Research Paper

Traditional Administrative System and Community Development in Nigeria: Roles and Relevance of Traditional Institutions in Local Community Development

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Abstract

Recently, the 1999 Nigerian constitution has been unavoidably silent on specific roles for traditional rulers in the country. Thus, traditional institutions play a crucial part in policy development and implementation in the country. Consequently, the lack of constitutional roles for traditional institutions severely limited their utility at the grassroots. The study assesses the roles of the traditional administrative system of selected communities in Osun State towards the integration of traditional core values into mainstream administration in Nigeria and also assesses the relevance of traditional institutions in managing inherent conflicts of the selected communities in Osun State. The study engaged qualitative research through key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. The findings showed that traditional institutions in Nigeria play active roles in the development process in the country. Despite their difficulty, the roles were more visible in cultural dissemination and managing conflicts in the local communities. The study concluded that the traditional administrative system and structure had influenced community development in the southwest region immensely but are limited in function and operation largely by the absence of roles in the Nigeria constitution.

Keywords *Administrative, Community Development, Traditional Institution, Traditional System*
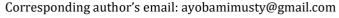
INTRODUCTION

Traditional institutions existed in Nigerian societies before the democratic dispensation in Nigeria. Thus, the British colonial government, which created the democratic government in Nigeria, also provided some roles for the traditional institution through an indirect rule system that enhanced the development process in Nigeria. It further contends that the colonial government recognized traditional institutions through the indirect rule system by appointing them as warrant chiefs and native court judges. It is important to note that traditional leaders made significant contributions to the prosperity and progress of their communities. As a result, the constitutional framework for traditional democracies was established, with community members voting for a leader they felt would do the best job (Umar, 2022).

Most rural and urban dwellers regard traditional institutions as directing the affairs concerning their welfare despite a recognized democratic structure. The traditional authority system remains the focal point for community dwellers sensitizing and disseminating government policies to the community level because the democratic government and its institutions had not yet penetrated the bulk of the population at the grassroots level. More importantly, the traditional rulers find it easy to perform the stated functions because the people still have high regard and respect for their various palaces (De Kadt & Larreguy, 2018). Recent research has highlighted the significance of traditional rulers in the planning and implementing of development projects within their spheres of influence. Among their many expected core functions are the recruitment of their communities for developmental purposes, the expression of citizen interest in regional and national policies, the upkeep of peace and order within their domain, and the coordination of self-

help projects based on the aggregated felt needs of people living there (Osifo, 2017).

In recent times, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 constitution is unavoidably silent on specific roles for traditional rulers inside the Local government. Thus, political appointees who have the legal ability to install and remove traditional rulers at whim treat them as an afterthought and treat them accordingly. Politicians only call on traditional rulers during election campaigns, and the monarchs play no part in policy development, implementation, or review. Not giving traditional rulers constitutional rights severely limited their usefulness, especially in rural areas (Osakede & Ijimakinwa, 2015).

In addition to their role in community development, they support the government's initiatives to enlighten the public on government initiatives and policies so that residents feel a feeling of participation in Nigeria's democratic process. As a result, this function has not been sufficiently acknowledged in Nigeria's democratic process, which has slowed the country's progress and development (Sokoh, 2018). Nigeria is currently facing difficulties due to several social problems, including terrorism, kidnapping, murder, and banditry, which have made it difficult to achieve the expected inclusive development for residents. The legitimacy and importance of traditional institutions in the sociocultural, economic, and political development of Nigerians, especially in rural regions, have been supported by numerous research (Eneji & Agri, 2020). Against this background, the study aims to assess the roles of the traditional administrative system of selected communities in Osun State towards the infusion of traditional core values into mainstream administration in Nigeria and also Assess the relevance of traditional institutions in managing inherent conflict of the selected communities in Osun State.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Roles of Traditional Administrative Systems: Integration of Traditional Core Values Into Nigeria's Mainstream Government

Before colonialism, an indigenous traditional administration system operated differently in different regions of the country but had the same overall objective of directing a social structure for the organization of its people. (Asimeng-Boahene, 2017). The literature has demonstrated that the Hausa/Fulani people in the northern region of Nigeria operated a highly centralized administration in which the emir served as both the political and religious head of state. Additionally, it has been argued that the Oba was the head of the monarchical form of government in southwestern Nigeria. The Yoruba Baales, who oversaw towns and villages and paid the Oba royalties at the end of the farming season yearly, assisted him in performing his duties, and the Oba's authority was subject to checks and balances. Due to the fact that they typically do not have monarchs or chiefs, arguably, the Igbo people of Nigeria's Eastern region are republican and egalitarian. Many age-grade organizations that carry out broad duties support the Council of Elders in their general duties. These include upholding law and order, acting as an army to defend the village from outside invasion, building and maintaining roads, and preventing elder council abuse of authority (Umar, 2022).

It has been argued that traditional rulers and institutions were given various constitutional roles during the colonial era and the period before independence, with the system of indirect rule and native authority system, as introduced by Lord Lugard, giving traditional rulers a prominent role to varying degrees as it could be recorded that they were the major and key actors under the rule (Henn, 2018). The traditional institutions during the colonial era provided an administration structure that organized and coordinated individuals and maintained law and order in society. It was also revealed that traditional monarchs' power appears to have diminished since the country's transition to democracy and post-independence administration. Traditional institutions continue to be an important part of the population, commanding a high degree of loyalty and respect from

them and acting as an unconstitutional authority and force to be reckoned with because there still seems to be a strong affinity among indigenous people for traditional rulers despite their lack of constitutional authority to govern (Zimbalist, 2021).

It was widely accepted that in African nations, particularly Nigeria, development could not be said to have occurred without the knowledge or participation of traditional rulers in their various communities because they served as the foundation for the projection and operationalization of new and developmental ideas in their various domains. Being the keeper of culture and traditions that the people's way of life in their territory and domain are centered around, as suggested. Since democracy's foundation and the post-independence era, there appears to have been an ongoing conflict between democratically elected public officeholders and traditional institutions over the institution of traditional rule's place in modern democratic government (Aniche & Falola, 2020).

Relevance of Traditional Institutions: Managing Inherent Conflict in Local Communities

Before the British colonization of Nigeria, traditional leaders were already in place and had been instrumental in advancing their people's economic, social, and political aspirations. Their role has now become an inseparable part of the cultural heritage. It is impossible to overstate the value of traditional powers in fostering peace and stability. Traditional authority is valued and depended upon for the advancement of moral ideals in society, in addition to being significant in mobilization. This is partly because these authorities are considered the guardians of the people's customs and traditions, which gives them legitimacy (Falola, 2021).

Literature affirmed that the public values traditional authorities' role in handling and resolving disputes, as well as their leadership skills and approachability to common people. It has also been argued that traditional rulers play a significant role in resolving conflicts between individuals living in their respective domains. Specifically, they ensure that conflicts involving land, communities, and religion are resolved before they escalate into open hostilities that result in human homicide. As a result, the government relies on traditional leaders to maintain social harmony by ensuring all interpersonal conflicts in each community are resolved or eliminated and do not develop into ethnic conflicts. Particularly in the Northern region, the widely varied structure of Nigerian communities has further rallied support for traditional rulers as crucial partners in the security of lives and property (Omitola et al., 2021).

Traditional rulers' interventionist policies showcased how significant and valuable they have been and will continue to be on questions of security and development impacting any part of the country. Additionally, it was confirmed in the literature that traditional leaders have always been utilized to diffuse crises as they develop. Thus, succeeding governments understood that working with traditional leaders was the best approach to win over the public's support for critical current issues (Ezema, 2020).

Importantly, it has been argued that despite the astronomical rise in the number of security incidents in Nigeria, and in the Northern region, in particular, traditional institutions have not yet been fully incorporated into the country's security architecture, and until they are, the results of the government's efforts in that direction will remain underwhelming. Some have argued that traditional rulers are better equipped to manage Nigeria's security concerns than the traditional law enforcement authorities, citing literature that has clarified the major role played by traditional institutions, particularly in the pre-colonial era (Ezema, 2020).

In a different perspective, Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State, Nigeria, claimed that traditional institutions are essential to Nigeria's welfare and security administration but blamed the usurpation of those roles on the 1976 local government reform that transferred those roles to the local government authorities. El-Rufai spoke to Kaduna State Traditional Rulers' council

members during their courtesy visit to his office. Additionally, he identified the apparent out-of-control degree of crime and insecurity in the area and throughout Nigeria as the result of the failure to give the traditional rulers constitutional authority as the root cause (El-Rufai, 2016).

Traditional Institutions and Sustainable Community Development in Nigeria

Traditional institutions' function in Nigeria has evolved. It was thought that traditional communities with many similarities and variances were combined to form pre-colonial Nigeria. It was composed of kingdoms that represented cultural units that varied in various ways, including the conventional institutions of government they used. In pre-colonial Nigeria, there were primarily two different kinds of traditional institutions. These include both decentralized and centralized authority structures (Ogunode, 2021).

Tracing the outlines of the function of traditional institutions, particularly in the north, which was founded on a synthesis of African political principles and the Islamic political system, two more different geographic regions, the southwest and the southeast of Nigeria, are visible. In pre-colonial Nigeria, traditional institutions played a larger role in governance. To carry out these duties, traditional leaders, particularly in the north, had to create appropriate policies, set priorities, and raise money to support their communities. Colonialism brought recognition by the British colonial authority of the crucial and powerful position held by traditional institutions in Nigeria. Numerous issues faced the colonial administration, such as a shortage of British staff, insufficient funding to administer the nation, and poor communication. By British colonial policy, colonies were expected to cover the costs of maintaining stable law and order and conducting their operations. Later, the colonists used indirect control as a practical method of ruling the populace through their institutions (Coleman, 2022).

Using local chiefs or other trusted mediators, customary laws, and customs, the indirect rule is a style of colonial governance where British administrators oversee the administration. They taught the populace about colonial government policies, presented frequent reports on various subjects, and instigated local development. These were just a few of their responsibilities throughout the colonial era (Havik, 2020). The political elites persisted in their efforts to weaken the impact of established institutions on governance after independence. In the past, traditional institutions played a constitutional role. A Council of Chiefs was established for them in each region under the constitutions of 1960 and 1963, some of whom were even regional officials. The Eastern and Western minority councils further reduced the authority of traditional monarchs to consultative functions. By 1966, when the military took over, the political position of conventional institutions had a significant impact on how much influence they had (Hilda & Asiazobor, 2021). Through the 1976 Local Government Reform, the Federal Military Government and State Governments endeavored to establish a standard role for traditional rulers across the nation by 1979. Traditional institutions were separated from politics and legally allocated advisory responsibilities in local decision-making through Traditional or Emirate Councils.

The reform only allowed for establishing a traditional council of chiefs at the state and local government levels to deal with chieftaincy and religious issues, support the upkeep of law and order, and handle other issues that the government might occasionally refer to the council for advice on (Ogunode, 2021). The formation of the traditional council of chiefs and its separation from local government council emirates thus marked the formal cessation of traditional ruler engagement in Nigerian politics, administration, the criminal justice system, and security. On the other hand, the administration had decided that communication with traditional leaders was crucial to establishing its legitimacy and accountability in the eyes of the general people (Sokoh, 2018). Since independence, the subject of traditional rulers has not garnered any significant public attention. In the ensuing debate of the Constituent Assembly in 1977–1978, popular democratic

forces seriously attacked and contested the institution, raising the question of what we should do with the traditional administration given our current state of security. In keeping with this, we should not assume that there will not be any crises or problems in the future.

However, elected local government councilors are not required to heed the counsel of traditional institutions. They were given representation in the National Council of State by the Constitution of 1979. The traditional institutions were not given any administrative responsibilities under the constitution. They are only to act as state-level advisory bodies to the governor on issues about customary law, relations between communities, chieftaincy, peace, and serenity within their jurisdiction. (Okonkwo & Amechi 2019).

Theoretical Explanation

Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parson, and Robert Merton are some of the main proponents of the structural-functional theory. The model's primary driving forces include social, structural, functional, manifestation, and underlying functions. The theory's guiding principles include identifying the structural components of a system, describing the role these components play, examining the effects of social phenomena on the systems they are a part of, and examining how new structures arise. The model attempts functionalism, which focuses on society in terms of how its fundamental components such as traditions, practices, norms, and institutions—perform. Maintaining social stability, group functioning, and social evolution are the three fundamental tenets of structural functionalism (Kalu, 2019).

A society's social structure comprises several interconnected and interdependent elements, such as social institutions, social standards, and values. The balanced and stable operation of society is facilitated by the distinct roles played by each system element. If any aspect of the structure changes to meet the changing requirements of society, the social structure will as well. The entire structure may fall apart if any element of it exhibits malfunction.

In this context, the theory is predicated on the assumption that new bureaucratic principles should consider the shared characteristics of the traditional, social, and politico-administrative systems of ethnic groups in Africa. It has been stated that the set of rules and regulations governing a representative of a corporate group may have been strengthened by the social and moral obligations surrounding them to assure the efficacy of the new bureaucratic structures. (Hopper & Weyman 2019). The constant honing of the non-Africanist administrative apparatus seems to have an inverse relationship with Africa's development issues. Then, to ensure that public institutions in Africa have an effective and efficient structure functioning, it is inevitable that public administration and traditional administrative systems would be well interdependently fused, as in the United Kingdom and Spain.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study engaged a descriptive research design through a qualitative approach. The study was conducted in selected communities, Ode-Omu, Oke-Ila, and Ifon-Osun communities in Osun State, Nigeria. Qualitative research instruments such as Key Informant Interviews (KII) and In-depth Interview (IDI) was used to elicit relevant information from 33 participants. Key informant interviews are qualitative interviews with people who know what is happening in the community. These experts can provide insight into the nature of problems and proffer solutions. An in-depth interview (IDI) is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method to obtain detailed information about a topic from a specialized individual with knowledge of the subject matter.

KII sessions were conducted for five traditional council leaders (Kings and high chiefs) in each selected community, totaling 15 participants. IDI sessions were conducted for six participants (Three youth association members and three trade associations such as market women/men,

farmers, and artisans), totaling 18 participants. The participants were selected based on occupation, status, gender, knowledge, and experiences with traditional institutions and community development in Nigeria. The data obtained from the fieldwork was analyzed through thematic content analysis. This was done by categorizing the data into themes and later comparing the data before writing the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study were done in line with the objectives of the study. The findings were juxtaposed with relevant literature in other to ensure a quality outcome.

Roles of Traditional Administrative Systems Towards Infusion of Traditional Core Values into Mainstream Administration in Nigeria

Evidence from the study areas indicated that traditional administrative systems had contributed immensely towards the infusion of traditional values into democratic governance in Nigeria. Findings from the participants indicated that traditional institutions in local communities had influenced cultural values in current democratic governance in Nigeria to a greater level. This synergy was notably determined by diverse community initiatives such as the community's annual cultural festival and celebration day.

Some participants affirmed that the cultural festival and celebration day mainly attracts community citizens in the diaspora and government personalities to showcase the beauty and value ingrained in the community's traditional culture. This is also backed by the conferment of honorary titles to deserving community citizens and government personalities to connect them to the workings and processes of the traditional administrative system in Nigeria. One participant stated that the honorary chieftaincy title is conferred on the government officials mainly to connect with the traditional system and value of the community,

> *"...We facilitate the cultural festival and town day celebration which attracts the intelligentsia elite to the community. During this cultural celebration, traditional institutions give honorary chieftaincy titles to deserving government officials so they have a robust knowledge of how the traditional administrative system works and its value to society" – KII, Male, King, 68 years, Oke-Ila Community.*

This was reiterated further by one of the community high chiefs,

> *"The infusion of cultural values into the current democratic dispensation is made possible through the annual event put in place by the traditional institution. This event serves as an avenue to mobilize indigenes in and outside the town for the town's development, and the government officials are not left out in the process of making the event successful. Honorary chieftaincy titles have been conferred on government officials to know the value embedded in the traditional institution structure." – KII, Male, King, 85years, Retired Teacher, Ode-Omu Community*

In other words, findings indicated that traditional institutions in local communities in the southwest region performed specific roles as part of efforts to integrate cultural values into democratic governance in Nigeria. These roles were mainly performed within the context of an advisory approach. Some participants asserted that the advisory roles are visibly operated in political sensitization and dialogue for peaceful coexistence, dispute settlement, and educational and skills acquisition for young children in the community. This was further illustrated in the

excerpts of the community leaders,

> *"…Most time, traditional institutions performed advisory roles in the current democratic era in terms of political sensitization, routine dialogue with major political parties, and town hall meetings with political stakeholders on the need for peace and order after the election in the community. We also educate young married men on family understanding and stability and also encourage children on the essence of going to school because education is the key to life, and acquiring knowledge is the most important asset for them to be useful to society." – KII, Male, High Chief (Oba'ale), 60years, Teacher, Oke-Ila Community*

> *"…The traditional institution of this community unites the people through settling disputes and major violent conflicts among them amicably." – KII, Male, King, 85years, Retired Teacher, Ode-Omu Community*

Relevance of Traditional Institutions in Managing Inherent Conflicts in The Current Democratic System

The relevance of traditional institutions emanating from local communities in the southwestern region of Nigeria in terms of managing inherent conflicts in the democratic dispensation was emphasized by the findings in this study. Findings from the participants indicated that the nature of conflicts that emanated from the local communities in Nigeria, especially the southwestern region of the country, is centered mainly on land disputes and political crises among major political parties in the country. These conflicts distorted the peaceful co-existence enjoyed in the communities, but the traditional institutions' quick intervention prevented the conflicts from degenerating into unmanageable situations.

The traditional institutions managed these conflicts through selected traditional high chiefs by inviting the warring parties to the king's palace and employed proactive measures to curb the conflicts between the parties involved:

> *"…Political fight among different factions of political parties and the land dispute is the major crises during democratic dispensation…Traditional rulers, as a father to everybody in the community, quickly intervene by calling all political leaders and the major players in politics to the palace for a peaceful meeting with the king and the high chiefs, warning them to control their followers as a proactive measure to save the situation from getting out of control." – IDI, Male, 42years Artisan (Bricklayer), Ifon-Osun Community*

Some of the participants further illustrated that the collective efforts of the high chiefs and Baale, in line with the king's support, make the peace process between the aggrieved parties easy and thereby ensure peaceful co-existence in the communities:

> *"…The political crisis among the politicians and the boundary disputes between the neighboring community and marriage disputes are major conflicts in this community… The high chiefs in charge of disputes and other unaccepted behaviors in the community invite the affected parties to the palace. The main purpose of the invitation is to broker peace between the fighting people and just to rise to the occasion to nip the ugly situation in the bud." – KII, Male, King, 85years, Retired Teacher, Ode-Omu Community*

> *"…The land disputes and political crises among the politicians and their followers are the major societal conflicts among the people in this community. The collective efforts and*

support that the high chiefs and the Baales usually render to the King make the process of settling any disputes among the community dwellers and the aggrieved parties possible, which in turn generates peace and unity among the affected parties." – KII, Male, High Chief (Balogun), 68years, Retired Civil Servant, Ode-Omu Community

The responses above indicated that culturally, traditional councils are known to have the powers to adjudicate and preside over the matters of their people while they also maintain boundaries of their territorials before it gets to court. Undoubtedly, the collective efforts of the leadership of traditional communities through the King and his Chiefs have been a quick intervention in conflict and crises in family, territory, and political matters. The role of the traditional structures is perceived as complementing and helping the democratic society to achieve its goal of peace and order, although it is historically the duty of the traditional institutions.

Similarly, findings indicated that apart from land disputes and political crises, marriage conflicts among couples are one of the conflicts that occurred in the local communities in the southwestern region of Nigeria. This conflict among the couples often resulted in domestic violence with unintended consequences to the family institution and the local communities. Importantly, the conflict among the couples is mediated by the traditional institution through a constituted committee to investigate and make a satisfactory unbiased judgment to the aggrieved parties. This measure employed by the traditional institution has further ameliorated such conflict in the local communities:

"…Couples also generated unnecessary disputes and later resulted in domestic violence…. traditional institutions invite the affected parties to the palace for a necessary remedy for the peace to continue to reign among the community dwellers." – IDI. Female, Women leader (Iyalode), 60years, Trader, Ifon-Osun Community

The findings are further supported in the excerpts of some of the participants that the traditional institution ensured that disgruntled couples were reunited through the constituted committee of High chiefs, and demarcation lines were also set for such parties to douse such conflict from occurring again, which is respected by the concerned couples:

"…The major conflicts that emerged in this community were mainly land disputes, marriage conflicts, and political crises among the politicians and followers…. traditional institutions settled the land disputes and domestic violence by inviting the parties involved to the palace, and the chiefs investigated and the traditional rulers without bias would draw a line of demarcation with the parties involved and they respect the palace decision." – KII, Male, High Chief (Balogun), 67years, Trader, Oke-Ila Community.

"…Farm boundary disputes among farmers, marriage crises, and political crises are the major problems in this community… traditional institutions set up a committee in the palace to look into the grievances and possible misunderstandings that may likely occur. The high chiefs in the palace constitute a committee and usually invite the family or individuals that need remedy or seek justice to the palace for possible reconciliation." – KII, Male, Eesa (Regent), 50 years, Trader, Ifon-Osun Community)

The assertions above revealed that through the intervention of the high chiefs of traditional administration, marital conflicts, even domestic violence cases, are treated by mediation or by justice to the end and seeks non-occurrence between the parties involved. This mediation approach

by the traditional institution also applies to land disputes in the local communities. Although there are structures in the modern system that can manage this, traditional local administration seeks to intervene quickly on such matters before it gets out of hand. The traditional system is a more efficient system of managing and reconciling differences in people based on shared socio-cultural homogeneity, which also lessens the burden of the democratic structure that maintain order and peace.

Findings also affirmed that disputes on farmland and community land boundaries fuelled the conflicts that emerged in the local communities in Nigeria. These have pitched families and communities against each other and degenerated into the loss of lives and properties in the local communities in the country's southwestern region. The traditional institutions intervened in the crisis due to the sensitive and destructive nature of the conflicts by inviting the concerned and aggrieved families to the palace and mediated on the conflicts with the hope of ensuring peace and order in the communities:

"…Conflicts and disputes militating against the peaceful atmosphere in this community are farm boundary disputes, and land disputes between families among others…The traditional rulers usually settled these conflicts by inviting the parties concerned to the palace to have insight into what happened so that to know how to handle it without bias and to restore peace between them." – KII, Male, High Chief (Sobaloju), 66years, Farmer, Ifon-Osun Community

This was illustrated further by some of the participants that intervention of the traditional institutions in conflict resolution among the belligerent parties is to keep the community safe from anarchy:

"The major disputes and conflicts are boundary disputes among the communities, political thuggery, and land disputes between compounds among others …The traditional council's involvement in managing disputes keeps the community going and safe from chaos and external attack from enemies." – IDI, Male, 43 years, Artisan, Oke-Ila Community

"…Disputes and conflicts are of different dimensions, but the major ones in this community are boundary disputes among villages and towns, land disputes, and political crises among the politicians and their followers...traditional institutions settled the crisis and conflicts involving different parties by inviting them to the palace and make a balance between them for peace to reign." – IDI, Male, Youth Association Member, 35 years, Farmer, Ifon-Osun

The above responses showed that the equilibrium of the larger society is an aggregation of the order and balance felt in smaller communities and that the traditional structure has been responsible for peace-keeping against inter-family disputes and inter-community boundary clashes, likewise external threats. In reality, the modern structure cannot also handle the complexity associated with some of the historical interactions between communities and families; hence, there is a need for the traditional governance system to complement the democratic system and strategies for maintaining peace and order.

Discussion of Findings

Findings showed that traditional institutions in local communities in the southwest region performed certain roles through diverse community initiatives such as the annual cultural festival and celebration day as part of efforts to integrate cultural values into democratic governance in Nigeria. These roles were mainly performed within the context of an advisory approach. The

advisory roles are visibly operated in terms of political sensitization and dialogue for peaceful coexistence, dispute settlement, provision of self-help projects, indigenous orientation program to local security personnel, source of the communication channel of community needs to government, educational and skills acquisition for young children and promotion of law and order in the local communities. This is in line with Dore (2011) and Bakare's (2015) submission that an advisory role was created in the 1976 constitution of Nigeria for traditional institutions putting into cognizance of their relevance in terms of supporting government policies and initiatives through history, culture, and social context which are domesticated and operationalized by traditional institutions within their domains.

Findings also showed that the traditional institutions managed inherent conflicts in the local communities vis-à-vis current democratic dispensation through selected traditional high chiefs by inviting the warring parties to the king's palace and employing proactive measures to curb the conflicts between the parties involved. This measure employed by the traditional institution has further ameliorated such conflicts in the local communities. This is corroborated in the literature (Osifo, 2017; Ezema, 2020) that traditional rulers play a significant role in settling a dispute among people in their respective domains, in terms of land-related disputes, community disputes, and religious crises before degenerating into unmanageable situations and are sometimes depended on by the government to promote peace among the pope in the communities.

In essence, the complementary nature of the traditional institution in the democratic system has enhanced their relevance in the security management process program in terms of timely intelligence reports gathering for governmental security agencies for quick response, provision of basic security needs like incentives and infrastructure for local and government security personnel, the embargo on social activities beyond sunset in the community and also, establishment of local security personnel such as vigilante group, OPC and hunter group to complement the efforts of the Nigeria police in securing lives and properties in the local communities.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study, it can be deduced that traditional institutions in Nigeria have not been given significant roles in democratic governance. However, their recent impact on community development has contributed significantly to the country's social, economic, and political progress. It is worthy of note that contributions of traditional institutions in community development in Nigeria were not made meaningful due largely to limitations in the Nigerian Constitution. The study concluded that traditional administrative systems and structures had influenced community development in the southwest region immensely but are limited in function and operation mainly by the absence of meaningful roles in the Nigerian Constitution.

Therefore, the following suggestions could be put into practice: Government at the federal and state should support and reinforce the traditional institutions of governance by rapidly specifying their roles and mode of operations in the Nigerian Constitution. This mainly supports their activities by infusing cultural values and norms into government policies backed with cogent laws. There is a need for governments at the federal and state level to ensure routine training and seminar sessions for traditional leaders on capacity building. This ensures traditional leaders' integration in conflict management processes regarding mediation and arbitration among warring parties in the local communities. This undoubtedly will enhance their skills and expertise in early warning disputes and conflicts and ensure the prevention and solution of grievances and conflicts in communities in Nigeria.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The study did not enable critical examination of the level of the advisory role given to the traditional institutions by the government that emanated during the fieldwork to know the level at which it is being utilized. Further studies could also explore the level of advisory roles given to the traditional institutions in the current democratic governance in Nigeria.

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