

The Role of Traditional Leaders in Conflict Resolution in Tanzania: A Case of Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Arusha Region

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Abstract

The study assessed the roles of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Ngorongoro conservation area, Tanzania. However a few studies have examine different areas in conflict resolution. This study confined itself in one model of Conflict resolution by John Burton that; "Conflict avoidance is not conflict resolution. The study adopted a descriptive research designs and employed a case study strategy with mixed approach by applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods which include questionnaire and interviews. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. The Finding reveals that there is increased role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Ngorongoro due to various reasons that included; Prevention of conflict escalation, Respect for their decisions, Lack of strong impartial judicial systems, Lack of structural frameworks and general mistrust and incompetence among governments employee. The study concluded that despite of modernity and challenges, the traditional larders in Ngorongoro have continued to have a big role in conflict resolutions in their areas and command a lot of respects. The study recommended Legal inclusion of Traditional Leaders by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and Ministry of Home Affairs in Conflicts resolutions and provision of Conflict Education and Training

INTRODUCTION

The role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Tanzania: a case of Ngorongoro conservation area in Arusha region. The study was timely since the government was undergoing the reallocation of some residents from loliondo- in Ngorongoro district to Msomera village in Tanga. In Ngorongoro District, the land conflict is mainly between Maasai community and Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority due to Maasai demand of land for cultivation and livestock while Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) demand land for environment conservation and wildlife protection. Not only that but also Maasai community was forced to leave their local areas to areas where there is no enough water and pastures for their livestock (Michael, 2008). Little is known on the roles of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Ngorongoro conservation area, Tanzania.

According to Umezulike, & Mbara, (2021), globally in the traditional setting, conflicts were solved by traditional elders whereas today, conflict management is as a result of increased interdependence among

actors and complexity of issues that underlie the interests leading to conflict which under rates the role played by the traditional leaders in conflict prevention and mediation. Traditional leaders have long been involved in mediation by creating a balance in the process of mediation and tribal disputes and in some cases led in restoring peace and reconciliation ventures.

Literature shows that; the tribes in the northeastern region of India have long sustained traditions leaders in conflict prevention. Some of these traditional leaders approach in conflict prevention survived the arrival of modernity and state-based institutions and continue to hold their influence in the Hills of Meghalaya. (Singh, & Saxena, 2021).

In Africa According to Goma, 2021, traditional leaders resolved most of the conflicts through sitting down the conflicting parties and talking to them to find a resolution to end the conflicts. These findings have been augmented by the works of other scholars that have investigated the role of traditional leaders in conflict management such as Ayittey (1999), Koyana (1995), Bercovitch (1992) and Chapman and Alexander (2009). Traditional conflict management practice is a part of the social system which has been proven over time to be efficient in reconciliation since it improves social relationships by restoring balance, settling disputes and managing conflict because it is deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of Africa. (Goma, 2021).

According to Abdulsalam, & Olokooba (2020.) in Nigeria the rationale for the relative importance of traditional rulers in the process of conflict resolution in the society is premised on the fact that they have a vast knowledge of the acceptable traditional methods and procedures have been passed from one generation to another. Furthermore, traditional rulers have a deep understanding of the morals, values and ethics of the society. Indeed, there is no question that every society recognized and mandated the traditional rulers the with some measures of power to maintain law and order, ensure security, manage, control and resolve conflicts among individuals and groups.

According to Muigua, (2017) in Kenya the Kiama or Council of Elders among the Kikuyu community used to act both as an arbitral forum and as a mediator. These elders and institutions were accessible to the populace and their decisions were respected. Therefore their role as carriers of life and agents of peace has not changed in modern society. As such their participation in conflict resolution activities should not be curtailed by the adoption of formal dispute resolution mechanisms or adherence to traditions hindering their role on the same.

In Uganda traditional conflict resolution mechanisms still prevail at the grass root level where the communities exchange gifts and slaughter animals for example the Karamoja in Uganda and other pastoralist societies in Kenya through their traditional elders still do these to solve conflicts among themselves hence promoting reconciliation. (Ogwari, 2015). The study show that in Tanzania traditional leaders otherwise referred to as Chiefs, play a pivotal role in settling disputes among the communities and

their decisions are respected. Chiefs are regarded as custodians of the people, traditional law and custom and the responsibility to ensure peaceful co-existence in their communities rests with them (Olengurumwa, 2009).

In response to Ngorongoro conflicts; Various stakeholders including the Government, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations have made several efforts to resolve the Ngorongoro Conservation Area conflict including numerous efforts such as preparation of land use plan, establishment of policies on pastoralist and natural resources management. Introduction of Community Based Conservations (CBC) to ensure pastoralist's benefits from conservation and community are directly involved in conservation issues (Wright 1993; Western et al. 1994; Adams and Hulme 2001, Hackel 1999, Hulme and Murphree 2001; Mattee, 2007). Despite of all these initiatives made by the government and other stakeholders like Ngorongoro Conservation Authority, conflict is still persisting in Ngorongoro Conservation area. Although studies have shown contribution of traditional leaders in conflict management in other places; the information about their role in Ngorongoro is limited. Therefore, this study explored the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Tanzania: a case of Ngorongoro conservation area in Arusha region.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

According to Ajayi and Buhari, (2014) the Conflict resolution theory by John Burton was used in this research. Burton states that, "*Conflict avoidance is not conflict resolution.*" He distinguishes between conflict resolution, management and settlement. Management is 'by alternative dispute resolution skills' and can confine or limit conflict; settlement is 'by authoritative and legal processes' and can be imposed by elites. Burton suggests by contrast: conflict resolution means terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem. Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or 'settlement', points to an outcome that, in the view of the parties involved, is a permanent solution to a problem.

By accepting the assumptions and hypotheses of the Human Needs Theory, Burton suggests that there is a need for a paradigm shift away from power politics and towards the 'reality of individual power'. In other words, individuals, as members of their identity groups, will strive for their needs within their environment. If they are prevented from this pursuit by elites, other identity groups, institutions and other forms of authority, there will inevitably be conflict. The only solution is for the groups to work out their problems in an analytical way. This is particularly relevant when the conflict is over needs which cannot be bargained and not material interests, which can be negotiated and compromised. (Burton, J., 1991). This theory was relevant to this study since, if Ngorongoro conservation area involves traditional leaders in conflict resolution and getting to the root of the problem, this would prevent future conflict.

One of the most important results by Ajayi and Buhari (2014), the study examined the patterns or mechanism for conflict resolution in traditional African societies with particular reference to of Yoruba and Igbo societies in Nigeria and Pondo tribe in South Africa. The study noted that Traditional leaders play a pre-eminent role as mediators of violent conflict and traditional Yoruba society, peace was negotiated. Apology for wrongs done to individuals and the entire community was a feature of negotiation. Such apology was channeled through Yoruba elders, compound heads and chiefs of high caliber in the society. In Pondo tribe in South Africa, the most conflict resolution method is the use of arbitration. It is done on the representative level or quasi-representation. The Babaogun (patron) played the role of a representative in the sense of conflict resolution (Olaoba, 2005).

According to the study by Goma (2021), the study investigated the role of traditional leaders in managing political conflict and peace building in Zambia. The study considered a case study of chieftainess Nkomeshya's . The findings show that traditional leaders resolved most of the conflicts through sitting down the conflicting parties and talking to them to find a resolution to end the conflicts. These findings have been augmented by the works of other scholars that have investigated the role of traditional leaders in conflict management such as Ayittey (1999), Koyana (1995), Bercovitch (1992) and Chapman and Alexander (2009). Traditional conflict management practice is a part of the social system which has been proven over time to be efficient in reconciliation since it improves social relationships by restoring balance, settling disputes and managing conflict because it is deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of Africa.

According to the study by Tapiwa and Chikohora (2022), the study investigated reimagining the Role of Traditional Leadership in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe: The findings show that there are pluralistic methods of conflict resolution in Umguza District whereby different avenues are used in seeking to resolve conflict the traditional Institution being the most popular. Perceptions that Communities have about the Traditional leadership institution and causes of conflict influences conflict resolution choice of institution for assistance. It is imperative to note, that the different avenues communities resort to satisfy conflicts in some way at times they do not offer the same opportunities for resolving conflict nonetheless one has to note that in Mbembesi and Ntabazinduna the institution of Traditional leaders is a key component in conflict resolution.

Otite and Albert (2009) argued that traditional rulers maintain law and order, ensure security, manage, control and resolve conflicts among individuals and groups in the Nigerian society. Traditional rulers settled

and resolved disputes/conflict arising within or between members of the community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people in that particular community. (Abdulsalam et al, 2020).

METHODOLOGY:

This study was basically grounded on the sets of basic beliefs that guide research processes. The basic sets of beliefs which inform our outlook are what Denzin and Lincoln (1998 pp. 200-201) refer to as 'paradigms'. This study used two research paradigms; positivism (deductive, Observable and measurable) and phenomenology (qualitative information). However, the dominant research paradigm was phenomenological paradigm. The need to assess the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Tanzania: a case of Ngorongoro conservation area in Arusha region. This made the phenomenological paradigm more informative than positivism. The aim of the phenomenological paradigm was to obtain depth and to discover the details of the situation and within this context. These dimensions made the choice of the phenomenological paradigm relevant and inevitable for the purpose of guiding inquiries related to this study.

In the line Kothari, (2004) the study adopted a descriptive research designs with a case study strategy. The reason for descriptive is able to make enough provision for protection against bias and it maximizes reliability and scientific approach including among other things probability sampling, pre-planned design for analysis and structured tools for data collection. The area under study was confined to Tanzania, with a case study in Ngorongoro conservation area Authority. The heads of households, traditional leaders in Ngorongoro conservation area, selected Village Executive Officer, Ward Executive Officer, and Ngorongoro Conservation Authority officials, Police officials, Division Officer and Pastoralist Council Ngorongoro conservation area were sampled out. Ngorongoro Conservation located in Ngorongoro district , 180km west of Arusha city in Arusha region, within the Crater Highlands geological area of northern Tanzania.

In keeping line with Aliaga and Gunderson (2017) the study used a mixed approach by applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches. These methods were employed due to the nature of the data required for the study. According to Cooper and Schind (2001), a population is the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inference. The study population consisted a total of 174 members from Heads of households, traditional rulers, Village Executive Officer, Ward Executive Officer, Ngorongoro Conservation Authority officials, Police officials, Division Officer and Pastoralist Council.

According to the Krathwohl (1998), the researcher opted to use both non-probability and probability sampling techniques because the sample size comprised numbers with the different characteristics; therefore it was needed to employ random sampling and judgment sampling techniques. Were a total of 105 sample size was obtained from 174 members. The sample size from 139 head households, were calculated based on the minimum number necessary to meet the desired statistical constraints. Were by 70 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real values is within $\pm 5\%$ of the measured, surveyed value, with population proportion of 50%.

In line with Kothari, (2004) the study employed primary and secondary data collection. Information were gathered through interviews, questionnaires. Structured questionnaires were used in this research, results are easily quantified by the researcher and it was cost effective. Interview method was also employed because it is most powerful and useful in generating information because of their adaptive and flexible characteristics. Finally the researcher collected data from secondary information to build up on the study findings. Information collected from relevant academic books, journals, articles, and documents of external communication emanating from the peace process.

The pilot study was conducted at Ngorongoro Conservation Authority office, to assess if traditional leader are being contacted and used in conflict resolution prior to the official field work, this served as a pilot study. After testing in the pilot area, the few questionnaire items will translated into Kiswahili language.

The decision on data analysing approaches and techniques was made during the research design stage. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods which helped to strengthen the research findings and conclusions by giving accurate and reliable findings. The data obtained were analyzed through the use of descriptive statistical analysis and content analysis. The data analysis exercise began with coding process. Some of the data collected was re-arranged into statistics to easy the analysis and interpretation analysis.

FINDINGS:

How the traditional leader were involved in Ngorongoro conflict resolution

Table No. 1.1: How the traditional leader were involved in Ngorongoro conflict resolution

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Mediators	4	5.6	5.6
	Facilitative and supportive groups	48	66.7	72.3

	Conciliator	8	11.0	83.3
	Negotiator	12	16.7	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	

(Source: Author, field data 2022)

From the table above, 66.7% (48) respondents believed that traditional leaders were acting as facilitators and supports of various groups, while 12(16.7%) were of the view that traditional leaders were involved in negotiation, with other 8(10.0%) stating that traditional leaders were involved as a conciliators and 4(5.6%) of the respondents believed that traditional leaders were involved as mediators

What are the reasons behind the increase of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Ngorongoro?

Table No. 1.2: Reasons behind the increase of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Ngorongoro

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of structural frameworks	2	2.8	2.8
	Prevention of conflict escalation	32	44.4	47.2
	Respect for their decisions	30	41.7	88.9
	Lack of strong impartial judicial systems	6	8.3	97.2
	General miss trust and incompetence among governments employee	2	2.8	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	

(Source: Author, field data 2022)

From Table 1.2, Prevention of conflict escalation with Over 44.4% (32) respondents was ranked first, followed by Respect for their decisions 41.7%(30) respondents, while 8.3% (6) respondent cited Lack of strong impartial judicial systems as a major reasons and 2.8% (6) respondent cited Lack of structural frameworks also 2.8% (6) respondent cited General miss trust and incompetence among governments employee.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

The first research objective aimed at determining the ways in which traditional leaders were involved in conflict resolution at Ngorongoro conservation area. Respondents were asked to state how they believed the traditional leaders were involved in the Ngorongoro conflict resolution process. Over 66.7% (48)

respondents believed that traditional leaders were acting as facilitators and supports of various groups involved in the Ngorongoro conflict resolution process, while 12(16.7%) were of the view that traditional leaders were involved in negotiation, with other 8(10.0%) stating that traditional leaders were involved as a conciliators and 4(5.6%) of the respondents believed that traditional leaders were involved as mediators.

This Findings partly confirm what Bercovitch (1992) argued that mediation was one of the ancient ways in which conflict was resolved and gives the example of mediation being used in ancient China, Homer's Iliad (750BC) and in the bible to solve personal disputes which justifies the existence of mediation since time immemorial being used by the traditional societies, though it has evolved the essence is still intact in all areas of the human social fabric.

When respondents were asked in their opinion, how are traditional leaders engaged in Ngorongoro conflict resolution process, more than over 66.7% (48) believed that traditional leaders assumed passive and non-prominent roles, while 12(16.7%) were of the view that traditional leaders assumed active prominent role acting as Negotiator with sufficient authority to effect changes and make decisions. This agree with the work of Otite and Albert (2009) who argued that traditional rulers maintain law and order, ensure security, manage, control and resolve conflicts among individuals and groups in the Nigerian society.

The researcher also assessed if traditional Leaders Necessary to be involved in Ngorongoro conflict resolution Respondents were asked to state if Traditional Leaders were Necessary to be involved in Ngorongoro conflict resolution process. Over 72 (100%) of respondents thought that Traditional Leaders were necessary to be involved in conflict resolution process. It's Necessary to note, that the majority of respondents who thought traditional leaders were necessary to be involved were all residents of Ngorongoro either by born or as government employees. This agree with the work of Tapiwa and Chikohora (2022), who argued that It is interesting to note, that all the village heads and headman thought traditional leaders were necessary, and that this is perhaps a subjective opinion since they were talking about themselves and probably their livelihoods.

The researcher wanted to know the reasons behind the increase of role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Ngorongoro. Here various reasons emerged as elevating the role of traditional leaders in solving conflicts in Ngorongoro. Among the major reasons cited by respondents as making the role of traditional leaders to increase in conflict resolution included; Prevention of conflict escalation with Over 44.4% (32) respondents , followed by Respect for their decisions 41.7%(30) respondents, while 8.3% (6) respondent cited Lack of strong impartial judicial systems as a major reasons and 2.8% (6) respondent cited Lack of structural frameworks also 2.8% (6) respondent cited General miss trust and incompetence among governments employee.

Prevention of conflict escalation and Respect for their decisions were cited by majority of respondents because they believed that because the conflict involved their livelihoods of the people, traditional leaders were seen to be important because they are part of the affected community. This agree with the work of Ajayi and Buhari, (2014), who argued that Regardless of the processes in use, many from the conflict resolution field argue that solutions to problems must address deeper or underlying human needs rather merely address the presenting issue who borrowed words from John Burton who stated that that; we believe that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments at all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs – needs such as security, identity, recognition, and development. This indicate that in all situations traditional leaders are important in conflict resolution. However this disagree with the work of Boege (2006) who pointed out that traditional approaches of conflict resolution are usually applicable in a situation where there is a failed state, and cited examples like in Bougainville, New Papua Guinea has remained a peaceful community due to the presence of tradition chiefs and leaders who strive to maintain a community based justice system during and after the conflict trough the restorative justice.

The study also assessed how the role of traditional Leaders can be strengthened in conflict resolution. Different approaches strategies on how the role of Traditional Leaders can be strengthened in conflict resolution were stated by the respondents. Over 69.4% (50) respondents believed that the role of traditional leaders can be strengthened through; Traditional leaders representation should play key role in conflict resolution, Comprehensive conflict resolution and peace education and to be provided with adequate financial resources. This agree with the work of Ogwari (2012), who argued that traditional leaders should be provided with resources, finances and training to enable them to be more knowledgeable in the current peace and mediation efforts. Their ventures in peacemaking and mediation should also be given due recognition by the regional, sub-regional and conflict management institutions around the globe.

While Only 30.6% (22) were of the view that role of traditional leaders can be strengthen through; International and local support and facilitation for the peace process, Local ownership and involvements of the conflict resolution process and Inclusion of Traditional leaders in governance. This agrees with the work of Bahta (2008) who argued that the role of the traditional leaders in international conflict management practices should also be encouraged and recognized internationally as important, they should be equipped with modern conflict management skills and their role as arbitrators should not be overlooked by African governments instead they should be incorporated in local institutions for conflict management and nation building to manage internal conflicts mainly rising due to unequal distribution of resources in Africa to have sustainable peace.

CONCLUSION(S):

The general research objective was to examine the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Tanzania; a case of Ngorongoro conservation Authority area in Arusha region. The findings show that the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution were increasing due various reasons among the major reasons was prevention of conflict escalation, followed by Respect for their decisions, lack of strong impartial judicial systems, lack of structural frameworks, general miss trust and incompetence among governments employee. Further the study revealed that when traditional leaders started being involved in mediation that was led by the Tanzania prime minister between the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority and member of households their perceptions started to show big results because of the understanding of the consequences of the conflict and eventually peace came on the areas were affected by conflict. The study found out that the role of Traditional Leaders can be strengthened in conflict resolution through; Traditional leaders representation should play key role in conflict resolution, Comprehensive conflict resolution and peace education, to be provided with adequate financial resources, international and local support and facilitation for the peace process, Local ownership and involvements of the conflict resolution process and inclusion of Traditional leaders in governance.

With the references to the findings, the following recommendations are made; The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and The Ministry of Home Affairs should be proved adequate resource, funding and training that will strengthen the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution, second their stake in the conflict resolutions process should also be given due recognition by the political leaders in Tanzania. Finally the Ministry of constitutional and legal affair should enhance the capacity of traditional leaders by standardizing, interpret and documents traditional laws so that everyone would have accesses to educate themselves on the traditional law existence within the country.

In line with above recommendation, more research need to be conducted in the following areas in conflict resolution; The impact of traditional leaders in managing political conflict given the assumptions that most of traditional leaders are partisan to the dominant ruling political party, how to reconcile traditional arbitration system and former justice system to narrow the gap between the two system and how traditional leaders resolve conflicts that base on suspicions of witchcraft among the community members

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