# University of Gondar
## Department of Social Anthropology
### Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Cross-Cultural Perspectives Syllabus

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|---|---|
| **Program** | Social Anthropology |
| **Course Title** | Conflict Resolution in Cross-cultural Perspectives |
| **Course Code** | SoAn3102 |
| **Degree Program** | BA in Social Anthropology |
| **Module Name** | **Legal and Political Anthropology** |
| **Module Code** | SoAn-M3102 |
| **Course Chair** | Abinet Abebe, E-mail: abinetabebe7@gmail.com, |
| | Office Location: Maraki Campus, New Building, Floor 3, Office No. 023<br>Consultation Hours:  Monday (9:00-11:00 AM), Thursday (2:00-3:00 PM) |
| **Instructor** | Abinet Abebe |
| | Office Location: Building No=023<br>Consultation Hours: Monday (9:00-11:00 AM), Thursday (2:00-3:00 PM) |
| **CP** | 5 |

| **Contact Hours** | Lecture | Practical | Tutorial | HS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 48 | 0 | 0 | 87 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Lecture Days, Hours & Room** | Tu. 5 (4:00-5:00 AM), Th. 1&2 (8:00-10:00 PM)<br>Room-M003-203 |
| **Target Group** | Third Year Social anthropology students |
| **Year/Semester** | Year III, Semester II |
| **Pre-requisite** | None |
| **Status of the Course** | Core |
| **Mode of delivery** | Semester Based |
| **Course Description** | **Course Description:** The course illuminates the ordering of human societies; focuses on how societies, without court, negotiate, settle and resolve disputes, and how they bring order without the formal law enforcement mechanisms; introduces the methods and theoretical approaches employed by legal Anthropologists; discusses legal pluralism in contemporary societies; analyzes ethnographic case studies of disputes settlement/resolution mechanisms particularly of sub-Saharan African societies; encourages students to engage in actual fieldwork on the analysis of conflict  management or settlement mechanisms in the diverse cultures of Ethiopia. |
| **Course Objectives** | After the end of the course, the students will be able to:<br><br>• Find out causes of conflict in cross-cultural perspectives<br>• Describe the kind and processes of conflict resolution mechanisms<br>• Explain the differences between the Western and the traditional African conflict resolution processes<br>• Identify the different traditional dispute resolution processes<br>• Discover conflict resolution supporting by case studies<br>• Appreciate the traditional methods of conflict resolution processes |

# Schedule of Lecture Topics, Activities and Reading

| Week | LH | Conceptual Focus | Activities/tasks | Reading |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | Introduction: Conflict<br>• The Meaning of Conflict Resolution<br>• Sources of Conflict in Traditional Society | • Distributing Course Guidebook<br>• Introductory Discussion<br>• Reading assignment and Oral Reflections<br>• Peer-Led Learning Assignment (PLLA) | Olaoba. 2010.Pp. 1-5 Lamert and Myers.1999. pp.1-6 |
| 2 | 6 | Conflict and Conflict Resolution:<br>• Features of Indigenous Conflict Resolution<br>• Traditional Institutions for Conflict Resolution<br>• Principles of Conflict Resolution in African Society<br>• Nature of Conflict Prevention in African Society | • Oral Reflection on the PLLA<br>• Listen to lectures<br>• Listen to concluding remarks<br>• Reading Assignment<br>• Test I (15%) | Olaoba. 2010. Pp.7-30 |
| 3 | 6 | Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution:<br>❖ Major Strategies of conflict resolution:<br>• Negotiation<br>• Mediation<br>• Arbitration<br>• Adjudication<br>• Reconciliation | • Oral reflection to reading assignment<br>• Listen to lectures<br>• Group Assignment (Paper Work, 20%)<br>• Role Play<br>• Listen to the concluding remarks<br>• Reading Assignment | Olaoba. 2010. Pp. 36-61 |
| 4 | 6 | Indigenous Personalities in Conflict Resolution:<br>• Kings and Chiefs<br>• Ancestors<br>• Elders and Family Heads<br>• Age-Grade Association<br>• Secret Societies | • Oral reflections on the Assignments<br>• Listen to lectures<br>• Active participation in the discussions<br>• Test II (15%)<br>• Reading Assignment | Olaoba. 2010. Pp. 69-103 |
| 5 | 6 | Traditional Strategies for Peace Making and Security in African Society<br>• Employment of Extra-Judicial Methods<br>• Practice of Inter-Marriages as Peacemaking Inducement | • Oral reflections on the Assignments<br>• Listen to lectures<br>• PLL Assignment<br>• Group Assignment Due date (optional: Paper | Olaoba. 2010. Pp. 220-137 |

| | | | Work or Field work and write ups) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Enforcement of Diplomatic Relations<br>• Demonstration of Hospitable Norms and Peace Initiatives<br>• Appointment of Ambassadors as Agents of Peace | • Active participation in the discussions<br>• Listen to the concluding remarks | |
| 6 | 6 | **Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Western Methods of Conflict Resolution:**<br>• Nature of Conflict Resolution in Traditional and Western Societies<br>• Timing of Resolution | • Oral reflections on the Assignments<br>• Listen to lectures<br>• Reading Assignment | Olaoba. 2010. Pp. 143-170 Barnard and Spencer. 2002. Pp.498-501 Roberts, Simon.1994. . Pp. 961/8 |
| 7 | 6 | **Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Western Methods of Conflict Resolution:**<br>• Nature of Training Reconciliators<br>• Problems of Adaptation of Conflict Resolution Methods<br>• The Future of Conflict Resolution in African Society | • Oral reflection on reading assignment<br>• Listen to lectures<br>• Listen to the concluding remarks<br>• Reading Assignment | Olaoba. 2010. Pp. 143-170 Barnard and Spencer. 2002. Pp.498-501 Roberts, Simon.1994. Pp. 961/8 |
| 8 | 6 | Concluding Remarks, Presentation, Final Exam and Feedback sessions | | |

**Methods of Teaching and Assessment**

1) The teaching learning method is a student based, Peer-Led Collaborative Learning (PLCL) approach, and every student attending the course is expected to participate in every activity in the individual and group assignments, oral reflections and classroom discussions.
2) Reading assignment, including article review will be administered, but it will be given a head of the teaching-learning topics to strengthen the active interaction of the learners and instructor.
3) The instructor will lecture on the most significant topics of the course. Students are expected to read related materials before lecture hours so that they will be ready for discussions and participations in the classroom. In addition, gust lecture will be invited to deliver some topics, which require expertise account by people who trained in the field.
4) Students will write a scholarly paper on self-identified or instructor approved topics related to conflict resolution in cross-cultural perspectives.
5) Both individual and group assignments will be given. Students will submit their assignments by the due date. The group assignment will be followed by presentation.
6) Feedback for every activity will be given at the class immediately after administered and students should be aware that there will not be other arrangements for feedback.

### Distribution of Values and Assessments

| No. | Assessments | Values |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Test I | 15% |
| 2 | Test I | 15% |
| 3 | Group Assignment I (10%) and presentation (10%) | 20% |
| 4 | Final Exam | 50% |

## Course Policy

All students are expected to abide by the code of conduct of students throughout this course. Academic dishonesty, cheating, fabrication and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the concerned body for action.

On the one hand, the students are expected to actively participate on discussions, presentations and to ask and raise questions. Thus, the students will be active participants in the course. Your participation in class is important and you also have important things to say. Come ready to raise questions and exchanges ideas. It is totally fine to disagree with others or with the readings, as soon as disagreement is respectful in words and manners. On the other hand, they are expected to accomplish, submit or present the given assignments according to the given timetable indicated. The instructor will give the directions, if necessary, for the assignments on one week prior to their due date although they are explained at each contents of your course guidebook.

In case, student have a grade change request, he/she must inform to the instructor in particular and the department in general with an application letter within five consecutive working days. If all students (more than 85%) missed class, the instructor will skip that day's topic and students are liable to cover the portion of the course via reading assignment and presentation of it in the classroom. To do this, you can get a copy of reading materials from the instructor.

You are expected to attend class regularly. The instructor will take attendance on random days during the semester to ensure that students are coming to class. If you miss classes, your grade will be affected. If you miss more than 15% of the class attendance you will not sit for final exam. Please try to be on time for class. The instructor will not allow you enter, if you are late more than three minutes you must not disturb discussions knocking the door and go back to the library.

Cell phones must be switched off before you enter to class. So please make sure that your cell phone is turned off before you enter to the class room. You are responsible for all class announcements and changes. All issues discussed in class and assignments are part of final exam question items. Please follow the instructions indicated at each of the content of your course guidebook to complete all the assignments provided whether they are to be performed individually or in group.

The course is run in English. However, English is not the mother tongue for many of us, including the instructor. As soon as you are able to communicate difficult concepts, do not worry about your pronunciation or making mistakes, while talking in class, but you should be serious in written exam, paper work and formal presentation.

## Reference

Olaoba, O. B. 2010. African Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution. Abuja, National Open University of Nigeria.

Aiyede, Emmanuel R.(ed).2006. Introduction to Conflict Resolution Processes I. National Open University of Nigeria.

Roberts, Simon. (1994). Law and the Dispute Processes. In. Ingold, Tim.(ed.) Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Humanity, Culture and Social Life. London: Routledge

Aiyede, Emmanuel R.(ed).2006. Introduction to Conflict Resolution Processes I. National Open University of Nigeria.

_____Introduction to Conflict Resolution Processes II. National Open University of Nigeria.

Barnard, Alan and Spencer, Jonathan. (eds.). 2002. Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology. London: Routledge.

Lamert, Jonamay and Myers, Selma.1999. Fifty Activities for Conflict Resolution. Amherst, Massachusetts: HRD Press.

Roberts, Simon. (1994). Law and the Dispute Processes. In. Ingold, Tim.(ed.) Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Humanity, Culture and Social Life. London: Routledge. Pp.961-979

Rubinstein, Robert A. Collective Violence and Common Security. In. Ingold, Tim.(ed.) Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Humanity, Culture and Social Life. London: Routledge. Pp. 983-1009

Rosman, Abraham, Rubel, Paula G. and Weisgrau, Maxine. The Tapestry of Culture: An Introduction to Political Anthropology. 9[th]ed. 2009. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

## Approved By

| Abinet Abebe (Mr.) | _____ | February 21, 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| Course Conveyer | Signature | Date |
| Addisu Gedlu (Ph.D.) | _____ | February 21, 2020 |
| Head of Dept. | Signature | Date |

**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**COURSE CODE : PCR831**

**COURSE TITLE:**
**AFRICAN TRADITIONAL METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**COURSE
GUIDE**

**PCR831
AFRICAN TRADITIONAL METHODS OF CONFLICT
RESOLUTION**

| | |
|---|---|
| Course Team | Dr. O.B Olaoba (Developer/Writer) – UI |
| | Prof. Remi Anifowose (Editor) - UNILAG |
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# Introduction

PCR831 is a three unit course with a minimum duration of one semester. The course is useful to all students engaged in the study of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, which is, in vogue in contemporary International Relations. It consists of twenty five units and a course guide. The course is designed to network relationship between the Indigenous and western models of Conflict Resolution with a view to understanding the wedlock of operations and relevance to modern African societies.

This course guide is for distance learners enrolled in the M.A. Peace and Conflict Studies Programmes of the National Open University of Nigeria. This guide is one of the several resource tools available to you to help you successfully complete this course and ultimately your programme.

The course guide is a sort of road map signposting course content, the context of operation, course materials and the modalities for effective study and analysis of issues. It sets out the time elements involved in the process of studying and understanding each study unit of the course. It also gives a sense of direction and optimal attention of your Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA). It is significantly advisable or mandatory to take part in tutorial discussion which will facilitate early diagnosis of difficult issues with the tutorial facilitators at the study centre. This will enable you address all issues emanating from the discussion quite promptly, geared towards effective or practical solutions to such problems. This is to your benefit because easy comprehension of all issues is borne out of practical discussion and analysis.

In this guide you will find very useful information about this course: aims, objectives, what the course is about, what course materials you will be using; available services to support your learning; information on assignments and examination. It also offers you guidelines on how to plan your time for study; the amount of time you are likely to spend on each study unit; your tutor-marked assignments.

I strongly recommend that you go through this course guide and complete the feedback form at the end before you begin your study of the course. The feedback form must be submitted to your tutorial facilitator along with your first assignment. This guide also provides answers to several of your questions.

However, do not hesitate to contact your study centre if you have further questions. I wish you all the best in your learning experience and successful completion of this course.

## Course Aims

This course has the following aims:

i.      to introduce you to African cultural heritage
ii.     to identify the features of conflict resolution
iii.    to recognize the traditional institutions for peace making
iv.     to design strategies articulating conflict resolution models
v.       to intensify efforts towards raising African conflict resolution pattern to the summit.

## Course Objectives

There are objectives to be achieved in each study unit of the course. You should read them before studying each unit. On completion of this course you should be able to:

*       understand the triggers of conflict in African societies and their cultural derivatives and specifics,
*       demonstrate the performability and practicality of peace process and peace practice in indigenous African societies.
*       identify the dynamics of peace and harmony, and influence on cultural development and governance.
*       design case studies that will promote critical thinking and understanding of  the art of mutual relationship germane to harmonious living standard.
*       have acquired the knowlesdge of articulating and actualizing the dynamics of indigenous peace process and practice, in the context of contemporary dispensation of cultural norms and values.

## Course Materials

To complete this course, you are advised to read through this course guide to familiarize yourself with the structure of the course; read the Study Units and attempt all Self Assessment Exercises; complete and submit all assignments for the course; and consult recommended sources for further reading.

Each unit contains Self Assessment Exercises, and at points in the course you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of the course, there is a final examination. The course should take you about seventy five hours to complete. You have to draw up your own timetable and allocate time to complete each study unit in order to complete the course successfully and on time.

All the components of the course are listed and explained below.

## Study Units

There are twenty-five Study Units in this course and they are:

**Module 1      Nature and Causes of conflict in African Society**

Unit 1      Sources of Conflict in Traditional African Society
Unit 2      Features of Indigenous Conflict Resolution
Unit 3      Traditional Institutions for Conflict Resolution
Unit 4      Principles of Conflict Resolution in African Society
Unit 5      Nature of Conflict Prevention in African Society

**Module 2      African Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution**

Unit 1      Adjudication Method
Unit 2      Reconciliation Method
Unit 3      Mediation Method
Unit 4      Negotiation Method
Unit 5      Arbitration Method

**Module 3      Indigenous Personalities in Conflict Resolution**

Unit 1      Kings and Chiefs
Unit 2      Ancestors
Unit 3      Elders and Family Heads
Unit 4      Age – Grade Association
Unit 5      Secret societies

**Module 4      Traditional Strategies for Peace-Making and Security in African Society**

Unit 1      Employment of Extra-Judicial Methods
Unit 2      Practice of Inter-Marriages as Peacemaking Inducement
Unit 3      Enforcement of Diplomatic Relations
Unit 4      Demonstration of Hospitable Norms and Peace Initiatives
Unit 5      Appointment of Ambassadors as Agents of Peace

**Module 5      Western and Traditional Methods of Conflict Compared**

Unit 1      Nature of Verdict
Unit 2      Timing of Resolution
Unit 3      Nature of Training Reconciliators
Unit 4      Problems of Adaptation of Conflict Resolution Methods
Unit 5      The Future of Conflict Resolution in African Society

**Course Summary**

Module 1 foregrounds the nature of conflict and its prevalence in Traditional African societies. In Module 2, traditional mechanism of conflict resolution forms the fundamentals of discussion. Module 3 catalogues various unique personalities engaged in Conflict Resolution. Module 4 highlights strategies for articulating and enhancing peaceful relations and networking in indigenous African societies. The concluding module (i.e. Module 5) analyses points of convergence and divergence in the dynamics of conflict resolution in both traditional and western cultures. There are twenty five study units for this course. Each study unit consists of one week's work and should take you about three hours to complete. It includes specific objectives, guidance for study, reading material, and Self Assessment Exercises. Together with tutor-marked assignments, these exercises will assist you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual Study Units and of the course.

**Textbooks and References**

Your course material is the main text for this course. However, you are encouraged to consult other sources as provided for you in list of references and further reading below:

Adewoye, O. (1987). "Proverbs as vehicles of juristic thought among the Yoruba. O.A.U. Law Journal 3 (4).

Adjaye, J.F (1984). *Diplomacy and Diplomats in Nineteen Century Asante;* New York.

Argyle, W.J., (1968). "The concept of African collectivism", *Mawazo* 4 (1): 37-43.

Braimah, A (1968). "Culture and Tradition in Conflict Resolution", in Chris Garuba (ed.) *Capacity Building for Crisis Management in Africa,* Abuja: National War College.

Christensen, J.D. (1958). "The Role of Proverbs in Fante Culture", *Journal of African Society.*

Deng, F.M., and Zartman, I (eds.) (1991). *Conflict Resolution in Africa,* Washington D.C.

Ezejiofor, G (2005). *The Law of Arbitration in Nigeria,* Lagos: Longman Nigeria Plc.

Gluckman, M (1955). *Custom and Conflict in Africa,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Ojielo, M.O. (2001). *Alternative Dispute Resolution* (ADR) Lagos: Centre for Peace in Africa

Osaghae, E.E. (2000). "Applying Traditional Methods to Modern Conflict, in Zartman, I.W. (ed.) *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Priestley, J.B. (1984). *Man and Time,* London: A Star Book

Schapera, I. (1966). "Tswana Legal Maxims". Africa, 36.

Smith, R.S. (1989). *Warfare and Diplomacy in pre-colonial West Africa* (Second edition) London. James Currey.

## Assessment

There are three components of assessment for this course: Self Assessment Exercises and assignments at the end of each study unit; the Tutor-Marked Assignments; and a written examination. In doing these assignments, you are expected to use the information gathered during your study of the course. Below are detailed explanations on how to do each assignment.

## Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

There are Self Assessment Exercises spread out through your course material. You should attempt each exercise immediately after reading the section that precedes it. Possible answers to the exercises are provided at the end of the course book. However, you should check the answers ONLY AFTER you must have attempted the exercises. The exercises are for you to evaluate your learning; they are not to be submitted. There are also questions spread through each study unit. You are required to attempt these questions after you have read a study unit. Again, the questions are to help you assess your knowledge of the contents of the unit. You are not required to submit the answers for SAEs.

## Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)

There are four Tutor-Marked Assignments for this course. The assignments are designed to cover all areas treated in the course. You will be given your assignments and the dates for submission at your study centre. You are required to attempt all four Tutor-Marked

Assignments. You will be assessed on all four, but the best three performances will be used for your continuous assessment. Each assignment carries 10% and together will count for 30% of your total score for the course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutorial facilitator for formal assessment on or before the stipulated dates for submission. The work that you submit to your tutorial facilitator for assessment will count for 30% of your total course score.

**Guidelines for Writing Tutor-Marked Assignments**

1.      On the cover page of your assignment, write the course code and title, assignment number (TMA 1, TMA 2..), and date of submission, your name and matriculation number. It should look like this:
Course Code _____Course Title _____
Tutor-Marked Assignment _____Date of Submission_____
Name _____Matriculation Number _____

2.      You should endeavour to be concise and to the point in your answers. Your answer should be based on your course material, further readings and experience. However, do not copy from any of these materials. If you do, you will be penalized. Remember to give relevant examples and illustrations.

3.      Use ruled foolscap-sized paper for writing answers. Make and keep a copy of your assignments.

4.      Your answers should be hand written by you. Leave a margin of about 1.5 inches of the left side and about 5 lines before the answer to the next question for your tutorial facilitator's comments.

5.      For assignments involving laboratory reports of experiments, the following format is required for submission in addition to 1 above:

**Experiment Report Sheet**

a.      Observations. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
b.      Readings . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
c.      Diagrams. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
d.      Graphs . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ..
e.      Precautions . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
f.      Results . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
g.      Calculations . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
h.      Sources of errors. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
         Conclusions. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

6.      When you have completed each assignment, make sure that each assignment reaches your tutorial facilitator on or before the deadline. If for any reason you cannot complete your work on time, contact your study centre manager and tutorial facilitator before the assignment is due to discuss the possibility of an extension. Extensions will not be granted after the due date unless under exceptional circumstances.

## Final Examination and Grading

The final examination for PCR831 will be of three hours duration, and will carry 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the kinds of Self Assessment Exercises and questions in the Tutor-Marked Assignments which you have previously encountered. All areas of the course will be assessed. You should use the time between finishing the last unit and taking the examination to revise the entire course. You will find it useful to review your answers to Self Assessment Exercises and Tutor-Marked Assignments before the examination.

For you to be eligible to sit for the final examinations, you must have done the following:

1.      You should have submitted all the four Tutor-Marked Assignments for the course
2.      You should have registered to sit for the examination. The deadline for examination registration will be available at your study centre. Failure to submit your assignments or to register for the examination (even if you sit for the examination) means that you will not have a score for the course.

## Course Marking Scheme

The following table lays out the marks that constitute the total course score.

| Assessment | Marks |
|---|---|
| Assignments 1-5 (five submitted, but the best three of all the assignments selected) | Three assignments, marked out of 10%, totalling 30% |
| Final examination | 70% of overall course score |
| Total | 100% of course score |

## Course Overview

This table is a presentation of the course and how long it should take you to complete each study unit and the accompanying assignments.

| Unit | Title of Work | Weeks/ Activity | Assignment (End of Unit) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Course Guide | 1 | |
| **Module 1   Nature and Causes of Conflict in African Society** | | | |
| 1 | Sources of Conflict in Traditional African Society | 2 | Assignment 1 |
| 2 | Features of Indigenous Conflict Resolution | 3 | Assignment 2 |
| 3 | Traditional Institutions for Conflict Resolution | 4 | Assignment 3 |
| 4 | Principles of Conflict Resolution in African Societies | 5 | Assignment 4 |
| 5 | Nature of Conflict Prevention in African Society | 6 | TMA 1 to be submitted |
| **Module 2     African Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution** | | | |
| 1 | Adjudication Method | 7 | Assignment 1 |
| 2 | Reconciliation Method | 8 | Assignment 2 |
| 3 | Mediation Method | 9 | Assignment 3 |
| 4 | Negotiation Method | 10 | Assignment 4 |
| 5 | Arbitration Method | 11 | TMA 2 to be submitted |
| **Module 3    Indigenous Personalities in Conflict Resolution** | | | |
| 1 | Kings and Chiefs | 12 | Assignment 1 |
| 2 | Ancestors | 13 | Assignment 2 |
| 3 | Elders and Family Heads | 14 | Assignment 3 |
| 4 | Age-Grade Association | 15 | Assignment 4 |
| 5 | Secret Societies | 16 | TMA 3 to be submitted |
| **Module 4     Traditional Strategies for Peace-making and Security in African** | | | |
| 1 | Employment of Extra-Judicial Methods | 17 | Assignment 1 |
| 2 | Practice of Inter-Marriages as Peace-Making Inducement | 18 | Assignment 2 |
| 3 | Enforcement of Diplomatic Relations | 19 | Assignment 3 |
| 4 | Demonstration of Hospitable Norms and Peace Initiatives | 20 | Assignment 4 |

| 5 | Appointment of Ambassadors as Agents of Peace | 21 | TMA 4 to be submitted |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Module 5** | **Western and Traditional methods of Conflict Compared** | | |
| 1 | Nature of Verdict | 22 | Assignment 1 |
| 2 | Timing of Resolution | 23 | Assignment 2 |
| 3 | Nature of Training Reconciliators | 24 | Assignment 3 |
| 4 | Problems of Adaptation of Conflict Resolution Methods | 25 | Assignment 4 |
| 5 | The Future of Conflict Resolution in African Society | 26 | TMA 5 to be submitted |
| | Revision | 27 | |
| | Examination | 28 | |
| | **Total** | **29** | |

*Now use this overview to plan your personal timetable.

## How to Get the Most from This Course

In distance learning, the Study Units replace the university lecturer. The advantage is that you can read and work through the course materials at your pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. Just as a lecturer might give you in-class exercise, your Study Units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate times.

Each of the Study Units has common features which are designed to aid your learning. The first feature is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the unit, you should go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. Self Assessment Exercises are interspersed throughout each study unit and answers are given at the end of the course. These exercises are designed to help you recall what you have studied and to evaluate your learning by yourself. You should do each Self Assessment Exercise as you come to it in the study unit. The summary at the end of each unit also helps you to recall all the main topics discussed in the main content of each unit. There are also tutor-marked questions at the end of each unit. Working on these questions will help you to achieve the objectives of the unit and prepare you for the assignments which you will submit and the final examination.

It should take you about three hours to complete a study unit, the exercises and assignments. When you have completed the first study unit take note of how long it took you and use this information to draw up a timetable to guide your study for the rest of your course. The wide margins on the left and right side of the pages of your course book are meant for you to make notes of main ideas or key points at which you can use when revising the course. If you make use of all these features, you will significantly increase your chances of passing the course.

**Course Delivery**

As an open and distance learner, you learn through several ways. You learn when you interact with the content in your course material in the same way as a student interacts with the teacher in a conventional institution. You also learn when you are guided through the course; however you are not taught the course. Instead, your course material is your teacher, and as such you will not be able to get answers to any questions which may arise from your study of the material. It is for this reason that, in addition to the course material which you have received, the delivery of this course is supported by tutorial, facilitation, and counselling support services. Although these services are not compulsory, you are encouraged to take maximum advantage of them.

**Tutorial**

The total number of tutorial hours for this course is 8 hours.

Tutorial sessions form a part of your learning process as you have an opportunity to receive face to face contact with your tutorial facilitator and to receive answers to questions or clarifications which you may have. Also you may contact your tutorial facilitator by phone or email.

On your part, you will be expected to prepare ahead of time by studying the relevant Study Units, write your questions so as to gain maximum benefit from tutorial sessions. Information about the location and time schedule for facilitation will be available at your study centre.

Tutorial sessions are a flexible arrangement between you and your tutorial facilitator. You will need to contact your study centre to arrange the time schedule for the sessions. You will also need to obtain your tutorial facilitator's phone number and email address.

Tutorial sessions are optional however, the benefits of participating in them provide you a forum for interaction and peer group discussions which will minimize the isolation you may experience as a distance learner.

**Facilitation**

Facilitation is learning that takes place both within and outside of tutorial sessions. Your tutorial facilitator guides your learning by doing the following:

- provide answers to your questions during tutorial sessions, on phone or by email;
- coordinate group discussions;
- provide feedback on your assignments;
- pose questions to confirm learning outcomes;
- coordinate, mark and record your assignment/examination score; and monitor your progress.

The language of instruction for this course is in English. The course material is available in print or CD formats, and also on the university website.

On your part, you will be expected to prepare ahead of time by studying the relevant Study Units, write your questions so as to gain maximum benefit from facilitation.

Information about the location and time schedule for facilitation will be available at your study centre. Time of facilitation is a flexible arrangement between you and your tutorial facilitator. You should contact your tutorial facilitator if:

- you do not understand any part of the Study Units.
- you have difficulty with the Self Assessment Exercises.
- you have a question or a problem with an assignment, with your tutorial facilitator's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

**Counselling**

Counselling forms a part of your learning because it is provided to make your learning experience easier. Counselling is available to you at two levels: academic and personal counselling. Student counsellors are available at the study centre to provide guidance for personal issues that may affect your studies. Your study centre manager and tutorial facilitators can assist you with questions on academic matters such as course materials, facilitation, grades and so on. Make sure that you have the phone numbers and email addresses of your study centre and the various individuals.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, all the features of this course guide have been designed to facilitate your learning in order that you achieve the aims and objectives of the course. They include the aims and objectives, course summary, course overview, self assessment exercises and study questions. You should ensure that you make maximum use of them in your study to achieve maximum results.

## Summary

PCR831: African Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution provides you with the knowledge of the nature of conflict and its resolution in traditional African society. It is aimed at equipping you with the understanding of the practice of conflict resolution which you can demonstrate towards restoring peace to your society. Upon completing the course you should be able to explain the dynamism of conflict resolution towards development agenda, the anchors of peace and harmony and the desirability of hospitable norms and peace initiatives. You should also be able to decipher between traditional and western models of conflict resolution in African society.

I wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it both interesting and useful.

Course Code      PCR831
Course Title     African Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution


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**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

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## UNIT 1     SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY

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## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

Conflict had been prevalent in traditional African society and had often had its origin in many aspects of their cultural life. It is obvious that conflict is a natural phenomenon in human society except that the approach to its perceptiveness, nature and management varied from society to society. Even the pattern and phases of conflict vary from community to community.

In traditional African societies the understanding of conflict and its corruption was anchored on the disaffection between the humans and the supernatural. Thus, unless an ontological balance is maintained between the two parties, peace conflagration remained uncontainable. From this point, it is important to stress that conflict, from whatever perspective, is inevitable. The first party to the conflict (human being/Africans imperfect people) and the supernatural (supreme being, deities and ancestors – perfect spirit) as the other part in conflict have quite a significant role to play in dislodging whatever might be responsible for the conflict. Thus, it is established here, not just the inevitability and

phenomenology of conflict, but also that highly placed (the supernatural) and the so lowly (human beings) often had occasion for disagreement and disaffection.

Beyond the unexplainable sources of conflict (as discussed in the proceeding paragraphs) also do lay the desirability of conflict from the generational point of view. Thus, conflict derived from diverse sources in African traditional societies. These included the family, economy, chieftaincy, social and religion as well as breakdown of deplumation relations and personal annoyance over behavioural pattern.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

It is important for you to understand the background study of conflict in traditional African societies as handled in this module. Thus by the end of this unit you should be able to:

- contextualize the nature of conflict;
- articulate the capacity to probe into the origin of peace and conflicts;
- investigate the diverse sources of conflict in traditional African societies; and
- impact on the others the dynamics of indigenous conflict pattern.

## 3.0   MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1   What are Sources?

A source of a thing, concept or idea can be simply defined as the origin or genesis of it. A source signifies a reference point suggesting authoritative allusion and therefore serves as the fundamental basis of the existence of a knowledge about what is being referred. Thus, a source provides a road map or direction to the understanding of a knowledge-based subject.

In this unit you will be able to understand the application of the foregoing definition to the existence of conflict and its derivation. It is important for you to know that many sources existed about conflict in traditional African societies. You will also have the knowledge that one source of conflict is different from the other thereby leading to the conclusion that there are sources and there are sources. This will enable you decipher between the written and unwritten sources of conflict.

This unit also provides you with the fact that unwritten sources derived from oral data namely songs, pithy sayings, proverbs and maxims as

well as from arbitral proceedings. While written sources are textual – archival materials, journal article and books. It is quite significant for you to critically assess the nature of the sources where conflict situation derived in traditional African societies.

## 3.2     Sources of Conflict in Indigenous African Societies

It is significant to note from the onset that the derivatives of conflict in traditional African societies was germane to the cultural activities of the people. Hence, peace and conflict are indices of culture allied to governance and social engineering in indigenous African societies.

Conflict derived from the families level even though it has been considered as the basic unity of African political culture. The individual in the family had the right of protest showcasing annoyance over many things. This could be over property inheritance, interpersonal relations and marital situation/matter. Wade (1956:308) and Max Gluckman (1956:101-105) have demonstrated, in their works, how conflict originated from the family.

From the economic point of view, it has been found out that conflict also became inevitable in traditional African societies. This in a way justifies Coser's approach to the phenomenology of conflict even across cultural boundaries of the world, land encroachment, territorial dislocation, house sequestration, trade imbalance and non-payment of tributes or loans can be identified as the *r'ason d'etre* of conflict origination in traditional African societies. You will find out from your private reading that examples of some of these forces of economic conflict are widespread in literature.

Chieftaincy imbroglios are prevalent in African Societies. These as you will find out, have had their origin, from time immemorial, from the inevitability of competing forces to the royal throne especially when the norms and customs have been relegated to the background. This the elements of chieftaincy conflict derived from tussle to the throne, misapplication of custom and tradition and impeachment/ dethronement. Again, you will discover that literature abounds on the nature and effects of Chieftaincy conflict in African societies.

Conflict can also derive from the breakdown of diplomatic relations among various African societies. This often led to inter-communal conflict and violence. It is also evident as you will discover that invasion of territories for one reason of the other had often occasion war which Robert Smith would make us believe.

It is not in doubt that insult to the supernatural, breaking of communal taboo, breach of sacred sanctions and the defecation of shrines / sanctuaries / groves have been the derivatives of religious conflict in traditional Africa societies. Earlier on, it was indicated that the infractions of religious ethos often occasioned conflict between the Africans and their deities. The manifestation of such disaffection, and of course a anisomery, had tilted the balance of relationship and power between the sacred and the profane.

Africans cherished their personality and ethos of respect and honour. Thus, you will find out that assault on personality often generated conflict. By the same token, you will discover that breakdown of covenant and the negligence of social responsibilities were obvious ground for generating conflict, cultural norms which often occasioned social engineering, especially during the celebration of festival and other traditional ceremonies also generated conflict in traditional African societies.

## 3.3     What Functions Do Conflicts Serve?

Sources of conflict have been so significant towards understanding the nature of conflict in the society. The sources will make you understand that conflict

- existed in traditional African societies,
- derived from various sources,
- have peculiar nature,
- can be positive or negative depending on its nature,
- was inevitable in traditional African society; and
- have ways of resolving it once the source of it has been discovered.

It is equally important for you to understand that the sources often serve useful purposes as they

- dictated the direction of understanding the nature of conflict in traditional African societies,
- exposed the relationship between conflict and culture thereby revealing significant aspect of African cultural heritage; and
- induced the inevitability of developing incidental capacity for resolving conflicts.

You will also discover that the sources will afford you the opportunity to understand how to develop interest in sourcing for the triggers of conflict in traditional African societies. This also provides you with the basis of anchoring the sources of the conflict on possible solutions to

them thereby facilitating peace and enhancing social harmony in the society. Consequently, the knowledge derived from understanding the sources of conflict in traditional African society can equip you with the capacity to move the society forward. It is upon knowing the existence of a problem that you will surmount it.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      What are sources of conflict?
2.      What are the various sources of conflict in indigenous African societies?
3.      Where do the sources derive?
4.      How valuable are the sources?
5.      What do the sources reveal about African cultural heritage?
6.      Are the sources documented?
7.      What are the differences between written and unwritten sources?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Africans regarded conflict as part of life and aspect of their cultural activities, which often showcased evidence of virility, responsibility and versatility. They were quite to understand the nature and fundamentals of conflict and its impact on societal development. Conflict, therefore, is in the psyche of the Africans and its perception often exhibited to make all and sundry vulnerable to the matrices of development.

Sourcing for the data to reconstruct and document conflict in traditional societies is very desirable. This will enable you and the future generation to understand and interpret the nature and functions of the management schemes attendant on conflict in African societies. No generation gap would ever exist in this regard. Of course there are other sources of conflict known to modern Africa people. Thus, joining the two together will give you a holistic view of conflict in African societies

## 5.0    SUMMARY

You have been informed in this unit that conflict had its origin in traditional African societies, which quite obviously, made for the understanding and interpretive perception of conflict. This suggests to you, therefore that conflict was inevitable in indigenous African societies. You have noted that conflict was also peculiar to other human societies.

As a matter of fact, the unit showcased the numerous source of conflict quite identifiable in traditional African societies. It gave you the catalogue of sources of conflict as family, economy, chieftaincy matter,

social and religion as well as the breakdown of diplomatic relations. For peace to reign in the society, however, it is quite significant that we identify where there had been upsurge of its conflagration. Thus, it is evident from the unit that the sources of conflict so identified were *sine qua non* to your reconstructing and interpreting them for proper documentation.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Examine critically the sources of conflict in traditional African societies
2.    What impact do the sources of conflict have on development agenda in African society?

## 7.0    REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**Unit 2      Features of Indigenous Conflict Resolution**

**CONTENTS**

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2.0    Objectives
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        3.1    Characteristics of Indigenous Conflict Resolution
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        3.3    Problems of Employing the Features
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## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

Indigenous conflict resolution in Africa had spectacular features uncommon in the global space. The notable feature of this conflict resolution stood Africans in the vantage position of demonstrating their culture and according it a radiant splendor and flame. This was why in pre-colonial African societies, peace and harmony somehow reigned supreme and often produced unique atmosphere for peace to thrive and development became dynamic.

It is important for you to know that the features of indigenous conflict resolution in African societies included performance stance, resolvability of conflict due to the adopted methods/mechanisms, demonstration of the customs and norms, deification of the ethical framework of the society and the trust of conflict resolution was widespread throughout the society thus creating conducive environment for the facilitation of peace and the enhancement of harmony.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- understand various aspects of peace facilitation and the enhancement of harmony in the society,
- ascertain the facts of the existence of the indigenous process of resolving conflict in the present circumstances of contemporary culture,
- investigate the hitherto substance of indigenous conflict resolution in Africa; and
- understand the workability and applicability of indigenous conflict resolution in African society.

These objectives provide the enabling environment for you to decipher the uniqueness of indigenous conflict resolution in African societies from those of the western culture. Thus, it is the fundamentals of the indigenous conflict resolution are significantly emphasized for the knowledge accruing there from.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    Characteristics of Indigenous Conflict Resolution

African conflict resolution model was anchored on the dramatization of the issues involved in conflicts. The performance level of conflict resolution in African societies enabled participants in the ensuing drama to further understand and depreciate that custom and norms bequeathed to them by their ancestors. Historically, the performance as you will get to know had always been stagemanaged by notable dramatic personae, which included experience elders, priests, age – grades, chiefs and kings in African societies. The stage as set for the drama of adjudication included homes (as family court), markets (as commercial court), streets (as open court) as Palaces (as royal court). Today, the stage now includes the media houses (as public court) and colonial court of heritage (as customary courts). It is pertinent for you to understand that the performers of conflict resolution from African perspective were the likes of African judges and adjudicators, the litigants (complainants and plaintiffs) or parties to the conflict and witnesses were groomed in the tradition from where the stage language and techniques evolved.

The dramaturgical device always involved a systematic radiation of all sides (scenes) to the conflict (drama). In a sense, the party to the conflict (litigants) normally resorted to adopting flashback (mnemonic memory) with a recitation model. The asides to the conflict were stage-managed by the witnesses who adequately provided the knots of denouement for the responding schemes of the adjudicators at all level of statecraft. The level of performance by the adjudicators is triangular, focusing or viewing the parties to the conflict, witnesses (two parties) and the audience (large crowed). Interestingly, the adjudicators must not only third and enthrall the audience so as to boost their morale in the interpretive analysis of conflict resolution tradition, they also had to ginger other *dramatic personae* on the stage to comply with dramaturgical devices.

Be informed that proverbs and maxims were used in the drama of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. Among the Fante (Ghana), Yoruba (Nigeria), Lugbara (Uganda) and Barotse (Bechuanaland), from where you can give examples, the lores were

verbally dramatized to sharpen the memory of the audience thus educating them of the crucial aspects of their cultural heritage.

In the process of resolving conflict in traditional African societies, certain rules were observed by all participants in the drama of conflict resolution. The rules were tailored to equitable distribution of justice and the maintenance of law and order. Thus one of the officers involved in the conflict resolution (a character on the upper stage) was responsible for announcing to other *dramatic personae* of the commencement of the action on stage. Such announcement signaled to the participants (parties to the conflict, witnesses and audience) of the serene atmosphere which should be adhered to.

Fundamentally, an aspect of the concluding scene in the drama of conflict resolution, which will interest you, was the celebration of reconciliation among the parties to the conflict. Significantly, the characters were dance fully thrilled in the songful tune of "give a little, get a little". The regal steps, swilling mien and embracing gestures exchanged among the hitherto aggressive parties to the conflict provided funfair with a mood of pomp and pageantry at the closing session of the stage craft.

It is pertinent to emphasize the points that when properly approached with the right method, conflicts in African indigenous societies had always been resolvable. The adjudicators saw to it that truth was the fundamental ingredient of surmounting the conflict. They were also doggedly determined not to leave the scene of conflict resolution until solution had been found to the raging problem inherent in the conflict. This characteristic of the conflict resolution model in pre – colonial African societies have been succinctly appraised by Basil Davidson (1973) Omoniyi Adewoye (1977) and J.H. Dribery (1934) as well as Max Gluckman (1956) which you must address your mind to.

A lot of constitutional ethical framework and etiquette characterized conflict resolution in indigenous African societies. Humanity before the adjudicators was encouraged and reference to the unseen forces of the ancestors was enhanced at the scene of conflict resolution. It is important for you to know that the parties to the conflict were also expected to respect each others with a view to expediting action on the resolution of the conflict. In an outline, a lot of cultural education was associated with the scene of conflict resolution in traditional African society.

## 3.2     How to Understand the Features

Understanding the features of indigenous conflict resolution in traditional African societies is quite necessary for meaningful development. It is your responsibility to discern and design development agenda for your society. Studying the features of conflict resolution in the society affords you the opportunity to forge ahead and facilitate peace and enhance harmonious relationship.

The first thing for you to do towards understanding the features of conflict resolution (as of the past) is to ponder and reflect through your observation in a family meeting, elders forum and impromptu street tribunal set up. For self – generating and situational conflicts, you should develop the habit of self-investigatory pattern, inner self-fulfillment and peace of mind towards ferreting out the features.

In this modern time, there are electronic means of conflict resolution. Thus Television and Radio Programmes are now available in the society with the presentation of conflict issues and their resolution. You should familiarize yourself with these programmes by closely monitoring and watching them with a view to identifying the features of conflict resolution in them. You will discover that you will naturally be inclined to facilitating peace and understand processes of conflict resolution in cultural parlance.

You can also understand the features of conflict resolution through reading of relevant literature on African cultural heritage. Observably, series of scholarly writings exist where you can locate and collate ideas on conflict resolution. It may be true that no single literature addressed all aspects of conflict resolution and for all ethnic groupings in Africa. But it is equally true that you can randomly select from the available ones. Your careful reading and application of the knowledge contained in them will equip you for proper comprehension of conflict resolution in various African societies.

## 3.3     Problems of Employing the Features

Certain problems may deter you from completely and readily understand the basis of applying all the features of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. One of such problems is language barrier. There are many linguistic groups in Africa and whenever the modes of resolving conflict have been documented in their original language you may as a foreigner to that cultural zone find it difficult to comprehend the gift of their cultural heritage. In that regard, you will need an interpreter to assist you. Similarly, under examination condition, it may be difficult for you to memorize the thrust of the idea expressed in the original

language which necessarily lowered your enthusiasm of using them for analogy.

In practical terms, application of proverbs and maxims, for example, may be difficult for you to handle outside your original zone of operation. Not only that such proverbs and sources may not conform with modern conflicting situation such that you can not apply them out also you may find their interpretation to be difficult. The onus is on your side, however, to be selective of the proverbs and maxims that you understand best and that facilitate the purpose for which you needed them.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      What is conflict resolution?
2.      What are the characteristics of indigenous conflict resolution?
3.      What is performance stance in traditional conflict resolution?
4.      How useful are proverbs to conflict resolution in African societies?
5.      Give examples of proverbs used in conflict resolution among various groups in Africa.

## 4.0   CONCLUSION

The nature of the mechanism for resolving conflicts in indigenous African societies such a crucial point of peculiarity anchored on African cultural heritage. Such a peculiarity was informed by the popularity of the custom and norms associated with conflict resolution. No member of the society was in doubt of the manner of adjudging truthful evidence and verdict as well as the dispatch with which the adjudicators handled the conflict issues. It is also important for you to understand the point that the adjudicators were so vehement in their resoluteness to resolve any conflict brought before them. They were also very pragmatic in decision making with a view to adhering to the custom and norms laid down by their forebears.

Beside resolving the conflict, a vital aspect of the features of conflict resolution in indigenous African societies, was the education of all and sundry (present at the scene of resolution) about the cultural heritage of the society viz. respect of personalities at the scene of conflict resolution, reverence to the supernatural, cross examination of evidence and interpretation of the cultural norms towards persuading the parties to the conflict, witnesses and the audience (especially on the amount of explanation turreted with the truth of the matter).

The focus of the adjudicators, as regularly discovered, was on appraising truthful evidence. Truth, therefore, became the *sine qua non* of conflict resolution in indigenous African societies. It was only the recognition of truth which attested to the fact of honoring the invisible presence of the supernatural and evidence of showcasing mastery of the art of conflict resolution in indigenous African society. Unless you are well – groomed and versatile with the art of indigenous conflict resolution, the magnitude of the resolution was to become verbal and war could ensue. Your lack of understanding the dynamism of the process could provoke crisis for you.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

Certainly each continent of the world had its peculiar way of handling conflict. In this respect, indigenous African societies have evolved spectacular mode of conflict resolution which you have been studying in this module. It has been stressed quite relevantly that the art of conflict resolution emanated from the cultural heritage of the Africans. This art was bequeathed to them by their forebears who originated it.

Considering the features of conflict resolution ion indigenous African societies, it was also emphasized that you should understand the performance (by way of dramatization) as associated with it. No one was in doubt as to the thriving nature of the art of conflict resolution. Parities to the conflict and their witnesses as well as the audience had not only a busy time with dedicated attention but also enjoyed the dramatic devices with which the scene of conflict resolution was couched.

The unit has addressed the point that the adjudicators have also been adjudged to be the pace setters at the scene of the conflict resolution. They often sufficiently demonstrated the mastery of the art of conflict resolution to a lively degree. Indeed, they usually stage-managed the scene with a lot of reasonability. Thus, you have discovered that the characteristics of conflict resolution in indigenous African societies attest to the fact of its positive nature.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    How would a scene of typical African conflict resolution look like? Bring out all the salient issues inherent in the scene.
2.    Examine the various characteristics of traditional conflict resolution.

## 7.0    REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**UNIT 3    TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

Many traditional institutions for conflict resolution existed in African society which were instrumental to the facilitation of peace and the ennoblement of harmony. These institutions included political institutions (family and Palace), economic institutions (market), social institutions (age-grade and professional associations) and religious institutions (deities, ancestors and sanctuaries). These institutions evolved at different times and places in African societies, and they had been purposeful towards enhancing the social engineering which fostered wholesome unity in diversity across cultural boundaries. The institutions also reflected a kind of association anchored on the cultural heritage in Africa.

Traditional institutions for conflict resolution (as clearly identified above) enabled individuals in the society to understand and interpret the norms which occasioned peace and harmony and the desirability of the conducive atmosphere under which development and social orientation and mobilization took place in various Africa societies. The institutions as you will discover also allowed optimal sense of belonging to the society and the social responsibility which the individual owed the society of his/her birth. Indeed, an individual was first born into a cultural society where the context of the individual growth and development took place.

Thus, an individual of African background and nurturing environment grand up to join forces of development under the atmosphere of peace and harmony. The individual also determined to learn, as you are doing, under the various identified institutions, models of conflict resolution so

that as he/she grew up with it, it was to become a master able art for demonstration.

Traditional institutions for conflict resolution also foregrounded the constitutional framework for the workability of the peaceful customs and norms. This was why the knowledge of the institutions was almost compulsory for the individuals of African origin to study and that is why you are studying them. No African was ready to be left in the dark or isolated from the realm of development and harmonious relationship. This became the utmost psyche and enthusiasm of the Africans since the application of traditional institutions for conflict resolution have produced positive result and had enhanced mutual living.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- master the art of conflict resolution through the mirror of traditional institutions;
- know the operative models of the institution;
- interpret stages of development which the various institutions enveloped; and
- imbibe the principles governing the operation of the institutions under specific situation.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1    What are Institutions?

Institutions are set up or establishment or organisation for achieving some goals of development. They may refer to personalities or infrastructures upon which the development of the society are anchored. In this unit the discussion on institutions of conflict resolution in traditional African societies were instruments so fundamentally based on tilting the orbit of development. The institutions so discussed were personality based and infrastructurally tuned. You will find them useful and instructive as you study and understand the unit discussion.

### 3.2    Traditional Institutions for Conflict Resolution

In this unit you will understand that African cultural heritage is very rich in indigenous institutions which governed the entire life of the people thus enhancing mutual understanding and unity of purpose. Africans, therefore, had long evolved institutions anchored on conflict resolution and governance of the society. These institutions were characteristically modeled along the line of public will and associational trust especially

when they have been coached in truthful operation and pragmatic dynamism. These institutions included the family, palace, market, numerous associations and supernatural influences. Experience was, however, aligned with the understanding, interpretation and application of the institutions towards the facilitation of peace and the enhancement of harmony in an enabling environment.

Obviously, the family as a traditional institution existed in African society as a practical model of understanding familial projection and unification of goals and forces desirable of positive outcomes. Eked out from a lineage, the family system in Africa exhibited convivial unity so much at a closed range that mutuality was enhanced. Living in expansive compound with identifiable reasonable responsibilities, the family system in Africa, as you will find out, typified the notion of keeping constant touch to ascertain positive knowledge of welfare and enthusiasm for virtuous wisdom associated with mutuality. Hence, the idea of being your brother's keeper was quite inherent in the family system. Such a mutually exclusive trust often enhanced not only equitable distribution of justice but also collective responsibility, for a common destiny.

Conflicts of diverse nature (especially civic one's) were resolved at the family level (in the family compound). Such conflicts include, petty quarrels between co-wives, among the polygamous children, between wives and husbands and the like. The conflicts were resolved based on the bond of unity and consanguinity. Those saddled with the responsibilities of resolving the conflicts at the family level were the family heads and elders whose roles you will find discussed so elaborately in Module 3.

Family unit in Africa represented a vibrant political institutions which was the bedrock of governance. The highest point of the political institution was the palace – a royal institution with legitimate authority and a symbol of state formation. The palace represented the splendour of cultural heritage in pre-colonial African societies. The king had the sovereign power to put a hold and a zeal on the issues of conflict. This was done along with the assistance of his chiefs, who met in the palace, to resolve conflicts especially of criminal tendencies. The roles of these kings and chiefs are issues of discussion in the third Module. Mere identification of this palace institution with conflict resolution model suggests the significant bearing with the enhancement of the atmosphere for development.

In this unit you will discover that the success of the state apparatus for development harped on the economic propensities of the society. Market institution in African society had enabled proper legitimization of

sovereignty. This market institution, however, gave rise to some agents (within the market system) of peace and harmony. In other words, market administrators and leaders (with diverse names across cultural boundaries) facilitated peace and ennobled equitable distribution of justice – the preservers of harmonious tradition in pre-colonial African societies. Selling and buying was not only done in the market, the mechanism for maintaining conducive atmosphere for bargaining was put in place. Hence, there were commodity associations helped by their executive overlords. Their roles were quite noticeable and appreciated not only by African kings but also by the populace.

Social institutions germane to conflict resolution in indigenous African societies have been relevant aspect of cultural heritage. Social conflicts were often surmounted through the machinery of social institutions. These institutions included age-grade association, professional associations (such as the guile of hunters etc.) and secret clubs (or societies). The legitimate power and social responsibilities of the identified strata of the society rested on the recognition accorded them by members of the society. Indeed, their prerogatives of position engineered the positive results which they normally propelled and orchestrated. They also had the wisdom and diplomacy of tilting the magnitude of conflicts to manageable and controllable limits. In their own sphere of influence, peace and harmony reigned supreme. Punishment was, however, meted out to offenders as corrective measure to discourage a wishful act that might derail collective responsibility for positive results in the development process. The roles of the age grade association and secret societies towards the facilitation of peace and the institutionalization of harmony in the – colonial African societies are subjects of discussion for you to say in Module 3.

    Traditional religion played tremendous role in conflict resolution across cultural boundaries in Africa. The religion, which brought about sets of belief, not only explain the influence of the supernatural but also showcased religious sanctuaries such as shrines and groves the venue that turned out to be the spots of many extra-judicial activities. Tradition religion promoted truth, equity and justice which were the primers of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. The duties and ancestors were always present at the scene of conflict resolution. This aspect will be elaborately treated for you in module 3. Here it is just sufficient to state the fact that the foregoing religious institutions were so well recognized by the Africans for the facilitation of peace and enhancements of harmonious relationship.

## 3.3    Problems Associated with the Institutions

Many of the institutions for conflict resolution are gradually fading out or not strikingly functional as of the past. You will discover that some of

them no longer have bearing with modern day governance. Thus, the first problem you will be faced with is how to recognize what some of the institutions discussed in this unit are. Only the older people of this generation would know them. Your reading of the institutions and asking relevant questions to facilitate sufficient knowledge about them will be an onerous task for you.

There are modern influences on the changing pattern of the institutions. Foreign religions and western education have created new institutional framework for conflict resolution. For example, you do know very well that social clubs and church/Mosque societies have replaced age-grade association typical of African cultural heritage. Time was when you as an individual belonged to a particular age-set. That you should know have gone with the wind of colonialism and foreign religion. You will, however, discover that your reading of the hitherto existing institutional framework for conflict resolution, will enable you to map out the relevant change of trend in African cultural heritage.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      What is an institution?
2.      What are various indigenous institutions in Africa?
3.      Mention various indigenous African Institutions for conflict resolution.
4.      How applicable are these institutions to modern development?
5.      What do the institutions reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Traditional institutions for conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies were the core of the adjudicatory process that promoted peace and fostered unity. They have, as you have seen, evolved in the society to ascertain societies and social engineering. Not only were they the very relevance of the cultural heritage, but also they ennobled the course of justice and its administration in the society. Indeed, they had been so significant to popularizing African ethical mannerism.

The legitimate power of the kings and the chiefs, the sacred power of the priests and priestesses as well as the supernatural in the scheme of development, the fundamentals of the roles of the age – grade association and the professional associations combined to engineer the rudiments of conflict resolution for your proper understanding. They served as the apron string of the facilitation of peace and the ennoblement of mutual understanding and harmonious relation in traditional African societies.

The foregoing submission suggests to you the very significant fact that the mode of conflict resolution in indigenous African societies had been well organized at the beginning of state formation, thereby making the various institutions (so discussed) quite functional and adaptable to the development process. The institutions were not only relevant and functional but also produced such positive results for the administration of all members of the society. They were so popular and vital to problem – solving for the purpose they were so designed.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit we have examined the fact that in the context of social engineering, that traditional institutions of conflict resolution promoted social justice and etiquette in the society. They paved the way for mutual understanding and social relation wither the development process. Indeed, they had been considered as the pivotal of peaceful co-existence. Thus, you have observed that the corporate existence of people in the society loomed large in the functionality of the institutions of conflict resolution.

It is evident that the Africans relied heavily on the institutions for peace to thrive. The institutions, therefore, were so instrumental to moving the society forward in indigenous African societies. It was in the atmosphere of peace and harmony that the agencies of the institutions derived their legitimacy of power.

## 6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Identify and discuss the roles of traditional institutions of conflict resolution in one African society.
2.   Examine the features and functions of traditional institutions in African society.

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## UNIT 4     PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will discover that the African forebears at the beginning of the institutionalization of political culture, had a fortuitous mindset towards imbibing the ethics of social justice. Inherent in that political culture were legitimacy of power and authority, ethical devices and models of conflict resolution, principled along the line of mutual understanding and public peace. It was in this situation that the principles were properly inaugurated on solid foundation. At the devise of the African forebears, they did well to bequeath the principles of conflict resolution, which they have actively practised, to their offspring's, who they themselves, never erred in justifying not only the existence of the principles but also lived to the expectation of their forefathers by making their legacy hirable.

The principles of conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies were sufficiently tailored towards proper understanding of African cultural heritage so that they were quite originally inherent in their customs and norms. The principles were also characterized with the mood and personality of the Africans such that their practice and adaptation were adequately suited to the environment and the psychic force. Thus, the principles followed the line of fruition and functional press to exhibit the cultural heritage of the Africans. The principles, therefore, set in motion the desirability and readiness of the Africans to institute social order and control of their affairs, in such a way, that public morality and etiquette strengthened the lord of relationship and mutual trust.

The principles of conflict resolution in traditional African societies revealed the mindset of the forebears for the greatest future relevance

and substance of peace and harmony in the body polity of social organisation. There was, therefore, continuity of what was inaugulated by the African forebears for their offspring's. The enormity of the principles of conflict resolution in traditional African society was quite in place. The degree of the application of the principles of conflict resolution to life expectations, however, depended largely on the interest and enthusiasm as well as the knowledge acquired by the practitioners. This is why it is often difficult to measure the degree of wisdom of the parishioners especially when colonial culture had intruded into the original African principle of conflict resolution.

Principles of conflict resolution in traditional African society were anchored on the confidence of the parishioners, verification of truth, attainment of impartiality and the enhancement of transparency, reconciliation and the display of fairness and social justice as well as adherence to forgiveness and tolerance. You will understand that the foregoing principles attested to the singular fact that Africans had long been so principled in the ways of life and this had transformed their mode of existence to that of mutual exclusiveness. The listed principles of conflict resolution in traditional African societies would be subsequently unearthed.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

That the African forebears left a legacy principled along social order and control entailed that their offspring's has a lot of challenges – acceptability of the principles and the maintenance of the legacy towards passing it on from generation to generation. In this regard this unit observes crucial aspect of African cultural heritage, which you must grapse and articulate to make it drivable. Thus, by the end of this unit you should be better able to:

- understand the origin of the principles of conflict resolution;
- address the issues inherent in the principles with a view to alerting you of the need to watch out;
- articulate the mindset of the forebears; and
- know the application of the principles of conflict resolution in traditional African society to the contemporary situation whenever appropriate.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1    Nature of the Principles

The theoretical basis of conflict resolution in traditional African societies was couched in the existence of some rules fundamental to the

comprehension of peace process. The nature of the principles of conflict resolution in indigenous African societies was anchored on the flexibility and elasticity of the rules and guidelines of operation, the divine inspiration and the conceptualization of peace in the society. Indeed, the principles of conflict resolution in traditional African societies represented the engineering process of the dynamics and legitimacy of enforcing the rules for operational scheming. You will understand that there may be slight variation in the principles of conflict resolution across cultural boundaries. The conflict situation as you will discover varied but essentially the guidelines (principles) attendant on its resolution were almost the same.

The divine ordering which backed up the operational model of the principles of conflict resolution characterized the dynamism of peace process in traditional African societies. It is important for you to understand that the supernatural force propelled the operation of the principles of conflict resolution in various traditional African societies. This you will discover permeated the essence of peacemaking and peacekeeping incentives.

It is also significant for you to understand the fact that the psyche of the Africans tinted their conceptualization of the principles regarding conflict resolution in traditional African societies. The cultural heritage of the people stood them at a vantage position of philosophizing the ideals in the peace process which had long evolved in the society. The principles became popularized and operationalized.

## 3.2    Principles of Conflict Resolution in Traditional African Society

It is important to put the principles of conflict resolution in African society in proper context and within the focus of African cultural heritage. Doing so entails that you acquire sufficient knowledge and proper understanding of peace process in African continent. Not to understand the mechanisms associated with conflict resolution in African society will amount to forgetting the customs and norms which informed it. It is on this note that this section of the unit is appropriately directed.

Fundamentally, parties to the conflict usually submitted themselves for cross-examination based on the fact that they had radiant confidence in the conflict resolution principles that were to be applied to the conflict in vogue. As a matter of fact, no one was adjudged an isolated entity in African society. This was why the principle of collective responsibility was in place. Indeed, you will find out that the concern of the populace was always directed to the parties in conflict borne out of sympathy and

reverence to the forebears, who looked from afar and had the wherewithal to punish the wrongdoers or offenders among the parties to the conflict. The wrongdoing when properly ascertained needed collective action to surmount. This was why J.H. Driberg maintained that such a wrongdoing must be propitiated by all the members of the society in the area of contributing towards procuring ritual materials. This was also akin to the practice of being your brother's keeper in the time of crisis

Truth which is associated with the positive conduct of life was quite at home (and in place) with conflict resolution mode in traditional African society. Truth had been adjudged by African elders as the objectivesation of scientific trust and ethical modesty showcasing movement of time in development process. The African forebears loved and embraced truth as covenant logo. It was upheld as salient principle of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. Hence, it deserved suitable verification to authenticate verdict in the process of conflict resolution in traditional African societies.

Impartiality, neutrality and transparency were tripod principles of conflict resolution in indigenous African societies. They were adopted by the African forebears to showcase the tension associated with peace-making and peace-building. Indeed, the practitioners of indigenous peace need the tripod principles to stand the test of time towards ensuring completeness and totality of verifying truth and asserting vibrant claims. Max Gluckman attested to this fact in his research among the Barotse people. Thus, African judges and adjudicators upheld the tripod principles toward playing safe and restoring peace and order in the muddy atmosphere.

Parties to the conflict in traditional African societies had the mutative of persuasion and submission to reasonable claims to justice. Hence, they had the chances of letting off the steam of conflict, forgiving, loving and tolerating one another for mutual orientation and adaptation. This you should understand, was the basis of reconciliation and restoration of harmonious relationship or *esprit de corps.* This principle had long been anchored of social engineering and mannerism on traditional African societies.

Fairness, equity and justice were tripartite principle of conflict resolution in traditional African society. Parties to the conflict, were usually given fair hearing and representation (through a witness) to the degree that no one had its case treated in absentia as during so announced to misplace of justice and assault to the enforcer of justice (the Supernatural). The Africans believe that justice delayed was justice out rightly denied which was to spell doom for the community. Thus at

the scene of conflict resolution parties to the conflict were always afforded reasonable time to state the issues of conflict. Failure to ever appear at the scene of conflict resolution amounted to what Schapera (among the Tswana) and Olaoba (among the Yoruba) regarded as contempt of court. The end of justice in traditional African society, therefore, justified the principles conflict resolution in place. Thus, parties to the conflict were enjoined to give peace a chance by shifting the ground of conflict and limping towards peace and harmony in a principle of "give a little, get a little".

## 3.3    Application of the Principles

Having studied the nature and dynamism of the principles of conflict resolution in traditional African societies, it is important for you to understand the wherewithal of applying them to suit the purpose for which they were designed by peace practitioners in the society. Doing so entails that you have well-grounded understanding and mastery of the principles because they were the tools of operation.

What you should first do towards applying the principles, is to understand the conflict situation and the principal actors. This will determine the principles with which to arrest and surmount the conflicting situation and subject them to critical survey and analysis against the background of the selected principle. This will provide you the basis of dousing the tension and facilitating peace as well as enhancing harmonious relationship.

It is also necessary for you to crosscheck the degree of success attendant on the conflicting situation consequent upon what principle so selected to resolve it. The application of the principle for a particular conflict by any peace practitioner in traditional African societies depended largely on the nature of both the conflict and the principle adopted to resolve it.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    Define a principle.
2.    Mention various principles of conflict resolution in indigenous African society.
3.    Where do the principles derive?
4.    What were the problems associated with the application of the principles in modern times?
5.    What do the principles reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0   CONCLUSION

The outcome of conflict resolution rested on justifiable recognition and application of the principles employed to reach peace process in traditional African societies. Listing was, however, a significant art towards ascertaining the judicious application of the principles of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. The principles were never toyed with nor played down to reach amicable reconciliation and restoration of peace and harmony to a hitherto bad situation or atmosphere of crisis.

The principles of conflict resolution had been so holistic in letters and approach to degree that it satisfies all conflict situations when properly applied. The non-application of the principles might be an affront to the forebears who inaugurated them. The mindset of the inaugurators of the principles was to the effect of maintaining the peaceful status quo of the society and to promote social bliss for equitable development. Thus, once annoyed, the forebears could inflict all sorts of afflictions on the people until the ontological balance was maintained. Conflict in African society, therefore, was a means of measuring social balance between the people (Africans) and their supernatural who have the superpower of coercion and conformance.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

Considered in this unit are the principles of conflict resolution in traditional African society. You must have observed that the principles here been properly put in the perspective of cultural heritage which gave them their originality and substance. It was also considered that the principles were institutionalized by the African forebears who originated the peace process towards making the society livable and thrivable.

The unit has also established that the principles were made purposive and directed towards reconciliation and restoration of harmonious relationship. The principles were the pictorial pivotal of the peace process and had been found durable and applicable to conflict situations. Moreover, the peace practitioners, judges and adjudicators in indigenous African societies anchored the principles for service delivery.

## 6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Examine the various principles of conflict resolution in African society stating their workable schemes.
2.    Who were the prime movers of the principles of conflict resolution in pre-colonial times?

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## UNIT 5     NATURE OF CONFLICT PREVENTION IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

**CONTENTS**

1.0     Introduction
2.0     Objectives
3.0     Main Content
        3.1     What are Preventive Measures?
        3.2     Nature of Conflict Prevention
        3.3     Perspectives of Conflict Prevention
4.0     Conclusion
5.0     Summary
6.0     Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0     References/Further Reading

## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will understand that conflict was preventable in traditional African societies when all the mechanisms and strategies regarding the prevention had been put in place. The aversion of conflict was necessary and desirable in order to ascertain the workability of the principles of conflict resolution (which you studied in unit four) to peace process. Conflict was adjudged energy sapping and time consuming (even though it was result oriented) while war was considered endemic in traditional African societies. What was more, the Africans always preferred peace to conflict or war. It was when the latter became so naturally necessary and invented (by any means) that Africans resorted to it with a degree of protecting the status quo of the society. Even at that stance, conflict resolution was always upper most in the psyche of parties to the conflict. Thus, there were channels of conflict prevention in pre-colonial African societies.

The matrices of conflict prevention in pre-colonial African societies, however, became elastic and durable whenever the principles of conflict resolution were resorted to in a resounding manner. Thus, the lexicon for conflict prevention at the indigenous level of operation included:

•     Dialogue;
•     Diplomacy;
•     Consultation;
•     Meeting;
•     Apology;
•     friendly disposition;
•     adherence to customs and norms occasioning peace and harmony; and
•     justice drive.

The foregoing elements of conflict prevention suggest to you that within the labyrinth of culture lay the factors of mutual understanding, social engineering and harmonious relationship in traditional African societies. It was, however, desirable for the African forebears to have sowed the seed of development through the inauguration of principles of conflict resolution that you have already studied.

Prevention of conflict and conflict resolution for the culture based and relevant Africans were two sides of the coin. One side pleading for non-existence of conflict (perhaps ingrained in early warning system) and the other side wiping off all destructive elements which the eventual collapse to conflict situation would have orchestrated. This again suggests to you that no African had the natural disposition to fight or quarrel with her neighbour, kin and kith and when conflict was inevitable there was adequate mechanism to restore peace and normalcy of relationship.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

• understand prevention mechanism in African society;
• examine the trust of conflict prevention modalities;
• assert the peculiarities of conflict prevention strategies in pre-colonial African society; and
• affirm the readiness and enthusiasm of the Africans to endear themselves to the culture of conflict precaution and social engineering philosophy.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    What are Preventive Measures?

Prevention deters bad omen from happening in the society. It is a necessary means of averting disaster or crisis. If you understand the dynamics of prevention you will get to know that certain measures are attachable to deterrence of an occurrence. These are tagged in this unit as preventive measures against the escalation or occurrence of conflict in human society.

Preventive measures are tailored towards exhibiting necessary modalities for development to take place in the society. Indeed, you should be able to discern that they are factors which necessarily facilitated peace and ennobled harmony in traditional African societies. Preventive measures have been designed long time ago by the Africans

to address future conflicting situation and therefore promoted mutual understanding and living.

Preventive measures deterred breakdown of law and order as well as war. It ensured the next stage of development in traditional African societies as the Africans had been known for their innovative team spirit and peace initiatives. You should therefore, cultivate the habit and custom of imbibing preventive measures against dastardly disaster.

Thus in traditional African societies preventive measures entailed:

- forces of truth,
- factors of deterrence,
- element of restrain,
- pattern of control,
- precautionary devices; and
- tall order of advancement.

## 3.2    Nature of Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention was quite desirable in traditional African societies to the degree that it gave sense of direction towards development process in cultural milieu. Conflict prevention therefore signaled the magnitude of articulating the development agenda in traditional African societies. This suggests to you that conflict was never a permanent feature of African cultural heritage.

Conflict prevention has certain significant features. It was quite popular and understandable by the large majority of people in traditional African societies. Since the prevention derived from the customs and norms, it was part and parcel of the people's psyche for proper operation. Be informed that the people usually preferred peace to conflict with a view to exhibiting their cultural wealth, and development orientation. This was bequeathed to them by their ancestors whose roles in the peace process you will understand in Module 3.

The adoption of conflict prevention was on two fronts in traditional African societies. The first front was on the supernatural side while the second was on the physical earthly side. In order for the continuity of the peace process to be enhanced on earth, the supernatural deities usually monitored the scene of conflict resolution to ascertain compliance with the principles associated with it to avoid misunderstanding. In the physical earthly realm, however, the peace practitioners not only conform with the divine directives (so as to avoid confusion and wrath of the supernaturals) but also to follow the customary principles of conflict resolution. It is for you to understand

that the maintenance of ontological balance between the deities and the humans often forestalled conflicting situation. This was part of the essential characteristics of conflict prevention in traditional African societies.

## 3.3    Perspectives of Conflict Prevention and Social Stability in African Society

Conflict prevention was upheld in pre-colonial African society as unique precautionary measures whose result. Produced stability in the society and mutual understanding that engineered solidarity.   This was why traditional etiquette was *sinequa non* of peace education in traditional African societies. Indeed, the concern of African parents was to give radiant home training to their children from adolescent age to maturity this is often regarded as good character building and confidence orientation to desire all that was to promote mutual understanding and good communal living devoid of rancour and acrimony

Religious inclination and indoctrination produced fairness in handling other people's religious adherence and practices. A case of study to buttress this point is the character of African traditional religion as you will understand which had the indices of peace and non-violence. For example, no adherence of ATR dare proselytize his/her own side of the religion to the other. Rather there was tolerance and accommodation of other people's dynamic means of approaching religious faith. This was why no one could cast aspersion on the other's religion on the ground of noticeable differences and peculiarities in the mode of worship with this on place conflict was preventable. Indeed, African Traditional religion exhibited truth and transparency which informed the African principle of conflict resolution.

The thesis of reasonability which involved respect for the dignity of man and its personality, philosophical paradigms, early warning directives to ward off unethical mannerism and the concern for taste or interest of others anchored the desirability of the Africans for peace-building and mutual understanding which are pre-requisites for averting conflict. For a conflict not to ensue, it is necessary for you to understand that one of the would be parties to the conflict must be reasonable and demonstrate sufficient capacity for maintaining peace.

Adoption of dialogue and showcasing diplomatic relations had, from time immemorial, prevented both intra and inter-communal conflicts in traditional African societies. This art was always demonstrated at the end of wars, where the states involved, saw reason for dialoguing and ending the intriguing feud. A reference point to this assertion was the

determination of both Yoruba and Dahomean Kings to surrender arms and seek for peace in the nineteenth century.

The art of listening was no doubt a significant means of preventing conflict. This suggests to you the fact that by this art persuasion could be therapeutic to preventing and ending conflict on a large scale. This listening to other person's grievances (at individual level) or responding early to the ultimatum of the other community loomed large in pre-colonial African states.

Early signals and reporting of a likely conflict (at whatever level) often helped the Africans to respond quickly towards averting an ensuring conflict. In this way the elders (who are the repository of wisdom) family heads, age – grade association and leaders of secret societies (which you studied module 1) were always on hand to quench the impending rage with utmost dispatch. As soon as the report was made known to these traditional institutions of conflict resolution, they had the wherewithal of wisdom and expertise to swing into action and disallow perpetration of evil desires which might destabilize the society.

Familial and statutory/official meeting (at the family or community level) often prevented conflict in traditional African societies. The essence of meeting was to make public any art of discrepancies, rancour and acrimony which might stain the *esprit de corps* already in existence and thereby forestall conflict situation. The exposure of the unwholesome factors of conflict often ascertained the ignominy associated with them and thus the level of collective damnation arrived at (in the meeting) usually checkmated the confusion in vogue.

Issuance of apologetic statements when one of the would be parties to the conflict owned up normally douse the factor of an ensuring conflict. This suggests to you that apology is therapeutic to conflict resolution and one of the early warning signals in traditional African societies. Based on good character and level of tolerance, a person may voluntarily prevent conflict especially with confidence in the realm of apology. Even at the scene of conflict resolution, a party to the conflict sued for peace through apologetic statements.

Regular consultation of the oracle (to determine future occurrence of conflict) often worked miraculously in the prevention of conflict in traditional African societies. The oracles in African society, were known for their airplay and judicious problem solving mechanisms. The Long Jujis (Ibiniukpabi) of Aroclukwu in Igboland (Nigeria) had been functional at the level of conflict prevention and resolution. There is no gain saying the fact that the wisdom of the oracle in African society was quite significant to helping the Africans determine the direction of

conflict and the magnitude of resolution. All that was required was the truthful attachment to the oracular mechanism and device.

Other ways of preventing conflict in traditional African societies included the show business of courtesy and sense of respectability and reciprocity, amorous recitation of the aggrieved person's praise –poem (cognomen), presentation of gifts at partial periods and issuance of soft ultimatum that would not ignite conflict. These have been pertinent to averting crisis in traditional African societies. The adoption of any of the preventive measures depended so largely on the nature of the people living in the society. This entails that prevention of conflict, which was desirable in African society, was differently achievable from one society to the other. It is noteworthy, however, that no African society failed to put in place many of the conflict preventive measures to galvanize solidarity, public will and whims as well as ascertain peace process and harmonious relationship.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.     What is conflict prevention?
2.     What were the features of conflict prevention in traditional African society?
3.     What were the preventive measures evolved in traditional African society against conflict escalation?
4.     How applicable are the preventive measures to present day environment?
5.     What do the preventive measures reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Conflict prevention was akin to ascertaining peace process in traditional African societies. It was a therapeutic means of assuaging initial or gesticulation period in any ensuring conflict. Conflict prevention facilitated peace and designed development process in African societies. It also set the pace for mutual understanding and communal coexistence.

Conflict prevention was reflective of the gamut of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. Both had been two sides of a coin serving synonymous purpose – instituting peace process and stability in the society. Between the two sides, however, one was actively used (so regularly) which the other was passively utilized (seldomly). Obviously the two were never used at the same time. Significantly, the two facilitated peace and promoted mutual understanding which led to harmonious association in traditional African societies.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

In outline, conflict prevention in traditional African societies (as considered on this unit) informed the desirability of the Africans for peaceful communal living and societies. It produced results and was instrumental to development process. As discussed in the unit, conflict prevention was the prerogatives of unity and solidarity among the various peoples in Africa. Collective responsibility as you have discovered among the Africans, occasioned uniformity in surmounting formidable problems and thus matched forward to greater heights.

You must have also observed so remarkably that conflict prevention reflected salient principles of conflict resolution. Both mechanism were likable to the two sides of a coin which differently showcased peace process and anonymous tendencies. From one African society to the other, it has been observed, that the nature of conflict prevention was akin to the preparedness of the people to employ which of the conflict prevention measures suitable for her environment and adaptable by the people.

## 6.0    TUTOR–MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Was conflict preventable in pre-colonial African societies?
2.    Examine the various preventive measures against incessant conflicts in pre-colonial African societies.

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**MODULE 2      AFRICAN TRADITIONAL METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Unit 1      Negotiation Method
Unit 2      Mediation Method
Unit 3      Arbitration Method
Unit 4      Adjudication Method
Unit 5      Reconciliation Method

**UNIT 1      NEGOTIATION METHOD**

**CONTENTS**

1.0     Introduction
2.0     Objectives
3.0     Main Content
        3.1     What is Negotiation?
        3.2     Structural Analysis of Negotiation
        3.3     Significance of Negotiation Method
4.0     Conclusion
5.0     Summary
6.0     Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0     References/Further Reading

**1.0     INTRODUCTION**

Negotiation method of conflict resolution existed in traditional African societies. It is all about positive perception of agreement resulting from cooperation, compromise and consensus among the individuals with a set goal of achieving the best for mutual relationship. A lot of activities were carried out by the autochthonous group in traditional African societies which required and necessitated solidarity trust and confidence and credible display of wisdom and whims. The best of situation never came the way of individuals in traditional African societies without supportive dealings and biddings. You will understand that the plea for agreement was, therefore, requested to enhance harmonious relationship in the society. This, therefore, paved the way for structural bargaining to reach a reasonable level of agreement and cooperation.

In traditional African societies negotiation permeated all the activities carried out for survival and development. In trading, as you must have known, there was the need to bargain for reasonable prices and a lot depends on the bargaining power of the traders and their patronizers. In governance, campaigning was quite necessary to win an election. A lot also depends on the strength and wisdom of the campaigner. In religion,

man negotiated with the supernatural for spiritual development. In conflict resolution, especially in traditional African societies, there had been two levels of negotiation-between the parties to the conflict on the one hand and between the parties to the conflict and the negotiators for peace on the other.

This unit focuses on the dynamism of negotiation in conflict resolution in traditional African societies. It unearthed the features and significance of negotiation in bringing about peace and harmony in the society. The unit also examines the task and challenges of negotiation especially capitalizing on what stuff the negotiators were made of in traditional African societies.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

• comprehend the concept of negotiation in the context of conflict resolution,
• assess the relevance of negotiation in the development  agenda in African society; and
• unearth the structural framework of negotiation within the context of cultural heritage.

## 3.0   MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1   What is Negotiation?

Negotiation was one of the methods of conflict resolution in traditional African societies which you need to understand in this unit of study. It is a process of reaching an agreed mode of operation. It simply entails level of bargaining to ascertain coping strategies of relationship. In this unit, you will be made to understand that cooperation and compromise had been part and parcel of the bargaining enthusiasm associated with traditional process of conflict resolution in Africa.

You need to understand that cooperation was necessary to reach an agreement and attaining mutual understanding. As you will be made to understand in the unit, cooperation was the anchor of negotiation desirous of peace making. To achieve peace in traditional African societies certain level of negotiation (bargaining) was piloted towards it. Indeed, the Africans inherited from their forebears the nitty-gritty of negotiating for peace. Thus, for conflict to be resolved elements of negotiation between the parties to the conflict must be present.

## 3.2 Structural Analysis of Negotiation Method in African Conflict Resolution

In this unit, you will be made to understand that negotiation method had been anchored on the conflict resolution mechanism in traditional African societies. Negotiation entailed systemic analysis of cooperation, compromise and consensus to the extent that agreement was reached at the end of the controversy. This entailed that negotiation was smooth sailing whenever the level of communication and understanding flowed in the same direction. In this case certain features had been associated with negotiation in traditional African societies namely:

- ability to listen to the other side of opinion,
- objective appraisal of conflicting issues,
- articulation of the issues of the conflict,
- understanding the language warranting the conflicting situation and environment,
- readiness to tread on a level plain ground,
- reciprocity of constructive etiquette of the other party to the conflict,
- focus on the appraisal of customs and norms of the society; and
- capacity for shifting the ground of conflict at the nick of time.

Negotiation requires sufficient wisdom to slow the pace, observe steadily and strategise the focal length of development in the society. This is comparable to the wisdom of a driver negotiating a sharp bend on the road. He must slow down with caution, give a signal to the suspected oncoming vehicle (by sounding the horn) and steadily negotiate the bend and thereafter can accelerate at will. The driver must appreciate the concern and whims of the other oncoming vehicle (driver) in a cooperative manner in order to avoid headon collision (road accident). However, his good gestures, cautionary wisdom and sense of safety must be reciprocated by the other driver. This is the basis of cooperation and compromise to enhance equitable distribution of justice and fairplay which you need to understand and imbibe. Negotiation as a process, therefore, requires a judicious display of creativity which produces development in the society.

The process of negotiation was necessary to have peace of mind in African family system. Family couples needed to engage in negotiation whenever things went wrong. For example, there was an ensuing argument between a father and his son. The father held up some complaints that the son should vacate his house. The son rebuffed with radiant enthusiasm that the action and reaction of his father was fundamentally un-African, put up a reasonable line of defense, which was preparatory to processing negotiation, thus: "I am sorry, I am in my

father's house. If you think we cannot live together, you must go and live with your father" (Wade, 1956:308).

Obviously, the reason which the father adduced, though quite explicit, as you will assume, presupposes the fact that he was ready to disown his son. Pungently, the son explicitly alluded to the expected mutual coexistence which dominated African family background. Thus, there was the need for negotiation between the father and the son. The father cannot by any stroke of annoyance or in the feat of anger throw out his son, since the latter, in African culture, has the right to the property of the former. The end product of the process of negotiation in this case should be that as long as the son was prepared to accommodate his father (since he has a more lasting heritage of the house) so must the father be tolerant of the son and reach a point of compromise. Thus, this case has revealed a lot of what negotiation (at the positional level) can achieve for parties to the conflict. It is, therefore, necessary that the two parties must:

- shift a ground of their position,
- exhibit sense of belonging,
- focus on the customs and norms of the society,
- be tolerant and cooperative; and
- appreciate the values of peace and harmony for positive co-existence.

## 3.3    Significance of Negotiation Method

Generally speaking, negotiation had been part of life. It had been instrumental to development in traditional African societies. Thus, you must have observed that the significance of negotiation in conflict resolution cannot be over-emphasized. The significance can be outlined. It specifically showcased:

- equal treatment of parties to the conflict,
- mutual understanding for the parties to the conflict and the negotiating team,
- understanding the critical issues associated with the conflict; and
- setting good agenda for the development of the society.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    Define negotiation.
2.    What was the process of negotiation in traditional African society?
3.    What were the features of a negotiation process?
4.    Who were the African negotiators?
5.    What were their challenges?

## 4.0   CONCLUSION

Negotiation method of conflict resolution was a systemic way of reaching points of agreement thereby ennobling the tripod quality of cooperation, compromise and consensus. Negotiation in African traditional societies as you must have observed, enhanced harmonious relationship spelling out the degree of mutuality and understanding, which unquestionably but robustly, directed towards a functional development agenda. Negotiation ascertained levels of reasoning and logical appraisal of trust and confidence in the negotiators. A lot of bargaining went along the line of exhibiting solidarity front at family, ward, quarter and community levels.

Negotiation in conflict resolution are two-way process. The parties to the conflict often engaged in the negotiation process sharing point of understanding, shifting ground of their conflicting situation and environment and adjusting to the new order of things. The negotiators between the parties to the conflict negotiated peace in order that harmony and mutual understanding was restored to ward off calamities from the society. Whatever might be the level and reason for negotiation, it behoves the negotiators the responsibility of ensuring the solidarity trust and harmonious relationship in the society.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

Negotiation method in conflict resolution in traditional African societies has been addressed in this unit. The unit examined the dynamic features and relevance of negotiation in development agenda. It submitted that the process of negotiation helped individuals in the society to exhibit trust and confidence in the peaceful co-existence which have been made possible with solidarity and fraternity.

The unit has also addressed the fact that negotiation rested on a tripod which signalized cooperation, compromise and consensus. The level of mutual living and the degree of understanding from the stand point of peace and harmony was engineered through cooperation and compromise. The unit, as you must have observed, also harped on the point that negotiation method of conflict resolution gingered the upliftment of the individuals who cherished peace and harmony in African traditional societies.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Identify various ways by which peace was negotiated in traditional African societies.
2.    How effective were negotiation measures in pre-colonial African societies?

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## UNIT 2      MEDIATION METHOD

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

Mediation method prevailed in African conflict resolution model, to the effect that parties to the conflict necessarily submitted themselves to a neutral third party, adjudged to be highly interested and concerned with the well – being of the individuals in traditional African societies. Mediation as you will soon understand was an art adopted to intervene in a conflicting situation and environment with a view to bringing about friendly disposition and restoration of order to both parties to the conflict and the society at the end of the intervention.

In traditional African societies, the cord of relationship, which was cordial and harmonious, was never allowed to go down the drain by mere misunderstanding between parties to the conflict. The passers-by were forbade to fold their arms watching a quarreling duo engaged in physical combat or engaged in tumultuous exchange of abuses. Woe betide such passers-by who refused intervention in the conflict and restored order. It was part of the social responsibilities of every individuals to be his brother's keeper – a dictum that flourished in traditional African societies. Expectedly, such fighting duo might bring about calamities from the enraged deities who might have been offended by the conflict, specially when the passes-by knew the concern of the supernatural for the divine ordering and social control of the society and for the well-being of the creatures. Thus, the passers – by were duty bound to intercede and resolve the ensued conflict for the benefit of the families of the fighting duo and the entire society. Driberg (1934:223-237) observed that the cause of calamities in African society derived from series of offending misdemeanour which affected the whole community and all must contribute towards the eradication of the aftermath of it. In other words, you must understand that the individuals were potential mediators for the purpose of engaging in the social

development of the society. No one was left out in the social responsibility and an effectively engaging art of mediation.

This unit focuses on the substance and relevance of mediation method within the context of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. It emphasized the dynamics and challenges before the African mediators to the extent that they legitimized salient aspects of mediation anchored on cultural heritage. You will discover that it is never in doubt, that situations whether conflictual or otherwise called for interventionist agenda. Thus, the autochthonous group in traditional African societies evolved a progressively positive method geared towards displaying the dynamics of conflict resolution within the context of African cultural heritage.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- understand the creative context associated with African mediation mechanism,
- examine the features of mediation in African society, and
- assess the roles of African mediators in the extermination of conflict in the society.

## 3.0   MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1   What is Mediation?

Mediation is an art of intervening in a conflicting situation. This interventionist process allowed for installing common ground for restoring friendly relations. You must have observed at one time or the other that interventionist tendencies usually allowed for dousing tension brought about by conflict. Mediation entails standing shoulder high above others toward interceeding and ensuring peaceful relations in the society. In this unit, you will understand the dynamics of mediation in the process of conflict resolution in traditional African societies.

## 3.2   The Dynamics of African Mediation Method of Conflict Resolution

Africans had often displayed interventionist approach to conflict resolution in their domain – family, market, farmstead and shrines as well as on the street. Mediation was a purposeful art through significant media and principles governing the process of social justice and harmonious relationship. You will find out that the parties to the conflict

hardly ever appreciated the effects of the conflict until persuaded to understand the implications of their actions. It was also observable as you will discover in traditional African societies, that one of the parties to the conflict, must after a while, be reasonable by Gluckman's standard (1956:101-105) before the parties were assisted by the mediators. Rage and fury were understandably akin to demonstration of fists without regard to sensibility on the part of the parties to the conflict. The scene of the conflict was no doubt a hot bed of argument, disaffection and displeasure borne out of the clash of interest with which the issues of conflict were couched.

Certainly the parties to the conflict often surrendered themselves for mediation which suggests that some factors would have been virile to make it happen. These factors included in traditional African societies:

- evidence of tiredness and frustration,
- elements of sensibility in the parties to the conflict,
- confidence in the mediators,
- sense of infracting social justice and development,
- understanding the ignominous outcome of their rage; and
- fear of loosing their personality in public gaze.

The atmosphere under which mediation took place as you will observe that traditional African societies was hitherto helly and hot until transformed to free and fair dealing not only of the parties to the conflict but also the mediators. Thus, the mediators had a good and working knowledge of the conflict situation and the enraged mood of the parties to the conflict. The mediators, therefore, struggled to cool the temper and doused the tension as the starting point of positive mediation which had certain enviable qualities that which the parties to the conflict admired. These included among others:

- imposing character disposition,
- respectability in the society,
- knowledgeable in customs and norms,
- quick-witted to a fault,
- damming consequences of what their engaging wisdom might precipitate,
- determination to end the feud;
- and restoration of harmonious relationship

In the process of mediating a conflict, as you will expect, the mediators were a lot prepared to re-direct and re-focus the parties to the conflict to their sense of belonging to the society and were therefore reminded of their useful contributions to social justice and development. Obviously,

engaging in perpetual conflict with all the ills attached to it (malice, abusive words and hatred) deprived them of the propensities of social harmony and relationship. The mediators usually persuaded the parties to the conflict of the consequences of ceaseless conflagration of peace and tranquility.

In traditional African societies seniority was given a pride of place such that the mediators were cognizant of the social responsibilities expected from senior or matured persons and the office holders. Each of them received appropriate measure of justice in accordance with the course of their action. The African mediators were often challenged of blaming or censuring the most senior of the parties to the conflict. This was done to respect African customs and norms. But certainly no winner emerged at the end of the mediation. Each party was told of the flaws in his display of rage and fury.

## 3.3     Challenges of Mediation

It will interest you to know that mediation was not carried out in traditional African societies without some challenges. Such challenges quite often affected the sum total of attaining goals through the process of mediation. You must be able to understand that challenges are instrumental to discerning a better placed affairs in a venture or thing. This being so, you will understand that nothing achievable can be done without a set of challenges.

First, the process of mediation was so tasking and cumbersome in traditional African societies. It was not that easy for the mediators to satisfy the interests of the parties to the conflict. How much of the interest of the parties to the conflict that must satisfactorily be addressed and accomplished was so difficult to determine. Even the parties to the conflict had not always owned up in the area of exposing their interests lest the mediators developed cold feet towards them.

Developing confidence and upholding the integrity of the mediators was yet another challenge attendant on mediation in traditional African societies. Even though parties to the conflict rated the process of mediation so highly and addressable to their problems, it is important for you to understand that a process might be instrumental to solving a problem, but the practitioners might err in making it workable. Thus, a lot of work was done in traditional African societies to enable people (parties to the conflict) repose confidence not only in the process of mediation but also in the mediating group.

It was not that easy to understand the psychic atmosphere which surrounded the mediation arena, such arena was religiously clothed in

traditional African societies. Indeed, you need to observe that the knowledge about the duties and other spiritual forces were in the abstract. The same was true of conceptualizing their over all influence on the process of mediation especially having to tender explanation relating to their functionalities in conflict resolution. Their influences will, however, be properly treated for you in module three of this course.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      What is mediation?
2.      Who were mediators in traditional African society?
3.      What were the roles of African mediators?
4.      What problems did mediators encountered in traditional African society?
5.      What does mediation reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Mediation mechanism was inherent in African pattern of conflict resolution. It was proper for interventionist agenda to have been ingrained in the conflict resolution practice in traditional African societies. Mediation had resulted in effective resolution of conflict at the family level, market place, religious sanctuaries and at the level of governance in traditional level of governance in traditional African societies. You must have observed that mediation had restored peace and harmony in the atmosphere of rage and fury and had facilitated social justice and development.

African mediators had lived up to the expectation of safeguarding the dynamism in customs and norms which endeared them not only to the conflict parties to as you have been made to understand, the conflict but also the populace in the society. The mediators often displayed their wits, knowledge and understanding of the mediating process within the context of conflict resolution. They usually demonstrated the understanding of the issues involved in the conflict and the mood and mien of the parties to the conflict.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

This unit has addressed the fact that mediation method of conflict resolution followed a significant pattern surveyed in this unit (in the context of pre-colonial African societies). It was one of the useful aspects of African cultural heritage which had been left as a legacy by the African forebears. Such a legacy as you have observed forbade individuals from passing by a fighting duo without intervening in the

ensued conflict. This was a way of demonstrating the *esprit de corps* anchored on the cultural engineering in pre-colonial African societies.

It has been established in the unit that the African mediators had the wherewithal of ending (by their intervention) feud at whatever level of operation. They were construed to understand the systemic nature of conflict resolution geared towards enhancing social justice and development. The unit finally addressed the nature of confidence reposed in the mediators and the expectation of interpreting the customs and norms regarding conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies. Indeed, you must have understood that mediation was functional towards the exhibition of the determination of both the parties to the conflict and the mediators to articulate development agenda in the society.

## 6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   What were the factors necessitating mediation process in pre-colonial African societies?
2.   What are the qualities of African mediators?

## 7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 3      ARBITRATION METHOD

**CONTENTS**

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
      3.1   What is Arbitration?
      3.2   Features of Arbitration
      3.3   The Significance of Arbitration
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

## 1.0   INTRODUCTION

Arbitration had been one of the significant methods of resolving conflict in traditional African societies. It has been adjudged a unique way of producing an arbiter who, as you will understand, reached out to special decisions which the parties to the conflict must submit themselves to. Arbitration also produced the venue from where such decisions were arrived at and executed. Thus, there had been arbitral courts, tribunal and proceedings in African society through the ages. The operational model of arbitration had been couched in contentment of the African authorities, condescending interest of the parties to the conflict (the disputants) and the working schemes of the African customs and norms, which you must understand, gave arbitration an unconditional backing and implementation in the process of conflict resolution.

Considering the operational motifs in arbitration, this unit focuses on the principles and practice of arbitration as it influenced the institutionalization of peace and harmony in pre-colonial African setting. It also examines the dynamic power wielding mechanisms of the arbitrators towards developing agenda for promoting peace and initiating goals of harmony in the society, which you need to know.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- contextualize the operational model of arbitral proceedings in African society,
- expound on the dynamism of the decision derivable from arbitral proceedings,
- assess the mannerism and public trust in African arbitrators; and
- articulate the level of compromise exhibited by the arbitrators and the parties to the conflict (disputants).

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT
## 3.1    What is Arbitration?

Arbitration can be simply defined as the enabling will and power to decide and determine a course of action quite instrumentable to decision making. The level of reaching out to a decisive and prompt action characterized arbitration. This simple definition will enable you to understand African will-power to engage in the absolute control of conflict resolution in their environment. Such a will-power must be understood by you to generate a process leading to development in the society.

As you will study in this unit, arbitration functioned well in traditional African societies. But you must understand that the process of arbitration in Africa deferred markedly from those of the western societies. The differences would be unfolded in subsequent discussion.

## 3.2    The Significance of Arbitration Method in Conflict Resolution

Arbitration method had produced great levels of trust, confidence and mutual understanding in traditional African societies. As you will observe the judges, arbiters or arbitrators had lived up to their expectation of being impartial and had interpreted the customs and norms creditably suitable to issues of conflict handled in the arbitral proceedings. The juristic tradition anchored on arbitration had made it possible to yield positive results. The implementation of the arbitral decisions of the arbiterage practically fitted into the dynamics of cultural heritage, which, as you will see, had been bequeathed to the Africans by their forebears. Arbitration, therefore, had a long history of existence in theory and practice in pre-colonial African societies.

It can be surmised upon reasonable considerations of the features of arbitration in pre-colonial African societies that:

• it engaged the attention of the sage and the supernatural in African setting or environment,
• the arbitrators relied heavily on the dictates of the supernatural and tradition,
• the decisions agreed upon must be satisfactory to the parties in conflict and must be so popularly acclaimed to the populace,
• the decisions were flexible and had human face implementation; and
• the arbitral venue was conducive enough to allow for the interplay of the spiritual elements credited to influencing positive decisions.

Obviously, the flexibility thesis and the non-formal approach to the arbiterage usually made the decisions of the arbitrators quite acceptable and worthwhile in traditional African societies. The decisions reached and concluded by the arbitrators in arbitral proceedings was not done in isolation of the supernatural who monitored, controlled and influenced such decisions. The level of justice with which the decisions were coached was, therefore, beyond man's or human's efforts. They were divinely derived and implemented on the axis of divine order.

Truth was yet another axis upon which arbitration revolved. Even the supernatural required elements of truth to design and implement judicious decisions. It will interest you to know that the parties to the conflict (disputants) must embrace truth and honesty of purpose to allow for positive and speedy arbitrage. No one was excused or excluded from hallowing and respecting the truth in the context of fruitful and functional arbitation in traditional African societies.

Decision in arbiterage revolved around duties and responsibilities and not rights. Obligatory sanctions functioned adequately well in traditional African societies. Arbitration recognized humaneness of disposition and discharging normal responsibilities to one's neighbour, kin and kith. Thus, Antony Allott submits that:

> In western (or at least English) legal procedure litigation is often treated as a sort of game, with the judge as umpire holding the whistle, blowing when one party gets offside, and awarding the victory to the side which scores most goals. The contrast with typical African procedure is a sharp one… African justice often has the qualities of being arbitral and consensual, of simplicity and publicity. The law and procedure are intelligible and acceptable to the people, and the *vox populi* often gains a hearing, not least when bystanders join in and give their opinion on the merits of a case. In brief, judicial procedure reflects the common African principle that government and decision are ultimately by popular consent (Allott, 1960:68-69).

The foregoing description aptly linked arbitration with the process of conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies distinguishing it from the western model. Moreover, it is significant for you to observe that the notion of cooperation and consensus still predominate in arbitration as with negotiation discussed in the previous unit.

The nature of arbitration and the approach of the arbitrator to truthful disposition of decision were anchored on arbitral proceedings in traditional African societies. Thus, the arbitrators must be above board

to design workable decisions acceptable to a greater majority in the crowd of audience listening and watching the proceedings. That being the case, the average arbitrator must, therefore, possess:

- open and discerning mind,
- ability to drive home decisive points bluntly,
- proof of radiant character disposition; and
- capacity for projecting the interest of their forebears towards implementing customs and norms.

## 3.3    Challenges of Arbitration

We have been discussing various methods of conflict resolution in traditional African societies to the extent that adjudication, reconciliation, mediation, negotiation and arbitration had been recognized and discussed. Our discussion suggests that these methods had functioned well in traditional African societies. But as you have noted there had been a lot of challenges attendant on the methods of conflict resolution hitherto identified and recognized for discussion.

In this unit, let us also see the challenges which prevailed on arbitration in traditional African societies. You must understand that the challenges enabled the articulation of the methods for greater development process if properly harnessed. Arbitration should not be assumed as a simple process as our forebears struggled so vehemently to arrive at a decision promotional to peace making and harmonious relationship.

The acceptability of the decisions of the arbitrators by the greater majority (both parties to the conflict and the crowd of audience) was akin to the degree of their integrity. Confidence was expected to be reposed on the African arbitrators by the parties to the conflict. You must understand, therefore, that a lot was demanded from the arbitrators for them to be relied upon for demonstrating the art of peace making so earnestly.

Measuring the degree of development which followed the process of arbitration was yet a significant challenge, which as you must observe, can prove a her clean task. Such a development profile was expected to move the society forward since development can only take place in the atmosphere of peace. It behoves on the arbitrators, therefore, to demonstrate enough zeal and enthusiasm in their bids to resolve conflict through the process of arbitration.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What is arbitration?
2.    Describe the nature of African arbitral proceeding.
3.    What was the significance of arbitration in traditional African society?
4.    Who were the arbitrators in traditional African society?
5.    Account for the future of arbitration in African society.

# 4.0    CONCLUSION

Arbitration was inherent in the methods of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. It produced arbiters, judges and arbitrators whose radiant interest was to reinforce a popular decision that enhanced harmonious relationship in the society. As you must have observed the arbiters operated at the level of curiously applying African customs and norms with a view to making them drivable and workable. The functional implementation of the decisions which African arbiters designed was anchored on the influence of the deities.

Effective communication towards making the arbitral proceedings enduring was quite engaged in the process of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. Both the arbitrators and the parties to the conflict had the singular choice of mutual understanding through functional communication of interests and decisions across board. This you have learnt, was necessary to ascertain the acceptability of the designed decisions for implementation and programming. No one engaged in arbitration lacked the proper understanding of the intent and purpose of the decision reached and concluded towards the advancement of development agenda piloted through conflict resolution. In outline, arbitration was effective and functional towards facilitating peace and enhancing harmony in pre-colonial African societies.

# 5.0    SUMMARY

The talking point of this unit as we have discussed, centered on the dynamism of arbitration as one of the methods (though very old) engaged in traditional African societies to enforce useful decisions promotional to peace and harmonious relationship. The ground for effective arbitration laid on accessing African customs and norms without let or hindrance. This was a way of preserving the cultural heritage and advancing development agenda and programming.

The unit has also addressed the fact, that certain qualities were desirous for the arbitrators as well as the parties to the conflict (disputants). Such qualities were instrumental to the outcome of arbitration in the context

of conflict resolution. It was also emphasized that the supernatural had greater grip and influence not only on the designing of decisions in the arbitrage but also in the implementation for steering the ship of social justice and harmony. This, as you must have observed, was the spectacular difference noticeable in African arbitration but conspicuously absent in western arbitration.

## 6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Examine the substance and relevance of arbitration in African pattern of conflict resolution.
2.   Discuss the problems faced by the arbitrators in an arbitral proceeding in indigenous African societies.

## 7.0   REFERENCES /FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 4    ADJUDICATION METHOD

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will discover that Africans evolved some significant methods to allow for judicious resolution of various conflicts which existed in their society. Such methods came in handy and clearly demonstrated the notion of impromptu synthesis of ideas, strategization of facts, pontification of seemingly related issues and effective cross examination of the issues and facts regarding the conflict. The methods were sorts of mechanisms geared towards peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationship.

The methods evolved by the African autochthonous group fitted quite creditably and uniquely to the peace agenda and the contextualization of the customs and norms in the society. The autochthonous group saw to it that social relations, constitutional etiquette and mutual understanding informed the basis of evolving the methods of conflict resolution. You will understand that the methods were clearly deciphered towards the direction of positive results and effective administration of justice, display of truth and confidence and utmost objectivisation of the traditions in cultural milieu.

The methods were not designed against social relations and control, rather they were people oriented and institutionally framed. This suggests to you, therefore, that the methods resonated in the reasonable ideas originated within the context of association and traditionally induced ideological framework. The methods were no doubt popularly acceptable to the entire townspeople and by application to various conflict which were quite positive and workable. In other words, your understanding would be that the methods of conflict resolution were designed to solve the knotty problems which existed in traditional African societies.

African traditional methods of conflict resolution remained largely one of the powerful resources of cultural heritage. The methods promoted the basis of institutionalizing peace and harmony in the society. The methods were akin to understanding the psyche of the people and the interpretation of the mindset of their inaugurators vis-a-viz the autochthonous group in African societies. These methods included adjudication, reconciliation, mediation, negotiation and arbitration. This unit, will take you through adjudication method as employed in traditional African societies to resolve conflict.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- identify various methods used in traditional African societies to resolve conflict;
- examine the various features of adjudication method,
- assess the effectiveness of adjudication towards resolving conflict in traditional African society; and
- articulate good sides of adjudication.

## 3.0   MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1   Definition of Adjudication

Adjudication can simply be defined as the process of reaching and concluding decision on issues of conflict. It is a systematic approach to pronouncing judgement on conflicting situation. This suggests to you that points of verdict are anchored on adjudication in order to identify guilt and innocence in a conflicting atmosphere. It should not surprise you, however, that this definition is western oriented. To give it an African phase, there may be quite a point of divergence and convergence.

The African model of Adjudication was not so much of pronouncing judgement and declaring the guilty party but it was the kind of judgement where punishment was not the ultimate even though found desirable. Even when judgement was linked up with punishment it was not a total issuance of draconian punishment. Thus, judgement in African adjudicatory process was mild and reassuringly restorative of peace and harmony in the society. You will discover many other sides of adjudication in subsequent section of this unit.

## 3.2   Adjudication as a Method of Conflict Resolution in African Society

Adjudication was one of the methods of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. It was projected towards formalizing the rule of law to the degree that it was akin to determining right or wrong in a conflict issue. This suggests to you that adjudication was a procedural means of adjudging the right or wrong sides of conflict with a view to designing appropriate treatment or handling of the conflict. It was, however, punishment inclined and focused.

Determining the right or wrong side of conflict issues was, indeed, a difficult task requiring great wits, designing mind, sound memory, quick action and objective identification of issues. The pronouncement of such determination of conflict issues came only when they have been thoroughly subjected and addicted to questioning and corroboration. The task also involve rapt attention, skillful listening and utmost cogitation to the degree that the ensuing results became promotional and articulatory to the various institutions and agencies engaged in the method.

The pronouncement of the judicial decisions in adjudicatory method of conflict resolution was, however, determined by:

• character disposition of the adjudicators;
• application of the customs and norms of the society;
• the manner of probing the truth of the conflict; and
• the readiness of the disputants to develop confidence in the resulting verdict.

Significantly, you will understand that the nature of evidence in adjudicatory process in traditional African societies was elastic, stretching high degree of imaginative focus. It was, however, a difficult task to adduce evidence given the nature of the conflict (simple or complex). The nature of evidence in simple conflicts became less elastic and less cumbersome. The witnesses always rose to the occasion of telling the truth thereby focusing on early resolution of the conflict (dispute) by the adjudicators. The complexity of a conflict determined the length of time, adjudicatory technique or mechanism and number of witnesses to adduce evidence. In this case, the adjudicators had a long way to go before pronouncing judgment. Whether simple or complex, evidence must be thoroughly adduced, clearly deciphered and promisory towards effective adjudication. This was why in traditional African societies disputes or conflicts took time before they were finally resolved. The determination of right or wrong was no doubt very onerous.

Adjudication in traditional African societies was tied down to customs and norms. The understanding of African traditions was quite desirable. This entails that adjudication method derived from African culture. The enforcement process akin to adjudication method influenced the overall assessment of the constitutional basis upon which it operated. The adjudicators were duty bound to understand the dynamism of operating adjudication method if they so desired to attain positive results.

It will be interesting for you to know that the adjudicators were honest set of people who respected customs and norms, revered the supernatural and engaged truth in the process of adjudication. They were men of conscience and fear of the supernatural. They were also imbued with robust sense of history and enduring wisdom. They were, indeed, go-getters in the sphere of pronouncing witty verdict based on judicious evidence.

Peacemaking justice as Fadipe (1991:223-237) researched, was peculiar to the process of adjudication among the Yoruba. This was, however, widespread in traditional African societies. The machinery of justice was akin to establishing the rapport for inaugurating peace and harmony. The adjudicators were well informed with it and its application to ensuring the *esprit de corps* in African traditional societies. You will get to understand more of this peace – making stance and its machinery in subsequent modules.

The volume of truth which was in corroborated alongside evidence always adjudged the verdict in adjudicatory method valuable and cherishable in traditional African societies. This was why the offenders had no choice other than adhered strictly to and believed in the judgement of the African adjudicators. The pronouncement of the judgement was couched with understanding language which attended on the persuasive instinct of the pronouncers and the recipients.

Fundamentally, punishment was anchored on the judicious pronouncement of verdict to a case under adjudication method, which left no one in doubt, that evidence had been thoroughly cross – examined. In traditional African societies, punishment was not considered as the ultimate rudiment of the conflict. It was, however, desirable for correctional purposes and preventive measure against re-occurrence of such a misdemeanour in the society. It behoves on the offenders, therefore, to exhibit robust sense of responsibility and maturity towards the acceptability of the verdict whose pronouncement was the collective decision of the adjudicators and force of bearing on customs and norms in the society. You will discover that punishment was meted out in the process of determining right or wrong sides of

conflicting situation(s) in traditional African societies without let or hindrance.

## 3.3    Challenges of Adjudication

You have found out that adjudication was a useful method of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. It was found so resourceful to the degree that the punishment which was sometime awarded served as corrective and restorative method. You, however, need to understand that despite the usefulness of adjudication as a method of conflict resolution in traditional African societies, it has some challenges.

The first challenge was the difficulty in determining the wherewithal of decision making. Although, you have noted that wisdom and knowledge of the customs and norms played very crucial roles, certain other conflicts might evade proper scrutinization in accordance with the custom. You may want to know that a person outside a particular locality who was tried in a place quite different from his own, run the risk of not conforming with the host custom and norm. Decision making was therefore, centred on wedlock of customs and norms which might become neutral when verdict was pronounced.

In most cases, you will discover that the direction of judgement was very challenging to the adjudicators. Indeed, it was not easy going through the verification and cross-examination of all the evidences adduced by the parties to the conflict or their witnesses. Thus, you may want to observe that the adjudicators and cogitation before arriving at and concluding judgement to a conflict in view. The adjudicators have to be quickwitted with a thorough level of discernment.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What is a method?
2.    Define adjudication.
3.    What are the features of adjudication method in conflict resolution?
4.    Who were the adjudicators in traditional African society?
5.    What stuff was a traditional adjudicator made up?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Throughout the discussion in this unit you must have observed that African adjudicatory method was borne out of their cultural heritage. It was inherent in their customs and norms. It had a significant determination of right or wrong sides of conflicting situations, with a stint of objectivity involved in the pronouncement of decision and

conclusion to the process of adjudication. The pronouncement was usually tied down to the interpretation of customs and norms which the offender or victim would have breached. It was the expectation, in traditional African societies, for the individuals in the society must not only have the knowledge of the customs and norms but also understood and obeyed all its dictates.

The adjudicators had great minds towards respecting the customs and norms in traditional Africa societies. They were great respecters of the mandate in adjudication method. Adjudicatory method of conflict resolution was targeted at the judicious determination of the course of justice. The machinery of justice was properly monitored and articulated to give room for peace and harmony to reign in the society. Consequently, Africans cherished the positive outcome of the enforcement of the procedure which promoted justice, facilitated peace and enhanced harmonious relationship. As old as adjudication method was, it projected positive effect of social control and order.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

You must have discovered in this unit that adjudication method was evolved by the autochthonous African groups. The intention attendant on the evolution of the method was akin to institutionalising a mechanism that empowered select group of enforcers to exhibit social control and cultural engineering in traditional African societies. It was also considered in the unit that the strength of customs and norms flourished in the display of adjudication method.

Observably, adjudication method was tailored to peacemaking justice which formed the *r'aison d'etre'* for the inauguration of peace and harmony in traditional African societies. Peace making was, indeed, the paramount essence of determining right or wrong sides in a conflict. It could be likened to two sides of a coin. At one side is the peace making mechanism and at other side is the forces leading to the point of peacemaking by the peace makers. This you have seen was so significantly anchored on the adjudication method in pre-colonial African societies.

## 6.0   TUTOR–MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.     Examine how adjudicatory method of conflict resolution influenced the promotion of peace and harmony in traditional African societies.
2.     What are the features of adjudicatory method in African society?

## 7.0    REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 5      RECONCILIATION METHOD

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0      INTRODUCTION

Restoration of peace and strained harmonious relationship characterized conflict resolution method in traditional African societies. This stance was eked out by the need to keep the society in one union drawing together every individuals towards cooperation and compromise. This was aimed at promoting mutual understanding and the elevation of social engineering to the submit of operation.

Conflict is no doubt a natural phenomenon as conflict resolution to set it ablaze is naturally tuned. In traditional African societies, the two parties or parties to the conflict never closed their eyes against the restoration of order, relationship and reasonability. At least one of the quarreling parties was reasonable enough to associate with the wisdom of reconciliation. Reconciliation became necessary for the fighting parties to rest the issues which warranted the conflict and therefore sued for peace in order for peace and tranquility, to reign and so move the society forward.

Reconciliation was carried out in traditional African societies with a view to pacifying the parties in conflict without destabilizing the social order and cultural engineering. You will discover that the synergy involved in the task of reconciliation revealed the singular fact that Africans had long developed the capacity to ignore those things and factors that bring about divide and rule. Infraction of social order and sociation meant complete erosion of mutual understanding and blissful development.

Set against the foregoing background, this unit focuses on the dynamism of reconciliation as evidence of social relations in traditional African societies. You will find out that the thesis of reconciliation in the context

of conflicting situation and environment can be parabolically linked with the wounds in a part of the body. Such a wound necessarily caused pain, displeasure and discomfort to all other parts of the body. Until the wound is healed, no such other parts of the body (which have no wound) will be comfortable. It will, therefore, be in the interest and cooperation of all parts of the body to disallow the festering of the wound and ensured that part of the body is healed. Undoubtedly, it is that part of the body that carries the scar of the healing wound. This is applicable to conflict resolution as upheld in traditional African societies. The part of the body which had the wound is comparable to the parties to a conflict why the rest of the body symbolize the society. The society will only be at peace when there is no conflict and when it ensued the civil society had the right to set it ablaze and restore order and harmony. The precedence which followed remained the reference point to prevent future conflict.

This unit, as you will discover, considers reconciliation as a positive means of ending conflict. In the process of ending the conflict, there must be a mechanism (method) to employ. The employment of such a method quite often testifies to the fact that such a conflict could have been averted or prevented had necessary techniques and modalities been put in place. This is the direction of discussion for you in this unit.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

• understand the dynamics of the restoration of order to a conflicting situation and environment;
• unearth the process of reconciliation in traditional African societies;
• assess the place of reconciliation in conflict resolution;
• sensitize modern persons to the interpretive analysis of reconciliation.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is a process of restoring order and normalcy to a hitherto worst situation. In conflict parlance it means a way of reaching agreement or compromise towards healing the wounds of misunderstanding. You need to understand that reconciliation is a positive means restoring friendly relationship and thereby prevent chaos or crisis. It was a method of conflict resolution in traditional African societies.

Reconciliation as you will get to understand projected development process as it tilted the society towards greater heights of survival and unity of purpose. It also paved the way for members of the society to channel their thought pattern around the zone of mutual understanding thereby lubricating the engine of social engineering typified in African cultural heritage. You will discover that development can only take place in the atmosphere of peace and social harmony. You must be prepared to access the usefulness of reconciliation to modern day development through the mirror of African cultural heritage which you will understand in a short while.

## 3.2    Perspectives of Reconciliation Method in African Society

Reconciliation as a method of conflict resolution facilitated peace and harmony in traditional African societies. It recognized the dynamics of pacification and the soothing "medicine" for the vexed parties to the conflict. The process of pacification and persuasion revolved around the expertise and experience of the pacificator. As a neutral party (serving as a third party) the pacificator was imbiled with the strength and energy to restore peace and harmony back to the society. The third party in the reconciliatory process must, therefore, possess the following attributes:

- ability to listen;
- capacity for interaction;
- passion for understanding the issues of the conflict;
- knowledge of customs and norms of the society;
- discerning mind for the interpretation of facts;
- understand the mood of the parties to the conflict;
- readiness to appraise objectivity; and
- determination to restore peace and harmony.

Communicating the process and significance of reconciliation to the parties in conflict loomed large in the cultural heritage of the Africans. You will find out that the language of pacification and persuasion must be a soothing balm and must percolate to the psyche and conscience of the parties to the conflict. This was why proverbs and maxims were instrumental to nailing the truth and ascertaining the facts expressible in the issues of conflicts in traditional African societies. The reconciliators were to exhibit transparent concern for the parties to the conflict on one hand and the society on the other. Thus, the responsibility of the reconciliators in traditional African society was anchored on "to assuage injured feelings, to restore peace, to reach a compromise acceptable to both disputants" (Matson 1953:48) and satisfy the insatiable desires of the people for social justice. Driberg (1934:223-237) claimed that the responsibility went beyond the reconciliators and fell on all and sundry

in the society because there was collective responsibility for a course of action in traditional African societies.

Assuredly, it will interest you to observe that reconciliation in traditional African societies was accorded a human face stance. It was not "a winner takes it all" affair. The parties to the conflict were made to understand the consequences of their action towards affecting social justice and development. There was, therefore, no victor no vanquished in the resulting verdict given to a conflict. Not only were the parties enjoined to give peace a chance by shifting the ground of their annoyance and aggression but also they were made to exhibit the "forgiveness and forgetfulness" of the conflict through:

• demonstration of apology,
• display of hugging drama,
• showing evidence of joy by smiling,
• public eating and drinking in a container (calabash) together; and
• appreciating the modalities of reconciliation.

The public demonstration of the acceptance of the end product of reconciliation entailed that the end justifies the means. Reconciliation method as you will find out was a magic wand captivating the interests of the parties to the conflict and the civil society, which organized the pacificator programme of restoration of peace and relationship. Indeed, reconciliation required proper language of persuasion to achieve. A soft word, no doubt, turns away anger; and in traditional African societies words had power. Moreover, the words of elders are anchored on wisdom. This was why the reconciliators in traditional African societies were always elders and those who had sufficient experience to engage in reconciliation.

In the religious psyche of the Africans, as you will discover, reconciliation process was engaged in the ancestral community. The process was carried out in a hierarchical order. Those who engaged in the reconciliation did so with a reflection on earthly practices which they had once inaugurated and bequeathed to their offspring. Among the forebears in the spiritual domain, there was the need for restoration of order between them and their earthly children just as there was the need to maintain an ontological balance between them and the supreme Being. This suggests that divine reconciliation exist in both space and time. This belief is uniquely the preserves of the Africans and had been so reflected in the authentication of reconciliatory process towards social justice and cultural engineering.

## 3.3    Characteristics of Reconciliation

You must have observed that reconciliation paved the way for further development in traditional African societies to the extent that it manifested in the psyche of the traditionalists. Some factors made it so and this is why you need to understand the characteristics of reconciliation with a view to integrating the veritable aspects of it into present day development process.

Reconciliation in traditional African societies allowed for the demonstration of human face and the upholding of good conscience and mannerism. The Africans as you must know have had the nature of mutual understanding and social harmony which facilitated good neighborliness and acts of brotherhood. This characteristics entailed that awe and fear were completely removed from the demonstration of *esprit de corps* which typified social engineering in African cultural heritage. You will remember that this feature of reconciliation clearly distinguish the Africans from the rest of the world and has also projected them into the realm of glory and finesse as well as propelling the Africans into the global village since peace had been borne out of reconciliatory process.

Reconciliation saved time and energy for the parties to the conflict and the reconciliators. Indeed, it played safe for the parties to the conflict. It is interesting for you to know that but for reconciliation process, conflict can ignite destruction of goods and properties as well as allowed for character assassination of the parties to the conflict. Good time was saved, energy invigorated and fortunes were restored in the process of reconciliation.

One vital aspect of the characteristics of reconciliation in traditional African societies was that the process often bridged gaps in societal goals and understanding. Thus, you will get to understand, through the process, that solidarity among groups was borne out of reconciliation. Observably, as it is well known to you, Africans engaged in communal living which had afforded them common understanding and destiny. Thus, when conflict arose, the process of reconciliation always set it ablaze and restored order and peace.

Peace which was the concern of all and sundry in traditional African societies was assuringly anchored on the substance of reconciliation. It is very significant for you to know that the collective will and ethos of the society made reconciliation fruitful and functional. Thus, reconciliation was the preserves of all in traditional African societies. It was upheld as the collective responsibilities such that the parties to the conflict usually submitted to the persuasion and pacification of the reconciliators.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What is a reconciliation method in conflict resolution?
2.    What are the characteristics of reconciliation?
3.    Apart from restoration of peace, what else had reconciliation achieved in traditional African society?
4.    Who were the reconciliators in traditional African society?
5.    What assessment can you give for the substance and relevance of reconciliation in traditional African society?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

When conflict ensued in traditional African societies, it presented hot bedrock of action and reactions which had been antithetical to social order and control. Obviously conflict had been adjudged inevitable in human society. Only the process of reconciliation nipped its bud in African society. Reconciliation process in traditional African societies facilitated peace and restored social engineering in the atmosphere of unity and diversity.

Reconciliation method of conflict resolution as you have discovered, was unarguably anchored on the provision of soothing balm towards promoting peace and harmony in traditional African societies. Such a balm had healed the wounds of conflict and had served as "medicine" regularly applied to the ensued conflicts. The reconciliator, who were adjudged as experienced pacificators usually used the right and appropriate language to persuade the parties to the conflict and the crowd of audience at the scene of conflict resolution. No one was left in doubt as to the desirability and the substance of seasoned reasoning associated with the logic of reconciliation. It was always a heart warming exercise penetrating the conscience and psyche of the people at the venue of reconciliation.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

Reconciliation method of conflict resolution in traditional African societies had been addressed sufficiently well to demonstrate the ideals of social relations and mutual trust and confidence. Obviously you have seen that enough confidence would have been reposed on the reconciliator. The mandate given to them was such that made customs and norms to thrive towards adjudging the fact that the African forebears left a worthwhile legacy to their offsprings, who they kept a divine watchful eyes on.

It has also been revealed to you that as inevitable as conflict was in traditional African societies, there was workable mechanism of social

order and control to the degree of exterminating conflict and restoring peace and harmony. Reconciliation method of conflict resolution had effectively worked for normalizing relationship and judiciously enhanced social justice and cultural engineering. In sum, you must have found out that reconciliation exposed all that gingered interest and ignited enthusiasm in the solidarity agenda in traditional African societies.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    "Reconciliation process had been instrumental to restoration of peace and social harmony in traditional African societies". Discuss.
2.    What are the problems inimical to functional indigenous reconciliation process in modern African societies?

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# MODULE 3     INDIGENOUS PERSONALITIES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Unit 1      Kings and Chiefs
Unit 2      Ancestors
Units 3     Elders and Family Heads
Units 4     Age-grade Association
Units 5     Secret Societies

## UNIT 1     KINGS AND CHIEFS

### CONTENTS

1.0      Introduction
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## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

You will study in this unit that conflict resolution was quite a rewarding exercise in traditional African societies as it involved statement and significant number of facilitators of peace and harmony, with a view to enhancing development and the maintenance of law and order. It is, therefore, obvious that those who governed various kingdoms in Africa, possessed the wherewithal of power and authority anchored on the rule of law and the legitimacy thesis thereof. Thus, the indigenous personalities noted for active participation in conflict resolution in African societies are identified as kings and chiefs, ancestors, elders, family heads, diviners and priests, members of age-association, commodity association and professional association (such as guilds of hunters, and blacksmith, etc) as well as members of secret societies. These key personalities in peace facilitation and social engineering had the capacity of keeping the society in order and maintaining social decorum.

Conflict resolution requires great force of intention and enthusiasm (interest), great probity, bravery and bravado, highly stimulating zeal and enduring sense of history. It behoves on the peace facilitators to be doggedly determined to ward off calamity which conflicts might have triggered off and a broad knowledge of norms and nuances of the art of

conflict resolution at the grassroot level. The key personalities of conflict resolution that you will study in this module possessed all the features of responsibility anchored on the art of conflict resolution as would be subsequently unearthed.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- situate the roles of African kings in conflict resolution perspectives,
- identify other players in the art of conflict resolution with the kings i.e. chiefs,
- assess the expectations of the townspeople on African kings and chiefs towards the facilitation of peace and harmony in the society,
- pencil down royal value of the kingly personality as they influence peace process; and
- catalogue the challenges of conflict resolution before African kings and chiefs.

At the end of the unit discussion, you must have appreciated the roles African kings have played in diverse forms – custodian of culture, facilitator of peace, promoter of harmony and controller of rituals for societal development. These roles are in tune with the African adage that says "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown". You should by this understand the nature of leadership in traditional African societies and made bold to compare it with the modern contextualization of leadership.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1 Kings and Chiefs

The political culture evolved in African societies recognized the king as the over all boss and father of the kingdom. He was at the apex of a royal hierarchy of chiefs and statesmen. He was the sacred representative of the supernatural on earth and the personification of his kingdom. Indeed, he was the link between the sacred world and the physical universe. The liaison personality between the gods and the people over whom he governed. The king often played pivotal role in the governance of his kingdom. Thus, to enable the king play significant role in African society, he was distinguished and invested with specifically distinct royal title symbolic of the history of his kingdom. Some of the titles are listed for you hereunder in **Table 1.**

| S/NO | Table of kingship | Kingdoms in Africa |
|------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Ga Mantse | Ga (in Ghana) |
| 2. | Ohene | Asante (in Ghana) |
| 3. | The Oni | Cradle of Yoruba |
| 4. | The Alaafin | Oyo kingdom |
| 5. | The Zibondo | Basoga kingdom (in Uganda) |
| 6. | The Kabaka | Kingdom of Buganda (in Ugenda) |
| 7. | The Moro naba | Kingdom of Mossi |
| 8. | The Bur | Serer kingdom (in Senegal) |
| 9. | The Mani Kongo | Kingdom of Kongo |
| 10. | Ngwenyama | Swazi kingdom |
| 11. | Shaka | Zulu Kingdom (in south eastern south Africa) |
| 12. | The Bur | Saloun kingdom (Senegal) |

The royal titles are limitless but they are significantly symbolic of the suzerainty of the divine personality. The nature of kingship in African traditional societies was that of a human being in the garb of godliness, which endowed on the personality, the power to issue out authority that cannot be querried. Herein lies the power of Africa kings towards social control and establishment of law and order in the society. In most cases, therefore, the word of an African king as you will understand, was law never to be flouted by anyone in his kingdom.

African kings played very significant roles in conflict resolution. They have been adjudged suitable for providing:

- Forum
- Process
- Principles
- Pattern
- Pace
- Context
- Direction for the fine-tuning and inauguration of peace and harmony, the preserves of growth and development in indigenous African societies. These provisions were in tune with the norms and customs of the kingdoms which the kings inherited from their ancestors. Thus, to facilitate peace in his domain and jurisdiction the African king was imbued with:
- enduring sense of history of the norms and nuances of the kingdom,
- unwavering wisdom of distilling facts from falsehood in the treatment of issues of conflict,
- high level of epitomizing moral order, peace process and classical demonstration of harmony; and
- broader legitimization of the vital link between the universe and the supernatural order.

The foregoing kingly values suggest optimal performance of royalty in the promotion of cultural heritage and the facilitation of peace and harmony.

African kings stood tall in the facilitation of peace and harmony in their various kingdoms. Their legitimacy on the throne, the investiture of royal power, their ritual cleansing capacity, their sense of history towards comprehending the norms and rules bequeathed on them by their forebears, the respect and reverence accorded them by their subjects (towns people) were prerogatives of contributing so immensely to peace process and development in African societies. They were regarded as active adjudicators, judges and reconciliators in their various domain.

In pre-colonial times, as you will be made to understand, African kings were not physically seen (having been veiled) or heard. Rather they had an interpreter so referred to among the Akan speaking people of Ghana as a linguist. Such an interpretation was diplomatically couched as typical of the names of the *Ilari* (royal emissaries) in the Palace of the *Alaafin* of Oyo kingdom. It was not so much of the idea of seeing the king that mattered but the process of resolution which the authority of the royal command through the interpreter to the degree that the end of justice was celebrated.

African kings at coronation were ritually cleansed and endowed with the capacity to cleanse the society of fifth and bless the townspeople from time to time. The capacity for ritual cleansing therefore, enabled African kings to decipher whatever situation that surrounded his kingdom, especially in terms of conflict and crisis. The king, for your proper understanding, normally rose to the occasion of resolving the conflict upon the advice and suggestions of his chiefs and Palace envoys. This entails that the king was surrounded by a retinue of chiefs quite capable of teaming up with the king (their boss) in the art of conflict resolution.

## 3.2    Chiefs as Partners in Progress with African Kings

The African kingdoms were ruled by kings (monarchs) in the constitutional framework of monarchical government. They were rulers. You need to understand that Chiefs were subordinate to the kings and therefore had chiefdom as their area of jurisdiction. Chiefs were of lesser status and power than the kings in African societies. While kings were rulers, chiefs were leaders. The meeting point of their constitutional rights and duties was their commitment to governance and inauguration of peace and harmony in African societies.

The chiefs in partnership with African kings carried out executive, legislative and judicial duties in their respective domains. They were duty bound to resolve conflicts regularly and facilitated peace and harmony which enhanced development in the society. The chiefs acted as safety verve in the conduct of conflict resolution meetings for the kings, who perhaps by loss of memory, would have missed certain procedure

associated with the art of resolving conflict. Thus, African chiefs provided

- supporting force of action,
- enabling spirit and motivation,
- team spirit and interest,
- checks and balances,
- validity of verdict; and
- reconnection points for parties to the conflict.

From the foregoing, it can be rightly established that African chiefs were powerful organs and agents of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. They played a modifying role in the art of conflict resolution especially ensuring that kings were not so autocratic in the dispensation of justice. They were for your comprehension, down to earth with the truth and peace process under their jurisdiction.

African chiefs have the wherewithal of conflict resolution in the society. This they have learnt by heart and experience from their forebears who bequeathed the art to them. Some of these chiefs were more practical and experience than the kings who they installed. This was why it was not so easy a task for the kings to underrate the intelligence and wisdom of their chiefs. The chiefs were often respected for the wealth of knowledge in reconciliation and enduring sense of history of the culture of the kingdoms. By their status and role-model, therefore, African kings and chiefs must foster unity, initiate programme of development and especially partnered peace and harmony for the benefits of all the subjects in their domain.

African chiefs were the watchdogs for the morality and proprietary of manners for the youth and the elderly in African societies. Fundamentally, the basis of unity, common understanding and mutuality was good behaviour and action geared towards social development in the society. Many African chiefs lived closely with the townspeople and monitored the mode of behaviour of the people. Indeed, chiefs in their various quarters and wards had court session where parties to the conflict often met for the resolution of their conflicts. In the event of mobility to handle the conflict, the chiefs of such a quarter or ward engineered the process of transferring the matter to the higher level, where kings and others chiefs listened to and resolved the conflict. This presupposes the fact that African chiefs always prepared the ground for eventual resolution of conflict in African societies.

African chiefs respected their kings so well that they:

- held kings in great reverence
- usually accorded the kings with utmost obeisance
- regarded the kings as representative of the gods and as such semi-supernatural
- upheld the words of the kings as law and authority as sacrosanct.
- expected a reciprocal gestures from the kings. Thus, African chiefs

never expected their kings to be so absolute in the expression of rights and privileges.

In the event of non-compliance with the norms and customs of the kingdom, shirking of chieftaincy responsibilities and status symbol, non-performance of sacrificial rites, African chiefs had the wherewithal to warn and institute specific ultimatum to their kings. African chiefs knew the act of installation of kings and their dethronement when situation of governance went soured. Hence, from kingdom to kingdom, as you will expect, there were established rules governing the relationship between the kings and chiefs in Africa. On the occasion of disaffection and disagreement between African kings and chiefs, conflict ensued and peace was conflagrated, thus, making the art of conflict resolution dislocated. Such a situation returned the kingdom to a period of interregnum and regency when conflict resolution became unpractical and unworkable. As a matter of fact, African chiefs had upper hand to manipulate the art of conflict resolution during the period of regency. It must be clearly stated that at such a period the regent was schooled in the art of conflict resolution by the African chiefs (which is the bedrock of societal governance). It is, therefore, significant that African kings and chiefs worked as partners in progress like the two human arms which jointly raised heavy loads up to the shoulder (one single arm is always helpless). It is also important to emphasize the point that conflict between African kings and chiefs sometimes hardly got noticed by the populace. Many times such a conflicting situation was resolved internally with a view to making the kingdom progressive. This suggests to you the fact that those "who live in glass houses must not develop the art of stone throwing". In other words, those who promulgate the laws must not be seen breaching them. In the pre-colonial times, African kings maintained high sense of responsibilities and maturity, especially when they had been endowed with the wisdom and knowledge of conflict resolution. The situation was, however, not the same during the colonial era in Africa.

## 3.3    African Kings and Chiefs Today

In the past African kings and chiefs were totally relied upon for executive, legislative and judicial control of the society. There had been a lot of changes which, as you must observe, have overtaken traditional functions of these indigenous ruling elites. Such changes include:

• the advent of the colonial administrators,
• the missionary impact,
• establishment of colonial styled courts which practised colonial laws,
• the introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR); and
• foreign pattern of governance and cultural traits.

Hitherto African kings and chiefs were engaged in the formulation of governmental policies and the promulgation of indigenous laws eked out of traditional norms and customs. The colonial authority came and assumed such royal duties and stood between African kings and chiefs, to the degree that some kings had their power increased far and above the chiefs. Of course, some other kings became ordinary puppet on the throne. While kings were made the presidents of customary courts in their jurisdiction, the chiefs were mere floor members. Since African kings merely followed the dictates and mandates of the colonial authority, their chiefs had no influence on them in the interpretation of colonial laws, which were totally alien to them. Since the indigenous laws and customs were not applied to bear with the colonial laws, the African chiefs right from the colonial times, had been redundant in the schemes of conflict resolution. Although, back in their royal palaces there were still traces of meeting and resolving very pertinent and specific conflicts, African kings and chiefs were very cautious of flouting the established colonial laws, lest they were arrested and incarcerated. For example, African kings and chiefs never practised the oathing and ordeal devices of getting to the root of unknown conflict.

You will be wondering, however, that in the scheme of governance at the grassroot level (moral setting), it has been difficult to scrap the kings and chiefs. It has also been difficult for foreign pattern of governance to design specific roles for kings and chiefs. Thus, African kings and chiefs, even though still exists and continually play vital role in governance and conflict resolution, lack constitutional roles. This is the crux of the matter when sympathizing with inability of various indigenous institutions which still flourished in African societies today. It is important for you to understand that inspite of the denial of the African kings and chiefs to be engaged in governance within the framework of the constitution (such roles which were hitherto highlighted in the African unwritten constitution) the knowledge of conflict resolution never perished and that kings and chiefs still play behind the scene roles and responsibilities in today's resolution of conflicts. This is in congruence with the fact of the transformation of conflict resolution model across time, kingdom and space. There is, therefore, no gainsaying the fact that people's culture can be virile and transformative.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1.    What is a kingdom?
2.    What is a chiefdom?
3.    What roles have African kings and chiefs played in conflict resolution?
4.    Mention indigenous African personalities in conflict resolution.
5.    What challenges do the modern kings face in the new trend of conflict resolution in Africa?

## 4.0   CONCLUSION

This unit has emphasized the point that conflict resolution is a bed rock of governance in any given society where political culture exists. Rulers and leaders are no doubt the anchors of such conflict resolution model cum governance. In African societies before the advent of colonialism, kings and chiefs were among the cherished personalities, who saw to the administration of justice, and the facilitation of peace and harmony. Thus, the role played by the potentates and their chieftains had been instrumental to the level of progress and development in pre-colonial African kingdoms.

Good governance, as exhibited in many African kingdoms (of the past) was a reflection of the conflict resolution model which enabled the rulers and the ruled to have peace of mind and foresight for development. Indeed, this unit of our course has demonstrated the fact that the presence of kings and chiefs in the society will enable us to understand the position of the rulers vis-a-vis the governed, to the extent that it induces the contextual analysis of royalty and loyalty which are indices of cooperation and compromise against destructive forces in the society.

It is also significant to deduce the fact (derivative of the dynamism of conflict resolution model) that the existence of institutions and its functionalities loom large in the players engaged in the promotion of the cultural heritage, which produced the institutions. There are always conflicts in all societies (African societies not exceptional) and there are always channels and instruments to resolve them. African kings and chiefs had all along acted together to have facilitated peace and harmony in their various kingdoms and jurisdictions.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

Established norms and customs have progressively engineered good institutions with network of relationship. This you have observed had been quite productive in the lubrication of the engine of development. Indeed, the lubricators of such a developmental innovation were the African kings and chiefs. Their roles had been so pivotal and undeniable on the pages of history in Africa. It was the role - model exhibited by the potentates and their chieftains which endeared the colonialists to have so recognised the ability of the kings and their capacity for bringing the people together as well as maintaining law and order. Thus, the British Administrators observed and mandated African kings, at a representative levels, to good governance which at the long run produced economic propensity. Although, the British and French Administrators had uncouth ulterior motive in using African kings as personnel of colonial Administration, the point is that the art of governance was never new to them except that the kings were used and dumped. The educated elites and their cohorts did the same thing and got away with it.

It is not in doubt that elements of fear existed for the African kings because of the sacredness associated with the royal office. Such fears were, however, counter productive for indigenous royal institution. You would have expected that the rights of the kings to ritual power would have intimidated any attempt of wishful thinking and usurpation should have been thrown over board. It is not in doubt that the kings never prepared for the situation which eventually bemoan them and up till today they are still being used, intimidated, harassed and embarrassed. Little wonder, therefore, that African kings are seldom seen or heard in the corridor of alien governance.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Examine the factors militating against African kings and chiefs that their roles in conflict resolution have not been raised to the summit in the global village.
2. African kings and chiefs were agents of conflict resolution in pre-colonial times. Discuss.

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## UNITS 2    ANCESTORS

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

In this unit of study you will know that ancestors have been existing through the ages in Africa. Their existences had been spiritually and metaphysically conceived in the psyche of the Africans. Such spiritualism informed the belief system of the Africans that death can never write off the living inspiration and aspiration of African people in as much as there is such conceptualization of the cosmos, where spiritual forces interplay in the scheme of existence.

The ancestors/ancestresses have been conceived as the living dead sharing dual existences, the living world and the spiritual community. The experience gained while on earth usually informed the level of reflections of earth activities in the spiritual community. Such an experience was never given off since the connective veins and blood continually flowed in their offsprings, who though, lacked the requisite experience, must be guided to gain the experience of life. Such an experience is that of motivation and coordination in the art of conflict resolution. Indeed, it is never in doubt that the ancestors would bring to bear on their ancestral and serene community, the art of facilitating peace and harmony, which undoubtedly, you will find out resonated in the modular exhibition of peaceful development. Thus, the art of conflict resolution would not have been limited to earthly living and sojourn but that it continued in the ancestral community. The ancestral community, therefore, would have been charged with series of well coordinated activities reflective of the physical world. Hence, the ancestral community is the spiritual world/universe and therefore the next stage of human sojourn through transformation into the spiritual realm.

As you will soon see, the ancestral community, which is the spiritual domain of the living – dead possesses the reflective characteristics of

human activities especially the art of conflict resolution. The transformation of human beings into the spiritual world is essentially a total one whereby the physical behaviour, norms and customs were never forgotten as the next point of sojourn. It is like a man journeying from one community to the other and would definitely influence and affect his next port of call while also he must imbibe the culture of the new environment. He must also look back so reflectively to what must have been going on in his community of exit. It is, therefore, instructive for you to know that life is a continuous flow of activities that are unending but changes pattern from age to age and person to person.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit has some unique objectives to propel clearer understanding of a totally difficult concept such as ancestral living. Thus, by the end of this unit you should be able to:

• situate ancestral living within the context of unending activities of man in space and time,
• identify the ancestors as key players in the art of conflict resolution in African society,
• assess the spectacular roles of the living – dead in the life of the living persons especially in the art of conflict resolution; and
• examine the implication of conflict between the ancestors and the living persons.

There is no doubting the fact that at the end of this unit you should have been convinced of the networking of relationship between the ancestors (who have been transformed into spiritual universe) and the living persons sojourning in the earthly universe. You will also ponder on their future and the end of times, when they will also be spiritually transformed. This unit is knowledge – based for you to recognize the invisible impact of the spiritual forces on such an earthly activity as conflict resolution, because the ancestors cannot afford to see what they have left behind (after their departure on earth) to go sour.

## 3.0   MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1   The Ancestors in Partnership with the Living

There had been network of relationship between the ancestors and the living persons. Their partnership had been so cordial and mutual but spiritually conceptualized as you will observe in this unit. The continual relationship between the living and the ancestors had been clearly described by Fortes thus:

> When a particular deceased and it is always a particular person – is thus reinstated as an ancestor, it is because he has living descendants of the right category. His reinstatement in this status established his continued relevance for his society, not as a ghost, but as a regulative focus for the social relations and activities and that persist as the deposit, so the (sic) speaks of his life and career (Fortes, 1965:129).

The relationship between the ancestors and the living persons are differently interpreted among various ethnic groups in Africa. It is dyadic among the Irigwe of Nigeria but triadic in the belief system of the Tiriki in Kenya. Among the Sisala of northern Ghana, the ancestors are conceptualized as a reflection of social relations. The ancestors control social relations among the Lojagaa, regarded as guardians among the Tallensi and regulators of disputes among the Lugbara of Uganda. The continual partnership and association in the regular governance of the society (as demonstrated by the ancestors and the living) is typical of the Suku of Southwestern Congo, the Ngas and the Sukuma in Tanganyika. Generally in African societies, the living and the dead have been in continual partnership.

The persistent occurrence of conflict in Africa would no doubt be attributed to the overwhelming influence of the supernatural in the affairs of the living. Indeed, the universe is a psychic arena which put paid to the interplay of many forces. To ignore these forces or undue tapping of the forces would always cause conflict. Moreover, the neglect of the ancestors (as part of life continuum) can trigger off conflicts and afflictions within the family, lineage and society. Among the Sukuma of Tanganyika, an offence against the ancestors attracts afflictions which can only be atoned for thorough propitiation. Thus, to prevent conflict in African indigenous societies, as the case of the Sukuma has demonstrated, there is the need for the fear of the supernatural forces such as that of the ancestors. Adewoye (1977:9-10) and Ojo (1979:65) are of the view that the supernatural had overwhelming influence on the moral conduct of the society through the facilitation of peace and harmony.

The main responsibility of African ancestors for your proper understanding is to ensure social equilibrium and justice. Thus authority is sufficiently vested in them. C.J. Calhoun (1980:304) identified marked differences between the authority of the ancestors and that of the living person. He concluded that the authority of the ancestors is "pervasive and absolute" while that of the living is "partial and subject to challenge". This presupposes the fact that the living are subservient to the ancestors.

## 3.2 Ancestors in Peacemaking Process

African ancestors have been adjudged one of the key personalities in conflict resolution. It has been established that the ancestors once lived the earthly universe before they transformed into the spiritual universe where they reflectively watched over the affairs and activities of the living person. By so doing they had the experience and wherewithal of peace – making far and above the living persons. Indeed, the ancestors bequeathed the art of conflict resolution to the living persons while quitting the earthly universe. This is the reason why the ancestors ensured that what they left behind in the physical world was maintained and upheld for continuity.

African ancestors possess the motivation and drive towards facilitating the process of conflict resolution. Not just because they have the experience and authority but also they are very wise and all knowing. You will discover that they are also peace-loving and as such they are peace facilitators and enhancers. It has ever been the avowed responsibility and rights of the ancestors to occupy a prominent, invisible and invincible position at the scene of conflict resolution in Africa. The living elders who are physically seen, though standing above all parties to the conflict and the evidence, are merely present as lieutenants of the dead elders. The authority of the living elders over any conflict in vogue was sanctioned by the dead elders. Thus, the ancestors are spiritually present at the scene of conflict resolution be it family, clan, lineage or town level. The serene atmosphere and the perfect decorum attendant on the process of conflict resolution lends credence to this fact. C.J. Calhoun is assertive on the presence of the ancestors in the process of conflict resolution-an approach which looms large in African societies. He submits thus:

> Alternately, the ancestors may be called upon to resolve a dispute, to put it another way, disputants may carry out their arguments in the language of ancestral authority. Specific ancestors hold primary authority over groups larger than households (that is, larger than those headed by living parents). They are also the prime referents in the definition and differentiation of these corporate groups. The primary means of bringing the ancestral voice into the affairs of the living, and thus rendering an authoritative decision through divination (Calhoun, 1980:306).

It is significant, here, for you to understand the point that the ancestors not only know the wherewithal of communicating in the language of peace and harmony, but are also powerful forces to reckon with in conflict resolution. Thus the living elders, which Kopytoff (1971:130)

considered as ancestors in the making possess the representational voices of the ancestors.

The living elders, therefore, owe it a sacred duty to uphold the tenets of power and authority of the ancestors. The living elders regard the obligation not as of right, but a privilege which must not be abused or neglected. If abused, the ancestors could wield their authority to punish erring living elders. This suggests to you that the ancestors possess punitive powers which the living elders cannot comprehend.

By and large, the peacemaking process in African societies is controlled by the presence of the ancestors, who watch over the procedure and practice of conflict resolution. Even at the inauguration of councils, panels and tribunals responsible for the installation of social order, maintenance of *esprit de corps*, etc. the ancestors give blessing and support. Peace making and peace building processes are the handiwork of constituted authorities-kings, chiefs (as earliest discussed) and priests some of whom claimed divine rights and the living elders – who have the ancestral investiture of power and authority not only to make rules but also to formulate enduring policies germane to the development of their societies.

The talking points of this unit include the fact that the African ancestors are:

•      watchdogs of morality, discipline and proximity,
•      initiators of the dynamics of conflict resolution,
•      arbiters of seemingly difficult conflicts for resolution,
•      invisible reconciliators of conflicts,
•      facilitators of peace and harmony in African universal space,
•      enhancers of social ethics and ethos; and
•      custodians of the knowledge and wisdom of conflict resolution.

## 3.3   Ancestors and Conflict Generating Traits

As human beings have the character traits so do the ancestors. There is of course a space of difference between the ancestors and the living persons in African societies. The ancestors as you will understand are invisible to the living persons but not vice versa. The gulf between them is so difficult to decipher and measure. While it is somehow easy to disarm the character of the humans, it is not so with the ancestors. It is, however, discernible that the ancestors:

•      have prerogatives of power to do and undo,
•      can exhibit robust sense of tolerance,

- may be annoyed over the slightest mistakes of their offspring,
- can inflict plague and such other epidemics at the slimmest of provocation; and
- can trigger off conflict when not satisfied with public ordering of events.

The African ancestors, always wished that the society progresses to the greatest limit of profitability. They, however, abhor:

- neglect
- hatred among kith and kin
- pretext
- greed
- self aggrandizement
- laziness
- lies
- character assassination
- molestation
- oppression

When any of the above listed offences had occurred, the hope of not permanently incurring the wrath of the ancestors lay in copious propitiation.

The ancestors are, however, not interested in causing wars, bringing about plagues and pestilence. M. Fortes captures this point quite clearly thus:

> In short, the persecuting ancestor is not a supernatural being capriciously punishing wrongdoing or rewarding virtue. He is rather to be thought of as an ultimate judge and mentor whose vigilance is directed towards restoring order and discipline in compliance with the norms of right and duty, amity and piety, whenever regression threaten or occur. When misfortune occurs and is interpreted as punitive, or to be more exact, corrective intervention by the ancestors, they are believed to have acted rightfully, not wantonly, moreover, they are subject to the moral constraint that emanates from faithful worship. Though one cannot be certain that one's offerings and attendance will gain their benevolence, one can rest assured that they will bind the ancestors to act justly (Fortes, 1965:136).

It is significant for you to understand the point that African ancestors have been well focused in their dealings with their offsprings in the earthly universe. The idea of generating conflict (a trait so reservedly

inclined to them) is not so much a great interest and intention but the ancestors could want their offsprings to maintain an ontological balance with them for the purpose of constant reminder of what will ginger the living persons not only to action but also to the right direction. Whatever punishment given to their offsprings was corrective and purposeful. Thus, the living persons can not take the African ancestors for a ride all because of their physical absence from the earthly universe.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      Who are the ancestors?
2.      Why do the Africans believe in the existence of their ancestors?
3.      What roles have the ancestors played in peace making process?
4.      What are the qualities of a good ancestor?
5.      Is there a bad ancestor?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

In African societies, individuals still adhere to funeral obsequies befitting aged parents. Their physical separation from the families still elicit concern, sympathy, fear and friction. Ancestors therefore are not forgotten, they are remembered and reverenced through paid adverts in both print and electronic media. The property left behind by them have constantly caused rifts between their offsprings which have constituted elements of conflict. It is, however, re-assuring that the words handed down by them and their wishes while on earth have been reference points for resolving whatever conflicts were triggered off by the exit. Thus, the ancestors still influence the bearing, mood, interest and psyche of their offsprings to a large extent.

The spirit of the ancestors can be invoked to ascertain the invisible and spiritual presence at the scheme of conflict resolution in African Societies. The reconciliators at the scene could be inspired and influenced by the unseen forces dominating the scene of conflict resolution. They, therefore, would have been overwhelmingly mandated to emphasize the obvious, stress the salient points in the issues of conflict and strike the canal of the truth regarding the resolution of the conflict.

The understanding of the issues of the conflict by the reconciliators, parties to the conflict, withnesses and the listening or participating audience could have been made possible by the serene atmosphere (brought about by spiritual essence of the ancestors) surrounding the scene of conflict resolution. Interestingly enough such an atmosphere was charged with maximum attention, intention and commitment all geared towards eliminating lies and falsehood but articulating and

hammering on the truth and nothing but the truth. It is important for you to know that truth is the only language of the ancestors and the instrument of facilitating peace and harmony in African societies. To do otherwise will incur the wrath and anger of the ancestors. Whereas it is not easy to annoy the ancestors.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

Focusing on the ancestors entails outright conceptualization of their power and authority with which they have controlled the earthly universe and networked with activities of man as discussed in this unit. The ancestors have also invisibly engaged in conflict resolution which promoted peace and harmony in African societies. Even though not physically seen at the venue of conflict resolution, ancestors have featured so prominently and engagingly to the level of providing succour and concord in the midst of resolving conflict. The end of the resolution would have been found satisfying and fulfilling to all participants at the venue of conflict resolution due to the overwhelming influence and control of the ancestors. This is always in the psyche of the reconciliator, whose interest was to "assuage injured feelings" of the parties to the conflict.

The end of conflict ceremony was no doubt ritual - based and ancestor – focused, to the extent that such a ceremony concluded the conflict resolution business and restored peace and normalcy to the society engineered by the ancestors. The ancestors are wise and all knowing, exhibiting the dynamism of the process of peace making and peace - building. Whether the spirit of the ancestor was invoked or not, nothing hindered the living-dead to be spiritually present at the venue of conflict resolution, whose knowledge resonated in their psyche. Conversely, you must have observed that the ancestors know the time and space of conflict resolution in African societies.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Why are the influences of the ancestors on conflict resolution more profound in the rural settings than in the urban centres?
2.    Imagine if living people of today reason and act like the ancestors would situation in African societies have been different?

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## UNIT 3     ELDERS AND FAMILY HEADS

**CONTENTS**

1.0     Introduction
2.0     Objectives
3.0     Main Content
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       3.2     Family System and Foundation of Conflict Resolution
       3.3     Elders as Icons of Conflict Resolution
4.0     Conclusion
5.0     Summary
6.0     Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0     References/Further Reading

## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

The elders and family heads, as you will understand in this unit, played crucial roles in indigenous conflict resolution in African societies. Their roles were not just political but also social and sometimes religious. They had served as key personalities in the facilitation of peace and harmony in their respective jurisdictions. The family heads were elders in their family compound and remain so in the larger society. There were also elders at ward and quarter levels of the society. These elders were widespread in traditional African societies.

What determined elderly disposition in indigenous African societies was not by stature or wealth but by age and maturity as well as wisdom and knowledge posturing. It requires substantial level of growth and length of time of habitation on earthly universe. Sometimes again, it requires traits of responsibility and reasonability – without which a man can successfully engage in the art of conflict resolution. There were various categories of elders – all of which were in tune with the development thesis in the society.

Elders were the focus of attention to the youth and the adolescent who look on in life for moments of enjoyment, fulfilling career and association and who regarded the aged person as repository of knowledge and wisdom as well as shinning example of projecting an enduring sense of history of the society. That history is no doubt replete with methods of conflict resolution that must be learnt and acquired because the young shall grow and later become elderly. It is, therefore, significant for you to note that there is transitional period in the stages of life in African societies. The transitional period was, however, determined by the rate of mentality and the interest and enthusiasm of both the youth (to lean fast and acquire knowledge) and the living elders (to impact sufficient practical knowledge on the youth who will later take over the rein of affairs from them). You will discover that the youth can be exuberant and the elders can be unassuming in knowledge

impartation. To fail to learn from the elders is to rubbish the process of governance and  conflict resolution for  the  future generation. Thus, the elders and the youth are partners in progress in the sustenance of peace and harmony in African traditional societies.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

*       understand the wisdom of elders and family heads in the art of conflict resolution,
*       assess the peacemaking capacity of the elders and the family heads,
*       identify the roles of the elders and family heads in conflict resolution; and
*       weigh the challenges before the elders and family heads in the process of conflict resolution in African societies.

Through the discussion in this unit, you stand at the vantage position of appreciating the value of wisdom as applicable to day-to-day life activities and how to cope with the challenges of the time.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    Elders and Synergy for Effective Conflict Resolution

African elders had the capacity to initate developments, gave foresight into the future of the society and facilitated peace and harmony the preserves of law and orderliness, which signalled social engineering. This presupposes the fact that the living elders have been imbued and endowed with the art of conflict resolution – the defence of truth and projection of progress in African societies. These elders were attributed with sterling qualities which stood them out of the society. These included:

*       forbearance
*       tolerance
*       patience
*       foresight
*       innovative spirit
*       self-control
*       forthrightness
*       commitment to development process

The foregoing sterling attributes, as you will understand, enabled the elders to relate well with members of their communities to the degree of carrying the people along with the programmes of development and thesis of companionship and social engineering. The elders were so committed to the development of the society such that the derivative thesis of governance

had its hold in both centralized and acephalous societies. Among the former included the Swazi and Zulu of South Africa, the Mossi of Burkina Faso, the Fante of Ghana, the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria and the Hausa of northern Nigeria. While the latter group are the Mbeere of Kenya, the Kokomba of Togoland, the Jie of Uganda and the Fulani of northern Nigeria as well as the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria. Gerontocracy (government by the elders) meant all aspects of social welfare for the people. As earlier mentioned, you must have observed, age and status are parameters of determining social classificatory models in African societies. The African elders, therefore, had the prerogatives of maturity and experience with which they carried out their early activities, especially the art of conflict resolution.

The experience and wisdom of conflict resolution, however, derived from their forbears. Indeed, Kopytoff Igor (1971:129-142) regarded the elders as ancestors in African societies. This suggests that the knowledge and wisdom of the elders were bequeathed to them by their ancestors (who earlier had the foremost of knowledge and understanding of the earthly conflict resolution model). It is also significant for you to infer from the ancestral impartation of knowledge on the living elders that African societies had existing conflict resolution model before western influence came. The living elders, therefore, were the instruments of transition of knowledge and experience of conflict resolution in African societies.

The acquisition of knowledge and wisdom of conflict resolution by the African elders enabled them to possess, in great abundance, the lores (Proverbs, maximum and folktales) with which they persuaded parties to the conflict and the crowd of listeners at the venue of conflict resolution. It is, however, not easy to acquire and master as well as apply the wisdom lores to issues of conflict. These lores were used at an impromptu manner, thereby suggesting for you the mental allertment and versatility of the living elders. To have been persuaded by the African elders (in a given conflicting situation) suggest the manifestation of the experience and capacity of the sages in the art of conflict resolution. The African elders, therefore, had the wherewithal of the power of persuasion and conviction derivable from the wisdom lores.

In the proceeding of conflict resolution whether at the family, ward or quarter levels, the elders usually showcased:

- belief in the ubiquitousness of the ancestral spirit,
- hope in the impartation of ancestral knowledge and control of the proceeding,
- application of the norms and customs of African society; and
- ability to end the feud in focus.

It was not in doubt, therefore, that E.S. Hartland (1924:50) clearly observed the "shrewdness" and "keen sense of justice" of the elders (adjudicating in

a conflict).

The elders among the Tiriki of western Kenya demonstrated the example of the judicial roles expected of them. Thus Water H. Sangree (49 – 50) described the roles of the Tiriki elders in a succinct way:

> The judicial elders who habitually gather at the community center in the mornings may always be prevailed upon by any man in the community to arbitrate a dispute. Boys, girls, and women customarily have their grievances presented by an adult brother of father … The plaintiff pleads his own case or the case of the aggrieved woman or child he represents, and he may bring as many witnesses as he wants to substantiate his story and give supporting evidence. The defendant, or his or her guardian, then presents his own case and names witnesses whom the judicial elders may then summon to give testimony on his behalf. During the entire proceedings all adult men and elderly women may ask the judicial elders for permission to express their opinion on the case, or add further evidence, and the elders may themselves call on anyone; including women and children to present testimony. The matter on which the judicial elder finally pass judgement is not necessarily that which the plaintiff first presented. Indeed, the original accusation may be judged irrelevant to some other question that arises during the trial and that is deemed greater importance by the elders. The original defendant may even be acquitted and final judgement made against someone else-even the plaintiff.

The foregoing proceeding among the Tiriki of Kenya demonstrates the fact of fair play and justice in the process of conflict resolution. The elders cannot afford to do otherwise as their commitment was geared towards peace and harmony for the parties to the conflict and the society at large.

## 3.2    Family System and the Foundation of Conflict Resolution

Fundamentally the family is a social unit and the bedrock of relationships and development. The family had been the unit of political culture in Africa and as such the foundation of conflict resolution. The art of conflict resolution, as we have discussed, promoted peace and harmony for the African populace. This presupposes the fact that the family must first feel the pulse of peace and harmony before it extends to the larger society. Thus, peace and harmony at the family level had been the foundation of a sound and positive political culture.

At the family level the engineers (facilitators) of peace and harmony were the family heads, who, in their own rights were also considered as elders. As a matter of fact, family heads in African societies were the most aged and matured otherwise they would have lacked the experience and wisdom with which to resolve conflicts. They must be the oldest person in the family.

The family heads in Africa had the capacity and experience of resolving conflicts within the family set up. As elders, the family heads possess all the sterling qualities which we earlier discussed on the living elders. As the oldest in the family and as ancestors in the making, they demonstrated the art of resolving conflict as bequeathed to them by the family ancestors. They therefore had the capacity of resolving conflicts such as marital brawl between co-wives in the family, between wives and husbands, between children and mothers as well as quarrels arising from property inheritance. Whatever conflicts that the family heads were unable to resolve were transferred to the ward heads.

The family heads were conscious of the cord of unity among family members. They therefore exercised:

- caution,
- patience; and
- level headedness.

These are widespread in African indigenous societies.

## 3.3    Elders as Icons of Conflict Resolution

You must have observed from the earlier discussion of the power and influence of spiritual forces in conflict resolution. The elders, you have also studied, were representatives of these spiritual forces or that they symbolized the power game in them. It is, however, instructive and significant for you to decipher the role-model of the spiritual forces that aided smooth execution of the power behind the resolution of conflict in traditional African societies.

African elders had been considered as iconoclasts whose power symbolization engineered greater grip and control in traditional African societies. You must understand the fact that representational stance entail so much in service delivery of spiritual influences. The symbolization of ancestral power meant greater impartation of the social ideals and justice. Such symbolization of power conferred on the African elders:

- investiture of authority,
- capacity for articulating norms and customs,
- ennoblement of personality,
- awareness of the well-being of the society,

- legitimacy of representation,
- linkage between abstract and sincerity of purpose,
- enablement to be divinely decisive; and
- firsthand knowledge of ritual disposition for resolving conflicts in traditional African societies.

By and large, African elders as iconoloclasts suggest to you that the articulation of the ancestral power overwhelmingly gave positive or negative results depending on the level playing ground for representation and symbolization of power. African elders stood tall in the development process as outcome of legitimacy and symbolization of power and authority.

As icons, therefore, African elders were upheld as senior citizens in the physical realm of the universe and junior citizens in the spiritual domain. The power of the icons in conflict resolution was synonymous with the physical cum spiritual voice echoed for the purpose of institutionalizing peace and systematizing harmony. The icons ensured robust sense of justice and good conscience tantamount to progressive projection of development agenda in traditional African societies.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.   Who are elders in African society?
2.   Distinguish between the elders and family heads.
3.   What is iconoclasm?
4.   What is gerontocracy?
5.   What roles have elders and family heads played in conflict resolution in Africa?

## 4.0   CONCLUSION

Age, sex and status have been adjudged prominent matrices of role-play and modeling in African indigenous societies in this unit. These three matrices influence seniority and maturity. They also determined experience and wisdom. African elders, therefore, possess experience and maturity which endeared them with the capacity to resolve conflicts in African societies. Such capacity was bequeathed to them by the ancestors whose interests and aspirations they represented on earth. The representational capacity of the living elders (that which enabled them to solve communal problems) made them to be recognized and respected by other members of the society.

Imbued with the attributes of the ancestors, endowed with the zeal of persuasion and entrusted with the welfare of the people, the African elders, as you have observed, always embarked on the programmes of developments tinted with norms and customs of the society. They were no doubt the custodians and enhancers of the culture of the society. This was

why the knowledge and wisdom of conflict resolution resonated in them.

African elders were found at the family, ward and quarter levels. In each level, their roles were always tailored to the actualization of development. They had the initiative to sustain whatever levels of development that might have been attained. At whatever level, therefore, the elders stood as agents of peace and harmony simply by articulating the process of conflict resolution.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

African elders and family heads have been adjudged as agents of peace and harmony as we have discussed in this unit. Not only had they the capacity to engage in the process of conflict resolution, they also had the wherewithal to promote cultural heritage which enhanced development. So, far so good, the elders have demonstrated the quintessence of experience and maturity. As sages they have showcased the fact that they had in their ancestors the ability to move the society forward by quenching rift, rage and friction from African indigenous societies.

This unit has anchored the knowledge that the representational ability of the elders and family heads was very purposeful and quite significant. For the purpose of continuity and sustainability, the ancestors deemed it necessary to have used the elders and the family heads as promoters and enhancers of the process of conflict resolution. Otherwise the African universe would have been terribly vacuous. The ancestors, elders and family heads made the process of conflict resolution thrivable and practicable.

The challenges faced by the African elders and family heads were no doubt enormous (such as critical appraisal of the issues of conflict, the psychological warfare on the part of the parties to the conflict and the desirability of applying the norms and customs with varying degrees of comprehension). These key players in the art of conflict resolution rose to the challenges with great equanimity and forthrightness. They were doggedly determined to living up to ancestral expectation and legacy. Indeed, the family (which was the basic unit of political culture and progression) projected the art of conflict resolution as championed by the family heads. The family was, therefore, in your understanding, the bedrock of operating the process of conflict resolution in African indigenous societies.

## 6.0   TUTOR–MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.     What were the challenges before the elders and family heads in the process of resolving conflicts in traditional African societies?
2.     Elders in African society were prototypes of the living dead (Ancestors) in social engineering". Elucidate.

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**UNIT 4      AGE-GRADE ASSOCIATION**

**CONTENTS**

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**1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Age, sex and status have been social phenomena in African societies as you earlier studied. They have been determinants of identity, social relevance and instruments of development. Africans have been so cautious of their birth, status and the manner of identification with their societies. In this regard, age-brackets have made it possible to make people get along with their group peers and companions. Thus the age – group in African societies have been people of roughly the same age. The degree of difference in the age-brackets depended largely on the nature of social stratification and this, therefore, differed from community to community. According to Onigu Otite and W. Ogionwo, (1994:51) the age difference so depends on "local needs, periodic events, or on economic or organizational necessities of the society concerned".

The age – grade association in African indigenous societies was not so much of identification with a particular group in the society but for the purposeful attention accorded them by members of the society, whose needs as the situation might have been (going through the stance of Otite and Ogionwo), the association capably satisfied. A person was born into a society and within a cultural context. Growing up entails that he found relevance and substance within a group germane to his physical growth, where he could find succour and social significance. Although, a person's membership of age-grade association changes from time to time (depending on the number of years designed for the association), there was always the enthusiasm and interest to contribute to the association's activities and programmes (irrespective of the numbers of years of membership). Each age-grade association thus recognized active participation, sense of belongingness and social relevance towards development.

No matter the pains and paeans of belonging to a particular age – grade association might have been on indigenous African societies, the mode of

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mobilization of the members showcased the capacity to initiate programmes of development and the acquisition of wisdom to forge ahead (not only as members of the association but also as members of the society) was quite in focus. Graduation into levels of organisation thus suggests for you various channels of development and units of challenges in African indigenous societies.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

• understand social stratification of the Africans,
• assess the roles played by age-grade associations in peace process,
• identify patterns of age-grouping in traditional African societies; and
• articulate the mode of mobilization anchored on age-grade association.

Going through the foregoing unit objectives, you stand the advantage of critically assessing their position at various associational levels (church, mosque, trade unions etc.) to the degree that they would be able to demonstrate their social relevance to the development of their society. You will no doubt, weigh their level of commitment, enthusiasm and interests to the various association and appreciate the value of belongingness. No doubt, the challenges are there for you to query the inability of the succeeding educated elites who did not pass on age-grade association, in the form it was, in pre-colonial times.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    Age-Grade Association and Task Force Mandate

The age-grade association, for your understanding, equalled a task force which was given a special mandate in indigenous African societies. A task force in that context was an organized labour unit working for the development of the society. Thus, such a task force might be charged with the mandate of:

• building and repairing the roads,
• tidying up the market square,
• drenching the streams and the rivers,
• felling wild trees,
• clearing palaces and shrines; and
• protecting lives and properties.

The foregoing mandates ensured the well-being and social welfare of the populace thereby making them peaceful and ready to shun chaos and

violence. Indeed, law and order was ascertained and sustained in indigenous African societies.

Being enlisted into such a task force entailed the testing of faith, energy, courage, bravery and enthusiasm of the members of the age-grade association. To be a member of the task force was suggestive of the fact that maturity was in vogue and mental alertment was at par with the task force mandate. Indeed, it was a thing of joy for a man to belong to this taskforce. Among the Bautu Tiriki of western Kenya (Sangreera, :49-52) there was a special grade of warriors. The same is true of the Swazi and the Zulu. In many African societies, this task force was recognized for its military strength and process as well as their intelligent projection. You will observe that in battle there was conflict and chaos but in peace there was harmony and mutuality signaling development. The Swazi, Zulu and Tswana had well organized age-groups noted for their regimentation. Among the Ashanti, Bemba and Pondo age-grouping was of lesser degree. Age-grade association had its age unit and period when their efficiency waned. Among the Turkana and Gusii, the strength of age – grade association waned in old age. At advancing age, the significance of age-grades diminishes among the Swazi, Zulu, Tswana etc. Among the Yako of Cross Rivers the diminishing return sets in after the middle age, whereas among the southern Ibo and Ibibio groups and some parts of Yorubaland, the military functions of the age-grade association almost always terminated at the middle age.

According to S.N. Eisenstadt (1954:108) difference existed among the various ethnic concerned age-grade associations, which can be identified in the different types of activities and tasks performed by them. He observes thus:

> In this respect the main difference is the extent to which the age-groups perform centrally integrative tasks- government, judiciary, military etc. (as among the Namdi group, Galla, Jamba, Kikuyu, Meru, Pokomo) – or more subsidiary tasks, such as economic help, public work, some police duties, or even only educational and recreational activities … limitation of age-span, emphasis on internal relations, lack of autonomy, and performance of subsidiary tasks tend to go together.

By and large in any African societies where points of illustration derived, it was so clearly understandable for you to know that they carried out significant task (whether integrative or subsidiary) geared towards propelling development, peace and harmony. The social engineering in African indigenous societies was such that the integrative force in place projected and sustained law and order germane to the progress of the society. The task force for which the age-grade association typified in African indigenous societies had been quite instrumental to the notion of proper organisation of ideas, duties and functions for which an individual

(as a member of an age-grade association) and (as a member of the entire gamut of the society) should play and actualize so creditably. Indeed, peace process was also anchored on task force mandate to be discussed subsequently.

## 3.2    Age-Grade Association and Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution was tailored towards the restoration of peace and enhancement of harmony in African indigenous societies. Obviously, you must know that it was not an easy task. It was desirous of knowledge, wisdom and experience. It was also alligned on social responsibilities of the age-grade association. The age-grade associations, therefore, played significant roles in the process of conflict resolution. Members of age-grade association in Africa had the capacity for ensuring mutuality and harmony.

Thus they are:

- forceful in action,
- dynamic by mindset,
- enthusiastic in manners,
- versatile in social engineering,
- intimidating in the struggle,
- spectacularly youthful; and
- blunt in the pursuit of truth.

These sterling qualities enabled the age-grade association wherever noticeable in African indigenous societies, to be power to reckon with in the reconciliatory process of restoring peace and harmony back to the society. The existence of the age-grade association was one good innovation which have proven quite successful in the sustainability of law and order in African indigenous societies.

The involvement of the individuals (with their oratory talents and mediating skills) in a given age-grade association resonated in the fact that conflicts never remained unresolved in African indigenous societies. For example, the Mbeere of Kenya had a significant moot proceeding which recognized the capacity of the individuals in conflict resolution. Jack Glazier (1976:319) observed among the Mbeere that:

> Moots were not standing bodies in the sense that the same group of men had all the cases, but were situational assemblies which disbanded when any case concluded. Because argumentation, persuasion, and compromise determined the outcome of a dispute, the personal talent of moot members were emphasized, and particular men from the pool of elders appeared as councilors in case after case. An individual's ability to serve on such a moot was

not contingent on his membership in a particular class or set without exception informants stress ability rather than set or class status as the major criterion in moot participation and leadership.

The moot among the Kpelle of Uganda as James I. Gibbs Jr. (1963:1-11) reported was a therapeutic model of conflict resolution. Similarly, the moot among the Suku of southwestern Congo, recognized the talent of the advocate in pleading for a case (Kopytoff, n.d., 463-465). The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria had a different approach of the age-grade association towards conflict resolution. Although, the Yoruba recognized talent possession by an individual members of the association, it further required maturity, experience and wisdom.

The age-grade associations, as you must understand, were used to perform police duties since they were considered as having military process. Such duties included summoning offenders to the scene of conflict resolution, watching over the behaviour of parties to the conflict at the scene of reconciliation, ensuring adherence to and application of the norms and customs governing conflict resolution and especially protecting the lives of the crowd of spectators present at the scene of conflict resolution in African indigenous societies. Thus, the age-grade association, especially of the youthful sets, played so considerable roles in peace process and the actualization of reconciliation. It was, therefore, challenging for the age-grade association, to ascertain truthful disposition of the audience at the scene of conflict resolution. Equally and perhaps more challenging, was the fact of compromise among the tribunal or moot, to reach reasonable conclusion of restoring peace and harmony back to the society.

## 3.3     Age – Grade Association and Challenges of the Time

We have been discussing the point that age-grade associations were very significant to development process in traditional African societies. Indeed, they have showcased a lot of understanding and lessons from African cultural heritage, which suggests to us that there was enough level of cooperation and solidarity among the people at the grassroot level. Similarly the contributions of the age-grade associations entailed the fact of proper understanding of the trend of mobilization and labour intensive efforts tilted towards moving the society forward. As a matter of fact, there was enough room and time as well as interest to exhibit socialisation and social engineering through the activities of the age-grade association which we have already noted.

It is not in doubt, however, for us to understand that there are now modern trends of development which have challenged the hitherto upheld view of the role of the age-grade associations (if they still exist in a lesser degree of understanding). The challenges of the modern times have had greater grip on the contributions of the age-grade associations to development agenda.

The first of such challenges had been the effect of colonialism on the political and social structures in traditional African societies. You must remember that the colonial structure of administration hardly recognized the existence and impact of age-grade association in development efforts. Had they done so, they would have used the members of the age-grade associations to collect taxes in colonial African period. The interest of the colonial administrators was only focused on the African kings (who you will remember) for all the administrative affairs. Assumably, therefore, the colonial authority probably thought that the onus was on the kings to exhaust all avenues within their power and jurisdiction (age-grade association being one of such avenues) towards ensuring the success of colonial administration. Expectedly, the kings were to mobilize their subjects towards manifesting the colonial subjugation agenda.

The nature of modern day governance did not give room for recognizing the age-grade association in development agenda. Over the years the youth have been neglected and unmobilized for thorough empowerment. Government is seemingly scared of the exuberance of the youth as well as their attendant aggression and vulnerability to violence. Whereas elderly forum existed in modern African society to resolve conflicts, youth foral are yet to manifest in governance and peace process. The downturn of African economy has also affected the desirability of modern African government to have enough time and interest in the youth.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    How did indigenous people recognize age-difference in their society?
2.    Mention the task force mandate in age-grade association.
3.    How was conflict resolved among the rank and file of African age-group?
4.    Identify age-brackets in African society.
5.    What do the age-grade associations reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Considered in this unit for you was the position of the members of age-grade association in African indigenous societies. The role played by the association had been so tremendous towards a well-articulated peace process in the society. They were always on hand to quench rift, rage and confusion with some elements of force and coercion. They were very innovative and peace-loving.

The challenges before the various age-grade associations, as you must have observed, made members to be assertive and blunt. Keeping watch over proceedings, curbing excessive manipulation of truth, protecting the lives of the audience at the scene of reconciliation and monitoring and equally

learning from the norms and customs which issues of conflict were resolved and celebrated, were no easy tasks for the age-grade association. Their patriotic zeal and dynamic projection often propelled African societies towards successful ending of feuds and conflicts.

Recognition of talents was no doubt appraised among some ethnic groups with spectacular age-grade association. This was noticeable for example, among the Mbere of Kenya, the Kpelle of Uganda and the Suku of southwestern Congo. Nonetheless, maturity, experience and wisdom were added qualities desirable among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria. It is significant for you to note, therefore, that the approach to conflict resolution markedly differed from one African society to the other.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

Age-grade association, as considered in this unit, had been one of the agents of conflict resolution in African indigenous societies. They had been so instrumental to restoration of peace and harmony to the society because of the diverse force, knowledge and wisdom they possessed. The military strength and process of the youthful age-grade association usually made them assertive and doggedly determined to watch over the proprietary of manners not only among members of the association but also among members of the larger society. They were, indeed, the watchdogs of the wholesomeness of internal and external relationships which always integrated forces of development in the society.

The age-grade association had numerous challenges to cope with in the performance of their duties. Even though they had the privilege of popularity, the discharge of their duty would not have annoyed a sizeable number of the audience participating at the scene of conflict resolution. One good thing was that such annoyance too soon melted down at the successful enduring of the conflict when peace would have reigned so supreme in the society. The onus, as you have observed, was on the side of the vexatious persons to overlook what might have itched them on the process of reconciliation and restoration of peace and harmony back to the society. The herculean tasks of the age-grade association, therefore, hinged on the fact of forcefully determining the progression of issues of conflict which must eventually end with concord and celebration.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Imagine the fortunes of age-grade association in traditional African societies and relate them to peace making gestures.
2.    "The age – grade associations were instruments of peace-making in African society". Do you subscribe to this assertion?

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## UNIT 5      SECRET SOCIETIES

**CONTENTS**

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5.0    Summary
6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0    References/Further Reading

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

This unit addresses the notion of associational instincts which had been with the Africans through the ages. Several associations have existed and workable to the development agenda in traditional African societies. Although, secret societies had been one of such indigenous association that thrived well in former times, their roles have been so cryptic. Secrecy was the watchword of the societies and this was made purposeful to engineer practical solution to the societal dilemma, which would have nipped in the bud the wheels of progress. The idea of secrecy entailed some elements of maturity from the initiates towards the capacity of holding in trust issues of development and progress to the degree that there was no opposition from any angle. Such an idea of secrecy amounted to experimenting the capacity for eldership complex and opportunistic institutes as well as legitimacy of power and ritual prowess. Membership of secret societies in indigenous African societies, therefore, was by maturity and demonstration of the will-power to exhibit ritual power and process to the extent of lubricating the engine of societal bliss and social values in African traditional societies.

One significant attribute of secret societies was the exhibition of political power (so ritualistic and over-bearing) anchored on enforcement of order and symbolization of the knowledge of the unknown spirit to resolving conflicts in the society. You will observe that the control and exhibition of extra-judicial devise stood secret societies at a vantage position and hence they were shoulder higher than ordinary person (who lacked the ritual power) in African traditional society. Indeed, the ritual power of secret societies had long been recognized by political authority in various indigenous African societies. This unit focuses on the ritual power of secret societies to the degree that they controlled (so overwhelmingly) the affairs of the society especially igniting the fiery process of dousing the tension associated with all forms of conflict in traditional African societies. The unit, as you will get to understand, is also examining the process of resolving conflicts in various secret societies in Africa. Indeed, the various

challenges facing secret societies in the various societies where they had existed and thrived would be identified for discussion.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- unearth the existence of secret societies within the focal length of social emgineering,
- identify the social values of secret societies in traditional African societies,
- examine the role – models exhibited by the authority of the secret societies,
- analyse the contributions of the secret societies towards the facilitation of peace and the enhancement of harmony in African traditional societies; and
- discuss the various challenges facing the operational models of secret societies.

The foregoing objectives are value loaded and significant to enable you reflect more on the ritual attributes of some personalities in African traditional societies. It will promote proper understanding of the social values and fears of supernatural power exhibited by the secret societies in African traditional societies. You will be able to decipher between natural human power and that of the supernatural. The study will provoke your thought and mindset to the degree of observing various approaches to resolving conflicts in traditional African societies.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    Secret Societies and Impact on Development

In traditional African societies members of secret societies had been so conscious of their roles in the development of their societies. They had exerted much influence on people, places and politics of their society. You will understand that their impact had been felt in the areas of religion, social and political culture as will be explained subsequently.

Secret societies occupied prominent place in traditional African societies. They had been so widespread in Africa before the advent of missionaries and European administrators. They are broadly categorized into two viz religious secret societies connected with divinities or ancestors and the totemic secret societies. The examples of the former include the Leopard, the Crocodile and the Allegator widespread in Sierra Leone, Ghana and in some parts of Benin and Nigeria. Those secret societies connected with the divinities include *oro* of the Yoruba of south west Nigeria and the Ekpe of the Efiks as well as Ekpo among the Ibibios. The latter examples, which are

the ancestral secret societies, are the *ogboni, Agemo* and *Egungun* of the Yoruba, the Ekpe of Calabar and the *Poro* and the *Sande* of the Mendes in Sierra Leone.

The secret societies impacted a lot on the Africans at the grass root level. Religiously the secret societies often performed sacrifices towards warding off evil spirit, bad omen and they generally influence the well-being of the people in the society. Politically, the members of secret societies saw to it that they influence political development in the society. Indeed, they are involved in the selection of kings and chiefs in African societies with a view to curbing despotic rule. Socially, they act as law enforcing agenda towards enhancing public morality.

Members of the secret societies in Africa are pursuers of truth, enforcers of order and ethics of the society. They are well disciplined and often chastise erring members thus projecting good image of public probity. This was why they often detected antisocial activities and crimes against the supernatural and humanity. Thus, undesirable elements in traftional African societies often received the wrath of the punishment of secret societies across cultural boundaries. Enforcement of discipline, enhancement of mutuality neutralized the unpleasantness of criminal tendencies in traditional African societies. It is only in the atmosphere of truth, transparent honesty and harmonious relationship that development can take place. The secret societies, as you must observe, had all along engaged in ethical revolution to institute a civil society in Africa.

Since matured people qualified to be members of secret societies in Africa, the onus was on their side to bring up the youth to understand the traditions of development, which they themselves met and integrated with. Obviously, the secret societies engaged in the training of the youth through puberty rites occasioning growth and development. The Poro and the Sande, among the Mende of Siera Leone are good examples of the engagement of secret societies in the process of social engineering for development. Development, therefore, had been ingrained in the activities of secret societies in pre-colonial African societies.

## 3.2    Secret Societies and Conflict Resolution

The act of conflict resolution require some elements of power and authorities. The enforcement of order enables peace facilitators to persuade parties to the conflict so much that peace becomes the order of the day and development can then take place in the society. Members of secret societies in Africa, through the ages, have had the mandate to lubricate the engine of societal development.

Secret societies performed such role as to resolve conflict in traditional African societies. As earlier indicated for you, members of secret societies enforced social ethic and public probity in the society. They had facilitated

peace and enhanced social harmony in traditional African societies. Social justice was also part of the concern of secret societies. They had never shirked their responsibility to ensure a thrivable and proven social engineering which had checkmated dastardly and criminal acts in the society where the secret societies operated. In some cases, they had served as the supreme tribunal for conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution demands maturity on the part of peace facilitators, openness of mind, great sense of history and enthusiasm anchored on capacity to wield enough power. Members of various secret societies in Africa before the colonial rule, had enough of the foregoing attributes. The Poro society in Sierra Leone and the Ogboni cult among the Yoruba of south west Nigeria had long established the models of conflict resolution geared towards peaceful co-existence of people in their environment.

Secret societies in Africa had devised the extra-judicial means of seeking to resolve an almost difficult conflict. It usually involved ritual performance, oath taking and the administration of ordeals. For example, you will get to understand that the *edan* was a symbol of ritual detection of crime in ogboni cult among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria. The Poro of Sierra Leone also devised a ritual performance in the act ensuring peaceful and harmonious relationship.

Since colonial era, secret societies had faced series of challenges some of which affected the status of members of the associations. Indeed, you will observe some of the activities of these secret societies were criticized against and gradually foreign religious and colonial administration laid the siege against secret societies in Africa. Successive governments in Africa spoke vehemently against the practice of secret cults and even banned their existence. For instance, the Nigerian government placed embargo on the membership of Ogboni cult in Yorubaland for any government officials. This led to many of these officials renouncing their membership and avowed belief in ogboni cult.

Today, there hardly exist some of the secret societies in Africa. There had been increasing level of awareness through education of the hollowness of taboos anchored on secret societies in Africa. Enlightenment had so far influenced the decision of the Africans against doctrinal imposition and affiliation. Generational differentials have also created a big gulf between the old and the new peoples of Africa.

## 3.3    Secret Societies and Modern Conflict Resolution Model

You must have discovered in this module that secret societies in traditional African societies occupied a prominent place in various activities culminating in the development process. They participated actively in the peace process and governance of the society. The ritual power which characterized their mode of operation stood members out of the rest of the

crowd. Indeed, such ritual capacity, as you must have observed, enabled them to control the affairs of the society to such an extent that the principles guiding their operation often worked out for the development of the society.

It is, however, not too difficult for you to understand that the challenges against secret societies continued to affect their operation in modern times. Since the colonial authority had placed embargo on the existence and operation of secret cults in Africa, it became difficult for them to operate in public sphere. Their operation can only be carried out in secrecy at the grassroot level. You may, therefore, want to conclude that the colonial model of conflict resolution never allowed the hitherto functional pattern of peace process to be relevant in modern schemes of development.

Besides, foreign religion and western education, which have influenced a lot of changes on secret societies in Africa, as you have earlier observed, modern form of conflict resolution seriously played out the hitherto existing substance of peace process through secret societies. Even though some members of reformed secret societies still exhibit a modicum of influence in limited circle, their involvement in peace process has nothing to write home about.

Modern conflict resolution model frowns at all forms of secrecy. It often displays openness of purpose through interventionist ideology. Modern conflict resolution builds up theories aimed at projecting practices which are manifestable in the level of development brought about by the process. It is important for you to understand that the peace process which secret societies in Africa engineered in cultural milieu satisfied the needs of the period but lack the stamina of the present moment.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      Define secret society.
2.      What were the features of secret societies in African society?
3.      What role do they play in conflict resolution agenda?
4.      What was the origin of secret society in African society?
5.      How relevant are secret societies in the development process?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Secret societies had played pivotal role in the reduction of division and coercion in traditional African societies to the extent that they were powerful forces to reckon with in nearly all the affairs of the society. The secret societies which were widespread in Africa, exercised much more power and authority thus ensuring the maintenance of law and order in the society. Members of secret societies were numerous and were reckoned with in the context of development. Indeed, they influenced political decisions, intervened in the installation of kings and chiefs, oversaw the

affairs of the ruling elites and played significant role in policy making and judicial functions.

The role of secret societies in conflict resolution (which is the focus of this unit) cannot be overemphasized. Kings used them to rubber stamp crucial state decision or verdict on difficult or controversial conflicting issues. Culprits never escaped the wrath of the ordeals instituted by the secret societies. As a matter of fact, they had been so overwhelmingly influential in conflict resolution.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

We have discussed in this unit that secret societies once existed in Africa and had been so widespread in African societies. Their existence in the society had been quite significant in that they influenced policy formulation and judicial decisions quite expected of political elders. Indeed, maturity was crucial to belonging to secret societies in Africa. Only a matured person can keep up secrets as secrecy was associated with the activities of secret cults in traditional African society.

The role of secret societies can not be glossed over in the over all well-being of members of the society. You have observed in the unit that members of secret societies exerted enough influence in the political and religious spheres. They had also been socially relevant to influence progress and development in traditional African societies. They were, indeed, powerful forces in the society.

Perhaps the area of influence of secret societies in traditional African societies was their positional heavy weight in conflict resolution. Obviously, this apparently seems to be a unique aspect of development because it is in the atmosphere of peace and concord that development can actually take place. Members of secret societies endeavoured with much energy to ascertain maintenance of law and order in the society. They also ensured social engineering process anchored on development. This was, of course, in pre-colonial times.

The issue of challenges against the continual existence of secret societies in African society, especially beginning from the colonial era was addressed in the unit. Foreign religion, western education and generational differentials accounted for the stunted growth of secret societies in modern African societies. Government in most African states issued policy statement and standpoint against secret societies in modern Africa. Secret cults are now moribund but they had hitherto played crucial roles in African societies.

## 6.0     TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.     What were the factors militating against the continued relevance of secret societies in modern African societies?
2.     What roles did secret societies played in conflict resolution in *one* African society.

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## MODULE 4 TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR PEACE – MAKING AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

Unit 1     Employment of Extra-Judicial Methods
Unit 2     Practice of Inter-Marriages as Peacemaking Inducement
Unit 3     Enforcement of Diplomatic Relations
Unit 4     Demonstration of Hospitable Norms and Peace Initiatives
Unit 5     Appointment of Ambassadors as Agents of Peace


## UNIT 1     EMPLOYMENT OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL METHODS

### CONTENTS

1.0     Introduction
2.0     Objectives
3.0     Main Content
      3.1    Nature of Extra-Judicial Method
      3.2    Conceptualizing Extra-Judicial Method
      3.3    The Relevance of Extra-Judicial Method
4.0     Conclusion
5.0     Summary
6.0     Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0     References/Further Reading

## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will understand that traditional strategies and mechanism for Peace making were employed by the autochthonous Africans with a view to fostering unity, ensuring the maintenance of *esprit de corps* and the facilitation of peace as well as the ennoblement of social harmony. Such strategies entailed the totality of commitment to the social interest and survival of the people as well as those of customs and norms of indigenous African society. Peace – making was seen as a useful process of creating meaningful atmosphere for mutual understanding of group identity and solidarity and social development – all subculture in African cultural heritage.

Peacemaking process engendered all that was good in traditional African societies. Part of it was security and social welfare. Security of people, property, environment (society) and traditions – all blossoming and productive towards making the indigenous African societies so composite. Indeed, you will appreciate the fact that Africans would do everything humanly possible and enhanced by the supernatural elements, to actualize security issues for the development of the society.

In traditional African society, man cannot neglect the over bearing influence of the deities. This belief in the supernatural to govern the entire society was borne out of the fact that man was not alone in the psychic arena. Certain other forces of the environment existed to complement man's frailties. In that sense, therefore, those forces would have been expectedly responsible for conflicts to ensue in the society. Ironically, when some of the resources inherent in those forces were spectacularly tapped; it often yielded great dividends. Those forces, which were quite spiritual and metaphysical, also influenced peace making in traditional African societies. A lot, therefore, depended on the adjudicators or peace facilitators (Peacemakers) to employ the forces to greater advantage in peacemaking process.

The strategies for peacemaking and security in traditional African society included both from the physical and spiritual angles. The former derived from the wisdom of the elders, kings and chiefs while the latter included the supreme being, divinities, priests and priestesses as well as the diviners. The latter group, of course, employed what was regarded as extra-judicial devices.

Extra-judicial devices were associated with the religious inclinations of the Africans. They were means beyond the physical power and wisdom to resolve conflict by the kings, chiefs and elders as well as the age-grade association and other professional associations in traditional African societies. The extrajudicial devices were administered by leaders of secret societies, priests and priestesses as well as the diviners widespread in traditional African societies. The extrajudicial devices included oath-taking, use of ordeal, curses, excommunication and blood feud. The extrajudicial methods were employed to resolve conflicts whose causes were unknown and whose method of resolution were beyond human comprehension and wisdom.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

It is important to have a holistic knowledge of the strategies evolved in traditional African societies even in the modern times. Indeed, it is not possible for the indigenous communities to be wiped out completely in Africa. If this is possible at the geographical space (on earth) it is not practically possible to wipe off the psychic (religious) space or cosmos where the primordial forces reside. By the end of this unit, therefore, you should be able to:

- acquire detail knowledge of the environing forces which have over-whelming influence on human activities,
- understand the relevance of the extra-judicial methods to peace-making process and security,
- articulate the derivation of power from the spiritual forces toward the ennoblement of harmonious relationship in African society; and

- comprehend the caution to take by you in handling spiritual entities so as not to incur their wrath unnecessarily.

## 3.0     MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1     Nature of extrajudicial method

Extra-judicial method of conflict resolution in traditional African societies involved the discernment of devices that provided for the knowledge of hidden causes of conflict. It was a means of reaching out to the unknown aspect of conflict to the degree of facilitating the process of conflict resolution. While it was true that conflict was often hidden from the autochthonous people, it was equally possible for accessing the nature of such a conflict through the divine wisdom. This you will understand stood the forebears in great advantage for tapping the resources of their environment to put things right in their society.

It is very important for you to know the devices employed in traditional African societies to facilitate peace and ensured harmonious relationship. To this end, your understanding of the characteristics of extra-judicial methods will go a long way to appreciating the wisdom and peace initiatives of the autochthones. In the first place, extra-judicial method had the feature of derivation from the environment in Africa – both physical and spiritual. This you will discover was borne out of the observatory trend of the forebears and their strength of familiarization with their environment thereby tapping its resources.

Secondly, the extra-judicial method was never the preserves of all and sundry in the society. Indeed, you will find out that only specialists in divination, medicine and magic had the knowledge of devising the extra-judicial method. Thus, the "scientific" basis of devising the extra-judicial method also had hidden knowledge quite uncommon in traditional African societies. You will expect, therefore, that the administration of the extra-judicial device was carried out by specialists who kept the members of the society spell bound at the result of the extra-judicial device.

Thirdly, it is interesting for you to observe that extra-judicial devices in traditional African societies were anchored on traditional African religion. Thus, the command of those who administered them was very significant. Obviously some elements of faith was associated with the command. On the part of the victims of extra-judicial devices, some elements of guilt was evident in their mood and appearance. Once they were offenders whatever extra-judicial device was administered on them quite often worked. Indeed, you will be amazed that extra-judicial devices were never administered in secret. It was open ended and in public gaze. This again you will discover often harassed and embarrassed the culprit towards submitting to the occultic credence of extra-judicial devices.

## 3.2    Conceptualizing Extrajudicial Methods in Pre-Colonial African Society

In traditional African society, peace making models, religion and philosophy were inseparable. Thus, dealing with extra-judicial methods in African societies, the force of traditional religion is inevitable. Adewoye (1977:7) succinctly subscribed to this view. It thus shows quite clearly that in the African setting, there were known and unknown causes of conflict. In the known causes of conflict, the kings, chiefs and elders stood the ground of resolving them, while in the unknown causes of conflict, the supernaturals and their ministers/representatives (such as priests, priestesses and diviners) stage managed the conflict resolution through strategies considered very metaphysical in approach and administration.

In the belief system of African people, the Supreme Being was adjudged a perfect judge who oversaw the affairs of men from the religious/spiritual space. The Supreme Being is, indeed, a silent judge and the Africans believe that it is a dangerous thing to incur the wrath of the Supreme Being. Thus, the Supreme Being had been considered as a power to reckon with in the enforcement of the moral ethics of both the earthly and spiritual spaces.

Strong social organisations with unlimited power as you will findout, existed in chiefly African societies and had played vital roles, not only in the dispensation of justice but also in the restoration of peace and harmony back to the society. Indeed, secret societies were strong organisations for the administration of justice. For example, there is the *ogboni* society in most Yoruba communities especially among the Egba and the Ijebu. There are the *Poro* and *Sande* societies of the Mende of Sierra Leone (Opoku, 1978:197). Even in the chiefless communities, there are the *Ekpo* (Leopard) and Ekpe (Spirit) societies in South eastern Nigeria as well as the *Ndi-diabia* (spiritual men in Igbo Society). Members of these societies usually claimed superiority of intelligence and thus exerted overwhelming influence in the administration of justice and the display of conflict resolution wisdom in their respective domains.

Both known and unknown causes of conflict were treated in the religious cults in African societies. The divinities played crucial roles not only in deputizing for the Supreme Being, but also in the enhancement of social stability and harmonious relationship. They were significant anchors of peace making through the invisible order. They instilled psychological fear in the people. Among the Yoruba, for example, *Sango* (god of thunder) *Ogun* (god of iron) *aiyelala* (god of social (justice), had great force on the administration of justice and moral ethics. Woe betides an erring African who encounters the wrath of these gods. This you will get to know, explains why *Sango* usually exposed theft and lying. Lightening usually struck the offender dead. The emblem of *Ogun* (iron) was always given to a witness to kiss as a means of verifying his claims of truthful disposition.

Ordeal was also associated with the extra-judicial methods in traditional African societies. Ordeals unravel whatever doubt or misery that enshrouded the offenders either civil or criminal. Ordeals take many forms from community to community. For example, among the Kalabari, a person accused of witchcraft was asked to swim across a creek full of crocodiles. The Ibibio and the Efik had an Ibiam oath capable of destroying those who swore falsely. In Buganda, chief Muganda was the mixer of ordeal liquor called *Madudu* (Kagwa, 1969:129). In all the ordeal, you will discover that the victim falls into a coma typifying the severity of his misdemeanour.

Oath-taking is anchored on the extrajudicial methods of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. Among the Gurage, ritual oathing featured prominently in the process of determining guilt or innocence. Among the Ashanti, the oath was used for seeking redress of infractions of the social norms (Ayisi, 1979:65). The *Kithitu* and *ndundu* oaths were employed to determine guilt among the Kamba (Elias: 1956:230). The Asande usually employed oath to detect witchcraft and adultery (Evans – Pritchard, 1937:33-34). In some African societies, oath was used as a curse. For example, chagga witnesses were solemnly cursed by the chief prior to giving evidence. Both oath and curses have the psychological influences attached to them.

It is important for you to understand that the ancestors in African setting have the power to afflict or plague an uncompromising member of the family attempting to dislocate peace and harmony in the family. Such a plague ranged from sickness to calamities. Among the Ishan ethnic group (in Nigeria), an adulterous husband or wife in the family soon receive the wrath of an ancestor. The husband or wife falls ill until confession was penitently made (Okoje, 1960:146).

Accompanying the extrajudicial processes adopted in African traditional societies, was the point of psychological fear and inducement of anxiety, which overwhelmed the victims. There was the fear of the supernatural, ordeals and blood feud as well as excommunication stress. No African lived in isolation of others in the community. He was part and parcel of the social ordering in the society. Hence, he must comply with the customs of the society. Extrajudicial processes, therefore, enhanced the capacity to unravel conflict issues in traditional African societies even-though modern trends have overtaken them.

## 3.3    The Relevance of Extra-Judicial Method

Extrajudicial method was designed in traditional African societies for the purpose of unraveling difficult and unknown conflicts aimed at resolving them. You must understand the fact that there were different types of conflict with some issues attached. Such issues were not easily identified for resolution. They sometimes deserved divine ordering when human

comprehension has failed. In this wise, wisdom and diligence were significantly resorted to.

Extrajudicial method was adjudged so relevant to speedy understanding and early resolution of conflicts in traditional African societies. Indeed, the knowledge of conflicting situation often resulted in the understanding and articulation of the suitable resolution model attendant on it. This suggests to you that history played a crucial role in dictating the trend or magnitude or direction of conflict resolution.

It is also good for you to know that the designing of extrajudicial method of conflict resolution has gone a long way to demonstrate the fact that the designers were quite wise and resourceful, tapping from the environment those things that make for the development of the society. It reveals the fact that development issues out of the initiatives of the people. Such initiative often articulated peace process and harmony in the society.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      What is extra-judicial method?
2.      How were extra-judicial methods categorized in traditional African society?
3.      What were the characteristics of extra-judicial methods in traditional African society?
4.      How effective were the extra-judicial methods of conflict resolution in African society?
5.      How applicable are extra-judicial methods to modern form of conflict resolution?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Issues of conflict have not been easily determined in indigenous African societies, parties to the conflict had ways of hiding facts and withholding the truth. To reveal the truth in a conflict situation was totally beyond the power and capacity of the peace-makers who depended so largely on the kind of methods employed. Again deciding on what method to adopt was not all that easy. This was why the indigenous peace-makers employed extrajudicial methods to unravel unknown causes of conflict and the associated issues.

Extrajudicial methods of conflict resolution was borne out of African cultural heritage. The Africans would do all things possible within the reach of the customs and norms, to ensure amicable resolution of conflict. In the event of not deciphering the truth of the matter, the Africans resorted to employing other means of facilitating peace and restoring harmonious relationship. Conflict resolution was, therefore, a positive innovation and accreditation of social relationship in traditional African societies.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

This unit has addressed the fact that certain causes and issues of conflict were difficult to comprehend in traditional African societies. Yet, it was usually the determination of the agencies of conflict resolution to unravel all issues associated with a conflict, with a view to surmounting them thus restoring peace and harmony back to the society. Hence, the adoption of extra-judicial methods in traditional African societies. In this regard, supernatural forces played vital roles in unraveling the causes and issues of conflict.

What was also achieved in the process of institutionalizing peace in the society included the recognition of the spiritual forces and their dominant impact on the restoration of peace in traditional African societies. They included the representatives of the Supreme Being: divinities, priests and priestesses as well as the diviners. These principal actors in the employment of extrajudicial methods in the process of instituting peace and restoring social harmony saw to it that the methods yielded positive results.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Examine the possible results of extrajudicial methods of conflict resolution in a typical African society.
2.    Identify and discuss extrajudicial methods in African society.

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**UNIT 2 THE PRACTICE OF INTER-MARRIAGES AS PEACE – MAKING INDUCEMENT**

**CONTENTS**

# 1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, it is important for you to know that marriage was a significant institution evolved by the autochthonous group in African society. The purpose of marriage went beyond procreation and child bearing (even though it was quite necessary) in traditional African society. It was also aimed at group solidarity, social engineering and responsibility towards keeping aglow and flourishing the social ethos and norms. As a matter of fact, marriage as a significant institution, produced family life and conjugal association. This was why individualism as a concept, was frowned at by the Africans.

The existence of family life brought about the need for both political and social organisation and fuelled by economic growth. Indeed, you will understand that no sooner had the autochthonous group settled down in various African societies that state formation began derivative of family life. In traditional African societies, therefore, the family was the unit of political culture. That culture was initiated by marital institution – preserves of growth and development.

By simple definition, marriage entails a union between a man and a woman to the degree that conjugal association became significant. Although, there are many types of marriage in the global village, polygamy was practised in traditional African societies; which produced polygamous children, first, as   evidence of procreation and second, as indices of collective responsibility towards surmounting problems be it political, economic, religious or social. African family system (which has now broken down) was a problem solving aspect of indigenous culture.

In traditional African societies, there was in-group marriage system (marriage within a given group of people) and out-group marriage system (known as inter-marriage). Inter-marriage system among the Africans engendered cross fertilization of ideas and ideals of socialization with a degree of virtuous and harmonious relationship anchoring the ethos and social etiquette in the society. Inter-marriages had produced positive results in traditional African societies. It had solidified group solidarity, mutual trust, protective etiquette and indices of development. More importantly, it had facilitated peace and the wherewithal of ending conflict and violence. This unit focuses on African inter-marriages as peace making inducement and developmental orientation.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- exhibit African inter-marriage pattern as evidence of harmonious social relations,
- demonstrate the uniqueness of marital institution in African cultural heritage ,
- orchestrate social mannerism as anchored on African inter-marriages; and
- display the knowledge of African solidarity, through inter-marriages, as means of problem-solving.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    Marital Institution

Marital institution entails such organizational structure of marriage, which as you must understand, produced systemic relationship in traditional African societies. It also means the production of familial relationship that sets in motion cohabitation and mutuality. This unit suggests to you that marital institution is the basic level of unity across cultural boundaries.

What emerged from the marital institution in traditional African societies included:

- family unit,
- lineage system,
- social attachment,
- unity of ideas; and
- fraternity

These indices of marital institution linked up with the capacity for good neighborliness and solidarity for greater understanding and development in the society.

## 3.2      Nature of Inter-Marriages

Inter-marriages were initiated and concluded in traditional African societies for diverse purposes. These purposes, as you will understand, typified the unity of action and celebration of mutuality. Inter-marriages extended the frontier of knowledge and broadened the geography of development in traditional African societies.

Sociation became elastic in the process of inter-marriages as there was to be in place the linkage between two cultures. Such a linkage bred unity in diversity and promoted the understanding of diverse cultures with a view to harvesting development in the society. The wedlock of ideas and customs from diverse background suggests to you the breeding of tolerance and appreciation.

Intermarriage bred economic fortunes in traditional African societies. Borrowed ideas and system from the other group engaged in intermarriages went a long way to promoting standardization of economic development in the society. Each group gave out of interest and likeness for the other group thus exhibiting inter-connection and networking.

You must understand that in the context of this unit that inter-marriage even though always ignited conflict, it also provided the avenue for resolving it. Indeed, it ensured that two families had the opportunity of robbing minds and setting in motion development agenda. It was not so difficult for the families which engaged in inter-marriage to ensure that there was no breakdown of misunderstanding in the process of conflict resolution. This was the level of social engineering in traditional African societies.

## 3.3      Dynamism of African Inter-Marriage Pattern

African culture thrives on solid foundation and good mannerly disposition, through which development had flourished in the society. Such a development began with the family system orchestrated in marital institution. Inter-marriage system, as we have earlier discussed harped on projecting group solidarity and socialization. It bordered on out-group harmony and concord in traditional African societies. Inter-marriages allowed cross-cultural institutionalization of the ethos and norms of the society as it epistemologises principle of sociation and

acculturation, thus inducing in the couples (and the resulting family life) virile projection of common destiny.

It can be categorically stated that African inter-marriages produced positive results for development in the areas of:

- social relations;
- mutual understanding;
- cultural proselytisation;
- cultural contextualization;
- knowledge based orientation and actualization,
- diplomatic relativism; and
- systemic display of peace-making models.

The foregoing interpretation and analysis of African inter-marriages suggests to you that for purposive reasoning and the internalisation of social harmony, there had been ways by which inter marriages had nipped conflict in the bud or had disallowed conflict from generating destructive violence in the society.

In the understanding of inter-marriages inducing peace making projection in traditional African societies, it is quite important for you to give examples as hereto demonstrated. Fundamentally, marital institution in traditional African societies enhanced great deal of respect and honour for the in-laws. It also demonstrated certain degree of humility. It was almost impossible to ignite conflict between and among in-laws. It was also a reality for the in-laws to resolve conflicts between and among spouses with accelerated dispensation of social justice. Among the Barotse of Southern Africa, Max Gluckman recorded significant drives towards exhibiting the power of relating well with ones own in-laws. Thus the in-laws had powerful means of dousing tension that might envelope social relationship occasioned in African inter-marriages.

In Yoruba society of southwestern Nigeria, it is interesting for you to know that Moremi demonstrated the dynamism of beauty cherished by the Igbo king when the former was captured in an inter-ethnic insurrection. Moremi with a drive of luck from her beauty inter-married the Igbo King even-though with a keen sense of diplomacy and patriotism for her Ife origin. The Ife/Egbo inter-ethnic  fratricidal war produced a romantic device of peace making gestures except that this was unknown to the    Igbo warring contingents let alone to the unassuming Igbo king, who lavished his love to a thoroughly scheming beautiful woman (in Moremi). The end result of the 'temporary' inter-marriage with the Igbo king under suspicious circumstances, was peaceful restoration of law and order to a turbulent muddy environment.

Similarly, the Yoruba / Dahomean war of the nineteenth century produced the intermarriage between the *Alaafin* and the *Agaja,* who both exchanged their daughters in marriage as a means of commencing and solidarising understanding in the atmosphere of peace and harmony. This intermarriage, as to be observed, engendered peace, institutionalized harmony and facilitated processes of development for the two west African nineteenth century powerful states. Both states knew each other better especially in the areas of diplomacy and romanticisation of power relations by inter-marriage. This entails that inter-marriage had for long induced peace making and human relations in African society.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What is marriage?
2.    Is there an African marriage?
3.    What were the basis of inter-marriages in traditional African society?
4.    How did inter-marriages induced peace-making in traditional African society?
5.    What did inter-marriages reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Inter-marriages, in the perspectives of diplomatic relations, conjugal association and group solidarity as well as ethnic harmony, as you have observed, had positively sensitized the Africans to envisioning social relationship and cultural engineering. It recognized group harmony and respectability which had been reciprocated and accelerated by lifelong understanding and mutuality. Peace building and peace making processes had been anchored on inter-marriages throughout the ages in African society.

The Moremi demystification of the endemic power of the Igbo, the Barotse deification of the taboo against relegating in-laws to the background as well as the *Alaafin / Agaja* romantic harmonization of kingly power through exchange of their daughters (as sensational inter-marriage) all demonstrated the influence of inter-marriages in problem-solving among the various African group.

The notion of inter-marriages in resolving conflict worked out very positively in contemporary Nigerian administrative scenes. Two examples can be cited here. The General Muritala Mohammed – Ajoke inter-marriage and the Atiku-Titi inter-marriage. The first example influenced the level of effective governance during the 1975-976 General Muritala Mohammed administration whereby General Olusegun

Obasanjo (an "in-law" to General Muritala Mohammed) supported the former. There is no doubting the fact that the Obasanjo / Atiku empasse became resolvable through in-law considerations. Indeed, it is a taboo to generate conflict for an in-law.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

The issue of inter-marriages, as addressed in this unit, had been instrumental to inducing peace-building and peace-making in traditional African societies. Inter-marriages in African society had fostered unity, group solidarity and familial relationship which paved the way for development through out ages. Intermarriage had been construed as the anchor of social harmony in Africa. The harmonious relationship eked out through intermarriage, thus disallowed conflict to ensue in traditional African societies.

The unit also demonstrated the dynamic notion of inter-marriages with three examples. The first was the attitude of the Barotse to giving respect and honour to the in-laws without injuring their feelings. This presupposes the fact that the existence of social harmony in a relationship with one's own in-laws can prevent conflict. The second example explained how Moremi (an Ife woman) demystified the power of the Igbo overlords (of pre-Oduduwa epoch) which earned for the Ife, peace of mind and restoration of order. Lastly, the Alaafin/Agaja harmonization of power relations came through inter-marriage. In outline, inter-marriages in African society had the means of enforcing peaceful order and social control.

## 6.0   TUTOR–MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Identify and discuss various examples of inter-marriages in African societies and their impact on harmonious relationship and restoration of order.
2.    "Inter-marriages facilitated peace and social hamony in pre-colonial African societies". Discuss.

## 7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**UNIT 3    DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN AFRICAN SOCIETY**

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will understand how diplomatic relations fostered unity and increased the tempo of understanding and friendship in pre-colonial African states (which recognized sovereign power). Diplomacy was seen at that time as a powerful instrument of concluding neighbourhood relationship and mutual understanding. It meant highest degree of negotiation and agreement, which sometimes, was made so sacrosanct. Indeed, living persons had to be cautious on how to normalize cordial and ontological balance with the supernatural forces. Annoying the deities entailed either negotiation or placation (propitiation) otherwise their wrath would have been incurred. To engage in negotiations with the supernatural beings suggest to you a closer relationship, mutual understanding and blissful atmosphere of existence and heritage. This diplomatic strategies engendered blessings, peace, harmony and orderliness as well as safe-drive towards development.

At the family level, diplomacy played a major role in mutual understanding. Marital institution in  pre-colonial African states facilitated peace and promoted cultural heritage. Marriage was positively concluded at the stage of diplomatic activities viz. knowing the family of the lady to be betrothed, showing respect and honour and engaging in massive cultivation (through the age-grade association) of the in-law's farmland. Presentation of gifts was also embarked upon.

Diplomatic strategies as would be engaged in this unit discussion, showcased the level reached in traditional African societies to enhance harmonious relationship which often disallowed conflict to ensue. Such diplomatic strategies naturally evolved from state formation from the bedrock of family unit which signified collective association and

responsibility. Diplomatic strategies also grew from the reasonable perception of cultural engineering. This is the direction to follow in this unit.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

It is hoped that by the end of this unit you should be able to:

• unearth the diplomatic strategies employed by African forebears to facilitate peace and enhance harmony for corporate existence in the society,
• demonstrate the desirability of diplomacy in the process of peace facilitation; and
• understand the place of elderly wisdom in the engagement of diplomacy to fast run development process.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    What is Diplomacy?

You will discover in this unit that the meaning of diplomacy is relevant to the process of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. This is why it is necessary to define diplomacy for your proper understanding and easy take off in the discussion for this unit. Diplomacy is no less than the art of negotiation for the successful innovation of things or ideas. It involves some elements of tactfulness, scheming and display of initiative. It is, indeed, targeted towards achieving reasonable end of affairs.

The connection between diplomacy and conflict resolution is quite simple. It is important for you to know that diplomacy provides sense of direction for a successful conflict resolution agenda. This sense or direction is anchored on actualizing and articulating peace process in the society. The relationship between two communities or states was made possible in traditional African societies through the principles of diplomacy. Diplomatic relations among states, therefore produced mutual understanding as a result of the display of negotiating art.

## 3.2    Features and Functions of Diplomacy

The art of diplomacy involves a lot of things. These included:

• reasonable force
• favour
• interest

- decree
- ultimatum
- ambush laying
- symbolic messages
- recognition badge

The foregoing features are to be observed by you towards identifying their influences on the conclusion of diplomatic relations and the facilitation of peace process in traditional African societies.

The wielding of authority and the legitimacy of diplomatic relations suggest to you that diplomacy served very useful purpose in statehood and neighbourhood development. Diplomacy ensured cordial relationship between communities and neighbours in traditional African societies. Diplomacy also functioned well in the area of fostering unity in diversity. It also promoted the spirit of social engineering anchored on solidarity trust.

You will discover that diplomacy provided the wherewithal of the systemic procedure of conflict resolution. It propelled the peace facilitators towards optimal utilization of confidence and dogged determination. Indeed, you also need to understand that diplomacy always fast track the process of development in the society as you have already observed that it is in the atmosphere of peace that development do take place.

## 3.3 The Dynamics of Diplomatic Strategies of Managing Conflict in African Society

You will discover in this unit that culture in Africa is dynamic and thrivable of peaceful foundation and harmonious relationship, which often signified development. Diplomacy was one of the indices of promoting cultural heritage and enhancing the consciousness of societal drive towards development in traditional African societies. There were, therefore, various diplomatic strategies and techniques of making peaceful association and communal living effectively possible. These included presentation of gifts, appointment of ambassadors and envoys, round table discussion/peace meetings and invitation to various neighbourhood/communal ceremonies (festivals) as well as symbolic communication strategies and sanctions by secret societies. These diplomatic strategies worked effectively with positive results in traditional African societies.

Presentation of gifts from persons to persons, family to family, kings to kings and neighbourhood to neighbourhood, enhanced good intension towards the recipient, friendly disposition, capacity for tilting towards

common efforts toward development and the promotion of unity in diversity. In traditional African societies, twin-birth was regarded as sacred and thus at the announcement of their birth, many Africans presented gifts, varying from country to country, to the twins with a view to  currying their favour for good governance and well-being of the populace. Indeed, you need to understand that sacrifices to the gods and goddesses were sorts of gifts to them to maintain good relationship with them. Thus, gift presentation was one functional diplomatic strategy of facilitating peace and enhancing harmonious relationship in traditional African societies.

Dialogue through peace meetings (at the family level, ward and quarter as well as communal levels), was ensured to prevent conflict in traditional African societies. Such meetings paved the way for the parties to the conflict to meet face to face, experience interventionist capacity, adjust character disposition and thus give peace a chance. This was why conflict resolution venues were established in traditional African societies. These included the royal palace, markets, family chambers and shrines.

Africans love celebrating events to enhance performance of culture on annual basis. Thus, the regular celebration of events as you will observe paved the way for the increased mutual understanding, assessment or measurement of developmental process, capacity for friendly mannerism and assurance for maintaining peace of mind. Thus, communal festivals and royal installation or re-enactment ceremonies allowed for the invitation of people from the near and distant neighbourhood. Again such invitation gave room for gift presentation as an attestation for harmonious relationship.

Peace reigns supreme in atmosphere of security. It was significant for you to observe that in traditional African societies security was given a pride of place. It was never toyed with. This was why kings (in African societies) built defensive walls and even dug pitches as mechanism for dealing with criminals. One of the very significant diplomatic techniques of enforcing security protocols, in traditional African societies, was ambush laying not only against criminals but also against fugitives and state offenders. In that regard, it is significant for you to know that two communities engaged in diplomatic strategy of warding off victims through a planned ambush laying by hunters, warriors and body guards of the two communities. While one community arrived, saw the excommunication of the victim from the community, the armies of the host community laid ambush with a view to eliminating the victim in a grand style involving molestation, immolation and execution.

Symbolic communication strategy was quite effective towards promoting mutual understanding through symbols. This was done through, for example, sending the royal staff to victim of war and conflict in the community. Indeed, you must observe that the royal staff must never sleep in the house of the victim otherwise all sorts of plague were to afflict him. He must necessarily sue for peace. The recipient of the royal staff of office was to understand that the king was summoning him to the royal court. Indeed, refusal to comply meant contempt of court and was punishable. This can also be done by a community to her neighbours.

Sanctions by secret societies in traditional African societies were special means of strategizing peace diplomatically. The highest form of diplomacy was found in the cult of secret societies whose sanctions went beyond those of the royal court. Indeed, the kings were expected to obey and carry out the sanction of the secret societies in their kingdom. The *Poro* and *Asande* of the Mende of Sierra Leone and the *Ogboni* cult among the Yoruba of south west Nigeria are good examples of the secret societies in African societies which you have earlier studied. The activities of these secret societies and their mandate were discussed elaborately in Module three unit five. Here it is sufficient to stress that members of the secret societies often employed diplomatic strategy to display their wisdom of facilitating peace in the society.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.      What is diplomacy?
2.      How did African society benefited from diplomatic relations?
3.      What were the implications for a breakdown of diplomatic relationship in traditional African societies?
4.      What are diplomatic immunities?
5.      What was the dynamism of diplomatic strategies to African conflict resolution?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Diplomatic strategies and techniques as displayed in the governance of communities in traditional African societies facilitated peace, ennobled harmony, promoted cultural heritage and engaged in developmental processes. Evidently, the various diplomatic strategies were evolved by the autochthonous group with a view to setting the pace of growth and development in the society. Diplomacy, therefore, was the bedrock of good atmosphere in traditional African societies.

One significant way of promoting African cultural heritage came from the process of targeting peace and systematizing harmony, which quite

often, results in equitable distribution of justice and a display of *esprit de corps.* To engage in the resolution of conflict entails wisdom and persuasion as well as reasonability. These are the matrices of diplomacy which had been inaugurated by African forebears to signify peace and harmony to be enjoyed by their offsprings.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Africans have been adjudged peace loving people who cherished the idea of harmonious living. It was not in doubt that the autochthonous group inaugurated diplomatic strategies and techniques towards making life enjoyable, meaningful and worth living. This was done with a view to promoting the cultural heritage in traditional African societies. Diplomatic relations, therefore, as you could have observed foregrounded peace and mutual understanding geared towards developmental process in the society.

As addressed in this unit, Africans had long initiated the idea of strategizing peace and harmony. The diplomatic strategies which we have discussed in the unit included presentation of gifts, ambush laying, peace meetings and invitation to communal festivals as well as symbolic communication and sanctions by secret societies. In outline, diplomatic strategies were so effective and targeted towards peace facilitation and harmonious relationship in traditional African societies.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Examine the various diplomatic strategies geared towards inaugurating peace and harmony in *One* African indigenous society.
2. What were the characteristics of diplomatic relations in pre-colonial African society?

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**UNIT 4      DEMONSTRATION OF HOSPITABLE NORMS AND PEACE INITIATIVES**

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will understand that hospitality had been one of the social norms recognized in traditional African societies to foster unity, endeared people to one another for mutual understanding and the maintenance of *esprit de corps*. It was one peace initiative evolved to synchronize all shades of sociation and proprietary of manners. Hospitality, as one of the matrices of African cultural identity, promoted conducive atmosphere and the enabling environment for development in traditional African societies.

Hospitality was contextualized at the beginning of cultural development as conceptualization of African group identity revealing and expounding on the dynamism of controlling welfare in the society. Hospitality can also be considered as sociological ideology determining harmony and concord not only between guests and hosts but also among people inhabiting an area even when they are not strangers. Thus, you need to understand that there is a three-way axis attendant on hospitality namely host-guest cordiality, host-host mutuality and guest-guest understanding. In a nutshell, hospitality reflects a high degree of generosity towards stranger and visitors.

Fundamentally, African hospitality had been anchored on good neighbourliness. It has a unique language of enhancing the thesis of being one's own brother's keeper. The thesis of neighbourliness transcended people living in a given community in traditional African societies. It, however, involved intra-and inter-communal relationship. Hospitality in African sense and psyche, therefore, was an instrument for cementing understanding and enhancing social engineering.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

The significance of African hospitable norms towards initiating peace and development cannot be over-emphasized. Hence, it is hoped that by the end of this unit you should be able to:

- adduce to revealing the substance and relevance of hospitable norms to peace-building and peace-making at the grassroot level,
- comprehend the peace initiatives of African autochthones; and
- examine the cultural ebullience in African hospitable norms and peace initiatives.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    What are Hospitable Norms?

Hospitability entails the demonstration of friendly disposition towards people (both known and unknown). It suggests to you that the exhibition of kindness or weakness is desirable to human existence. It is the first course in humanity.

Hospitable norms, which are addressed in this unit, are symbols or elements that make up the inevitable demonstration or display of hospitability. They are quite essentials for growth and the measurement of development in human society. Even the lower animals often show some forms of kindness to each other. This suggests to you that the homo-sapiens necessarily must do more.

In this wise, hospitable norms in traditional African societies involved:

- cultural traits,
- human meekness,
- character display,
- exhibition of goodness,
- affectionate disposition,
- neighbourly fraternity; and
- traditional friendly disposition.

These norms were spectacularly widespread across cultural boundaries. The hospitable norms so far identified suggests to you that they derived from the dire need of the people for social welfare and sociation. African hospitable norms, therefore, propelled the people towards greater heights of development and the recognition of the knowledge based development.

## 3.2 What are Peace Initiatives?

Initiative involves discernment of a course of action towards enhancing development process. This suggests to you that originality is anchored on development or advancement. Thus, peace initiatives suggest to you the original conception of the idea to discern peace process towards nipping in the bud all forms of conflict.

Peace initiatives were so early developed in traditional African societies. The developers of peace initiatives were very thoughtful of development process which grew out of their customs and norms. Africans, as you will get to know, have sufficient initiatives to discern friendly disposition, ethical mannerism and good neighbourliness. This was why common and mutual understanding prevailed in traditional African societies.

Peace initiatives cut across cultural boundaries of the world. This presupposes the fact that you must understand that peace initiatives had long been culturally branded in the global village. Each continent of the world, therefore, has the peculiarities of peace initiatives. It is quite pertinent for you to know that there is African peace initiatives. In traditional African societies they included:

- demonstration of hospitality,
- presentation of gifts,
- display of courtesy,
- exhibition of social etiquette,
- act of forgiveness,
- openness of intention; and
- truthful discernment.

## 3.3 Perspectives of African Hospitable Norms and Peace Initiatives

You will understand in this unit that there are many sides to African hospitality from where peace initiatives derived. One such aspect was the concern for the welfare of others. This was exhibited through visitation, salutation and presentation of gifts. Calling at the home of neighbours was desirous of inquiring of their well-being, aspirations and expectations. In the process, the visiting guest cared to know the problems besetting the development of the lineage. Sometimes the visiting guest arrived to resolve conflict among the members of the host families. At that point in time, the visiting guest played the role of a third party and therefore became the intervenor or interventionist. At other times, timely arrival of the visiting guest coincided with the birth of a new baby at which occasion he was considered a fortune bearer. He

was so credited by his host for brightening their hopes. This is an example of host-guest cordiality.

African lineage system was made up of several compounds and every member of the lineage usually struggled to maintain *esprit de corps,* the parameter for measuring hospitable norms. In a situation whereby a member of the lineage had gone on a journey, on arrival, other members of the lineage normally welcomed him with warm embrace, pleasant salutation with a view to inquiring into his plight on the trip. The youngest wife fetched him cold water to drink and quench his thirst. She immediately proceeded to the kitchen to prepare a delicious meal for him. He became the cynosure of all and sundry in the linage. His safe arrival from a trip was celebrated with a miniature pomp and pageantry. Similarly, if a member of the lineage had gone to farm or on hunting expedition, on arrival, he was so given well-nigh a hospitable treatment accorded a traveler. This is an example of host-host mutuality.

You will also understand in this unit that there existed several farm markets (especially on the way side) in various traditional African societies. There had also been roadside farms, as a guest had the moral privilege to enter into the farm (of his unknown host) harvested some crops and fed on them. He was careful enough to avoid wastage. Thus, he merely took that which was sufficient to satisfy his insatiable needs. He, however, may do some farm work which commensurated with what had been harvested as a mark of reciprocating the good gesture of the provider (the host) who had established his farm by the roadside. Otherwise, the guest might make some *aroko* signs to enable the farm owner understand that no thief had devastated his farm. But that his farm was visited by a pleasant guest. The farm owner then rejoiced that he had made a unique contribution towards alleviating the problem of a neighbour in need, who indeed, was considered as a friend at a given opportunity; perhaps when his guest made returning journey the farm owner might come in contact with his guest. This friendly disposition, demonstrated sympathy for those in difficulties and avoidance of curses whose implications wreaked havoc in the society.

Obviously, hospitality had been so obligatory in traditional African societies. You must observe that there had been reasons for such obligatoriness. It was believed that gods and goddesses often appeared in human forms desiring helping hands for a purpose, which when achieved often engendered abundance of blessings. Thus, hospitality shown to such spiritual entities were repaid. On the human plane, no act of hospitality was considered lost. Moreover, hospitality usually promoted unity, established friendly relationship, facilitated peace and enhanced harmony in the society. Hospitality necessarily produced social control and cultural engineering in traditional African societies.

Thus, you must understand that hospitality which promoted mutual trust and understanding quite often resisted pandemonium.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.   What is hospitality?
2.   What is hostility?
3.   What were the African hospitable norms which engendered peace initiatives?
4.   How can hostility among African neighbours be exterminated?
5.   What do hospitable norms and initiatives reveal about African cultural heritage?

# 4.0   CONCLUSION

Every aspect of African culture has interpretative meaning and significance. Hospitable norms and peace initiatives are important aspects of African cultural heritage. The interpretive analysis of these relevant aspects of African culture signifies the dogged determination of mutual living and societal bliss. It also engendered, as you have observed, substantial grounding of developmental process in traditional African societies. Development, however, took place in the atmosphere of social well-being, capacity for friendly disposition and proprietary of manners.

Hospitable norms gave rise to the inauguration and promotion of peace initiatives in traditional African societies. Peace initiatives accounted for the level of understanding the wherewithal of common destiny and group solidarity among the various nation-states in African continent. Peace initiatives informed social and cultural engineering in the society. Through peace initiatives, neighbours understood each other and promoted the interest anchored on their development. Peace initiatives derivative, of hospitable norms, resisted strife and rancour between the strangers and hosts. Peace initiatives frowned at hostility and conflict in traditional African societies.

# 5.0   SUMMARY

Hospitability had been the mainstay of cultural engineering in traditional African societies. It has been addressed, as the essence of harmonious relationship, which usually doused tension but increased the tempo of understanding among the people in the society. To be enthusiastic at promoting other people's well-being and facilitating utmost interaction, entailed the actualization of wisdom and perceptive reasoning which eventually led to moving the society forward.

It has also been stressed that peace initiatives derived from hospitable norms which ensured sympathy for people's welfare and development. Certainly development arose in traditional African societies from the consciousness of the people towards solidarity and cultural identity. To be peaceful, therefore, deserves openness of mind and social responsibility that engendered so much of improved standard of living.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.      Enumerate various hospitable norms in *two* African societies.
2.      "Hospitality and hostility were sharp edges of peace and conflict in traditional African societies". Discuss.

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## UNIT 5    APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADORS AS AGENTS OF PEACE

**CONTENTS**

1.0    Introduction
2.0    Objectives
3.0    Main Content
      3.1    Who are Ambassadors?
      3.2    African Ambassadors and Peace Making Task
      3.3    Problems Confronting Ambassadors
4.0    Conclusion
5.0    Summary
6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0    References/Further Reading

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

We have discussed earlier on the relevance of hospitality and peace initiatives in traditional African societies. In this unit our discussion is based on how relating well with other neighbours had been on the culture of the Africans. This derived, perhaps, from the custom of collective responsibility in the Africans to channel a course of common destiny to reach a purposeful end. In this case, diplomatic relations loomed large in traditional African societies. You will find out that evidence abound that there were proper channels of maintaining crucial relationship among people and kingdoms in Africa, even though data on it remained so scanty before the nineteenth century as corroborated by Robert Smith (1989:7) Indeed, early travelers provided scanty data but reported that it was in the nature of African states to send diplomatists used as ambassadors for peace mission abroad. For example, they were known as "Linguist" in Gold Coast (Ghana).

Appointment of ambassadors in pre-colonial period was pertinent to the maintainance of *esprit de corps* among African states. Robert Smith writes on the examples of travelers who gave good reports as evidence of the appointment of ambassadors ever before the advent of colonial rule thus:

> The earliest reference to diplomatic relations in west Africa seems to be the account by al-saghr (writing in the early tenth century) of the sending of an ambassador (called Muhammad Ibn Arafa) by a ninth-century Imam of Tabert in North Africa to an unnamed sudanic state, possibly Gao. Then follows al-Bakri's description of the Mosque in the royal capital of eleventh – century Ghana

which was set aside for the use of Muslims who visit the king on missions', and there are indications that political relations were maintained in the late eleventh or early twelfth century between Ghana and the Almoravids in Morocco. In the sixteenth century there is Leo Africanus mention of the reception at the court of Timbuktu of Ambassadors from other princes (Smith, 1989:8).

The foregoing examples show to you that ambassadors were diplomatic representatives sent and maintained abroad in pre-colonial times. This unit, however, focuses on the principles behind their appointment, the activities carried out by them and their mode of conduct.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this study you should be better able to:

• articulate the knowledge and awareness of diplomatists in pre-colonial African states,
• understand the various activities and idiosyncrasies of the ambassadors, and
• examine the roles of the African ambassadors in peace-making moves.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    Who are Ambassadors?

You need to understand that some persons usually played quite seemingly apparent role in development process of the society. Such persons often acted well under strict instruction to set the pace of growth and development in the society. They are no doubt referred to as ambassadors. Ambassadors therefore are agents or messengers of development with the cementation of cordial understanding and relationship between communities or  states. They are,  indeed, diplomatic envoys or emissaries who are highly intelligent and brave. Their bravado mixes with wisdom. Thus, you need to know that ambassadors are equipped with robust sense and initiatives toward propelling their society to greater heights of advancement and glory.

Ambassadors existed in traditional African societies and had played tremendous diplomatic roles in the facilitation of peace and enhancement of harmonious relationship, which you will discover in this unit. The African ambassadors were communal or state representatives in foreign lands. They depicted or symbolized the political and economic interests and enthusiasm of their community or state.

## 3.2    African Ambassadors and Peacemaking Task

You need to know in this unit that African ambassadors were stationed in different pre-colonial kingdoms for very many useful purposes. These included defence of territorial boundaries and integrity, negotiation for friendly disposition, harmonious relationship, alliance against enemies and joint problem solving at all fronts. The biddings and cravings for diplomatic relations often took different shapes from society to society and from kings to kings. For the stipulated reasons for negotiating diplomatic relations among African states in pre-colonial times, the resulting influence of the diplomatic arrangement entailed that the road to peace and harmony was averagely smooth.

Defence of territorial boundary and integrity featured prominently in the diplomatic agenda of pre-colonial African states. You will discover that this was necessary at the level of promoting understanding as to the boundary delineation to avert conflict. Land was regarded as sacred belongings of the African families and the land tenure system as practised in Africa often resulted in possible encroachment that usually led to war. It was, therefore, necessary for sending ambassadors abroad especially to nearby neighbourhood to actualize a defence of land demarcations. When tribute was involved, it became necessary for the ambassadors to initiate collection of tribute. For example, it was reported by Leo Africanus that Askia (king of Songhai) in the early sixteenth century 'has some of his courtiers (ambassadors of a kind) perpetually residing at Kano with the purpose of receiving the tribute due to him (Smith, 1989:9). The *Alaafin* of Oyo did the same to the Dahomean and Egbaland at the closing period of the eighteenth century.

Policy and prestige advertisement towards making other neighbours have a feel of the glory and splendour of the kingdom, this you will discover was quite promoted through diplomatic relations. Thus, Mansa Kankan Musa (king of Mali) realized this fact and developed friendly relations with North African rulers. This enabled Mansa Musa to advertise the wealth, good government and the Islamization of Mali on a grand scale. Thus, the king of Mali stationed ambassadors in North Africa and as far as Mecca. Indeed, Ibn Battuta, who visited Mali in 1532, gave a glowing description of the glory of Mali Empire especially in the area of promoting diplomatic relations.

Ambassadors sought the assistance of neighbouring empires to launch attack on common enemy. This was by a way of consolidating military alliance. For instance, c. 1513. Askia Muhammed of Songhai empire allied with Kanta of Kebbi to dislodge Tuareg inhabitants. He encouraged Songhai scholars to exchange ideas with those of Fez, Tunis and Cairo.

## 3.3    Problems Confronting Ambassadors

You need to understand that African ambassadors encountered a lot of difficulties in the discharge of their duties in foreign levels. Such difficulties, you should expect, must necessarily dampened the spirit of operation of diplomacy. It was not so easy for the African ambassadors to be overwhelmingly accepted in foreign land and they also had the problem of satisfying the conditions of their existence in a society so alien to them in culture and environment as well as in the realization of their saddled responsibilities.

Robert smith (1989:12) reported quite convincingly how ambassadors scaled the hurdles of recognition in foreign lands. According to him:

> The diplomatists of West Africa generally carried credentials or badges of office in such forms as a cane, a baton, a whistle, a fan or a sword. The best known of these are the staffs of Asante and Dahomean ambassadors. They were often covered in gold or silver leaf and decorated with symbolic emblems … The staff of the chief linguist of the Asantehene was called Asempatia...

Despite the credentials referred to in the foregoing passage, ambassadors needed a great measure of minority which was not easily available unless properly concluded by mutual understanding and trust. Thus, ambassadors were expected to maintain reasonable standard of complying with the alien conditions, which quite often were not so easily adaptable.

You must understand that African ambassadors faced a lot of hardship and unspeakable inhumanity in a foreign land. Robert Smith (1989:25) also articulated the hardship of African ambassadors thus:

> Ibn Fartua, for example, reports two occasions on which the troops of Idris Alooma of Bomo killed envoys from the pagan So during wars in the late sixteenth century. The alleged imprisonment of ambassadors by a sixteenth – century Oba of Benin has been mentioned … In 1726, for example, an Asante ambassador sent to ask the Fante to withdraw their protection from king Ntsiful of Wassa, who had taken refuge with them, was pelted with stones… In 1878 an envoy sent by the ruler of Imesi – Igbodo to assure Ibadan that his town would not join the Ekitiparapo was murdered by his own townspeople on his return home.

Linguistic barriers also stood in the ways of the African ambassadors. It was not all that easy for the ambassadors to understand the language of their host. Even though they have had to rely on the assistance of the interpreters adept in the language and culture of their host, it was never easy for the ambassadors to understand the manipulations of their interest due to non-understanding of the jargon of indigenous diplomacy. Indeed, the interpreters had the opportunity of taking over the role of the negotiators which quite often had some severe implications.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.     Who is an ambassador?
2.     How were ambassadors employed in traditional African society?
3.     How did ambassador played the role of agent of peace in
        traditional African society?
4.     What were the challenges before the African Ambassadors?
5.     Identify various ambassadors in traditional African society?

## 4.0     CONCLUSION

Stationing ambassadors in foreign lands by pre-colonial African states apparently functioned as positive way of increasing diplomatic relations and understanding, ennobling process of peaceful and harmonious relationship, growing tendencies of solidarisation and improving commercial interests and security of the engaging states. It also cowed down levels of self aggrandizement and arrogance among the various states. You would have discovered, that in all, the capacity for the ambassadors to advertise the policies and prestige of their state, entailed greater enthusiasm for development.

It was also the duty of the ambassadors to explain the nature of governance of their homeland thereby inducing greater capacity for understanding by the foreign state. This often promoted respect and honour which were also reciprocated by the receiving foreign state. Thus, such a reciprocity engendered common wealth of peace and harmony – the preserve of development in traditional African societies.

## 5.0     SUMMARY

This unit has addressed the position of African ambassadors in the sphere of influence for greater development in pre-colonial African states. Observably, African ambassadors were noted for their increasing knowledge and awareness of the political and social development of both their homeland and foreign states. This, you must have observed, enabled them to articulate levels of diplomatic relations significantly

anchored to peace and harmony and resistance against conflict. Thus, diplomatic relations entailed positive negotiation and cooperation that yielded good results in pre-colonial African states.

It has also been considered that the ambassadors often liaised with their foreign diplomatic friends with a view to evolving joint problem solving tactics in their diplomatic agenda. Many pre-colonial kings, especially in the western Sudan (as revealed in the unit) rose to the occasion of concluding series of alliance to discipline their common enemies. Thus, diplomatic activity demanded substantial level of power politics and the display of intelligence in pre-colonial African states.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Identify various levels of diplomatic experiences of pre-colonial African kings especially showing merits and demerits of the engagement.
2.    Examine the nature of diplomatic immunities for African Ambassadors in pre-colonial times.

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## MODULE 5    COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL AND WESTERN METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## UNIT 1    NATURE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN TRADITIONAL AND WESTERN SOCIETIES

**CONTENTS**

1.0    Introduction
2.0    Objectives
3.0    Main Content
     3.1    What Traditional Societies Stand for
     3.2    Western Societies in Focus
     3.3    Traditional and Western Conflict Resolution Compared
4.0    Conclusion
5.0    Summary
6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0    References/Further Reading

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

Colonialism had been a notable event which overwhelmingly affected traditional methods of conflict resolution in Africa. The colonialists came with the colonial agenda and introduced western methods of conflict resolution. This was craftily done by subjugating the hitherto existing method of conflict resolution which they met on arrival. The traditional methods of conflict resolution (discussed in Module 2) was closely observed, controlled and relegated to the background for purposes of governing all aspects and affairs of the Africans, advertising the colonial pattern of conflict resolution and demonstrating the craft of colonial imperialism.

The introduction of western model of conflict resolution was received in traditional African societies with mixed feelings especially with sense of loss (of values in the African cultural heritage) and experimenting on the benefits of the newly introduced method. What was more, the introduction had a lot of imposition and condemnation of the original pattern of conflict resolution. The experimentation of the new model of conflict resolution

was in the same environment and space, where the traditional conflict resolution once blossomed. The environment and space were the same but the principles and practitioners of the conflict resolution were quite different. Even the result was proportionately different. The speed of grafting the western method of conflict resolution was criminally alarming.

Although, western method of conflict resolution had come to stay in Africa, the hitherto exciting traditional method of conflict resolution still thrived so surprisingly. This was due to a number of reasons to be unearthed in this unit. Observably, however, both methods of conflict exists side by side in Africa. One dictates the pace of development on a fast lane (western method) while the other controls (traditional method) the speed orchestrated by the other. It is, however, difficult to discern whether the wedlock of both traditional and western methods of conflict resolution benefited Africa far beyond what the hitherto existing method had achieved. This had been a difficult academic terrain which scholarly writings have shied away from. An attempt will, however, be made to bridge the gap in this module.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

* unearth the apparent characteristics of both traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in African society,
* understand the reasons for the thriving nature of traditional methods of conflict resolution in the context of imposition,
* contextualize the values of colonially inherited method of conflict resolution in African environment; and
* assess the nature of wedlock between the traditional and western methods of conflict resolution.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1    What Traditional Societies Stand For

It is very significant for you to understand the geographical and cultural delineations of the areas of study in this course. You may encounter some difficulties of linking the mainthrust of the discussion with the zones of operation if you fail to understand at the onset the locus of operation of the study. You will, therefore, understand in this unit what is traditional about the society and the traditions so ebullient to make a society qualifies with the prefix of "traditional". You may also want to know about the appropriateness of the prefix to a society in focus.

Traditional society refers to a geographical region of human existence with the fundamentals of customs and norms basically anchored on systemic

operations. You must understand that traditions play tremendous influence on the actions of the indigenous populace. It suggests to you, therefore, that traditional society is that which upholds and demonstrates the customary norms. Thus, traditional society as used in this course is the indigenous or rural community.

The appropriateness of the prefix "traditional" is anchored on the fact that issues of development are basically associated with the customs and norms of the society. The peculiarities of the customary thought can only be properly typified by the prefix "traditional". Secondly, the prefix distinguishes African societies from the western world.

## 3.2    Western Societies in Focus

Your next point of understanding is to discover the geographical and cultural identity of the western world. Western society refers to other societies outside Africa and especially the European societies or white societies. This western society deferred markedly from the traditional societies in Africa.

From our definition of traditional society, as earlier discussed, the rural setting of the European World qualifies for a traditional society. This suggests to you that certain geographical setting in the western world can be tagged traditional European societies which demonstrates element of traditionality of thought pattern. You must, however, understand that the nature and functions of customs and norms in the western society quite differed from those of the African traditional societies. Thus, no continent of the world lack rural setting.

The European cultural norms are by principles and operation different from African cultural orientation. It is necessary for you to know that there may be a meeting point of the two norms but such convergence of interest is very rarely observable. You should be able to engage yourself in reading and identifying the comparison between the two geographical regions of the world in space and time. For example, you should identify colour differentiation and linguistic peculiarities.

## 3.3    Traditional and Western Methods of Conflict Resolution on a Comparative Scale

It is necessary to weigh the level of balance in the wedlock between traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in a totally different environment, space and time. Doing so helps us to understand the degree of mutual relationship they could be subjected to. It also helps us to measure the degree of relevance and application of one method to the other under whatever circumstance and capacity.

Both methods are representative of a culture and civilization and product of totally different era and epoch of development. It is just good enough that both methods signified development process and experience of yet totally different people and psyche. The merger of the two methods symbolized cultural fusion brought about by acculturation for what ever purpose and motive. It is not in doubt, however, that the imperial tendencies of the western method was an overriding clause subjecting the traditional method to reduction in substance and relevance. Each method of conflict resolution whether traditional or western had its salient characteristics hereunder catalogued.

Traditional method of conflict resolution had been patterned or designed along the following characteristics:

• it has largely been undocumented until recently interpreted and scholarly analyzed,
• it is couched in religious garb and abound in rituals, customs and norms,
• it is so localized with a lot of specificity,
• it is well focused on balance of interests,
• it is dynamic and thrivable; and
• it is value laden.

On the other hand, the western method has the following features:

• It is propaganda tuned,
• It has largely been documented,
• It has sufficient whims and caprices,
• It is imperialistic,
• It is theoretically focused; and
• It is systematically fashionable.

In the area of fundamental differentiation, traditional and western methods markedly varied. Too much of confidentiality is associated with the western method in the process of conflict resolution. In the case of the traditional method, you will find out that it is open-ended given room to structural application of principles and the dominance of custom and norms at the procedural level.

In the resolution of conflict in traditional African societies, the audience included all members of the community and thus the result was always community focused. No one dare disagreed with the outcome since it would have received supernatural attention and blessing. Whereas western method of conflict resolution had the exclusive audience in the disputants.

Western model of conflict is very flexible in operation paving way for manipulation and pliability. This is absent in the traditional method which

derived its mode of operation from the laid down customs and norms. This suggests to you that it is culture specific. Traditional method of conflict resolution recognized extrajudicial devices and power in the process of resolving conflict. The supernatural connectivity enforced sanctions and plagued erring offenders. Western method of conflict resolution lacks such mundane powers.

The outcome of western model of conflict is anchored on a tripod structure – win-win, win – loose and loose – loose (on rare occasion). A lot depend on the level of manipulation or flexibility and the readiness of the parties to the conflict to state the facts clearly and with honesty of purpose and truthful disposition. In the case of traditional method, the parties to the conflict proportionately shared the blame and praise so inherent in the matter and were often adjudged to shift ground through the pronouncement of the dictum: "give a – little – get – a – little". This thesis suggests to you that there is no victor no vanquished in the verdict of the intervenors or the reconciliators.

The training of the peace makers or facilitators eventhough required for the traditional and western methods of conflict resolution, they quite varied. One requires informal training (traditional/method) with lots of experience through observation, the other demands for a formal training (western method) with experimental sensibility. Thus, the professionalism that was so required are also of different posturing. One requires the school system and rigorous systemization of the process (western method) while the other needs sound memory, closer observation and systemic demonstration (traditional method) of the process involved in comprehending conflict resolution in traditional African societies.

Advantageously, western model saves time much more than litigation (which was the early pattern of western adjudicatory system). Traditional method can be rated much cheaper, quicker and peace-focused. There is enough evidence to attest to the desirability of party to the conflict through the end of conflict resolution ceremony. In that ceremony, you need to understand that parties to the conflict exhibited their peaceful disposition and acceptability of the resolution out come through palm wine drink, bean cake eating, kolanut chewing and warm embrace as well as glowing and beaming smiles to the admiration of members of the audience and the delight of the facilitators of the emergent peace and harmony.

Having discussed the prevailing differentials in both traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in African society, the significant fact remains as to the nature of the wedlock of the methods. How do they work side by side in the same environmental setting? How have the agents and agencies of the two methods faired? Which method has overwhelming influence on the other? Can the two methods be applied simultaneously to the same conflict?

Some of the questions raised in the foregoing paragraph may be difficult to answer until situation arises whereby the practical solution preferred may be so significantly relevant. It is, however, important to emphasize the point that the environment of conflict situation largely depends on the applicability of what method is in vogue. Environmental setting, therefore, is very necessary a determining factor in the desirability and adaptation of a specific method to use in the resolution of a particular conflict. It may not be easy to apply all methods to a specific conflict situation and environment.

Peace practitioners and facilitators earnestly desired the extermination of conflict. So difficult is the task of conflict resolution to peace practitioners who must merge theory with practice. They have other difficulties such as language barrier, understanding the reality of the conflict situation and environment and the cultural background they are coming from. These difficulties as you will understand apply to users and adopters of both traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in African society. It behoves on the peace practitioners, therefore, to be selective, interactive and observant with quick intelligence to discern and decipher the nature of the method to use to resolve conflict in vogue. Hence, it is difficult to adjudge the wedlock of traditional and western methods of conflict resolution a convenient one by association or union, application, operation and relevance. A lot depends on situation, environment and the direction of facilitation.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What are the geographical differences between the traditional and western societies?
2.    What linked up the two geographical regions of the world?
3.    Identify their methods of conflict resolution.
4.    Compare the traditional and western methods of conflict resolution?
5.    Was the wedlock of the two modes of conflict resolution practicable in African society?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of traditional and western methods of conflict resolution significantly suggests to you that two methods fused together under imposing circumstances. One method (western) must have imposed on the other hitherto original method (traditional). The imposing method must have had imperial tendencies toward alienating the unsuspecting homely method. Whatever the case might have been, the fusion and adaptation have come to stay and forces of acculturation have made them to so directionally coagulated.

Applying the traditional methods which hitherto had the original *modus operandi,* to a totally alien culture within African background, you must

have observed, had been an onerous task. This became worse when the alien method determined and vigorously struggled to pull down the original and hitherto existing method on her own soil. The attempt failed as the original method thrived and flourished merely accommodating the alien method. Thus, in applying the receiving method there are, therefore, possible and limited levels. Each method has to surrender what is not applicable in it and invigorate what is relevant to the ensuing conflict situation and environment.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

This unit has addressed the wedlock between traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in African society. It took into cognizant the nature of both methods and the practitioners associated with them. It also catalogued some of the seemingly apparent differentials in both methods.

It has also been considered in the unit that the alienation of the traditional method of conflict resolution did not totally abolish it, in that it has a thriving and flourishing tendencies. The thriving nature of traditional method of conflict resolution as you must have observed, repelled the coercive courtship of the western method of conflict resolution, forcing it to explorative wedlock with observatory exclusivity. Consequently both methods have been adjudged relevant to specific conflict situation and environment.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Identify the various differences and similarities between traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in African society.
2.    What are the challenges of western methods of conflict resolution in African society?

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**UNIT 2      TIMING OF RESOLUTION**

**CONTENTS**

# 1.0   INTRODUCTION

Our focus in this unit is that conflict resolution in traditional African societies was time induced, time-focused and time-specific. The process was not carried out without reference to time element which gave it deserving attention and utmost concern. Although, time is no respecter of persons and issues, it associates with events, season and ceremonies. Thus, African judges were time conscious and at alert with accreditation of speedy resolution of conflict in traditional African societies.

There was time for everything, event and activity in traditional African societies. Time reckoning in those societies was not tied to the scientific clock brought about by invention. Time element was associated with the movement of the galaxy – moon, stars and the sun. These units of the galaxy controlled seasons, events and human existence in traditional African societies. Thus, you will understand that there were time symbols and signs such as the cockcrow, signing birds, sunrise and sunset. This suggests to you that the Africans have a knowledge-based time consciousness that determined and reflected their activities in the society.

Conflict resolution in traditional African societies was tied down to the consciousness of time, space and environment. For space, this was necessary to tap the psychic resources of the spiritual forces as emblem of supernatural protection and attention at the scene of resolution. For environment, it was significant to identify veritable venues for the actualization of conflict resolution. Such venues included palaces, market squares, family chambers, shrines and sanctuaries as well as cult of secret societies. These venues were time bound and bounded in traditional African societies. The day in traditional African societies was reckoned in accordance with events. This is why the Ankole of Uganda

reckoned days with references to events around the cattle – *akasheshe* which is milking time is 6 a.m., *bari omubirago* is noon and time for cattle and people to rest or relax while *ente zaataba* (time when cattle enter their kraals to sleep) (Mbiti, 1976: 19-21). For the Ankole, time measurement and conflict resolution may be tied down to one of the times as may be convenient for such activity. This unit, therefore, focuses on the appropriate and convenient time for conflict resolution in traditional African societies.

## 2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- reconstruct African time elements and symbols as they relate with conflict resolution activity,
- understand the significance of the unity of time and space in conflict resolution procedure in traditional African societies,
- assess the substance and relevance of time to conflict resolution outcome; and
- contextualize time – focused issues in conflict resolution perspectives.

## 3.0   MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1   What is Time?

The definition of time is necessary for you to understand its relevance in conflict resolution process. Time refers to moment of change revolving around occasion or event. It is often paradoxically used to indicate season, period and epoch. It is significant for you to know that the measurement of time symbolizes regularity and spontaneity of occurrence or event. Thus, time enables man to adjust to constant changes penetrating into social activities.

You will find out in this unit that time controls and influences occasion for conflict resolution. Indeed, conflict resolution takes time. There are, therefore, time allotted to issues of conflict. In other words, there is time for conflict and there is time for resolution of such a conflict.

In this unit, our interest will be centered on both periodisation and moment associated with conflict resolution. This suggests to you that the unit is dealing with moments of conflict resolution and the periodisation or dating of such a social activity. The periodisation here refers to pre-colonial era in African society. It is often tagged traditional African society when African cultural heritage was not polluted through the advent of colonialism.

## 3.2 Perspectives in the Timing of Conflict Resolution in African Society

The timeliness of attending to conflict situation was very significant in traditional African societies. It was neatly tied down to conflict prevention towards preserving time against all odds. There was no occasion for time wastage in traditional African societies. Rather time was both conserved and preserved for greater development of cultural events and activities. The time to be supposedly wasted on resolving conflict and mending fences was judiciously spent on agricultural activities, industrial works and social connections. Even at the escalation of conflict, procedurally, the peace facilitators maximized time in the process of resolution by engaging other dissemination of news and useful information, recognition of the areas needing further development and identifying with the supernatural connective cord towards comprehending the divine order of social control and cultural engineering. Thus, at the venue of conflict resolution in traditional African societies you will observe that many other significant activities were packaged along with the issues which bordered on the conflict in vogue. This was to justify the fact that time must not only be bound and bonded with events and activities but also that Africans were time conscious and freely used time for developmental process.

Time element showcased African culture. If there is anything that exists as African time, it is to be interpreted as the peculiar way by which Africans were conscious of time and judiciously used it within the boundary and context of their environmental forces. African time elements as you will discover derived from their climatic exigencies and possibilities. There were, therefore, seasonal delineation of time for conveniences of carrying out one event or the other. The time elements thus included morning, afternoon, evening and night sections with one section of time translating into the other and man making history through the translatory process. Most activities in traditional African societies were carried out in the conveniences and womb of morning and evening section. This was to effectively enjoyed the atmospheric conditions exhibiting the sections without any hindrance or disturbance. Thus, conflict resolution was done during those sections for mental alertment, intellectual bliss (over memory laden activity such as conflict resolution) and spiritual conveniences. Thus, convenience was eked out of the time – bound conflict thereby effectively demonstrating the skills associated with listening art and persuasive panorama.

Conflict resolution agenda did not deterred the Africans at the grassroot level from carrying out their domestic responsibilities and routinely duties. This was why the time for conflict resolution was carefully selected and allotted so that parties to the conflict would not have been

disturbed or deprived of their occupational rights and privileges. Otherwise it would have created what the author elsewhere called "contempt of court" (Olaoba, 2008:55-65). Schapera (1974:139-152) and Rewane (1957:180 cf) also evidently agreed on the exigencies of contempt of court in African society.

Supernatural power quite often controlled and influenced time elements in traditional African societies. Indeed, you will understand that the supernatural created time, space and environment with all the circumstances tilting the progress of time and translation of events and activities in the sphere of development. Man, however, has no control of time but resourcefully tapped time to actualize the space of social harmony and peaceful co-existence. Man cannot, therefore, misuse time within the context of the consciousness of the supernatural. Indeed, the fear of the supernatural engineered dynamic usage of time by peace facilitators in traditional African society. Thus, the social control and engineering of the worldly events and activities were within the reach and management by the supernatural who had the divine orbit of earthly rotation and galaxical freelance of time. Hence, the presence of the supernatural at the scene of conflict resolution often preserved time, space and environment. The intervenors or peace facilitators took enough time to resolve conflict, managed the time at their disposal and justifying the time spent in the process of resolution to the degree that success and development attended on the occasion as monitored through the divine order and axis. Peace facilitators, parties to the conflict and their witnesses as well as the large crowd of audience not only enjoyed the "palaver" (coined by E.S. Hartland in his *Primitive culture,* 1924) but also received sufficient knowledge commensurate with the time so far spent at the scene of conflict resolution.

The western concept of time as you will find out, is not only formalized but also quite calendrical. Caucusing by western parlance can be done anytime of the day. It is, unlike the traditional method of conflict resolution, not restricted to time specific during the day. This is so because:

• there is no attachment to divine order and control,
• it is professionalized with remuneration,
• concept of time differs markedly in western society from that of the traditional society; and
• it has no religious inducement like that of the traditional method.

## 3.3     Challenges of Time

You must have discovered in this unit that time played a tremendous role in accomplishing peace and harmony in the society. Inspite of its

significance to the development process and especially to conflict resolution process, time do have some challenges which you need to understand in this course. This will enable you decipher between event and time in the society.

The linkage between time and the event of conflict resolution was not easily determined and delineated in many traditional African societies. The time spent on conflict resolution was not recordable in traditional African societies. Although, the process of resolving the conflict was speedy and apt in some conflicts, for others it was not easily controlled. More importantly there was no recording of the moments of conflict resolution in traditional African societies. A lot depended on the degree and intensity of the issues of conflict and the expertise of the peace facilitators or the interveners.

Putting the conflict and its resolution into time –perspectives was yet another challenge against time. The period was apparently undecided in the sphere of accuracy. Hence, what you will find out was loose periodisation. This is so because of the fact that there was no structured chronology of events and the fluidy time-elements.

Man, as you must understand, changes with time. The death of special and knowledgeable peace practitioners or facilitators often affect the direction of flow of thought and understanding of conflict issues and situation. This suggests to you that there is time for every event as well as that conflict resolution called for timeliness of operation. Once issues of conflict are not unnecessarily delayed those who are experts to resolve them would still be available.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.     What is time reckoning?
2.     How was time reckoning done in traditional African society?
3.     What is the place of time in African conflict resolution?
4.     What are the challenges of the time in conflict resolution?
5.     What does timing of conflict resolution reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Time flies with magic wand and dovetailed into development when properly accessed and judiciously utilized. This is the direction of traditional thought pattern among the Africans. Indeed, there is what can be adjudged African perception of time which resonated in the objectification of performance and quantification of social events and activities. In traditional African societies, you must have discovered that

time was rated not only as so significant to initiating success and development act but also tied down to the actualization of conflict resolution. Timeliness of events and activities as linked up with conflict resolution in traditional African societies prevented the escalation of conflict.

There was, as a matter of fact, divine control of time by the supernatural, who created it along with space and environment. Man, thus, has enough time to reckon with the ontological balance of the timeliness of conflict resolution with a view to exhibiting peace and harmony on the orbit of time and space. To space out the supernatural in the realm of affairs amounted to non-utilization of time allotted to development. Thus, Africans wasted no time in recognizing the divine control of time, space and environment in their conflict resolution agenda.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

Considered in this unit was the traditional perception of time and its influence on conflict resolution procedure. There was, therefore, the notion of procedural progression of time signaling events and activities in traditional African societies. It has been argued so creditably that the timely resolution of conflict symbolized prevention or further escalation into another stage of conflict. Africans thus appreciated the utilitarian perception of time elements.

Time elements evolved quite progressively and circumstantially in traditional African societies. Events were adjudged people oriented and time-tuned. Thus the unit identified cockcrow (normally at dawn and specific hours of the day), signals of farm birds, sunrise and sunset as time elements in traditional African societies. The recognition of these time elements influenced the period so selected and allotted to conflict resolution for effective harmonisation of time and events.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    "Time and event had been twilight of conflict resolution in African traditional society". Discuss.
2.    Discuss the suitability of time to conflict resolution process in indigenous African society.

## 7.0    REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 3       NATURE OF TRAINING RECONCILIATORS IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

**CONTENTS**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will discover that informal training was attendant on the preparation of the reconciliators for the greater task of conflict resolution. The training took place at the conflict resolution venues – in the palace, family chamber, market square and shrines. Sometimes it took place as an impromptu training on the street or in the open. The individuals in traditional African societies qualified to be trained but greater enthusiasm was required. Other requirements necessary to facilitate speedy training and interest in conflict resolution included:

- open mind
- determination
- sound memory
- observatory instinct
- inquisitiveness
- participatory whims
- sense of humour
- adept in persuasive language (proverbs, maxims and allegories)
- submissiveness
- knowledge of customs and norms

The trainers of reconciliators also deserved to possess the following:

- sound expression of ideas
- sufficient experience
- analytical mind
- investigatory spirit
- fear and respect for the supernatural

- adept in cultural norms
- knowledgeable in historical explanations

As for the western method of conflict resolution, the training has the form of formality relating to formal school system and professional technicalities. The venue can be anywhere depending on the interest and wishes of the parties to the conflict. It thus requires:

- optimal interest
- ability to withstand all odds
- wide horizon
- interactive ability
- great sense of history
- perceptive inclination

In a nutshell, this unit focuses on the level and significance of training to acquire high degree of professionalism by the reconciliators.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- investigate the mode of training associated with the practice of conflict resolution in African societies,
- understand the hardship inherent in the training of reconciliators,
- assess the degree of inquisitiveness displayed by the trainees; and
- identify the level of sociation required by the trainees and the trainers.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1 Training Schedules

Training is an important aspect of education in life. It showcases the experimentation of theoretical fronts for the acquirement of basic knowledge and understanding. You must understand that no one acquire the knowledge of a thing without a form of training. It is also significant for you to know that there are informal and formal types of training. Our concern is on the informal type which is bereft of a school system. Both types of training have merits and demerits for different categories of trainees. Moreover, training do have some salient schedules.

The schedules of training in traditional African societies were customarily packaged to accommodate the dictates of African cultural heritage. The schedules usually gave room for age, sex, status and level

of intelligence. The schedules also accommodated sense of history and sound judgment. Time constraints were carefully handled and managed. The schedules allowed for the spirited discernment and initiative drives.

## 3.2     The Training of Reconciliators in African Societies

The perspective associated with the training of reconciliators in African societies seemed apparently broad and holistic in approach. It involved a lot of time, interest and commitment both on the part of the trainees and the trainers. On both sides, however, freedom and freelance was allowed. Though it was compulsory that a person must become a reconciliator in traditional African societies, it was adjudged a status symbol to become one so as to contribute meaningfully to the development process. Individuals, therefore, strove and struggled to attain the greatest heights in understanding the process of reconciliation in traditional African societies.

You will discover that the period of training was difficult to peg as it apparently seemed to be long-lasting. There was no end to the training. Even the trainers constantly re-equipped themselves in the art of reconciliation because of the nature of conflicts that they often resolved. Indeed, the application of precedent to reconciliatory process was not as easy as may be assumed by trainers. Thus, both the trainees and the trainers were conscious of the diversity in the nature of conflicts in vogue. Experience became perceptive. The period of training, therefore, was determined by the early and speedy display of intelligence, wisdom and initiatives toward robust expertise in conflict resolution.

The caliber of trainees was not difficult to identify by the trainers. The trainers kept watchful eyes on the trainees studying them from moment to moment on their display of wisdom and inquisitiveness in the process of reconciliation. Humaneness, character disposition and dogged determination in grasping the dynamics of reconciliation equipped the trainees for mastering the art. Obviously the trainees were of youthful age than the trainers.

The process of training the reconciliators was simple and straightforward to the engaging trainees ready to learn. The process involved listening art, watchful eyes and cogitative minds on the part of the trainees to decipher the issues of conflict as they were practically approached by the trainers. The process was devoid of question time when the conflict was resolved. Much more later, however, there was the post-conflict resolution question time for the inquisitive trainees (Olaoba, 199:122-125).

There was no stereotyped curriculum for the process of training the reconciliators in traditional African societies. There were, however, loose curriculum involving pattern of reconciliation, identification of the issues of the conflict, language of reconciliation, the listening art, knowledge of customs and norms and the dynamics of peaceful reconciliation. All these reconciliatory agenda were mastered and dramatized before the very eyes of the trainees. When it came to post conflict resolution question time, which was often done with open-mindedness, the trainees usually understood the hidden aspect of the reconciliatory process.

You will discover, however, that the trainees often encounters some problems when undergoing the training. Such problems included, the pace of the service delivery by the trainers, the language of the reconciliation (Proverbs, maxims and allegories), the mood of the trainers and the audience and the logicality of the verdict (all associated with customs and norms in the society). These problems were, however, solved during the post conflict resolution question time if the trainees cared to follow up. Since the trainers were never remunerated for the training, the trainees took time to bombard them with questions.

It is important for you to observe that training to become a reconciliator in western model of conflict resolution differed from that of the traditional method earlier unearthed. Not only is the process adjudged tedious and complex, it is also long drawn. The process also needs certificated trainers (peace practitioners) and complex curricula. Thus, trainees are selected and often paid for the training or could be sponsored by government, institutions and organisations. Moreover, the time for the training is relatively short. This suggests to you that the curricula for the training are always sophisticatedly packaged. Yet the trainers receive remuneration for engaging in the training.

The training in western model of reconciliation happens in a closed door atmosphere though spacious to allow for practical sessions. The venue is usually selected to equate with the school system and ensures free movement of the trainees when it comes to practical sessions. Such practical session you must understand paves the way for the experimentation (in a brief moment) of the reconciliatory process. At the end of the training, certificate of participation is issued to the trainees as attestation to the fact that they once received training in reconciliation. It, therefore, behoves them to practicalise on what they have been trained within a short period.

### 3.3    Challenges of Training

The training of African reconciliators were not without some teething challenges. You need to understand, however, that such challenges usually put the reconciliators on their toes and throes of articulating the substance of reconciliation in the development process. The training was no doubt hazardous and pain-staking especially at the beginning.

In the process of training there was no doubting the fact that vexatious attitude cropped up which usually confused the trainees and wobbled their interest and enthusiasm. Such vexatious occurrence not only championed the spirit of the trained but also served as setback of the training schedules. A lot was no doubt lost in the exhibition of vexatious mannerism.

The practical approach through which training always started for reconciliators in traditional African societies, always marred theoretical framework of conflict resolution for the trainees. Unless such trainees have picturesque of mastering the issues of conflict and the manner in which the peace facilitators approached the resolution, it often became highly difficult to propel speedy understanding of the training schedules. Your understanding of these challenges must be based on the analysis of issues of conflict.

In western societies, the training schedules had been formalized and congestionally packaged, what a trainee needed was quick wisdom and initiatives to grapse so speedily the curricula of training. The practical session, as you need to understand, put the trainees on their toes for the demonstration of the theory dished out to them. This suggests to you that the classroom environment through which the training took place ensured maximum comfort and space of operation.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What are the pertinent schemes in the training of African reconciliators?
2.    Why were the African reconciliators subjected to training?
3.    How were they trained?
4.    Who trained them?
5.    What were the challenges of the trainers?

### 4.0    CONCLUSION

The perspectives of training reconciliators in both traditional and western societies are undoubtedly different. There are, however, areas of convergence in both models of training. The principles behind the

training are fundamentally similar and directed towards peace facilitation in African society.

Obviously, you must have observed that the form of training so engaged in by the trainees in both methods anchored on the singular fact that conflict resolution expertise is not achievable in a moment or day. It requires both gesticulating and seeding procedures before maturity becomes handy. Furthermore, the training would have been done under conducive and peaceful atmosphere. Thus, the trainees must experience peace which they were to facilitate after the training.

## 5.0   SUMMARY

Evidently peace education requires levels of training. This unit has demonstrated the fact that reconciliators need sufficient training before engaging in reconciliatory process. Experience is the best teacher. Thus, the trainees received adequate knowledge of the process of reconciliation from the trainers (who must exhibit and dramatise their acquired knowledge).

You must have discovered in this unit that both traditional and western methods of training the reconciliators produced knowledge based experimentation and facilitation of peace in African society. Indeed, this has shown quite clearly that peace education is not only desirable but also significant to development process in the society. Obviously, development can only take place in the atmosphere of peace and harmony. It is pertinent, therefore, that Africans need knowledge based model of reconciliation for economic survival and social engineering.

## 6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Examine the challenges of peace education in the development of African society.
2.   Identify and discuss the roles of reconciliators in conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies.

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## UNIT 4     PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION METHODS

**CONTENTS**

1.0     Introduction
2.0     Objectives
3.0     Main Content
        3.1     What Adaptation is all about
        3.2     Cataloging Problems of Adaptation of Conflict Resolution
        3.3     How to Overcome the Problems
4.0     Conclusion
5.0     Summary
6.0     Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0     References/Further Reading

## 1.0     INTRODUCTION

The adaptation of the conflict resolution methods have been approached with a pinch of salt in African society. You will discover that it has not been readily possible to adapt them suitably to all conflicting situations and environment. The peculiarities of the conflicts loomed large in the determination of what method to apply. Also proper understanding and knowledge of the methods aided the decision on what method to suitably and conveniently apply.

You must have observed that there are five different methods identified in module two of this study. Each of them had its own characteristics and shortcomings. It beholds, therefore on the peace facilitators or reconciliators to watch closely and adequately scrutinize the relevance of which method to the conflict in vogue. There can be no holistic application and adaptation of the method to all issues of conflicts in African society. Indeed, the customs and norms associated with the issues of conflict determined the desirability of the choice of method to adopt for resolving a specific conflict. Hence, the reconciliators are bound to encounter some knotty problems in the adoption and adaptation of conflict resolution methods, which, as the occasion of western influence of the methods is instrumental to mixed recognition of the methods in contemporary African society.

The envisaged problems of adaptation of conflict resolution methods by the reconciliators may include the following:

• recognition
• choice or selection
• comprehension

- interpretation
- application
- evaluation

Whatever method was already in place in traditional African societies need no re-adaptation. You will find out that it continues to flourish and thrive but always receptive of the influence of the newly introduced methods. The environment of operation of the methods was constant and unchanging. This unit focuses on the problems of adapting the methods of conflict resolution to give room for their accessibility and assessment.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify various problems surrounding the adoption of what method to apply towards resolving a given conflict in contemporary African society; and
- recognize the need to harmonize both traditional and western methods of conflict resolution in the face of all challenges.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

## 3.1 What Adaptation is all about

The advent of western model of conflict resolution to African society had overwhelmingly re-condition the hitherto existing pattern of conflict resolution. The result, as you are to observe, had been that of a wedlock of systems and models. It is, however, not easy for you to discern the degree of penetration and the present dispensation of affairs in African society. The wedlock suggests to you a form of adoption and adaptation. But what the adaptation is all about is the issue at stake.

You need to understand the fact of western model of conflict resolution in modern African society. You also need to understand certain pertinent issues such as what prompted the idea of adaptation, was the idea necessary? What has been the outcome of the adaptive process of conflict resolution in modern African society?

Adaptation is all about befitting adjustment for the development process to take place. There are conditions perquisite to adaptive process and these have been found ready made in African society.

They included:

- hospitable intention,

- accommodable spirit,
- tolerance,
- open-handedness to cooperate,
- receptiveness,
- virility of existing norms and customs; and
- thriving trend.

You must, however, understand that not all western models of conflict resolution were adaptive to the African soil. This suggests to you that there had been elements of resistance to some aspects of the adaptive foreign culture. Similarly, the environmental condition of the adaptive cultural model of the western society equally deterred thorough and positive adaptation on a foreign soil (African society).

## 3.2    Cataloguing Problems of Adaptation of Conflict Resolution Methods in African Society

You need to understand that problems abound in the process of integrating or harmonizing the traditional and western methods of conflict resolution especially in the same environmental setting. It is obviously difficult for the hitherto existing methods not to be somehow relevant to resolving modern conflict. Although Osaghae (1999:2001-217) and Zartman (1999: 1-11) have thrown much light on some of the problems associated with the adaptation of harmonized methods of conflict resolution in a totally pre-literate environment, it is still important to stress the fact that tradition do die hard.

Researching the methods of conflict resolution in African society has not been so easy for scholars. There had been paucity of data to assist scholarly writings. Agents of conflict resolution are no longer easy to come by and where available, they have been largely uncompromising in dishing out vibrant data for scholarly documentation. The documentation of conflict resolution methods would have facilitated sufficient understanding of the knowledge associated with them and thereby enabled reconciliators to discern and design articulated process of adapting the methods in contemporary cultural milieu.

There is no gainsaying the fact that five notable methods of conflict resolution had been recognized in traditional African societies. Their recognition in modern times has been with mixed feelings and ideological framework which has gone beyond the hitherto appraisal of the methods. It therefore becomes a teething problem to identify what is traditional and modern in the current appraisal of the methods of conflict resolution in contemporary African societies.

Once the recognition has been somehow foggy, comprehending the methods in the context of modern development becomes another knotty problem in the hands of the moderators and wishful learner of the process of reconciliation in modern African societies. The lack of understanding, therefore, paves the way for the selection of negligible aspect of the methods of conflict resolution. It also disallows holistic interpretation of the process of conflict resolution.

The harmonization of the method of conflict resolution has been the product of cultural fusion. It has given rise to actualizing sociation and acculturation with undetectable instincts. Thus, dual application of what had been harmonized as conflict resolution method to bear on the issues of conflict may be damaging to the end result of the resolution exercise. Caution thus, becomes the operational watch word in the process of application.

### 3.3    How to Overcome the Problems

The identification and understanding of a problem often curvets solution especially with a desirable intention. You have already been exposed to the problems of adaptation of conflict resolution model of the western society to African society. The adaptation thus depicted a kind of surreptiously inclined wedlock which is yet to be adjudged a befitting and productive networking. You need to ponder on the way out of the quadmire especially identifying the grey areas involved in the supposed wedlock.

The first solution to the adaptive problem is the demonstration and exhibition of caution. This you need to understand will guard against casting aspersion on and be overcritical of the issue of adaptation. This suggests to you that the issue must not be overstretched beyond human imagination and dimension.

Another point of solving the problem is to display proper recognition of the cultural traits and heritage which informed the origination of the conflict resolution model of both geographical divides. Once you recognize and understand the dynamism of the derivative      cultural outlet of the conflict resolution in both global regions, the fact is that you would have understood their idiosyncrasies which will also deter casting aspersion on any aspect of the culture. In that situation and context, there will be natural adaptation and integration.

You need also to know that the point of sympathy for whatever inadequacies found in both models of conflict resolution will go a long way to solving the problem of adaptation. Sympathy entails accessibility towards cooperation and determination to do business with the new

system unconditionally. Sympathy will also enhance tolerance of the new system in place. A lot, however, depends on what aspect of the conflict model necessarily deserves sympathy and tolerance for effective adaptation and integration.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1.    What were the levels of adaptation of conflict resolution methods in traditional African society?
2.    What were the problems associated with the process of adapting conflict resolution methods?
3.    How were these problems solved?
4.    Identify the problems of adaptation of conflict resolution methods.
5.    How do Africans behave in the face of problems in their society?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Conflict of culture often presents a lot of problems even though there could be positive results therefrom. The harmonization of traditional and western methods of conflict resolution has both advantages and disadvantages in modern African society. The disadvantages apparently seem to outweigh the advantages. This, however, depends on the nature of conflict to which the methods are applicable and the expertise of the reconciliators.

You must have observed that the problems of adaptation of the conflict resolution methods are enormous with a degree of diversity in modern African societies. These include recognition, selection, comprehension, interpretation and application of the existing methods of conflict resolution. Conflict situation and environmental setting pose some additional challenges. The challenges are quite weighty and inimical to the articulation of the conflict resolution methods. A lot, however, depends on the degree of the harmonization of the methods and the enormity of the problems (associated with the conflict) that the methods are addressing.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

Problems exist in the harmonization (for adaptation) of conflict resolution methods in modern African society, which this unit has addressed. The problems have been adjudged complex and critical in appraisal. Considered along the line was the link between the conflict situation and environmental setting which informed the degree of intensity of the problems.

The unit also identified for our discussion some of the problems such as recognition, selection, comprehension, interpretation and application of the right method of conflict resolution to facilitate peace and enhance harmony in modern African societies. Meaningful evaluation and synthesis of the problems will pave the way for the articulation of the methods towards their harmonization. Solution to the problem of harmonization of the methods for directional application to a particular conflict situation and environmental setting will depend on the expertise and robust knowledge of the cultures from where the methods derived. The solution to be preferred would also depend on the determination and mood of the reconciliators as well as the nature of the conflict.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Identify the problems inimical to the adaptation of conflict resolution methods in modern African society. What are the probable solutions to the problems?
2.    Examine the expectations of modern man to future peace process.

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**UNIT 5      THE FUTURE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICAN SOCIETY**

**CONTENTS**

1.0    Introduction
2.0    Objectives
3.0    Main Content
       3.1    Preparation for the Future
       3.2    Future Agenda of Conflict Resolution
       3.3    The Unforseable Circumstances
4.0    Conclusion
5.0    Summary
6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0    References/Further Reading

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will understand that the fusion and harmonization of traditional and western pattern of conflict resolution engendered the transformation of the entire process in modern African society. Side by side operation of the methods of conflict resolution has come to stay. Apparently both methods of conflict resolution have points of convergence and divergence in modern African society. A lot depend on what aspect of the conflict resolution is usable and applicable as discussed in units one and four of this module.

The meeting point of two cultures viz traditional and western produced the harmonization and transformation process which relatively yielded dividends for peace facilitation in modern African society. Such dividends you must understand remain good signal for future development. Its anchor on development process depends largely on the spirited efforts of peace practitioners and facilitators in the emergent situation.

The emerging situation surrounding African economy whereby there are multiples of conflict issues arising therefrom, makes conflict resolution much more desirable and significant. More problems are increasingly forthcoming from the downturns of African economy. Such problems include unemployment, increasing wave of crime and conflict, bastardization of indigenous customs and norms, disregard to the rule of law and disrespect for human relations as well as lack of conscience and indiscipline at all levels of the society. Conflicts and crises are daily on the increase. The foregoing catalogue of African problems entail greater magnitude and intensification of efforts to overhaul the economic

system, social relations and humane feelings made possible through the articulation of peace process in modern African society.

The problems of modern African society differ markedly from what obtained in the past four decades or so. Some of the earlier problems encountered by the Africans have been unearthed by the late sage and statesman chief Obafemi Jeremiah Awolowo (1980). Areoye Oyebola also discussed African problems. The discussion of the problems by them left no one in doubt that the continent needs urgent intervention and re-orientation of the social ideals to lubricate the engine of development. The future of African society, therefore, lies in her strength to apply the right 'medicine' to the various conflicts impeding on the development process as this unit focuses.

## 2.0    OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

•    design appropriate conflict resolution mechanism towards sustaining the future of African society,
•    identify present areas of strength that engineers development process; and
•    mainstream the synergy between old and new conflict situation and environmental setting.

## 3.0    MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1    Preparation for the Future

The future is a close-nit distance which is yet to come and determinedly experience. You need to understand that as distant as the future time is, it will soon come. It, therefore, behoves on reasonable human beings not to wait for the future before preparing for it. You need to understand that the present is in the future and the future in the present. Thus, there is the presence of the past and the future in the present dispensation of affairs. This much has been scholarly adduced (Otite, 1986).

The way to prepare for the future is quite simple though laborious. You need to know that nothing is so easy without some hazzles. It is, however, significant to be equipped for future eventualities. Hence, preparation for the future of peace facilitation and enhancement of harmonious relationship involves:

•    the right sense of time,
•    enduring sense of history,
•    hopeful expectation,

- understanding the dynamic process of development,
- capacity for integrative motifs,
- close monitoring of economic wherewithal,
- critical assessment of the level of contribution of the present conflict resolution model; and
- sense of discerning speedy projection of issues of development process in modern African society.

## 3.2    Future Agenda of Conflict Resolution in African Society

Understanding the fact that some problems bedevil African march towards progressive development, it is just reasonable to design appropriate mechanism akin to a constructive conflict resolution model, which must see the light of day, to further enhance the wheels of development in modern African society. Integration and harmonization of all mechanisms that will lubricate the engine of positive peace process may be quite necessary to appreciate and articulate. This must be done so reasonably without let or hindrance. Consideration must also be given to all shades of opinion yearning for clearly defined strategies and programmes of development. Certainly modern African society need workable future agenda for development.

One of the significant agenda for articulating conflict resolution in modern African society is the overhauling of peace education. Peace education should be the concern of all and sundry whether young or old. Every adult must have the knowledge of peace education with increasing tempo and seriousness. Equipped with peace education, individuals in the society will have respect for his/her neighbours and query indecent mode of behaviour. Everyone will be cautious of the mandate on fellowship and mutuality anchored on social engineering. Peace education will further enhance the following virtues in the individuals in modern African society:

- patience
- endurance
- truthful character disposition
- helpful hands to the needy
- counselling zeal
- honesty of purpose
- humane feelings
- obedience to the norms and law
- confidence in the process of governance

You need to understand the fact that peace education will instill in the individuals not only a sense of belonging and commitment to

development process but also the demonstration of social responsibilities. The capacity for service delivery of conflict resolution is inherent in peace education which prepare the individuals for future eventualities. One cannot, therefore, ignore the singular fact that peace education is knowledge based and instrumental to enhancing sociation and social harmony in modern African society. Peace education is most desirable in the process of articulating conflict resolution mechanism if African problems are to be meaningfully tackled.

African cultural values of the past served that generation and surged them towards development. Those values are still intact but some how forgotten by the succeeding generations in Africa. Although passively engaged, the values were never static – they kept on growing at a slow pace. Thus, if they are lubricated they will march on to greater heights of development. While it is not reasonable to suggest a reverse and total resort to the autothonous cultural values and ideals (even when they are still intact) it is equally unreasonable to throw them off the scene of development. What seems reasonable for us to appreciate is the harmonization of the functional aspects of the cultural values with the new and modern values in order to meet the global development policy. The world has eventually turned out to be a global village and each continent which forms a part of that continuum and social change and development must toe a line of attachment and belonging.

It is in the sense of the foregoing assertion that you must recognize the fact that Africans continuously played unique roles, among the comity of global nations, in various aspects of development. For instance, it is noteworthy that the brand of conflict resolution model adapted as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the global phase originated appropriately from the continent of Africa even though in its presence form and functions it has been re-branded and remobilized. The practical sides of ADR uniquely belong to Africa while the theoretical framework with which it has been adorned for more functional professionalism is of the western orientation and propagation. This is the reason that the re-introduced western branded ADR has been working in Africa of the twenty-first millennium. Africa certainly need the ADR to get along with the rest of the world and to resolve internal conflicts in her domain.

Again, Africa sold the ideals of the thesis of the brotherhood of man which resonated in the diction of being your brother's keeper, to the global space. This African philosophy was originated by the autochthones and had flourished throughout the ages. It transformed into collectivism with a garb of solidarity, cooperation and compromise. This has been clothed in a parable, contextualizing the harmonious relationship between the tree and the leaves as:

This collectivist orientation of African values is shown where marriage is perceived as a contract between families, land is vested in communities and work is seen as a social obligation towards the group, where sharing with other members of the group is an obligation of those who have more than they need for survival (economy of affection). The much used parable to symbolize this relationship between the group and its constituent individuals is that of the tree and its leaf (sic). The leaf is doomed if separated from the tree, while the tree can grow more leafs (sic) and is not affected by the loss of few leaves, but dies when loosing many or all leaves (Munker, 1998:80).

The ideal of collectivism, therefore, buttresses the point of cooperation and cooperative societies recognized the world over.

In the environment of cooperation and compromise, clash of interest is reduced to minimum level. This suggests to you a low level operation of conflict but high sense of development. This is what can hold the future development for modern African society. The future development desirable for African society is anchored on cooperation, solidarity, mutual understanding, peace and harmony, all of which are linked up with an articulated conflict resolution dynamics that recognize cultural values as basis of operation. Just as the world can gain from Africa, the latter also stand to benefit from the former. This is the basis of cultural pluralism and reciprocity.

## 3.3    The Unforseeable Circumstances

In this course, our discussion had been based on the dynamism of indigenous African conflict resolution. We have discovered that African conflict resolution had the force of:

- character,
- virtuous disposition,
- good neighborhood intention,
- hospitable demonstration,
- overwhelming influence,
- adaptive motifs; and
- determination for future development.

The foregoing features of African conflict resolution exhibited a lot of drivable cultural heritage. This suggests to you that the background for future development had been established in the past, which assuringly,

had been instrumental to peace facilitation and harmonious relationship in the society.

It is pertinent to hazard a guess of the circumstances that lie ahead of time. They are no doubt unforeseeable and seemingly unpredictable. You must understand the fact that African economic fortunes are unpredictable. Such an economic stance affects the nature of projections and discernment. Whenever there is economic downturn in the society, poverty becomes the order of the day and hence breed conflicting situations.

The social tension currently existing in modern African society disavowed optimal commitment to the ideals of sociation and social as well as cultural engineering, which you should expect, will tilt the bane of mutual understanding. Presently, Africa is at the crossroad in the determination of the direction of development. The ethical dimension to social relations has not been properly articulated and ennobled. A lot of potholes are yet to be filled in the modern process of development. This suggests to you that modern African society needs proper adjustment to integrative forces on her soil.

Another aspect of unpredictability in modern African society, which you need to understand, is the nature of governance. It is difficult to determine the directional flow of African governmental policy. Indeed, there are lots of political nuisancer who lack the wherewithal of development process. Corruption and nepotism have nipped development process in the bud thereby creating avenue for clashes of interest – the preserves of conflict escalation and peace conflagration. The foregoing discussion suggests to you that the march towards progress has been terribly and abysmally truncated in modern African society. Who will rescue us from ourselves?

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. What is peace education?
2. Who needs peace education?
3. How does peace education signalize the future of the Africans?
4. What is the place of peace education in African conflict resolution?
5. What does peace education reveal about African cultural heritage?

## 4.0    CONCLUSION

Africa is a fertile ground for cultural pluralism and therefore a useful and drivable bedrock of cooperation and solidarity. Her operational model of societies and social engineering endears her to greater height of development policy when adequately articulated. She had advertised her glory and cultural opulence to the outside world in a number of spectacular events such as slave trade, colonialism, sports and adventurism. It is difficult to leave her in the dark by the rest of the world. Indeed, her people and fame have influenced lots of global development which are yet to be measurably quantified.

One good aspect of the cultural values cherishable in Africa is the nuances of her conflict resolution model. This has been explored and re-branded in the west, which now carry the logo of Alternative Dispute resolution (ADR). ADR fits in permanently to resolution agenda in African because she originally owned it. It is good that the world has transformed into a global village where each continent that makes up the world has been struggling to contribute meaningfully to its survival. The capacity to change the world within the context of social order and engineering lies in the hands of the Africans if they choose to. Her economy and cultural values have all it takes to engineer positive development policy. Her future, therefore, is bright if carefully piloted through cooperation and collective ethos.

## 5.0    SUMMARY

This unit has adjudged African continent as a usable and thrivable anchor of development. It addressed the fact that there are enough potentials, human resources and cultural values which make the continent quite outstanding among the comity of nations. It, however, submitted that she had been denied such rights and opportunities by the colonial overlords even though compensated at another level of economic development.

The talking point of this unit for you is associated with the pattern of cultural life in African society, with the practice of collectivism, which contextualized cooperation and compromise (indices of conflict resolution). The unit also submitted that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) originated from Africa especially with the performance character associated with. It considered the fact that ADR (even though relevant to solving African problems) had been re-branded and re-visioned in the western world. Finally, the unit concluded that the future of modern African society lies in the capacity to articulate the models of conflict resolution most desirable to put an end to internal conflict considered practicable to development agenda.

## 6.0    TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.    Examine the various factors that could significantly launch African society into greater heights of development.
2.    How far is it true that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has African traits?

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