

The Role of Traditional Political Institutions In Conflict Resolution in Nguru Emirate, Yobe State, Nigeria: 2007-2012 A.D.

Kabir Mohammed PhD, FHSN, FNSS¹; Mr. Abdulhameed Hamisu Bakabe²; Usman Mu'azu Alhassan PhD³; Nafi'u Muhammad Babagana⁴

¹ Department of History And International Studies, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Gashua, P.M.B. 1005, Yobe State Nigeria.

² Department of History And International Studies, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Gashua, Yobe State, Nigeria.

³ Department of History And Diplomatic Studies, Federal University of Kashere, P.M.B 0182, Gombe State, Nigeria.

⁴ Residential Address: State Lowcost Estate, Bambori Street, Nguru Metropolis, Yobe State, Nigeria.

***Corresponding Author:** Kabir Mohammed PhD, FHSN, FNSS

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| Article History | Abstract |
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| Original Research Article | <p><i>This study examines “The Role Of Traditional Political Institutions In Conflict Resolution In Nguru Emirate, Yobe State, Nigeria, Between 2007-2012 A.D.” Traditional political institutions, particularly the Emirate Councils have historically played a vital role in maintaining social harmony, mediating disputes, and fostering community cohesion. However, of great relevance and importance is the need to bring into light that in the course of conducting the study, both published, unpublished and oral traditions were equally used for a proper historical reconstruction to be attained. The study discovered how these institutions managed conflicts during the period under review, exploring the methods employed, the nature of conflicts addressed, and the effectiveness of their interventions. Furthermore, the findings reveal that traditional political institutions remain central to grassroots conflict resolution, offering culturally rooted mechanisms that are often faster, more trusted, and less adversarial than formal legal processes. However, the study also highlights several challenges faced by these institutions, including political interference, erosion of authority and limited legal backing. The research recommends strengthening the synergy between traditional and modern conflict resolution frameworks to enhance peace building efforts in the region. Finally, the study has suggested the way forward.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Role, Traditional, Political, Institution, Conflicts, Revolution, Emirate.</p> |
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General Introduction of The Studied Subject Matter

Traditional political institutions have for long played a crucial role in governance, particularly in areas where formal state mechanisms are either weak or culturally distant. In Northern Nigeria, including Nguru Emirate, traditional rulers such as Emirs, District Heads, and Village Heads serve as key agents in maintaining peace and order. This study explores how these institutions contributed to conflict resolution between 2007-2012 A.D.¹ Conflict is an inevitable and natural part of human interaction, arising from differences in interests, values, beliefs, and access to resources. In African societies, long before the advent of colonialism and the introduction of formal state institutions, communities had developed indigenous mechanisms for managing

and resolving conflicts. These mechanisms were deeply rooted in the customs, traditions, and belief systems of the people, and they were primarily administered by traditional political institutions such as kings, chiefs, elders, and religious leaders.²

General Background of The Study

Nguru is a historic town with deep-rooted traditional structures. The Emirate system, established long before colonial rule, has continued to function as a parallel authority structure, often working alongside local government authorities. From 2007-2012 A.D., the Emirate experienced various challenges, including communal disputes, resource-based conflicts (e.g., over

land and water), and early signs of insurgent activities in surrounding areas.³

In Nigeria, particularly in the Northern region, traditional political institutions have historically played a central role in governance, social control, and dispute resolution. These institutions were not only custodians of culture and tradition but also served as judicial authorities that ensured peace and stability within their domains. The Emirate system, for instance, dates back to the pre-colonial era and continued to function through colonial rule and into the post-independence period. Even today, traditional rulers maintain significant influence in their communities, especially in rural areas where government presence is minimal or ineffective⁴.

Nguru Emirate is one of the Emirates where traditional political institutions have remained active and relevant. The area, which falls under the Nguru Emirate, has a long history of organized traditional leadership and customary law. The people of Nguru continue to respect and rely on their traditional rulers for guidance, conflict mediation, and community development. Despite the expansion of formal legal and administrative systems, many residents still prefer to settle disputes through traditional means, which are often faster, more accessible, and more culturally acceptable than formal court procedures.⁵

Between 2007-2012 A.D. Nguru Emirate, like many parts of Northern Nigeria, experienced several social challenges that occasionally led to conflict. These included disputes over land and water resources particularly between farmers and herder's chieftaincy and boundary disputes, political tensions during elections, and the rising threat of insecurity related to the early stages of *Boko-Haram* insurgency. During this period, traditional political institutions were called upon to address these conflicts and to help maintain peace and order in the face of increasing socio-economic pressures and limited government capacity.⁶

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating the specific role that traditional political institutions played in conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate from 2007-2012 A.D. It aims to highlight their methods, assess their effectiveness, and explore how they interact with formal governance structures in maintaining peace in the local context.⁷

Statement of the Research Problem

In every society, the presence of conflict is a natural occurrence. What distinguishes one society from another

is the method by which these conflicts are managed or resolved. In Nigeria, particularly in Nguru Emirate, traditional political institutions have historically served as the first point of call in conflict resolution. These institutions embodied by Emirs, District Heads, Village Heads, and Councils of Elders have long acted as custodians of peace, using culturally accepted approaches that emphasize dialogue, reconciliation, and community cohesion.⁸

However, with the increasing influence of formal legal and governmental systems, especially after Nigeria's independence, the role of traditional political institutions in governance and conflict resolution has been gradually sidelined. Despite this, in many rural and semi-urban areas such as Nguru Emirate, these institutions continue to play a vital role in addressing disputes, especially in places where modern governmental structures are either weak, under-resourced, or disconnected from the local population.⁹

Between 2007-2012 A.D. Nguru Emirate faced a range of conflicts, including land disputes, farmer-herder clashes, chieftaincy tussles, political rivalry, and growing insecurity due to the early emergence of the *Boko-Haram* insurgency in surrounding areas. During these events, traditional political institutions often stepped into mediate and restore peace. Despite their involvement, there is a lack of systematic documentation and analysis of how these institutions operated, the nature of their interventions, and the outcomes achieved.¹⁰

Furthermore, traditional rulers often operate without formal recognition in the country's legal framework, which limits their authority in certain situations and creates tension or overlap between customary and statutory laws. In addition, they are increasingly facing challenges such as political interference, erosion of cultural values, declining respect from younger generations, and limited support from state authorities. This study is therefore motivated by the need to critically examine the practical roles of traditional political institutions in conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate between 2007-2012 A.D. By doing so, it aims to bridge the knowledge gap and offer policy-relevant recommendations on how to strengthen indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms alongside formal systems.¹¹

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- i. What types of conflicts were prevalent in Nguru Emirate between 2007-2012 A.D.?
- ii. How did traditional political institutions respond to these conflicts in Nguru Emirate?
- iii. What methods and strategies were employed in resolving the conflicts in Nguru Emirate?
- iv. How effective were these methods in ensuring lasting peace in Nguru Emirate?
- v. What challenges did traditional political institutions face in their conflict resolution efforts in Nguru Emirate?

Aim And Objectives of The Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of traditional political institutions in conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate between 2007-2012 A.D. The specific objectives include:

- i. To identify the types of conflicts that occurred in Nguru Emirate during the period under review.
- ii. To examine the strategies and mechanisms used by traditional political institutions to resolve these conflicts in Nguru Emirate.
- iii. To assess the effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution methods in Nguru Emirate.
- iv. To explore the challenges faced by traditional political institutions in the conflict resolution process in Nguru Emirate.
- v. To make recommendations for enhancing the role of traditional political institutions in peace building in Nguru Emirate.

Significance of the Study

This research will contribute to the growing body of literature on indigenous approaches to conflict resolution. By focusing on a specific geographical and temporal context, it will offer insights into the practical functions of traditional political institutions in contemporary society. The findings will be valuable to policymakers, scholars, peacebuilding organizations, and local government authorities interested in harnessing community-based approaches for conflict management and development.

Scope And Limitations of The Study

This study is limited to Nguru Emirate and focuses specifically on the period from 2007-2012 A.D. It concentrates on traditional political institutions such as the Emirate Council, District Heads, and Village Heads. It does not cover the activities of formal law enforcement or judiciary bodies, except in relation to their interaction with traditional authorities. Limitations may include

access to reliable data, the availability of key informants, and potential biases in oral accounts or records.

Methodology

The researcher used three (3) historical methods in obtaining data and information which include interview method of which information were obtained orally, the observation method were also used, whereby the researcher used eyes analyzes the information and written documents were also consulted and relevant information were taped.

Literature Review

In the course of conducting the study, various materials were consulted and reviewed for this, below are some of the materials consulted accordingly.

Traditional political institutions include the structures and leadership systems rooted in indigenous African cultures, such as Emirs, Chiefs, Village Heads, and Councils of Elders. These institutions wield social and moral authority within communities and play key roles in dispute resolution, governance, and cultural preservation¹².

Traditional political institutions refer to the indigenous governance structures and systems that have existed in African societies long before the introduction of modern state systems. These institutions are deeply rooted in the history, customs, and cultural practices of specific communities. They operate alongside formal state institutions, complementing and sometimes competing with them.¹³

In many African societies, including those in Nigeria, traditional political institutions are responsible for social control, conflict resolution, and community governance. They play a significant role in the day-to-day lives of individuals and are often viewed as the moral compass of the community. In Nguru Emirate, as in many northern Nigerian communities, traditional political institutions consist of leaders, councils, and customary law systems that are often decentralized and informal, yet powerful in practice.¹⁴

Conflict is generally described as a situation of disagreement or confrontation between individuals or groups due to divergent interests, goals, or values. Conflict is a natural and unavoidable part of human interaction that arises when basic human needs are denied. Conflict refers to a situation in which two or more individuals, groups, or communities perceive a clash of interests, goals, values, or needs. It arises when

one party believes that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of human existence because individuals and groups often differ in values, priorities, resources, identities, and power.¹⁵

Scholars like Coser (1956) and Burton (1990) argue that conflict is not inherently negative. According to them, conflict can be both constructive and destructive. When managed properly, conflict can lead to positive social change, stronger relationships, and institutional reforms. However, when left unresolved, it can escalate into violence, disintegration of social cohesion, or even prolonged crises. Conflict in this area, as in many others, reflects deeper socio-economic and historical factors. The role of traditional political institutions has been critical in mitigating these conflicts through culturally grounded, informal dispute resolution mechanisms. In sum, conflict is a multifaceted phenomenon that, if understood and managed effectively especially by trusted institutions like traditional rulers can serve as a catalyst for positive change and community stability.¹⁶

Conflict resolution refers to the process of addressing and resolving disputes between parties by using a variety of methods that aim to achieve a peaceful outcome. It involves strategies and techniques that help parties in conflict to find mutually acceptable solutions while restoring relationships, addressing the underlying causes of the conflict, and preventing further escalation. Effective conflict resolution not only ends the immediate dispute but can also strengthen social bonds, build trust, and contribute to long-term peace.¹⁷

Conflict resolution is a broad field that encompasses a range of approaches, both formal and informal. These approaches vary in complexity and depend on the nature of the conflict, the parties involved, the resources available, and the social context. There are several well-established methods of conflict resolution, including:

Negotiation is a direct process in which conflicting parties engage in dialogue to reach a compromise or agreement. It is often the first step in conflict resolution and can be used for both minor and major disputes. Successful negotiation requires communication, active listening, and the willingness of parties to find common ground. Traditional leaders often facilitate such negotiations in their communities.¹⁸

Mediation is a form of dispute resolution in which a neutral third party, often with authority or cultural respect, helps the conflicting parties to communicate and negotiate a solution. Mediators do not impose a decision

but facilitate discussion to help the parties reach a voluntary, mutually agreed-upon resolution. In the case of traditional institutions, elders, chiefs, or religious leaders often take on the role of mediators.¹⁹ Restorative justice is a conflict resolution approach that focuses on healing relationships rather than punishing the wrongdoer. It emphasizes accountability, the repair of harm, and the reintegration of offenders into the community. In traditional African settings, restorative justice often involves rituals, apologies, and community ceremonies that seek to restore the balance within the community.²⁰

Peace building refers to the broader process of addressing the root causes of conflict and establishing structures to prevent future violence. It involves community engagement, rebuilding social networks, and creating systems of justice and reconciliation. Conflict transformation, as described by Johan Galtung, focuses on long-term change in relationships and societal structures that cause conflict. This concept is integral to traditional conflict resolution methods, which often aim to restore and transform relationships between groups through dialogue and reconciliation.²¹

The traditional states of northern Nigeria formed the backbone of the British system of Indirect Rule. From the early colonial period onwards these states and their peoples have been the subject of a number of studies, most of which have been descriptive and historical. Important early overviews include Burdon's Northern Nigeria, Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes (1909), Temple's The Native Races and their Rulers (1918) and Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria (1919), Meek's The Northern Tribes of Nigeria (1925) and Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria (1931), and Hogben's The *Muhammadan* Emirates of Nigeria (1930), revised and updated by Hogben and Kirk-Greene in The Emirates of Northern Nigeria (1966). Basic anthropological information is collected in the volumes produced for the Ethnographic Survey of Africa (e.g. Forde 1950; Gunn 1953; 1956; Gunn & Conant 1960).²²

These various works draw upon local histories and chronicles and in turn have spawned more detailed histories of individual policies. The most widely known of these have been published by outside scholars and include Last's The *Sokoto Caliphate* (1967) and M.G. Smith's trilogy Government in Zazzau (1950), The Affairs of Daura (1978), and Government in Kano (1997). But the most rapidly expanding and vibrant category of historical literature is that of locally

published histories and hagiographies written by Nigerians themselves. Examples are recent works on the Berom chief ship (Nyam & Jacobs 2004; Dung 2005) and on past and present Emirs of **Zazzau** (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000; Dalhatu 2002). Many more examples are cited in this report. Studies such as these are important both as sources of information and as active contributions to debate about the contemporary significance of traditional rulers and related institutions.²³

Conclusively, this introductory section of the study contains general introduction, general background to the study, statement of research problem, aim and objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, research methodology, literature review and have both offer a significant and relevant details regarding the focus of the study. However, it is worthy and pertinent to state that the aforementioned were accordingly examined with a view of attaining a balanced study for a proper historical reconstruction to be made.

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Geographical And Historical Survey of Nguru Emirate: An Overview

Nguru Emirate is situated in the Northern part of Yobe State. Nguru is relatively an urban center with a long history behind it. It is traditionally identified with the **Galadimas** of Borno who have been its hereditary rulers for almost three hundred years. Its area is about 2550

square miles of which about 200 square miles is effectively occupied as village lands.¹ However, historical sources interacted with common traditions of origin has even before the coming of *Walu tribe*, a tribe known as *Agura*, whose used to be numerous at Malawi, north-east of Machina, but it is considered they never reached into what is now Nguru Emirate.² Furthermore, any tradition of origin one thing is clear that during the

eighteenth century there seems to have been considerable migration from the north and large *Manga* towns were formed particularly at *Karimeri* south-west of the present *Kumagannam*. In fact, nearly all the Nguru elders give a family history dating from these traditions of migration. It should be noted that the aim of this work is to throw more light on the fishing in the area than its political history.³

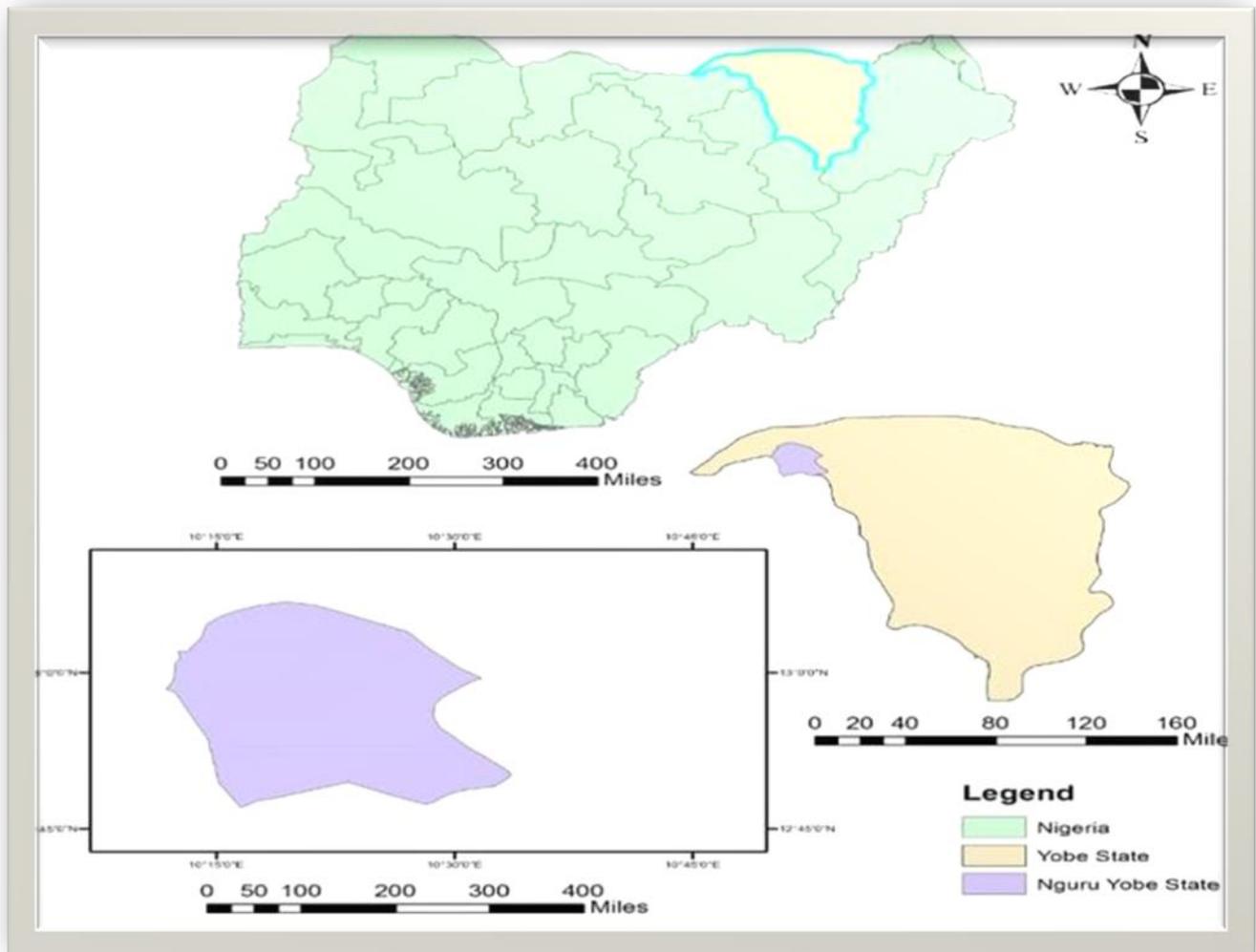


Figure 1: A Political Map Showing Nguru Local Government, Area Of Yobe State.

Furthermore, the Manga are traditionally, associated with fishing and hunting, besides farming activity. The Fishing activity was developed due to the availability of water, salt, and natron production was another occupation that engaged the attention of the people of Nguru district. This development brought the people very close to the culture of local industrial growth.⁴

However, the local industry that came to growth in Nguru was based on plant and animal resources. The former aided in the making of items such as woodwork, mat making, etc. while the later facilitated the development in the making of hide and skin which were

used to make various hems for socio-economic aspects. The economic activities and potentialities as symbolized above were the factors that later led to the development of trade routes linking Nguru with various economic centers, particularly Hausa land and Borno which inevitably make the area a significant commercial center or rather a melting pot of various goods and cultures. In fact, the town became very important to the kingdom of *Saifawa* especially with the creation of the office of the Galadima.⁵

However, agriculture had been the dominant economic activity in the period. It was basically subsistence that is

productions were generally made for household consumption. Millets, beans, guinea corn, groundnuts were the principal crops produced in the area. The system of farming was in form of shifting cultivation. The implements generally used in the period were cutlasses, hoes, axes etc. which were produced by blacksmith. One of the dominant aspects of the agricultural production in West Africa as a whole, it was not based on material accumulation and therefore there was fair distribution of wealth among individuals.⁶

Equally important was cultivation through irrigation. At nearby villages, a fringes of irrigation culture was developed as a result of the surrounding dikes, this particular development led to the production of various crops which supplied the needs of animal satisfaction and later served as a means that facilitated the exchange of goods in the name of trading with neighboring villages and towns. Beside agriculture, animal husbandry was practiced in Nguru. The presence of the *Komadugu of Yobe* (River) encouraged the raising of livestock such as cattle, sheep and goats in the area. The cattle were owned mostly by the Fulbe who were said to have migrated to almost all parts of western and central Sudan.⁷ Their activities had facilitated the growth of animal husbandry in the area which later attracted people to developed the culture of rearing. And up to present day people of Nguru are so much accustomed to cattle rearing.

The Relevance and Validity of Traditional Political Institutions in Nguru Emirate

In Nguru Emirate, traditional political institutions continue to play a pivotal role in community governance and conflict resolution. The Emir of Nguru is the highest traditional authority in the area, and under his leadership, local disputes are resolved using methods aligned with Islamic and customary traditions. Additionally, the Emir's council is involved in managing issues related to resource allocation, inter-community relations, and dispute settlement, often holding community meetings and leveraging traditional laws to mediate conflicts.⁸

Despite challenges such as political interference and the growing influence of modern state governance, traditional institutions in Nguru remain crucial for maintaining order, stability, and peace, particularly in rural areas where state presence is minimal. Traditional political institutions in Nigeria, especially in northern states like Yobe, continue to be central to the fabric of local governance and conflict resolution. These

institutions, which include traditional rulers, councils of elders, and customary law, provide essential functions in maintaining order, resolving disputes, and preserving cultural identity. While they face various challenges, their importance in ensuring peace and stability in communities like Nguru cannot be overstated.⁹

Physical Features (Land, Vegetation And Rivers):

Nguru Emirate is situated very close to water which touches the *Komadugu of Yobe* (River). From the west to northwest is of light forest in which varieties of tree predominates. The northern part of the town as well as down north-eastern is semi-desert and virtually treeless in general appearance. This particular characteristic favored the areas with agricultural activities which had become the central factor that later attracted commerce to growth and flourished in the area.¹⁰ However, in the case of vegetation, the predominant tree species found in Nguru Emirate are *Neem*, Acacia, Dum palm, Tamarind, and Baobab trees. Shrubs are available all year round while grasses mostly disappear with the termination of rainy seasons due to excessive grazing and fuel wood sourcing carried out by the study area locals; and regenerate at the onset of the wet seasons which mostly comes in around June (Ibraheem *et al.*, 2018).¹¹ In another inter-related aspect, the study briefly surveys the rivers found available in the area such as *Kumadugu of Yobe* which is the back bone of fishing activities in Nguru. The area also has favorable fertile land for cultivation (farming) of both food and cash crops. It is within the Chad Basin, mostly sandy with loan marshy, Fadama areas along the rivers.¹⁰ *River Hadejia* and *Katagum* flows through the area where by the converged at *Dumsai* to form the river known as *Kumadugu of Yobe*.¹² To the south east, it flows into Lake Chad. The staple food production include the cultivation of common food crops like millet, guinea corn and maize, while rice and wheat are cultivated in all areas laying along the river.¹¹ Apart from fishing, there are other economic activities perform by the inhabitants, these include cultivation of onion, pepper, tomatoes garden eggs, water melon cabbage, carrots, Bambara nuts, okra beans, cassava and sweet potatoes. Other fruits includes mangoes, guava, bitter lemon and pawpaw. The northern part is characterized by scattered trees with occasional drought. The land is also good for animal rearing especially cows, goats, horses, donkeys, which are also used as a means of transportation.¹

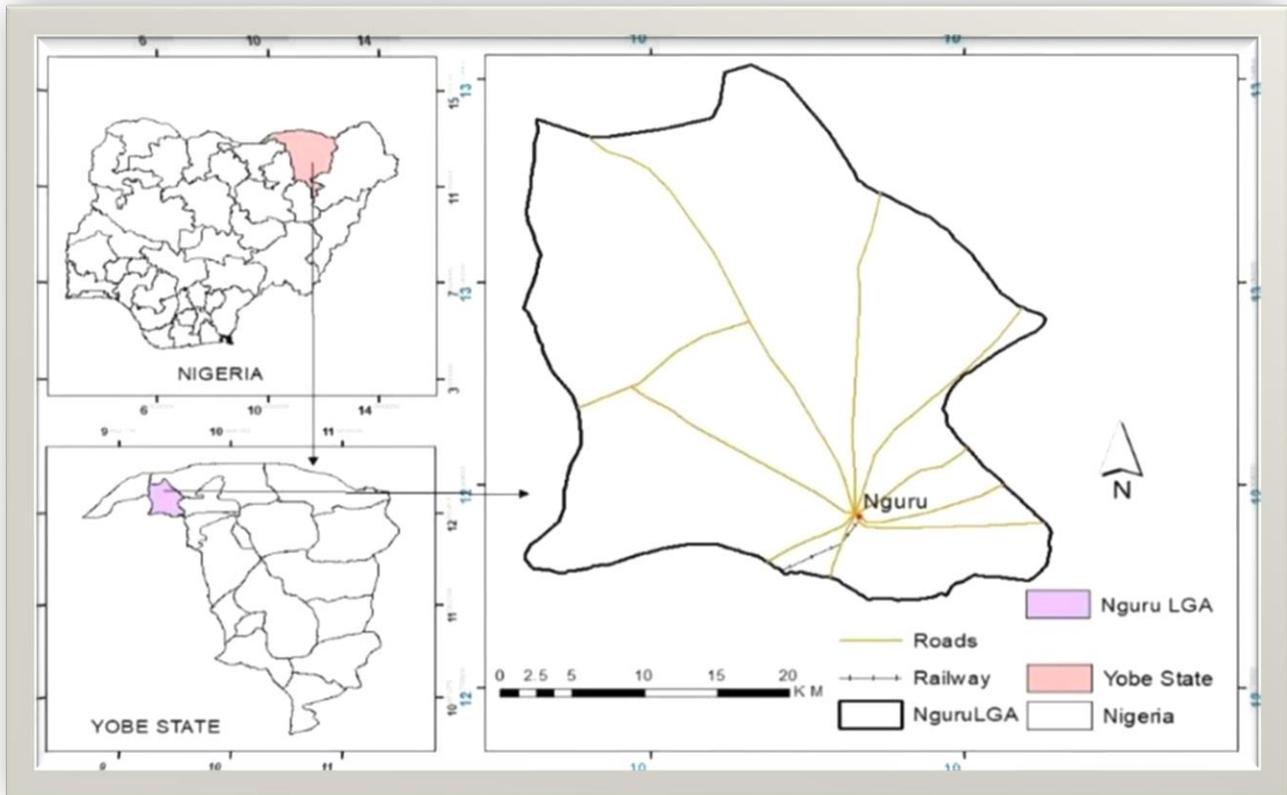


Figure2: A Geographical Map of Nguru Local Government, Area Of Yobe State.

Conclusively, it has been discovered in this study that Nguru Emirate is situated in Yobe state, Nguru is relatively an urban center with a long history behind it. Its area is about 2550 square miles of which about 200 square miles is effectively occupied as village lands. Nguru Emirate is situated very close to water which touches the Komadugu of Yobe (River). From the west to northwest is of light forest in which varieties of tree predominates.

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General Overview of Traditional Political Institutions in Nguru Emirate

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate have a long-standing history dating back to pre-colonial times. In the northern part of the country, especially in emirate

structures like Nguru, Emirs and their councils were responsible for administration, justice, and peacekeeping. Despite the rise of formal political institutions, traditional leaders continue to exert significant influence, particularly in rural areas where state institutions are weak or absent.¹

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate refer to the indigenous governance systems, leadership structures, and cultural norms that have been passed down through generations. These institutions existed long before the establishment of the modern Nigerian state, and they continue to play a significant role in local governance, social control, and conflict resolution across the country. While Nigeria is a federal republic with formal state structures and institutions, traditional political institutions are deeply rooted in the society, particularly in rural areas, and coexist with the formal political system.²

Features Of Traditional Political Institutions in Nguru Emirate

The central figure in many Nigerian traditional political institutions particularly Nguru Emirate is the traditional ruler, who holds the title of king, emir. Traditional rulers are seen as the custodians of culture, religion, and social values within their communities. These rulers have authority derived from their lineage, cultural significance, and role in community decision-making. Traditional rulers often lead local councils, influence local political decisions, and mediate in community matters. They are responsible for maintaining cultural traditions, rituals, and ceremonies that bind the community together. They are often involved in resolving disputes within the community, using customary laws to provide justice and promote reconciliation. In many communities, traditional rulers also have a spiritual or religious role, leading worship and maintaining the moral and spiritual health of the community. In Nguru Emirate, for example, the Emir of Nguru plays a crucial role in local governance, cultural affairs, and conflict resolution.³

Councils of Elders

The council of elders is an important element in traditional political institutions across Nigeria, Nguru Emirate in particular. These councils consist of respected members of the community, usually elderly men and women, who have gained authority through their age, wisdom, and contributions to society. Elders serve as advisors to the traditional ruler and play a key role in conflict resolution, decision-making, and cultural preservation. The councils also oversee the enforcement of customary laws and are responsible for maintaining social harmony. In some areas elders are tasked with making decisions on land disputes, marriage issues, inheritance, and settling conflicts between different groups.⁴

Customary Law and Practices

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate are governed by customary law, which is a system of unwritten laws and practices that have evolved over time within specific ethnic or cultural groups. Customary laws are based on the values, beliefs, and practices of the community and can vary significantly between regions. In rural areas, land ownership and use are governed by traditional laws that often give priority to communal ownership or inheritance practices. Customary law also covers marital arrangements, bride price, inheritance, and the rights of women and children within the family. Traditional courts or councils resolve conflicts, using customary law principles to determine guilt, compensation, or reconciliation.⁵

The Role of Religion

Religion is often intertwined with traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate. In many cases, traditional rulers are not only secular leaders but also spiritual leaders who oversee religious ceremonies, rituals, and festivals. In areas where Islam is dominant, such as Nguru Emirate and Northern Nigeria as a whole, traditional leaders may also have significant roles in overseeing Islamic practices and integrating Islamic law (Sharia) with local customs. In Nguru Emirate, Islamic principles often guide the actions and decisions of traditional leaders, especially in matters of family law, marriage, and community behavior.⁶

Types of Traditional Political Institutions In Nguru Emirate

Nguru Emirate Traditional political institutions vary widely depending on the ethnic group. Below is the types of traditional political institutions commonly used in Nguru Emirate.

The Emirate System

In the north, especially Nguru Emirate, traditional political institutions are largely influenced by Islam and the Emirate system, which is a hierarchy of local governance headed by the Emir. The Emir is a powerful figure responsible for governing, maintaining peace, and resolving conflicts within his territory. The Emirate councils consist of important chiefs, local leaders, and scholars who advise the Emir. The Emirate system is particularly significant in states like Yobe, Borno, and Kano, where traditional leaders hold substantial political and religious authority. The Emir's council has a role in mediating conflicts between ethnic groups and resolving issues related to land, marriage, and social disputes.⁷

Challenges Facing Traditional Political Institutions In Nguru Emirate

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate, while deeply embedded in the cultural and social fabric of many communities, face several challenges in the modern era. These challenges often arise from the intersection of traditional authority with modern state systems, socio-economic changes, and the pressures of globalization. Despite their importance in maintaining social order and resolving conflicts, these institutions must navigate a host of issues that hinder their effectiveness. Below are some of the challenges facing traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate:

Limited Resources And Financial Dependency

Traditional political institutions often operate with limited financial resources, which makes it difficult for them to carry out their roles effectively in the modern era. Unlike formal government structures, traditional institutions do not have access to state funds or institutionalized support, leaving them vulnerable to financial instability. Traditional political institutions often lack the infrastructure and resources needed to carry out their duties. For example, they may not have access to modern communication tools, legal resources, or trained staff to handle complex disputes. This limits their ability to manage conflicts on a large scale or handle emerging social issues that require technical expertise.⁸

The lack of financial autonomy among traditional political institutions may hinder their ability to hold regular community meetings or pay mediators, thus reducing their capacity to mediate conflicts or enforce agreements.⁹

Political Interference and State Domination

One of the most significant challenges facing traditional political institutions is the increasing interference of the state in their affairs. As Nigeria's political system has evolved, particularly since independence, the government has sought to centralize authority, sometimes undermining the role of traditional rulers and local councils. In some instances, traditional leaders are co-opted by political elites to serve the interests of the government, rather than the community. Traditional rulers may be appointed by state authorities to serve as puppet leaders, reducing their independence and authority in local governance. This can lead to a loss of respect for traditional political institutions by the community, as they are perceived to be beholden to the state rather than serving the needs of the people.¹⁰

The modern state's centralized system of governance sometimes contradicts the decentralized nature of traditional political institutions. Traditional rulers and elders, who historically governed through consensus and

community-driven decision-making, are often sidelined or ignored in favor of formal political structures. This can lead to tension between the two systems, particularly when traditional leaders are excluded from political decision-making processes. For example, in some parts of Nigeria, especially in Nguru Emirate, Emirs and other traditional rulers may find themselves in conflict with elected local government officials who claim legitimacy through democratic elections. This has created struggles over local authority, with traditional leaders sometimes feeling marginalized by the state's formal political system.¹¹

Modernization And The Decline Of Traditional Authority

The rapid pace of modernization and urbanization has also presented significant challenges for traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate. As communities grow more urbanized and connected to global trends, traditional values and systems may lose their influence, particularly among younger generations. Many young Nigerians, particularly those in urban areas, may no longer see the value of adhering to the norms and authority of traditional leaders. Western education and exposure to globalized media have contributed to a shift in values, with younger generations increasingly favoring individualism over communalism. As a result, the traditional system of leadership, based on elders' wisdom and collective decision-making, faces erosion.¹²

The growth of formal education, mass media, and economic opportunities has changed societal values. Younger people may question the legitimacy or relevance of traditional rulers, viewing them as outdated or disconnected from the needs of modern society. This undermines the traditional authority structure, as respect for elders and customary leadership diminishes. For instance, in urbanized areas, the role of traditional political institutions has been increasingly marginalized in favor of elected officials or technocratic leadership, leading to a decline in their ability to effectively resolve conflicts or lead their communities.¹³

Conflicts Between Statutory Law and Customary Law

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate often rely on customary law to resolve conflicts, but this legal framework is increasingly coming into conflict with Nigeria's statutory law (or formal legal system). The overlap between customary law and statutory law creates confusion and challenges for traditional political institutions. There are instances where traditional courts and customary law clash with the formal judicial system. For example, in matters such as inheritance rights, land disputes, and marriage laws, customary law may differ significantly from the principles of the Nigerian

constitution or statutory laws. This can create confusion among community members about which system of law to follow.

In some cases, the customary laws enforced by traditional political institutions may conflict with international human rights standards, particularly with respect to women's rights. Issues such as child marriage, inheritance rights for women, and polygamy may be regulated by customary law in ways that contradict statutory laws or the human rights framework that Nigeria has signed onto. For example, in certain parts of the local government, traditional political institutions may continue to uphold patrilineal inheritance practices, which may exclude women from inheriting property. This can conflict with Nigeria's gender equality laws and international human rights standards, presenting a challenge for reconciling the two legal systems.¹⁴

Despite their historical significance and enduring relevance, traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate and Nigeria at large face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to function effectively in the contemporary world. Political interference, the erosion of cultural authority, conflicts between customary and statutory law, resource limitations, ethnic divisions, and the influence of globalization all contribute to the difficulties faced by these institutions. However, with the right support and adaptation, traditional political institutions can continue to play an essential role in local governance, conflict resolution, and cultural preservation. Addressing these challenges will require a balanced approach that respects the autonomy and relevance of traditional political institutions while integrating them into the broader framework of modern governance.¹⁵

Methods Used By Traditional Political Institutions In Conflict Resolution

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate play a vital role in managing and resolving conflicts at the local level. They utilize time-tested, culturally appropriate methods for conflict resolution, relying on restorative justice, mediation, and dialogue to restore peace and harmony. These methods are often rooted in customary laws and practices that have evolved over centuries. The conflict resolution mechanisms employed by traditional political institutions are particularly effective in rural areas, where access to formal courts or state institutions might be limited.

Below are some of the key methods used by traditional political institutions in conflict resolution:

✓ **Mediation And Negotiation**

Mediation is one of the most commonly used methods by traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate. It involves a neutral third party

often a traditional ruler, elder, or respected leader who helps conflicting parties come to a mutually agreeable solution. Unlike formal judicial processes that tend to focus on punishment, mediation seeks to restore relationships and create a peaceful resolution. In Nguru, disputes between farmers and herders over land and grazing rights are often resolved through community dialogues, where both sides present their grievances. The Emir or local elders will guide them in reaching a solution based on shared community values, ensuring the maintenance of peace and fairness.¹⁶

✓ **Restorative Justice and Reconciliation**

Traditional conflict resolution focuses heavily on restorative justice, a process aimed at repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than seeking punitive measures. Restorative justice methods are often seen as more appropriate in situations where the goal is to heal the community and bring back peace. The focus is on the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties. In many cases, the parties are encouraged to engage in face-to-face reconciliation, during which they apologize, forgive, and agree to live in harmony. Conflict resolution in traditional settings often involves the entire community, not just the conflicting parties. The community plays an important role in the reconciliation process, offering support and ensuring that the terms of the resolution are upheld. This community oversight helps prevent further conflicts from arising and strengthens social cohesion. In Nguru Emirate, in situations where a conflict between two families leads to a breakdown in community relations, the Emir might organize a reconciliation ceremony that includes the families, respected elders, and other community members. Through this ceremony, the parties offer apologies, restore social bonds, and make amends for any harm caused.¹⁷

✓ **Public Admonishment and Social Sanctions**

Another common method used by traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate is the use of public admonishment or social sanctions to resolve conflicts. These sanctions are typically informal, but they hold great significance within the community. The idea is to encourage individuals to uphold social norms and avoid behavior that could lead to conflict. The traditional leader or elders may publicly admonish the conflicting parties, urging them to make peace and reminding them of their duties to the community. In some cases, a more direct form of sanction may be

imposed. This can include restrictions on social activities, such as being excluded from important ceremonies, rituals, or festivals. The aim is to apply subtle but powerful pressure on the parties to restore peace and avoid further conflict. In Nguru, in the case of land disputes or breaches of customary laws, the Emir or elders might reprimand the involved parties publicly, emphasizing the importance of communal harmony and collective well-being. These admonishments can act as a deterrent against future conflicts and encourage social conformity.¹⁸

✓ **Rituals And Ceremonial Peace Building**

In Nguru Emirate communities, rituals and ceremonies play an important role in conflict resolution. These rituals are seen as spiritual acts that help to purify the community, restore balance, and heal relationships. They often involve prayers, sacrifices, and offerings to the ancestors or gods, invoking divine intervention to end hostilities. Traditional leaders may perform rituals to symbolically cleanse the community of the negative energy caused by the conflict. These rituals may involve sacrifices, the offering of symbolic gifts, or the use of sacred objects. Ceremonial practices, such as communal feasts or public celebrations, may be used to mark the conclusion of a conflict and demonstrate the restoration of peace. These ceremonies allow for a collective reaffirmation of social bonds and community unity. In Nguru, where Islamic practices are intertwined with traditional customs, conflicts might be resolved through both Islamic rituals and traditional ceremonies. A traditional feast might follow the reconciliation of a dispute, and the community may hold a prayer ceremony seeking divine intervention for lasting peace.¹⁹

The methods used by traditional institutions in conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate are deeply rooted in customary practices, restorative justice, and community cohesion. These methods prioritize the restoration of relationships, peacebuilding, and communal harmony, rather than punitive measures. By utilizing mediation, social sanctions, reconciliation ceremonies, and customary courts, traditional institutions continue to play an indispensable role in resolving conflicts in many Nigerian communities, especially in rural and remote areas like Nguru in Yobe State. These methods not only serve to address immediate disputes but also help maintain social stability and cultural continuity within the community.²⁰

Conclusively, this segment reviewed the general overview of the traditional political institution and conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate and highlighted their historical relevance,

the methods they use, and the challenges they face. While literature exists on traditional conflict resolution broadly, there is limited research focusing on Nguru Emirate during the specified period, justifying the need for this study.

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The Role of Traditional Political Institutions in Conflict Resolution

In many parts of the world, particularly in rural communities like those in Nguru E, traditional political institutions have served as the primary mechanism for resolving disputes. These institutions use the above-mentioned methods in ways that are deeply embedded in local customs, values, and social norms. Traditional leaders often act as mediators, using culturally familiar practices like communal gatherings, storytelling, and ceremonies to help resolve conflicts. In communities where traditional institutions hold sway, the resolution of disputes is often governed by customary laws that reflect local values and norms. These laws are flexible and adaptable to the specific circumstances of the conflict.¹

Traditional conflict resolution methods often involve the community as a whole. This communal approach helps reinforce social cohesion and ensure that the resolution is accepted by all parties. By addressing conflicts early and providing accessible means of resolution, traditional political institutions can prevent the escalation of disputes into violent confrontations. These approaches not only resolve the immediate conflict but also contribute to social harmony and the preservation of communal relationships. This is particularly important in societies where the social fabric is tightly knit, and maintaining community unity is vital for survival.²

Conflict Resolution In Nguru Emirate

In Nguru Emirate, as in many parts of Yobe State and northern Nigeria, traditional conflict resolution practices remain central to handling local disputes. These practices are particularly significant given the limited presence of formal judicial institutions in rural areas. The role of Emirs, District Heads, and Council of Elders in Nguru extends beyond conflict resolution to governance, social control, and even political mediation. These traditional leaders often play a role in resolving land disputes, farmer-herder conflicts, and inter-community tensions. Through the use of dialogue, negotiation, and reconciliation, they have maintained relative peace in the face of challenges like political instability, resource scarcity, and insurgent activity.³

Functions Of Traditional Political Institutions In Conflict Resolution

✓ **Dispute Resolution**

One of the primary functions of traditional political institutions is conflict resolution. In many rural Nigerian communities, including those in Nguru, formal legal institutions such as courts may be distant, expensive, and time-consuming to access. Traditional political institutions provide a more accessible and culturally relevant alternative. Through informal mechanisms like mediation, conciliation and arbitration, traditional leaders resolve conflicts at the local level⁴. For example, when disputes arise between neighbors over land or water use, the traditional ruler or council of elders may summon both parties for a peace conference, where they discuss the issues in the presence of respected community leaders. The aim is to reach a fair and mutually agreeable solution, based on customary practices. This approach emphasizes reconciliation over punishment.

✓ **Social Control and Community Stability**

Traditional political institutions also serve as agents of social control by maintaining community order and enforcing norms. By ensuring that individuals adhere to customary rules and values, these institutions play a significant role in maintaining social cohesion and preventing violence or unrest. In communities like Nguru, traditional leaders often mediate conflicts before they escalate into violence, particularly those involving ethnic groups, religions, or youth unrest. Their authority is derived from the respect and trust that the community has in them, and they use this authority to maintain peace and order.⁵

✓ Cultural Preservation

Traditional political institutions are essential in preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage of a community. This includes safeguarding local customs, rituals, ceremonies, and traditional knowledge systems. By ensuring the continuity of these practices, traditional political institutions help to strengthen community identity and social cohesion.

For instance, in Nguru, traditional leaders oversee rituals that mark important life events, such as births, marriages, and funerals, which help reinforce cultural unity and stability. These events also offer opportunities for conflict resolution and the restoration of relationships, as they bring the community together.⁶

✓ Principles of Conflict Transformation

Conflict is viewed not just as a temporary crisis or event, but as a dynamic and evolving process that affects both the immediate parties involved and the broader social context. In conflict transformation, the focus is on the transformation of attitudes, relationships, and social structures over time, rather than simply solving a particular issue or dispute. Conflict is seen as an opportunity for change and growth. Transforming the conflict involves understanding the underlying causes such as economic, political, and social inequalities, and addressing them to create a new, more just equilibrium in society. Traditional conflict resolution methods often focus on finding solutions that result in a "winner" and a "loser" someone who benefits from the resolution and someone who is dissatisfied. Conflict transformation, however, focuses on creating win-win situations by seeking solutions that benefit all parties involved. It emphasizes collaboration, mutual understanding, and addressing the needs of all stakeholders rather than simply solving the immediate problem⁷.

One of the central aspects of conflict transformation is addressing the root causes of conflict rather than just dealing with its symptoms. These causes often include inequality, injustice, discrimination, and historical grievances. Conflict is viewed not merely as a set of disputes to be resolved, but as a symptom of deeper issues in society⁸. In practice, this means that traditional political institutions, such as the Emirate system in Nguru, play a crucial role in conflict transformation. They engage not only in resolving specific disputes (like land or resource

conflicts) but also work towards rebuilding community trust and addressing structural inequalities that contribute to the recurrence of conflicts.

The goal is to transform the way people relate to one another, moving from mistrust, hostility, and violence to reconciliation, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. For example, in areas affected by ethnic or religious tensions (like parts of Yobe State), traditional leaders play an essential role in healing historical divisions by fostering inter-group dialogue, encouraging forgiveness, and promoting community-based peace building practices.⁹ In the context of Nguru, this multi-level approach could involve not only resolving conflicts between farmers and herders but also addressing broader political dynamics, land tenure systems, and resource management strategies that may contribute to tensions.

Advantages Of Traditional Institutions

Traditional political institutions are deeply rooted in the community's cultural values, making them more likely to be accepted by local people. They are perceived as more legitimate and trustworthy than external state institutions. Traditional leaders typically have deep knowledge of local dynamics and the social fabric, enabling them to understand the underlying causes of conflicts and address them in culturally appropriate ways. Resolving conflicts through traditional political institutions is generally less costly and time-consuming than pursuing formal legal channels.¹⁰ Traditional leaders are often more accessible to rural populations, as they reside within or near the communities they serve. Traditional conflict resolution methods often emphasize reconciliation, restoring relationships rather than focusing solely on punishment.¹¹

In conclusion, traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate play a pivotal role in local governance, conflict resolution, and the preservation of culture. Despite challenges from modernization and political interference, these institutions continue to be integral to the fabric of Nguru society, particularly in rural areas. Understanding the significance of these institutions is crucial for addressing the broader socio-political dynamics that shape conflict and governance in communities such as Nguru in Yobe State.

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General Conclusion of The Studied Subject Matter

Conclusively, the study has come up with some major findings for the intellectual advancement of the students researchers, scholars and general reading public. The whole attempt herein centres on the need to develop some major strategies of overcoming conflict of whatever sorts for the well-being of humanity. Similarly, the study has wholeheartedly and unreservedly called for the traditional rulers to be playing a significant role in combating against conflict in any given human society with an emphasis to Nguru Emirate in particular. Furthermore, the study has suggested the way forward among which include: arbitration, enlightenment, sensitization, motivation and mediation as well as other related ways forward.

This study set out to examine the role of traditional political institutions in conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate from 2007-2012 A.D. The study focused on understanding the methods used by traditional political institutions in resolving conflicts, the challenges they face, and the impact of their efforts on community cohesion. The major findings from the study are summarized below:

Traditional political institutions in Nguru Emirate use various methods to resolve conflicts, including mediation, arbitration, reconciliation rituals, and compensation. Traditional rulers and community leaders play a central role in the conflict resolution process, acting as mediators, arbitrators, and peacekeepers within their communities.

Traditional institutions face some challenges, including political interference, lack of resources, erosion of authority

due to modernization, and security concerns caused by insurgency and banditry. Political leaders often undermine the authority of traditional rulers for personal gain, which weakens their role in conflict resolution. The security situation in the area makes it difficult to gather communities for conflict resolution sessions, further complicating the process. Despite the challenges, traditional political institutions have a positive impact on promoting peace and stability in the local government. Traditional methods of conflict resolution, such as reconciliation rituals and mediation, help restore social harmony and rebuild trust between conflicting parties.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn, traditional political institutions continue to play an essential role in conflict resolution in Nguru Emirate. Despite facing various challenges, they remain integral to the peace-building process in the community. The cultural and social relevance of traditional institutions means they are still trusted by the community for resolving disputes. The challenges of political interference, lack of resources, and security concerns have significantly hindered the effectiveness of traditional political institutions in resolving conflicts. While the institutions have shown resilience in managing conflicts, their ability to function at full capacity is compromised by these limitations, traditional political institutions complement formal legal systems and can be seen as a bridge between formal state institutions and the local community. Collaboration between traditional institutions and government agencies could improve conflict resolution outcomes and ensure that both systems are effectively utilized.

Conflict Resolution in Contemporary Nguru and The Quest for The Way Forward

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

There is a need for government policies that recognize and strengthen the authority of traditional institutions. This can be achieved through legal frameworks that ensure traditional political institutions have a more formalized role in conflict resolution.

Traditional rulers should be empowered with greater authority to mediate and resolve conflicts without political interference. Traditional political institutions require financial and logistical support to effectively carry out their duties. The government and *NGOs* should provide resources such as funds, training, and infrastructure to enhance the capacity of traditional leaders to resolve conflicts. Creating a fund for community conflict resolution initiatives could help traditional institutions organize and implement conflict resolution processes more effectively.

The study recommends that traditional political institutions work more closely with formal legal systems (courts, police, etc.) to ensure that conflicts are addressed from multiple perspectives. This partnership could help in addressing issues that are beyond the capacity of traditional political institutions alone. Government agencies, *NGOs*, and traditional rulers should collaborate in developing conflict resolution training programs for community leaders, ensuring that they are equipped with the skills needed to handle modern challenges.

Addressing the security concerns in the region is critical for enabling traditional institutions to function effectively. Strengthening community security and providing protection for conflict resolution meetings will enable traditional political institutions to carry out their roles without fear of disruption. Government intervention in enhancing security and providing safe spaces for community meetings is necessary, there is a need for continuous awareness campaigns to educate the public on the importance of traditional political institutions in conflict resolution. This could involve community workshops, seminars, and media campaigns that highlight the positive role traditional political institutions play in maintaining peace. Advocacy for greater recognition of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms should be promoted at both the local and national levels.

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(c) Oral Information/ Interview Conducted

| S/N | NAME | AGE | PLACE | OCCUPATION | DATE |
|-----|----------------------|-----|-------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Zannah B. Sheriff | 52 | Nguru | Civil Servant | July 29, 2025 |
| 2 | Mall. I. Musa | 51 | Nguru | Business man | July 29, 2025 |
| 3 | Mall. Hussaini Bukar | 58 | Nguru | Farmer | July 29, 2025 |
| 4 | Mal. Sani Usman | 60 | Nguru | Farmer | July 29, 2025 |
| 5 | Alhaji Abba Tahir | 60 | Nguru | armer | July 29, 2025 |
| 6 | Mal. I. Mai Tarko | 43 | Nguru | Trader | August 02, 2025 |
| 7 | Alhaji S. Abdullahi | 58 | Nguru | Carpenter | August 02, 2025 |
| 8 | Hajiya Fatsuma I. | 51 | Nguru | Trader | August 02, 2025 |

Glossary Of Terms

- ✓ **Ngos:** - - Non-Governmental Organizations.
- ✓ **Boko Haram:-** - - Is an Extremist Religious Group In Northern Nigeria.
- ✓ **Sokoto Caliphate:** - - Centre/Seat of Islamic Caliphate.
- ✓ **Zazzau:-** - - Was One Of The Original Hausa City-States.
- ✓ **Galadima:** - - Is a Cabinet/Official In Hausa Emirates.
- ✓ **Fadama Areas:** - - Floodplain Or Fertile Lowland.
- ✓ **Fulbe:** - - It is a speaking clan Living In Northern Nigeria.
- ✓ **Saifawa:** - - One Of West Africa’s Greatest Pre-Colonial States.
- ✓ **Karimeri:** - - Traditional Emirate Located In Northeastern Yobe State.
- ✓ **Machina:** - - A Historic Kanuri Emirate And Border Town In Northern Yobe State.
- ✓ **Agura:** - - Is a Settlement/Area Within The Nguru Emirate.
- ✓ **River Hadejia:** - - Is an Important River In Jigawa State Nigeria.
- ✓ **Komadugu Of Yobe:** - - It is a River In Yobe State.
- ✓ **Neem:** - - Is a Tree, Native To India But Now Found Widely Across Africa.
- ✓ **Dumsai:** - - Is a Settlement Under Postal/Zip Code 630101 For Nguru LGA.
- ✓ **Katagum:** - - Is a Historic Emirate Located In Bauchi State.
- ✓ **Walu Tribe:** - - Is a Set Of Clan Situated In Are Of Yobe State.
- ✓ **Muhammadan:** - - The Followers Of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)