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What Next the Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation: The Case of the Bunkpurugu Family Conflict in the Northern Region

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Abstract

The Jamong family and The Jafouk family crashed over the skin of Bunkpurugu which is currently under the rule of Jafouk family. 23 persons died and several houses burnt in Bunkprugu-Yunyoo in the Northern region. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 10 opinion leaders and sub-chiefs in the Area. Many of the solutions to these conflicts often fail to adopt home-based indigenous method in resolving them since most of our conflicts have traditional underpinnings. This paper is an empirical study which uses the views of traditional actors to examine how indigenous mechanisms can be explored in resolving the family conflict in the area. The central objective is to use Traditional approaches in resolving the long-standing family chieftaincy conflict in Bunkpurugu. The study reveals that indigenous methods of conflict transformation in the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area can be effective in resolving the conflict through an integration of both Jamong and Jafouk families as well as the other families using indigenous approaches. Arbitration approach cannot help find a lasting solution to the problem at hand because the families are bonded by blood.

Keywords: Ghana, Bunkpurugu, conflict, peace, conflict transformation, non-conventional approaches

INTRODUCTION

Although these families are not the only families that are in Bunkpurugu, there are other families such as Jatong, Kpakul, Taana, Jakpaikil, Chainleeb and Naapouk beside the two families (Jamong and Jafouk). All these families belong to Louk clan (brothers) and they were living peacefully until the chief of Bunkpurugu who was enskined in 2007 from the Jafouk family. After the chief was enskined the other family (Jamong) opposed his ascension to the skin and sent the matter to court for the diskinment of the chief. The crises escalated during 2012, where the burning and killing started.

The biggest challenge today confronting humans is not about the occurrence of conflict per se, but how these conflicts are fully resolved whenever they occur to prevent them from further escalating. Conflict will continue to exist with humanity since deaths, are inevitable. The inevitability of conflicts, however, becomes pathological to society, depending on the type and nature of the resolution methods used. Many a times, the intervention mechanisms to a conflict right from its onset can be problematic and therefore can be a source of conflict itself. Conflicts often occur within a certain political, economic, social and cultural dimension. Nowadays, many of the conflicts that occur are what Kaldor (2004) asserts as Identity politics as well as 'new wars' and 'old wars' are more internal, non-conventional and culture-sensitive Bello & Olutola (2016). Some of these conflicts need intervention mechanisms that are culturally-based and relate to their environment of occurrence and the family conflict in Bunkpurugu cannot be exempted. Many of the people of Africa continent in the past have lived together peacefully and had their own ways of settling their disputes before the arrival of the colonial masters. In their bit to set up administrative structures to make their governance easier, many families, clans and ethnic groups were forced into cohesive

structures by the colonial masters destroying many of the roots of traditional structures including ways of conflict resolution (Bukari, 2016). These forced administrative structures resulted in many of the protracted conflicts in many parts of the African continent in our present days (Bukari, 2016).

Moreover, this has led to a spate of new and different conflicts in Africa with varied causes. These conflicts include predominantly, family, clan and ethnic conflicts between rival ethnic groups, internal conflicts, conflicts over succession and power struggles within the state and conflicts over the control of state resources and this is in line with the crises in Bunkpurugu (Okpanachi, 2010 & Idowu, 2005).

Bukari, 2016 & Osaghae, 2005, mentioned that most of these conflicts have often been driven by ethnic contest for power, land, resources and the struggle for identity and, in recent times, political infiltrations. These conflicts, such as the Ivorians, Liberians, Sudanese, Burundian and Democratic Republic of Congo's conflicts, have created deep-seated hatred and destructions with their attendant manifestations of genocide, mistrust, inequality in the distribution of power and resources among ethnic groups in these states.

Some of the conflicts that occurred in Africa in the 1990s were approached by a wide range of approaches and mechanisms to regulate and resolve them through a number of resolution processes that involved the use of international statesmen, international and regional organisations, the involvement of neighbouring countries, peace support operations and civil society organisations (Stockholm International Research Institute, 2015). Many of these methods of conflict resolution were thus western and conventional that did not take into account the cultural milieu of their occurrence. As a result, many of the conflicts became protracted and intractable. Even where there is a return to peace,

deep-seated issues still remain to be resolved and therefore make peace in these fragile areas. This questioned the effectiveness of most of these conventional and western resolution approaches and mechanisms in Africa. The conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger Delta rage on, despite efforts to resolve them. The challenges associated with the transformational approaches call for alternative transformation mechanisms that can be used to bring a final solution to the conflicts in the continent.

Bello & Olutola (2016) assert that many of the 'new wars' are permeated by traditional causes and forms of violence. Bello & Olutola (2016) stated further that traditional social structures such as extended families, lineages, clans, 'tribes', religious brotherhoods and ethnic groups become parties to the conflict(s), bringing their own agendas into the overall conflict setting. Therefore, the intervention approaches to these conflicts will need traditional methods to resolving them. Bello & Olutola (2016), also mentioned that a hybrid of non-state traditional actors and methods and their combination with modern forms of conflict transformation, be they state-based or civil-society-based could be applied in conflict resolution.

Most of the conflicts in Ghana and other African countries are traditional because many of them revolve around the traditional quest for power complexly linked to land ownership. The Dagbon chieftaincy, Bunkpurugu chieftaincy, Bimbagu (Tamong and Puri Land conflict and Bimobas and Konkombas Land conflict), Nankpanduri – kpemal (Bimobas and Konkombas land conflict) the Buipe chieftaincy and Akropong-Akwapem and Abiriw land conflicts, for example, are all traditional. However, approaches to resolving these conflicts right from their onset often do not adopt traditional approaches in their resolution despite the fact that they have a traditional source. As a

result, many of these localised conflicts have assumed a protracted nature with occasional flaring up of violence which has negative impact on local social and economic development.

The Bunkpurugu conflict remains one of the localised conflicts that has existed for more than six years, having its source also being traditional – the ownership of the Bunkpurugu skin. Despite many years of efforts to resolve the conflict through the Maprugu paramount chief and government mediation, committees of enquiry, the law courts, decrees and peace enforcement, the conflict still remains to be resolved to bring lasting peace to Bunkpurugu. The protracted nature of the conflict and frequent eruption of violence questions the current resolution methods used to resolve the conflict. Besides, traditional methods have not been explored in a serious manner to resolve this conflict.

This paper examines how traditional method in the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area can be explored in resolving the family conflict in the area. The remainder of the paper is organised in the follow sections: one discussing of the theoretical and conceptual issues related to the conflict; section two the discussion of the study area and history of the Bunkpurugu chieftaincy conflict, section three presents the methods and the methodology used; the empirical results and discussions are examined in section four and finally section five presents the conclusion and the suggested recommendations. The research question that guides the research is: what are the traditional methods used to transform the family conflict in Bunkpurugu traditional area? The objective is to determine how Traditional approaches are used in resolving the long-standing family chieftaincy conflict in Bunkpurugu.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict occurs when two or more parties pursue different interests or goals through actions that the parties try to undertake or damage one another. These parties could be individuals, groups or countries. The parties' interests can differ over access to their ideology or identity and values, resources, the political control or traditional power. The dream of these needs and interests of people can lead to conflict. When two groups or individuals such as family different interests and needs which may be religious, cultural, political, economic, social, they can engage in conflict which can be violent and bloody.

The frustration-aggression theory of Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Scars (1939) and the theory of identity politics by Mary Kaldor (2004). Frustration-aggression is briefly used in the family chieftaincy conflict of Bunkpurugu skin as follows: a frustration can be illustrated as the non-fulfilment of an expected gratification, the instigation to aggression produced by a frustration is an inclination to hostile or angry and not instrumental aggression. The objections to this theory holding their only subjective or illegitimate, frustrations produce aggressive reactions and that only controllable and intentional misdeeds give rise to anger are then examined. Evidence is reported showing that frustrations can create instigation to aggression, even when they are not arbitrary or intentionally directed at the person(s). Frustrations produce aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they give rise to negative effects. The Identity politics is a movement that mobilizes around ethnic, racial or religious identity for the purpose of claiming state power. Identity politics refers to "the claim to power on the basis of a particular identity is it national, clan, religious or linguistic" (Kaldor, 2004: 6). In line with the chieftaincy conflict in Bunkpurugu the two families (Jamong

and Jafouk). The Jamong family see themselves to be frustrated in terms of the chieftaincy case in Bunkpurugu and that led to the aggression and finally the families identify themselves in terms of the family line and this made the case to be serious and emanated to a full bloody conflict.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation aims at identifying the main causes of a conflict in order to put an end to the conflict to ensure lasting peace. The United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (Goodwin-Doming, 2007 & UNDESA, 2001) states that a conflict is resolved when the root cause(s) of that particular conflict is/are identified and addressed. Conflict transformation seeks to design lasting solutions through a joint-problem solving approach. When a conflict is successfully resolved, the conflict is transformed and becomes a catalyst for deep-rooted enduring positive change in individuals, families, clans, relationships and structures (Goodwin-Doming, 2007 & UNDESA, 2001) Accordingly, the successful transformation of a conflict will ensure sustainable peace which would lead to improved security and good relations among people which could lead to human well-being and general development.

Conflict transformation brings an end to a conflict where the disputing factions become satisfied and the conflict is genuinely and truly ended. Many approaches and methods could be used in conflict transformation. These include mediation through a third person intervention, negotiation, collaboration, arbitration, alternative dispute resolution, and conciliation. The suitable method may depend on the nature, parties and type of conflict involved (Ayayi & Buhari, 2014).

Broad-spectrum, the various methods of conflict transformation are usually a process in which each requires a certain procedure, time and not just a one-way approach (Ayayi & Buhari, 2014).

Bukari, (2016) asserts that mediation by a third party helps to identify the root causes of the conflicts in order to address them. Godongs thinks that mediations are collaborative and reconciliatory to help to design solutions through a joint problem-solving approach to conflict. Regard to the Bunkpurugu chieftaincy conflict, conflict transformation process has been sought after with the aim of bringing the conflict to a lasting end with most of the methods mentioned above being in an attempt to end the conflict.

Non-conventional conflict Transformation method

Traditional conflict transformation methods comprise social, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions in line with the totality of traditions, customs and international accepted views of a society within the different globe of societal life. The methods involve negotiations, mediations and reconciliation based on the knowledge, tradition, customs and history of the community. The mechanism is led by leaders of the community, such as traditional chiefs, kings, priests, healers, elders and other tribal leaders and takes the forms of rituals in which the whole community takes part in it. Wealth exchanges, prayers and sacrificing to the gods/ancestors are performed and there is often merry-making. In traditional African societies, conflict is often resolved using laid down traditions (Tafese, 2016). This is because the restoration of peace, its maintenance and social harmony are prime for the welfare of the entire society.

Linda & David (2010) stated that traditional social bodies such as local institutions, religious bodies, tribes, clans, chiefs, elders of the community, extended families, lineages, brotherhood, and ethno- linguistic groups remain important in the resolution

process of conflicts. The western methods of conflict transformation that is the use of formal and external bodies and structures in attempting to end a conflict. In differentiating the tradional conflict resolution methods from the western-style/ methods of conflict transformation. According to Linda & David (2010), traditional conflict transformation methods are not just about adjudication of who is right or wrong and the reprimanding of victims, but the reconciliation of the parties to end conflict. The main aim is the transformation of conflict in which both parties are satisfied and willing to let go their pain and forgive each other. Bello & Olutola (2016) state the restitutive reconciliation, however, traditional approaches to conflict transformation aim at restorative justice, restoration of order, harmony and the maintenance of relationships within the families through reintegrating disputed parties for true reconciliation.

In addition, traditional methods are holistic and consensus-based and often involve the involvement of all factions as well as the entire families/ communities. For instance, using chieftaincy conflict that happened in the Wungu in the Mampurugu traditional area in Ghana, describes how traditional methods of conflict resolution helped to end the chieftaincy conflict in the area.

Western methods of conflict resolution such as the use of the court system and use of foreign NGOs do not lead to proper conflict transformation. The court system often leads to blame and punishment of some factions which tend to aggravate antagonism among the conflicting parties and lead to the escalation of violence, although currently the chieftaincy issue in Bunkpurugu has moved in that direction but may not get the best solution it may deserve. In a Similar way Owusu-Mensah, (2013) and Agyeman (2008) insist that the involvement of foreign and international NGOs in conflict

transformation do not often lead to real conflict transformation at the local level. This is because most of these foreign NGOs do not know the local history and the dynamics in these chieftaincy conflicts and are not therefore in position to prescribe local solutions to the real termination of conflicts and therefore emphasis on the use of local entities such as the paramount chiefs, houses of chiefs and community-based organizations in resolving local conflicts, especially chieftaincy conflicts. The Bunkpurugu chieftaincy conflict which is the focus of this paper has seen the numerous involvements of local NGOs, Ghana national peace council, churches in the area in its transformation but the conflict is yet to see the seizer of violence and true transformation. Furthermore, Bukari, (2013) assert that western methods of conflict resolution in Northern Ghana have failed in resolving conflicts. Many of the factions in these conflicts have resorted to the court system of transformation and use of foreign NGOs which has not helped to address the root causes underlying them and the researcher in line with his views states that the case of Bunkpurugu may not be different. The conflicts need to be understood in the cultural context rather than adopting western methods which are not culturally sensitive and contextual to many of the conflicts around the north. The way to conflict transformation requires entering deeply into cultural issues at all levels and also considering the ritual dimensions to the issues at conflict. Bukari, (2013) stated that the conflict in Bunkpurugu need conflict transformation that is in two-dimensional negotiation between the combatants and reconciliation between the conflicting parties and more importantly for all others suffering the negative effects of the conflict though not directly involved.
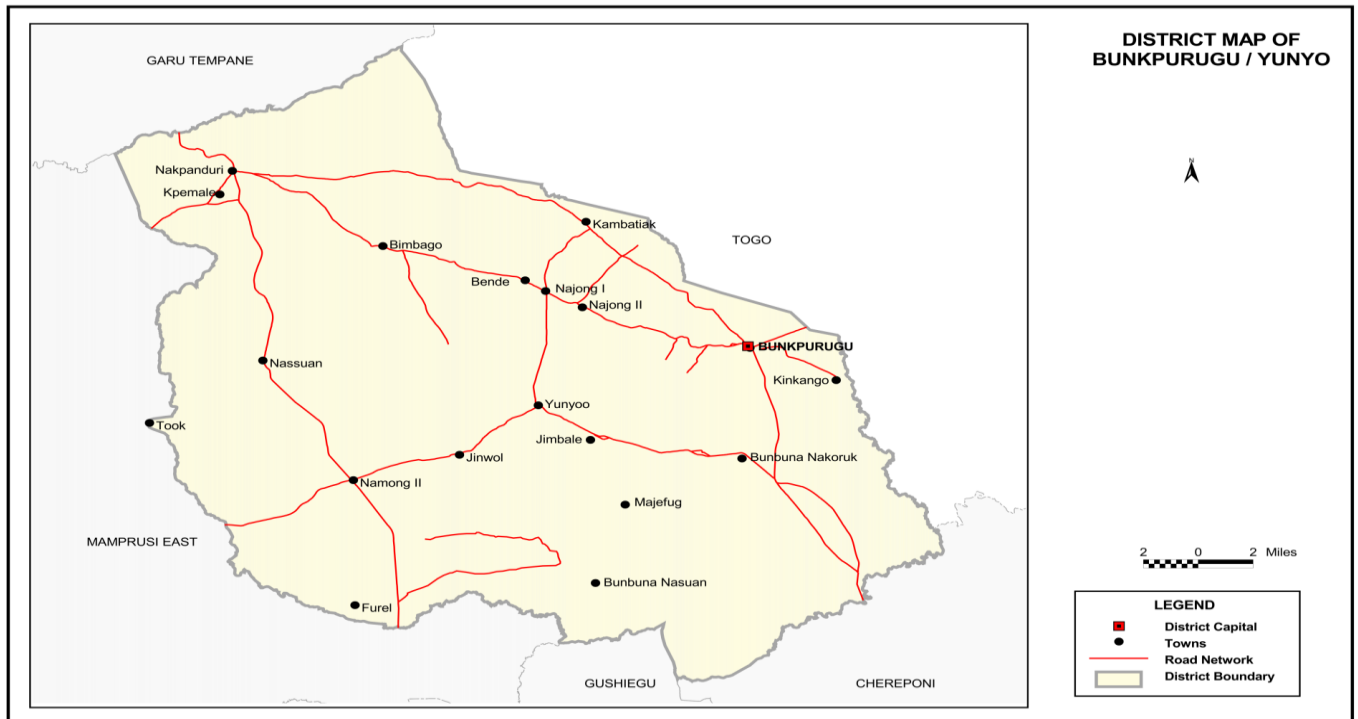
Bukari, (2013) posits that addressing ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana and elsewhere demands using local beliefs, values and attitudes as well as local contexts, procedures, actors and practices. These beliefs, values and practices must engage an understanding of local cultures of reconciliation based on African Traditional Region. The rituals with regard to the earth cult in most tribes in Northern Ghana play important roles in conflict transformation and reconciliation. These rituals of the earth cult include sacrifices, prayers and appeasing the spirits for proper reconciliation to take place and to make the conflicting factions to stick to their words (Bukari,2013). Unlike western-style of transforming conflicts which impose foreign mechanisms and practices into conflicts making it complex for true reconciliation to take place (Bukari,2013). The traditional methods of conflict transformations are all encircling methods that combine a number of conflict transformation methods involving negotiation, mediation and reconciliation.

Study area

The study was conducted in the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area which covers the chieftaincy case of the Louk skin in Bunkpurugu in the Bunkpurugu/yunyoo districts within the Northern region of Ghana. This district is predominantly farming communities and it is inhabited largely by Bimobas and Konkombas. The mamprusis found in the district are in smaller numbers. The Bunkpurugu Traditional Area covers all the areas under the Bunkpurugu Skin and has over 10 communities. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census Report, the District has a total population of 122,591 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

Bunkpurugu is the administrative capital of the District. Other major towns in the District are Nankpanduri, Nasuan, Kpemale, Bimbagu, Najong No.1, Najong No 2, Bende, Yunyoo and jinbali.

The District is a heterogeneous society with many ethnic groups and religions. The major ethnic groups in the District are Bimobas, Kokombas - Kombas, who speak Moar, Komba respectively. The major religious groups are African traditional and Christian. There is high communal spirit among the people, especially the small communities. The factors that account for this are the size of the communities, high functional literacy and education by Community- Based Organizations and local Non- Governmental Organizations. The literacy rate among the people in the district is very high and almost every household has an educated person.

Map of Bunkpurugu- Nankpanduri District

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

History of the Bunkpurugu conflict

The Bunkpurugu traditional chieftaincy issue can be trace from 1931 the then chief of Mampurugu (Nayiiri) rule in favour of Jamong family Paramag. Following the disturbances of parimag jajing in BonKporok (meaning old living place and now called Bunkpurugu) after the death of Jamong Toojak the elder of BonKporok village. Jamong was the first person to settle on the land given to him by Peb-dana bawalima Dawuni. The Bunkpurugu chieftaincy conflict is a deep-seated and longstanding family-political conflict between the Jamong and Jafouk families among the Louk clan of Bimobas in the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area of Ghana. The conflict is identity-based, and revolves

around the claim for traditional political power (chieftaincy) between the Jamong family and the Jafouk family. The contest between the Jamong and Jafouk families over the Bunkpurugu skin has its roots from 1931 but became bloody in 2012 after the death of the late Bunkpurugu Chief (Taapang).

Since that time (2008), this has degenerated into violent confrontations between the two families and this keeps unending due to failure to resolve the chieftaincy conflict. The failure to resolve the chieftaincy conflict seems to have made it re-occurring. The two families have had armed confrontations several times in 2012 to 2016.

Following the intensity of violence and the inability of the state to resolve the conflict, a number of NGOs had to come in to help resolve the conflict. These include international and community-based NGOs have been particularly instrumental in bringing the parties and all other families, groups in Bunkpurugu for peace talks and mediation attempts to resolve the conflict.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative approach in both its analysis and data collection. A descriptive case study approach was used for a detailed description of the family conflict and the indigenous methods that exist in the area. A total of 10 participants comprised of opinion leaders, stakeholders, security personnel and some of the sub-chiefs around Bunkpurugu traditional area were interviewed for the study. They were selected using the purposive sampling method because they are the ownership of the Bunkpurugu Skin and some also had experience of the conflict and can therefore give detailed description of the indigenous methods. The interviews were transcribed, coded and a content analysis of the coded data was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section of the manuscript discusses the views of participants on indigenous conflict transformation methods in the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area highlighting the conflict transformation methods of both the Jamong and Jafouk families because they are the principal conflicting factions.

Methods used in attempting to transform the Bunkpurugu family conflict

Many approaches have been used over the years in attempting to transform the Bunkpurugu chieftaincy conflict. These include reconciliation, mediation, peace keeping, and arbitration. These efforts have been through committees of enquiry, the law courts, mediation, decrees and peace enforcement by traditional house of chiefs and the government. There were sittings in Nalerigu, Tamale and Kumasi in order to arrive at amicable solution. The government has used over the years deployed security agencies made up of the Rapid Deployment Force (army) and the police to the area to maintain peace during occurrence of the armed conflict. Besides, governments impose curfews whenever the conflict erupts to mitigate the effects of the conflicts. The Bunkpurugu traditional area is currently under curfew in order to maintain peace in the traditional area. Moreover, the chiefs and the court system have been used as a means of trying to end the conflict since its inception. Various rulings have been made by the National house of chiefs and courts with regard to the conflict but could not end it. Currently the matter is before Tamale High Court pending ruling, meanwhile the two families are still not Seeing Eye to eye to one another. NGOs together with the National Peace Council (NPC) provide mechanisms through which Ghanaians can seek peaceful, non-violent resolution of conflicts. It was established in August 2006 after many concerns about the upsurge of ethnic and communal violence in Ghana mediated and

drawn up a roadmap to peace. A critical look at all these measures at transforming the conflict indicates that the conflict still remains unsettled and many of them are western methods (arbitrations). The researcher believed that most of these methods rather attempt at managing the conflict to reduce the spate of violence and killings than conflict transformation that will see the end of the conflict and get to the true transformation of the conflict in Bunkpurugu using non-violent means. This goes to confirm what is said by Bello & Olutola (2016).

Tradition and conflict Transformation in the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area

Every society has its way of resolving conflict which is made up of the traditions of the people (Tafese, 2016). All the traditional actors in Bunkpurugu said that traditional methods exist in the area in transforming conflicts. They mentioned the family system, the clan and the community levels at which conflicts are transformed. The Louk people mentioned the use of the rites of the earth cult in which there are blood cleansing rites, purification rites, blood collecting and sacrifice of animals as a major way of conflict transformation. The use of the rites of the earth cult is a major method of conflict transformation in Northern Ghana (Bukari,2013). Participants also stated the use of chiefs, elders and opinion leaders in transforming conflicts in the area. As to whether these methods have been applied in transforming the current chieftaincy conflict, participants agreed that some of the methods have been used to assist the transformation of the conflict, but have failed to bring the conflict to an end. Many of the participants, however, said that the use of the rites of the earth cult has yet to be used in transforming the conflict.

Bimobas methods of traditional conflict resolution

According to Bimobas tradition, conflict is an infringement on the gods and the spirits of the earth. They therefore assert that when conflicts occur and human blood is shed, the gods and spirits of the earth need to be pacified to avoid calamity on human beings. Bimobas according to traditional actors are religious and therefore believe that the return of peace after violent conflict involves the rites of the earth cult. As to how this traditional method (*the rites of the earth cult*) can be applied in transforming the conflict, participants mentioned that the use of the rites of the earth cult among the Bimobas involves three main processes: blood-collecting and blood cleansing, burial of objects and merry making and these methods is in line with the assertions Bukari, (2013).

Blood-collecting and blood cleansing.

The first step of the performance of the rites of the earth cult is blood-collecting and blood cleansing. This involves sacrificing animals to pacify the land in areas where human lives were lost during the conflict. Here, a goat and a cock are killed and used with pito (a local brewed beer or African beer) to pacify the land. According to respondents, the sacrificed animal is often roasted and eaten by the conflicting parties together. The eating of the together sacrificed animal by the conflicting parties signifies that they have resolve to work together towards peace. Three (3) areas, according to the respondents, have been identified in the traditional area for the rites of purification. All these areas will be cleansed through traditional rites of sacrifice to purify the land for the desecration which involved the shedding of human lives. One Bimoba traditional respondent observed that:

Tingbondam (chief priests) of the respective areas normally perform these rites with the invocation of incantations calling on the spirit of the earth god to forgive us humans for

we have erred against her (earth-god). This rite is important since it is the first step to making peace in any conflict situation and it also goes along to confirm what Tafese, (2016) stated in accordance with traditional method of conflict transformation.   Failure to accomplish this rite renders the subsequent rites useless.

Funeral Performance

A funeral is a solemn period to mourn the dead. It is one of the oldest traditional conflict resolution methods in Africa and in Ghana. It is a moment of reflection and the belief is that family and community members have to forgive themselves for the offences they committed to ensure a right passage of the dead (Busia, 1968). According to Mkhize (1985), traditionally, vigils and funerals promote the integration of people with fractured relationship. He opined that funerals bring people within and outside the family and the community together to wish the departed soul a farewell.

Among the Bimobas of Ghana, for instance, funeral rites are not performed for adults who commit suicide and other deaths which traditionally are labelled as abominable deaths. Funeral rites for a departed soul start with a cultural performance which includes drumming and dancing and bathing and clothing of the deceased, and burial of the corpse. The climax of the funeral rites takes place after the burial where members of the bereaved family assemble usually in the deceased house, dressed in smocks, red and other traditional clothes and donations in terms of kind and cash presented to the deceased family from members of the community, well-wishers and other social networks built by the deceased and the bereaved family. Drumming and singing and dancing feature prominently in funerals. Donors in contemporary times are usually served with food, normally rice with chicken or fish together with alcoholic beverages such as Beer and Akpeteshie, and in some instances Schnapps and pito (traditional

beer) at large. Information gathered from the respondents, among others revealed that, mostly Christmas and Easters are the preferable period earmarked for funerals. The import of any given funeral, however, is to give the departed soul a befitting farewell and during the performance it helps to unit various antagonistic members or conflicting factions.

Merry making

Finally, merry making is organised at a grand ceremony usually in the traditional capital and the seat of the senior chief or senior-most elder amongst the clan or families where all the parties involved in the conflict come together to celebrate and declare their support for peace in the area. This occasion, according to them will involve all the parties, community members and government functionaries. During this occasion, final animal sacrifices are made purposely to prepare for the merry-making. It involves singing, drumming and dancing by factions

These rituals and processes are not new and are consistent with the study of Bukari, (2013) of northern tribes in Ghana. According to his study he found that the rituals of the earth cult through sacrifices, prayers and appeasing the spirits in most tribes in Northern Ghana play a crucial role in conflict transformation because it allows for proper reconciliation to take place.

Using traditional methods of conflict transformation in the Bunkpurugu conflict.

A critical study of the use of traditional methods of transformation in the Bunkpurugu conflict reveals the following: First of all, the 2010 Kumasi Peace Talks did not actually arrive at acceptable and all-encompassing traditional resolution methods at resolving the conflict, although the communiqué issued at the end of the talk was signed by both factions and all stakeholders. The current methods to be used by the BICPC are not

acceptable particularly to the Jamong family. Although, one of the co-chairmen of the BICPC told me that it was due to lack of cooperation from both families that the committee's program of using traditional methods to resolve the Bunkpurugu conflict has stalled, it is obvious that the methods do not adopt an integration of both factions' traditions to resolve the conflict. The question is how the traditional resolution methods of both groups can be integrated since the traditional resolution methods of both factions are completely the same?

Moreover, the entrenched positions taken by both factions make the use of traditional methods very difficult. While the Jafouk family believe that the best traditional approach to the conflict is the use of laid-down and long-held tradition which is going back to the Nayiri who they see as the only one who can enskin a Bunkpurugu Bat, the Louk believe that the right to enskin a Bunkpurugu Bat rests with the louk families traditions and that the Louk are the owners of Bunkpurugu and have the right to name the right family for the skin of Louk traditions. The conspicuous exclusion of the Nayiri in the transformation process of the Bunkpurugu conflict may impede the achievement of peace and the resolution of the conflict. The Kumasi Peace Talks should have made the Nayiri an integral part of the resolution process and the BICPC. The Nayiri's exclusion from transformation efforts actually makes it difficult to achieve peace since he is an interested party in the Bunkpurugu conflict.

Before any transformation effort can be made to end the conflict in Bunkpurugu, there is the need to cease all violence, fighting and arbitration among the families to allow for negotiation or mediation. The Kumasi Talks did very well by bringing the factions to a round-table discussion on how to end the conflict. However, since the talks, there has been violence and up to date, occasional violence breaks out leading to the death of

people. The seeming peace is even very fragile as tensions are still high and violence in Bunkpurugu is possible. The application of traditional methods of resolving the Bunkpurugu conflict will need an acceptance of traditional resolution of both families. It is important to adopt traditional approaches which are acceptable and cultural-sensitive to both families. The rites of the earth-cult have some similarities in both families – especially the aspect of appeasing the gods where efforts are made to present an animal to gods to appease them to enable peace to prevail and this was also opined by Tafese, (2016) and Linda & David (2010).

Thus, the prayers, pacification and reconciliation rites, both sides can agree to appease the gods by performing these rites after which they publically come together to announce the end of violence and their resolve to enter into negotiations to deal with the substantive issue in contention. In applying rites of the earth-cult, the view of the two families for the inclusion of the Nayiri in traditional methods needs a critical consideration. Linda & David (2010) also made this assertion in terms of traditional method of conflict transformation. This is because the Nayiri remains very necessary and important to the Mampurugu traditional area which includes the Bunkpurugu area since his call on the families to stop their contestation for the Bunkpurugu chieftaincy could bring this long conflict to an end. Thus, the BICPC must integrate the traditional approaches of the two factions to help resolve the conflict. It is equally crucial to identify challenges and weaknesses of the traditional approaches to be used by the BICPC and deal with them to ensure the participation of all ethnic groups and parties in the peace process.

The issue of the involvement of the Nayiri in negotiation efforts is very contentious and needs to be considered carefully by the BICPC seriously. Most stakeholders' insistence

on the Nayiri as the one who is the traditional solution to the Bunkpurugu conflict is vehemently rejected by the Jamong family. However, it is important for the BICPC and other stakeholders to do everything to get the Jamong family to allow the Nayiri to be part of the negotiations to end the conflict. I am not by this asking the Jamong family to accept the decisions that the Nayiri impose on them but for both sides to reach a favourable and acceptable solution to both of them.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mere application of traditional methods may not necessarily end the Bunkpurugu conflict if disputed factions do not agree first of all as to what traditional methods to use; secondly, they should use these traditional methods and adhere to them; thirdly, if the factions do not agree to end violence completely; and lastly, if entrenched positions are not softened.

Also, there is the need for government to fund the activities of peace building. The current Bunkpurugu Inter-Clan Peace Committee (BICPC) must be resourced and funded to help build peace and resolve the conflict. This is because one great challenge of the BICPC is lack of funds to carry out its peace activities.

In addition, the seeming lack of transparency and fairness, perceived by the Mamprusis in particular, in dealing with issues in the area such as the handling of security issues by the security agencies and the activities concerning the families need to be seriously dealt with through dialogue. The committee must also work independent of state or government interference. NGOs must rather facilitate the activities of the committee towards self-negotiation. The involvement and inclusion of the Nayiri in all future negotiations and mediation efforts are paramount in the peace building and conflict transformation process. This is because of the power and recognition he has among

ethnic groups in the Mampurugu traditional area which include the Bimoba traditional area and can help to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

The use of the court system (*arbitration and adjudication*) through the traditional council tends to polarise the area further and cannot bring a resolution of the conflict. This is because the use of the court system since the beginning has not helped to end the conflict, but rather polarise the area. Parties to the conflict must recognise the need to engage in dialogue rather than resorting to the court system for redress.

There is the need for a proper stakeholder's analysis of actual factions in the conflict to engage them in the negotiation and mediation process especially those in Tamale, Kumasi and Accra. Very often, key stakeholders are not involved in the conflict transformation process and all need to be identified and brought on board in the transformation process. These stakeholders include youth and women groups, clergy men and women and people from the other parts of the traditional area like Nankpanduri and Lopaanu (Togo), who often are not included in mediation and negotiation processes. In a nutshell, it is also possible for the two families (The Jafouk and Jamong) in this conflict to consider power sharing as an alternative. This power-sharing should be fashioned out such that either each group has its own term, after the end of one family reign, it goes to the other family without any argument. This can be done through proper laid-down procedures and clear-cut rules about the power-sharing. The stakeholders should also encourage the families to heed to dialogue among themselves and also withdraw the matter from the court and make the settlement by themselves or through the Nayiri. The question I may leave for the families is that each and every family should ask themselves how many times they have been enskin before handing to the other family. They families should also know that they are bond by

blood and until they agree and accept the fact that no one can come and settle their family squabbles for them unless themselves, the blood shared will never stop.

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