property or resources, arbitration is more formal. The Jakada also observed that alternative form of punishment involved in transactions, in which the wrong doer would be made to pay restitution to the injured party, be it in terms of livestock, farm produce and other valuables based on the scale of the offence. This system preserves detailed records of, and precedent in, settling such traditions through previous decisions. It was noted that “if it is something serious, like intra-community crisis, it would be elevated to the district head or common ruler”. Elaborate Peace Ceremonies These are usually formalized peace ceremonies that can last for days and involve performances, sharing of food and ritual exchanges (R-vii, 2025). It was also noted that women also played a “very important” role as not very much recognized as behind the scenes mediators or persons dealing with disputes, especially at the level of domestic or inter-family disputes. They are involved in informal activities initially before they mature to formal traditional institutions (R-viii, 2025).

R-ix (2025) explained how the principles of the system are kept to but remain flexible to be able to cope with modern challenges. Today’s disputes between land or resource use can be illustrative: they are a mixture of traditional knowledge and a current technical understanding. Also, (R-x, 2025) said the final step to every solution is communal ratification, where the consensus reached is publicly announced for the people to accept and comply with. 'There is a public element to this, to show to the world that this is not going to be tolerated and it is claimed back; and to reinforce social norms.

Challenges Faced by Traditional Institutions in Conflict Resolution in Adamawa State

R-iv (2025) offered nuanced account of how traditional institutions 'walk the tight rope' due to the sensitivity of most conflicts. For instance, traditional institutions use restorative and punitive dimension of farmer-herders conflict. Those conflicts, which tend to be over crop damage, grazing space or access to water, are particularly complicated since they can lead to violent conflicts. The intervention design always begins with an orientation towards mediation, in such a way that community authorities mediate and seek dialogue and the understanding of the interests of the two sectors, agriculturalists versus pastoralists.

The process of mediation involves using the old-fashioned conflict mapping. Elders begin by trying to go deeper, rather than treating only the presenting signs. For example, farmers alleged to have been driving cattle onto fields can be the result of shifts in rainfall patterns that have disrupted traditional grazing routes. The Jakada stated that there were established compensation structures in customary laws that would provide for the evaluation of crops destroyed and livestock lost. The equations take into account factors such as the growth stage of crops, the breed and age of animals, and projected market values (R-v, 2025). R-vii (2025) explained how the punishment in such cases is usually the perpetrator compensating the victim in kind, replacing crops or healthy animals that were destroyed or killed. R-viii, (2025) further said that whenever those resolutions failed or violations are repeated, the traditional institutions could then apply sanctions. They range from warnings to fines, temporary restriction of access to grazing or, in the worst of cases, social shunning. R-ix (2025) pointed out that the rejection from the society is the most severe traditional verdict used to be passed on such no-go area cases.

R-i, (2025) opined that it has a preventive element to it as local leaders develop grazing corridors and rotational schedules that ensure low levels of contact between crop control activities and herding activities during critical periods. It was further noted that such agreements are articulated through oral contracts, which are renegotiated annually in pre-season community meetings. The religious leaders, the Wali explains, are called upon to take part in this process, contributing a veneer of moral legitimacy to the agreements, pronouncing them holy and asking the faithful to live together in harmony (R-ii, 2025).

R-x (2025) described how this co-option is the foundation of the regime's legitimacy. Everyone involved has input and the solutions are public and open to scrutiny. This is in contrast to courts where findings can sometimes seem forced upon the parties rather than consented to. Crucially, as the Jakada said, in the tradition, farmer-herder relations are seen as a continuous, not a one-off engagement, and so we need to seek solutions that preserve long term coexistence and not that all blame is put on one side.

There also exists the issue of constitutional ambiguity and status of traditional institutions in Nigeria. As observed by R-vi (2025), the roles of traditional rulers are designed to be hierarchical, reflecting the layered authority that flows from village heads to district and paramount rulers. However, these roles are also interwoven, since traditional leaders often operate across multiple domains which includes cultural, political, religious, and

administrative. This overlapping nature makes their constitutional position complex and sometimes contradictory. On one hand, they are recognized as custodians of culture and agents of community cohesion; on the other hand, they lack formal constitutional powers within the modern governance framework. R-vii (2025) emphasised that consequently traditional rulers often find themselves compelled to act outside their officially defined roles for instance, intervening in political, security, or inter-communal matters not out of defiance, but out of necessity to maintain peace and stability at the grassroots. Such informal interventions, though effective in some cases, further blur the lines between customary authority and state governance, thereby reinforcing the long-standing debate on whether traditional institutions should be constitutionally entrenched or remain informal actors in local governance and conflict resolution (R-x 2025).

There is a lot of political interference these days. Sometimes, politicians try to influence the decisions of traditional rulers or use palace structures to pursue political interests as regards resolving some conflicts. This makes it difficult for us to stay neutral completely, especially during election periods or communal disputes. Once people perceive bias, it affects the legitimacy of the institution (R-iii 2025). What we have been doing is to keep open communication with government officials and emphasize that traditional councils are non-partisan. We now have regular coordination meetings between traditional rulers and local government authorities just to maintain mutual understanding and avoid crossing boundaries (R-ix 2025).

Another challenge has to do with poor documentation (R-viii 2025). The thing is that most traditional institutions still rely on oral processes. Cases are discussed, judgments are given, and everyone goes home but there is often no written record. Later, when another conflict arises, people argue about what was agreed upon before. That creates confusion and sometimes leads to new quarrels. To solve this, we have started training palace secretaries and youth volunteers on how to record cases and resolutions properly (R-x 2025). In some places, NGOs have even provided laptops and digital record books to help us keep track of conflict settlements.

Then, another serious issue is the exclusion of women and young people (R-ii 2025) in the peace process. Traditionally, only elderly men sit in the council and make decisions, but that is no longer realistic. The youth are often the ones directly involved in violent clashes, and women usually suffer most when conflict breaks out, yet they have little say. We are trying to

change that. These days, we make sure women leaders and youth representatives are invited to peace meetings. In some communities, they even have a special seat on the conflict resolution committee. We also hold separate consultation forums with them before the main sittings. It's not easy to change old traditions, but we have noticed that once everyone feels included, the decisions we reach are more accepted and lasting (R-iv 2025).

The Effectiveness of the Traditional Institution's Conflict Resolution Strategies

Traditional institutions have been very effective, especially when it comes to local and community level conflicts. People here still believe strongly in the authority of their chiefs, emirs, and elders. When a case is brought before the council of elders, both parties know that the outcome will be respected because the judgment is based on truth and fairness, not on money or influence (R-vi 2025). Unlike the courts, where cases can drag on for years, traditional rulers handle matters quickly and encourage reconciliation. The aim is not to find a winner or loser but to restore peace and relationships. That is why many people prefer to take their problems to the palace first before going to any government office (R-viii 2025). The moral and cultural respect attached to traditional authority makes their resolution binding, even without legal enforcement.

R-x (2025) described their effectiveness as situational. This depends on the nature of the conflict. For disputes like farmland boundaries, inheritance issues, or minor community disagreements, the traditional rulers are very effective because they understand the local context and history of the land or families involved. But for conflicts that involve politics or militia activities, their effectiveness is limited. This is because such conflicts go beyond cultural control and often involve external influences or security agencies (R-vii 2025). Still, they play a crucial role in calming people down and preventing violence. For example, during the periods of political tension or religious misunderstanding, the emirs and chiefs usually call meetings, preach peace, and sometimes send delegations to mediate between groups. Even if they can't resolve everything, their moral voice carries weight in restoring calm (R-iii 2025).

Traditional institutions have been effective mainly because they use methods that fit our culture. They don't just listen to complaints and pass judgment, they listen deeply, involve elders, and try to find the root cause of the problem. Most times, they use dialogue, family meetings, and oaths to ensure commitment to peace (R-vi 2025). A respondent further asserted that shortly after the insurgency period, the local chiefs went round the communities

persuading people to forgive and rebuild. They organized cleansing ceremonies and reconciliation events for displaced families. Those efforts really helped us heal emotionally and socially. What makes their method special is that they focus on repairing broken relationships and restoring community harmony. That is something the formal justice system doesn't always achieve (R-viii 2025).

Traditional institutions are still effective, but not as strong as they used to be R-vi (2025). In the past, whatever the chief said was final, but now people sometimes question their decisions or prefer to go to the police or the courts. The younger generation sees the traditional system as old-fashioned, and that is affecting its influence (R-viii 2025). Also, politics has entered the system as some traditional rulers are appointed or influenced by politicians, which affect their neutrality. Once people see that a ruler is politically aligned, they start doubting his fairness in handling disputes (R-ii 2025). Despite this, when a traditional leader is respected and upright, his intervention can settle a conflict faster than any court process. So, the system is still effective, but its power is slowly weakening because of modernization, political interference, and lack of autonomy

Conclusion

Using the traditional method in resolving conflicts has long since proved effective. Not only is it a way to promote peace, but its readiness to always contain and restrain conflicts from spiralling out of control through forgiveness. The conflict resolution strategies of the traditional institution of Adamawa State have enabled one group to recognize the importance of the other, which has consequently led them to find common grounds. The study illustrated how traditional value systems can be used to promote peace throughout the world as a means of promoting the welfare of mankind. The study observed how traditional political system of Adamawa State is based on co-existence, acknowledgment, and self-negotiation while respecting cultures. It is essential that the strengths of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are incorporated into everyday lives. becoming committed to building trust and unity among societies. It therefore recognises that ethnic harmony is essential for national cohesion.

Recommendation

- i. There should be more inclusive traditional conflict resolution practices, particularly include marginalized groups, in particular youth and women.

- ii. Members of the community should also be encouraged to undertake initiatives that give such meetings and methods education, greater initiative, self-discipline, and a sense of group responsibility for their own community.
- iii. Traditional institutions are to maintain independence and avoid external influences when resolving conflicts in communities.
- iv. Traditional institutions should be integrated into formal local governance by establishing committees with designated seats for traditional leaders so they can operate effectively, promote cultural preservation and community development.

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