CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NIGERIA: A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY WORKERS

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Abstract
The role of community in society development is widely acknowledged by development scholars, but incessant conflict is belittling the development effort. In order to checkmate against such crisis, this paper provides a roadmap for management of conflicts that arise from the planning and implementation of community development projects. By this, it acquaints community workers with knowledge of the sources of conflict, its manifestations, effects, and management. This will doubtlessly empower community workers and all those interested in community work to deal promptly with development barriers in the course of their work. The paper argued that conflict, if well handled, can be a source of change and development. Conflict theory is used as the framework for the study; with qualitative approach as the major sources of data. The paper thus found that conflicts in handling community projects stem from the economic factors, power struggle, socio-cultural sources, and location of projects, among others. Conflict manifests itself in the form of anger, disagreement, withdrawal from participating in community projects, violent attacks on people and projects, demonstrations and blockades, and largely intra-communal and communal tensions. Based on these findings, the study recommended that mediation, negotiation, and conciliation are veritable intervention tools that can be deployed to manage conflicts. The community needs to engage to a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of community projects; transparent and accountable leadership; and, effective communication as ways of building community cohesion, reducing disparities and feelings of alienation.

Keywords: Community development, Conflict, Management, Project, Worker.

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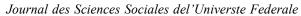
Abstrait

Le rôle de la communauté dans le développement de la société est largement reconnu par les spécialistes du développement, mais les conflits incessants déprécient l'effort de développement. Afin de faire échec à une telle crise, ce document fournit une feuille de route pour la gestion des conflits qui découlent de la planification et de la mise en œuvre de projets de développement communautaire. Par cela, il familiarise les agents communautaires avec la connaissance des sources de conflit, ses manifestations, ses effets et sa gestion. Cela permettra sans aucun doute aux travailleurs communautaires et à tous ceux qui s'intéressent au travail communautaire de faire face rapidement aux obstacles au développement dans le cadre de leur travail. Le document a soutenu que le conflit, s'il est bien géré, peut être une source de changement et de développement. La théorie des conflits sert de cadre à l'étude; avec une approche qualitative comme principale source de données. Le document a ainsi constaté que les conflits dans la gestion des projets communautaires découlent des facteurs économiques, de la lutte pour le pouvoir, des sources socioculturelles et de l'emplacement des projets, entre autres. Le conflit se manifeste sous forme de colère, de désaccord, de retrait de la participation à des projets communautaires, d'attaques violentes contre des personnes et des projets, des manifestations et des blocages, et des tensions largement intracommunautaires et communautaires. Sur la base de ces constats, l'étude a recommandé que la médiation, la négociation et la conciliation soient de véritables outils d'intervention pouvant être déployés pour gérer les conflits. La communauté doit s'engager auprès d'un large éventail de parties prenantes dans la planification et la mise en œuvre de projets communautaires ; un leadership transparent et responsable ; et une communication efficace comme moyen de renforcer la cohésion communautaire, de réduire les disparités et les sentiments d'aliénation.

Mots-clés : Développement communautaire, Conflit, Gestion, Projet, Travailleur.

Introduction

Much has been said and written about conflict. It is universally accepted that conflict is inevitable in every human society. Given its frequent occurrence, Wahab and Adetunji (2015) asserted that conflict appears to have become a permanent feature of human life. This means that wherever human beings are, conflict is there too. In this context, the planning and implementation of community development projects is not devoid of conflict.

For a developing country like Nigeria to achieve her community development objective, knowledge of conflict, its sources, manifestations, effects and management in the context of community development becomes a *sine qua non*. This will aid in effective management of disruptive issues that could impact negatively on development. For this reason, those who work in the community development projects and actively engage in community discourses ought to realize quickly that conflict could be expected in community life (Ilvento, 1995). Community development is a means of giving local communities a facelift in terms of development and capacity building. This is needed especially in the context of rural development. However, in many parts of Nigeria, conflict has become a thorn in the flesh of such development efforts. Some of these efforts have been rendered nugatory as a result of conflicts' destructive influences occasioned by the community workers inexperience and ignorance of conflict management. This has craftily perfected destructive inroad into community development

activities, and thus, overshadow every efforts to raise the standard of living of the community members. For instance, Anugwom (2005) observed that in Southeast Nigeria, conflict between the chieftaincy institutions and town unions, has on few occasions, impaired development efforts. Chukwuezi (2000) equally noted that in many parts of Nigeria, conflict has slowed down the pace of community development and in some cases, has become agents of destruction of human lives and property. He further argued that in some communities, conflict has erupted into a protracted war to the extent that security of lives and property can no longer be guaranteed.

In view of the above, there is no gain denying the obvious that conflict has negatively affected planning and implementation of community development projects. The inability to skillfully deploy relevant conflict management techniques to control or halt the escalation of conflicts has led to some degenerating into communal clashes with untold consequences on both the project and the beneficiary communities. Unfortunately however, not much work has been done on conflict management to serve as a blueprint to community workers. On this note, Ilvento (1995) lamented that despite the potential benefits of conflict management in human society, little attention has been dedicated to it in community literature. He further argued that most classic community textbooks do not discuss community conflict to any great degree. This and more have made it possible for conflict to continue ravaging many development efforts with the end not promisingly in sight. The dearth of written literature in this regard and shortage of experienced practitioners in conflict management and community development therefore necessitate this paper. The paper is developed with themes that skillfully explore relevant, concrete steps that could be deployed to manage conflicts that spring up in community development. It will therefore serve as a guide to peace practitioners, community workers, project team leaders, project committee leaders, local leaders as well as others who are interested in investing in community development activities with the intent to improve the quality of lives of the community.

To achieve this excellent objective, the study is discussed in four sections. Section one is on conceptual clarification, which introduces conflict and community development project and the theoretical underpinning of the study. Whereas section two discusses the sources, manifestations and effects of conflict in community development and argues that if conflicts are not well handled, both the projects and the community will get a fair share of its destructive consequences, section three looks at the various methods of conflict management in community development and emphasizes the imperative of conflict analysis as a necessary step to conflict management. Consequently, section four concludes with veritable recommendations to ensure effective delivery of community development projects with much emphasis on stakeholder involvement in community development.

Conceptual Clarification Conflict

It is no longer news that conflict signifies the presence of disagreement, rancour, tension and anger in the relationship between or among individuals, groups, and institutions arising from incompatible goals, values, interest, and needs. Conflict revolves around opposing interests, needs, or goal and often occurs when individuals or groups realize that their interests, needs or goal are opposed to those of others, and as such, expect these other persons to thwart their concern. It has become very common cutting across every field of human endeavor. This means

that in every social relationship, conflict is most likely to occur. As long as people engage in social interaction or relationship, differences in opinion are unavoidable. Such differences arise whenever people disagree over issues, interests, values, motives, perceptions, feelings, or desires (Odigbo, Okonkwo & Eleje, 2014). For example, issues surrounding the planning and implementation of community development projects such as project selection, location, funding and management raise arguments, disagreements and differences in opinion. This situation is typical of every human relationship, be it organizational, communal or international. By the same stroke of logic, Jeong, (2008) argued that the concept of conflict has been broadly stretched and molded to describe any discord resulting from almost every aspect of social relationship. The controversies and agitations by various ethnic and interest groups against the federal government's planned Rural Grazing Areas (RUGA), is an incontrovertible example.
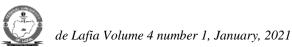
From the above conceptions, it can be seen that conflict is part of human existence that cannot be avoided totally and thus evolves in stages. Adedoyin (2015) posited that conflict progresses from latent stage, manifestation stage, escalation stage, optimal stage, deescalation stage, and finally to transformation stage. The transformation stage indicates that conflict is not entirely bad as it is being portrayed. It offers hope that conflict could be transplanted into something useful and this depends largely on how it is managed. In this context, conflict is not a *cull de sac*. Yielding to this position, Warner (2000) stressed that the word _conflict' carries negative connotations and is often thought of as the opposite of cooperation and peace, and is most commonly associated with violence, the threat of violence or disruptive (non-violet) disputes. He consequently remarks that this view of conflict as negative is not always helpful. In other words, conflict can be constructive as well as destructive in most cases though, the negative effects of conflict outweigh the positive effects.

In the context of community development, conflict has economic, political, social and cultural coloration and has degenerated to value and even identity differences. Beyond these basic assumptions, the root causes of conflict are many and are tied to a range of issues which are often difficult to track unless by a careful analysis. It is also rewarding to add here that once conflict sets in, it takes different shapes and forms. It can be in the form of interpersonal conflict, intra-group conflict, inter-group conflict and at large, within the limit of this study, communal conflict.

Community Development
Ezeh (1999) conceived of community development as the various strategies and interpositions by which community members, through coordinate actions, usher in for the people, social and economic infrastructure. It is an effort geared towards achieving a solution to community problems by raising their standard of living as well as promoting social welfare, justice, community cohesion and the development of their material and human resources optimally. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that community development covers all forms of development activities aimed at improving the standard of living of the community members. This improvement seeks to reduce poverty, suffering, develop healthy lifestyles, empower the community members, create economic and employment opportunities, and achieve socio-economic, cultural, and environmental goals through the active participation of the community members. To buttress this, a more comprehensive definition of community development which

has the widest universal acceptance, especially in government circles, is offered by the United Nations as embedded in the Social Policy for Nigeria (United Nations, 1989, p. 13). It is thus seen as:

> the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities, to integrate the community members into the life of the nation and to enable them contribute fully to national progress.

Implicit in the above definition by the United Nations is the emphasis on people's effort (input, consent, and consensus), and government's assistance.
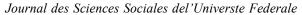
According to John (2001), ―people's effort‖ means the active participation of the community members in initiating, planning and execution of community development projects with much reliance on their own initiatives and resources, while ―government's assistance‖ means the provision of technical, financial and other services in ways that encourage self-help.

Having said this, community development projects, to all intents and purposes, represent the various undertakings which community members embark on to improve their quality of life. This could be in the form of environmental sanitation programmes, functional literacy programmes, job training facilities, community colleges, construction of tangible projects like town halls, etc (Omoruyi, 2001). It can also be in the form of road rehabilitation, construction of drainages (Wahab & Adetunji, 2015). Other projects such as rural electrification, construction of bridges, boreholes, village markets, community banks or cooperatives that give soft loans to rural farmers to improve the agricultural sector, are all factors that enhance community development.

In order to achieve community development projects, community members raise funds through levies, contributions, donations, sales from community products, fines, and other sundry sources. Complementarily, the government can assist in funding community projects; sometimes based on its area of interest. Similarly, non-governmental organizations such as the UNDP, USAID, UNICEF, sometimes also assist in community projects, in most cases, depending on their own area of interest. Private individuals such as philanthropists and foundations equally assist in community projects. These bodies, Idyorough (2001) observed, may be contacted through a written proposal from community-based organizations clearly stating the problem, the objectives of the project, how it will resolve community problems, and how much it may cost. These development efforts, Udensi, Udoh, Daasi and Igbara (2012) believed, could be achieved through effective management of community development programmes as well as having highly committed and enthusiastic leaders.

Theoretical Underpinning

For the purpose of this study, a review of conflict theory is employed in understanding the nature, sources, and manifestations of conflict in community development. Conflict theory is credited to the writings of a German philosopher and Sociologist, Karl Marx (1818-1883). He saw society as a conglomeration of individuals in different social classes who compete for power and scarce social and material resources ranging from food, housing, employment, education, to other development needs. The theory holds that the history of all existing societies is that of class struggle. This explains the polarization of societies into opposing groups which consequently introduced inequality, discrimination, injustice, poverty, among others. Implicit

in this struggle is that those in possession of power, wealth and resources will protect and hoard them while those without will do whatever they can to obtain it. This situation places society in a never-ending struggle where every individual or group strives to maximize their own benefits. Okeibunor and Anugwom (2003) corroborated the conflict perspective arguments in the observation that the struggle over material or economic power provides the objective condition for the emergence of conflicting groups in society. Conflict theory, therefore, can be used to analyze wars, violence, revolutions, and conflicts between the various social, religious, and other types of groups by explaining that there is a natural disparity in society that stirs conflict. Though Marx's opinion is not centered on whether conflict is good or bad, his preoccupation is to underpin the fact that there is an unavoidable aspect of human nature which makes conflict inescapable in every human society.
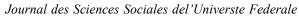
In the context of community development, conflict theory has therefore become the lens through which the emergence of conflict can be viewed, interpreted, and understood. A community is a typical society with the existence of several different groups and individuals. Hence, it can conveniently be argued that this division and infinite struggle for personal or group gains have instigated hostility within the community thus, breaking community cohesion, and threatening community development. The existence of the rich, the poor, the powerful, the powerless, the various social, religious, traditional, political, professional, and interest groups, among others, makes explicit this narration. These are groups of stakeholders with varied interests and socio-economic backgrounds. For any community development to be successfully executed, these stakeholders must be involved in every ramification.

Additionally, the scramble for and composition of membership of development committees, control of development projects, decision making on the nature and location of development projects, and representation of the interests of members in community affairs, etc should be harmonized to tap the socio-economic potentials of community projects. Beyond this, community development, in most general sense, requires contribution of levies. This is often met with stiff resistance on account of ideological differences, belief (on the part of some religious groups), poverty (on account of poor socio economic status), injustices (on account of marginalization, domination, negative stereotyping, etc). Not until there is a synthesis of idea (when all the proposing and opposing interests in a community come to an understanding, probably by the application of relevant intervention mechanisms) community development will remain forever conflicting.

In the light of conflict theory, community conflict can be understood as a phenomenon that is inevitable in the process of community development. Thus, the need for knowledge of conflict, its sources, manifestations, and management becomes imperative. It offers community workers and other stakeholders an insight on how to overcome conflict situations and make progress in the community development processes.

Sources, Manifestations, and Effects of Conflict in Community Development
Sources of Conflict in Community Development
Conflict is so complex a phenomenon that tracking its root causes sometimes becomes a daunting task. However, through a casual observation and in the most professional manner – conflict analysis – its sources surely can be trailed. To Padilla, Brusset, Kugler, Sarkar, Barron

and Tripathy (2008), conflict can be social or political or both. It might be preexisting (e.g., between groups); latent (e.g., festering tensions which need a small catalyst to erupt); or caused directly by a project (e.g., anger over construction impact, unmet expectations or perceived inequality over a community development programme, loss of livelihoods or access to land and resources). In a manner akin to this, Fisher (2000) is of the view that the roots of conflict are tied to a range of sources namely, ‗economic conflict‘, which involves competitive motives to attain scarce resources by each party wanting to get the most that it can with their behaviour directed towards profit maximization. Values conflict, involves incompatibilities in ways of life and ideologies; while ‗power conflict‘ erupts when parties struggle to maintain and maximize their influence in their relationship with others and the social setting. In the observation of Wahab and Adetunji (2015), the causes of conflict associated with community development include among others, project financing, prioritization and project selection, and inappropriate information. With this overview, the various sources of conflict as they affect community development, including the ones embedded in the economic, political, and socio-cultural perspectives shall be briefly explained.

Leadership Structure and Style of Governance
The composition of community leadership or project team/committee and the approach it adopts in the pursuit of community development projects matter a lot in the life of the project and that of the community at large. The leadership is either elected or selected based on the members‘ possession of specific attributes such as skills and knowledge in their community. This, no doubt, is informed by the fact that the success of every community project, to a large extent, depends on leadership. The leadership could be an already existing body (e.g., a community-based organization) or, a new body purposely constituted for the project. In whichever way, the composition should reflect democratic principles that adopt a participative approach to development. When the leadership is not properly constituted, not fairly representing the various groups in the community, it could lead to power asymmetry; it will give rise to dissenting voices. When roles and responsibilities are not designated to capable individuals and bodies, and when the approach to leadership appears autocratic, lacking in transparency and accountability, conflict is bound to occur and this bodes ill for the community and the project.

Location of Projects
Citing a project in the community is not easy to come by because of the interest of the stakeholders. Since most community projects are being financed by the community members in the form of self-help, community members may resort to bargaining for location of projects close to them for maximum benefit and accessibility and, this can spark off controversy leading to a conflict. For instance, in a rural community without access to clean water, scramble for location of borehole (for reasons of accessibility) can lead to feud supposing all the units/villages or quarters in the community have equal chance of being selected for the project. Same scramble for proximity goes for building of community schools and markets, and equally in the installation of electric transformers during rural electrification projects where the assumption is that lightening up a community that hitherto had no electricity starts from the

point where transformer is installed. This scramble for location of projects in communities brings forth division and altercations that can potentially engulf communities in a conflict.

Communication Gap

The impact of effective communication in community development in most cases, does not receive a resounding recognition it deserves. Some project leaders chose to alienate themselves from the rest of the community members once they are constituted leading to a total or partial disconnect. Viewed from this perspective, Adedoyin (2015) argued that poor communication or absence of communication can escalate conflict. In line with this thinking, Fisher (2000) also observed that miscommunication can create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. Implicit in the above observations is that the real problem of community development project is not just in the planning and technical aspect of it but also the day-to-day interaction with the community members who are the real beneficiaries and in most cases, financiers of the projects. Communication gap, especially in communities that have had past records of financial misappropriation and exploitation, causes distrust and suspicion. In the case of self-help projects, community members may feel reluctant to give their nod to subsequent contributions if they are not properly informed on the stages of development projects. In many cases where gap in communication exist, community members may suspect any further demand for project levies as corrupt tendencies on the part of the leaders. This situation can lead to non- compliance to project levies, disobedience to leaders and rules, and can further heighten division and internal rift in the community by antagonizing whatever development efforts that the leaders might put in place.

Prioritization of Community Development Projects

In many cases, certain leaders may try to sway discussions in their favour to the detriment of other groups within the community such as women, other ethnic groups, other religions, other political affiliations or the poor and otherwise marginalized (Padilla, et al., 2008). Such exclusion or discrimination can result in divisions, formation of alliances and disintegration of communities into factions and eventually, protests and rioting. Additionally, it can lead to the marginalized groups refusing to comply with project levies which of course affect project funding.

Management of Project Resources

It is quite unfortunate that the society we found ourselves in Nigeria today is almost a rotten one. Greed, pride and dishonesty have permeated all the nooks and crannies of our society that one rarely finds transparent, corrupt-free body to lean on. For example, Wahab and Adetunji (2015) found, in their study in Lagos, that occasional complaints on misappropriation and embezzlement of funds, inflation of cost of projects, poor accountability and lack of transparency against the project committee are raised by community members. This being the case, there is the tendency for conflict to erupt in the midst of perceived mismanagement of project resources.

Programme Results and Outcome

As community development nears conclusion, stakeholders expect to see productive and tangible results. If they have not received constant communication about changing dynamics,

‗disappointing' outcomes can cause increased tension and lead to blaming and scapegoat (Padilla*, et al.,* 2008). Such disappointing outcome could be as a result of cutting or misappropriation of funds meant for development projects by the project team. This corrupt attitude can prompt the project team to resort to the use of substandard materials or cheap labour for the project. Viewed from another perspective, disappointing outcome could be a fall out of inexperience on the part of the project executors and, this can generates tension and conflict in the community.

Acquisition of Land for Development Projects

Many communities would want development projects to be near them for accessibility and other benefits, yet donating land for such projects can be an issue, especially where there is no communal land or where such exists but is not suitable or enough for intended projects. While some willingly yield to requests for use of their parcel of land for projects, some see it as a loss of livelihood and valuable and as such, vehemently kick against it. In many other instances, some impose strict conditions (e.g., compensations) that the project leaders cannot meet and, any attempt to use such land without the consent of the owners can be termed ‗land grabbing' and can degenerates to a conflict. A typical example is the resistance in some quarters to the federal government's idea of Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) in Nigeria which has constantly been a source of conflict.

There are some other conflict flashpoints that are worth keeping an eye on and if they are not properly monitored or are ignored, may ignite controversy in community development. As identified by Padilla et al., (2008), they include: collection of community contribution which can cause commotion when members decline to contribute on account of not understanding the intents and purpose of projects; local government partnership with communities which may raise concern in attempt to use the partnership for political gains; untimely or mismanagement of grievances when project leaders fail to promptly address illfeelings of members. Others are inability to manage handover between teams when there is a change in management team especially on account of fraud or inexperience; and, selection of target area for projects especially where some members believe that some areas are chosen for religious, ethnic, or religious favouritism.

Manifestations of Conflict in Community Development

At a point in a relationship, signs and symptoms emerge indicating that all is no longer well and community members become aware that conflict has permeated their relationship. This stage evokes negative responses in the form of apathy, aggression, sabotage, and withdrawal from community activities, or disobedience to rules. Adedoyin (2015), and Best (2015), described this stage as the ―emergence stage‖ and ―confrontation stage‖ respectively. However, the duos are in alliance that this stage is characterized by arguments, disagreements, fighting, intolerance, search for alliance, and polarization. As observed by Kriesber g(1973), conflicts manifest differently depending on the nature of the antagonism and issues in contention. In community development, this is no exception, As Wahab and Adetunji (2015) found in their study of community-driven development in Lagos, conflict manifested in the form of quarrel, fighting, clashes and murmuring during the construction of drainages and road rehabilitation. Further findings by Padilla et al., (2008) showed that in community

development, conflict manifests in the form of violent attacks on people and property, peaceful demonstration and blockades, local antagonism resulting in the inability of groups to work together productively, kidnapping, inter-communal tensions and low productivity. These conflicts further manifest to interpersonal conflict, intra-group conflict, inter-group conflict, and, at large, communal conflict. Other factors of conflict manifestation are explained in the following paragraphs.

Inter-personal Conflict

Aside the intra-personal conflict which exists at the individual level, inter-personal conflict occurs between persons or among persons arising from poor interaction. This could be as a result of the persons' dissatisfaction with the planning and implementation of community projects such as disagreement over project prioritization and location of projects. As minor as this type of conflict could be, ignoring it can escalate to intra-group or inter-group conflict which can affect the community and the projects negatively.

Intra-group Conflict

This refers to a conflict between two or more members of same group or team. This is distinct as it develops from implicit or real mismatches among group members and it mostly arises from either task or relationship issues (Hanif, Khan, Adeel & Shah, 2016). According to Curseu (2011), intra-group conflict describes a situation in which group members hold discrepant views or have inter-personal incompatibilities with one other.

Intra-group conflict is very common in communities, especially as it affects development projects. For instance, when a project team fails in its responsibilities to manage inter-personal fracas regarding its member's interest in development projects, it can ignite confrontation and translate to intra-group squabble. Such internal rift can be a consequence of role ambiguity, decisions on prioritization of projects, location of projects, or even financial misappropriation. Intra-group conflict in the context of community development is dangerous as it deters project teams from working together effectively to deliver project goals and objectives.

Inter-group Conflict

Inter-group conflict is not new in human societies; it is a pervasive and ubiquitous phenomenon. It is a type of conflict that exists between two or more groups and could be as a result of humans' tendency to distinguish between _in-group' and _out-group' members. In most cases, it underscores the forces leading to discrimination, exclusion, and aggression between groups. In the context of community development, inter-group conflict can be seen as disagreement, struggle, clash between two or more groups within the community over selection of projects, location of projects, management of projects and their funds and other project-related matters. Such groups could be chieftaincy institutions, town unions, women associations, religious groups, youth associations, among others with each group wanting its interest to impact on community projects. For instance, Ukaegbu and Anugwom (1995); Anugwom (2000b) (as cited in Anugwom, 2005) found that in Southeast Nigeria, the process of community or rural development, especially in self-help initiatives, often leads to the emergence of conflicts between different parties. They disclosed that chieftaincy institutions often pitch against other groups and individuals in the community. As unraveled in the study, there is always in

existence, even though most subtly, tussle of supremacy between the chieftaincy institutions and the town unions.

Communal Conflict

This is the height of conflict manifestation in community development projects. It is dangerous and should demand greater attention from community workers. It occurs when the inter-personal, intra-group, and inter-group conflicts and/or interactions are not well managed. As observed by Ilvento (1995) classic community conflicts over development often involve groups that are divided and engage in endless debate. This stage is characterized by protests, blockades, killings, kidnappings, total shutdown of community activities and destruction of property. Chukwuwezi (2000) identified this as one of the issues hindering community development both within communities and between communities (in the case of inter-communal conflict).Community conflict can be a spin-off from disagreement over land for development projects, misappropriation of projects funds, marginalization of certain groups of people (e.g., women, youths, elderly, the disabled, particular religious groups, or ethnic groups, etc) from participation in the planning and implementation of community projects. These lead to protests and breakdown of law and order.

Effects of Conflict on Community Development

Scholars have tried to explore the two sides of conflict in order to reposition the mentality of profiling conflict as always negative. Ilvento (1995), on this note, argued that depending on the perspectives, conflict is both dysfunctional and functional, a curse and an opportunity, a situation in which all hopes are lost and one in which true changes can begin. In other words, conflict has both positive and negative effects on community development projects. However, the constructiveness or otherwise of every conflict depends heavily on how it is managed.

The positive side of conflict sees it as a perfectly natural and inevitable phenomenon in the processes of change and development (Holmboe, 2005). Corroborating this view, Odigbo, Okonkwo and Eleje (2014); Kriesberg (1973) contended that conflict, when properly handled and institutionalized, is an effective vehicle for discovering truth, attaining justice, and for the long-run benefit of a society as a whole. Thus, conflict provides an opportunity for growth and development, and strengthens the bond between people for the improvement of their quality of livelihood. To illustrate this, Agbo (2018) revealed that in January, 2006, Ohodo community in Enugu State resolved to boycott Achara people (a section of the community) in all her meetings because of inter-group conflict. Consequently, Achara people united themselves and embarked on structural development (e.g., construction health centre and rural electrification, etc) under self-help. Warner (2000), also concurred that conflict can often be seen as a force for positive social change. Its presence, therefore, being a visible demonstration of a society adapting to a new political, economic or physical environment. In the logic of Lewis Coser, conflict within a group can establish, or re-establish unity and cohesion where they have been threatened by hostility and antagonism among the members. He furthered that conflict within a group can serve as a means of ascertaining the relative strength of antagonistic interests; ironically produce new associations or coalitions with others; and, can help to revitalize existing norms or even lead to the emergence of new ones (Okeibunor & Anugwom, 2003).

In spite of the above benefits, the negative effects of conflict on community development can whittle down development efforts and community cohesion. For example, on the experience of conflict, Jeong (2008) recalled that its negative effects spread to many aspects of a community's life. Adetula (2015) also reasoned that conflict has the capacity to severely constrain development endeavours by destroying infrastructure, interrupting the productive process and diverting resources away from productive use. In essence, conflict costs money and contributes to projects risk. Communities and external supporters are not left out; they equally feel the destructive impact of conflict in community development. To be sure, Padilla et al, (2008) found that losers in conflicts are not only the investors in community projects but also the host communities who, instead of benefiting from community projects, focus their energies on the conflict. Again, apart from halting development activities, Chukwuezi (2000) has argued that conflict slows down the pace of community development, and in most cases, has become agents of destruction of human lives and property. In some communities, he continued, conflict has erupted into a protracted war and security of lives and property is no longer guaranteed. Arguably, if conflicts are not well handled, both the projects and community members will be negatively affected.

Management of Conflict in Community Development
Conflict management is the process of reducing the destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict (Best, 2015). However, to effectively manage conflicts in community development, it is imperative to understand the very nature, causes, and dynamics of the conflict in order to determine the appropriate management technique to apply. This process, therefore, necessitates conflict analysis.

Conflict analysis is an approach to understanding conflict situations by systematically and comprehensively studying the contexts and dynamics of a conflict and with a view to designing commensurate intervention responses to the conflict. To Madu (2015), conflict analysis is a way of gaining a thorough understanding of the dynamics, nature, characteristics, issues and context of conflict as well as the parties involved and their relationship in that conflict. The purpose of the analysis, Best (2015) argued, is that without a proper understanding of the conflict, it will be quite difficult to proffer any solution to it. In other words, conflict management will be in jeopardy if we are unable to carefully and correctly analyze the conflicts we deal with. Analyzing a conflict, however, starts by collecting data about the conflict. Data are gathered mostly through direct observation, secondary sources, interviews, and focus group discussions. Some of the conflict analysis tools needed to understand conflict in community projects include stakeholders analysis and Onion/Doughnut method.

Stakeholders Analysis
In this context, stakeholders are individuals or groups who are directly or indirectly involved in conflict and are interested in the outcome (Madu, 2015). They constitute the primary stakeholders, secondary stakeholder and shadow stakeholders (who are mostly not seen but have the capacity to influence conflicts positively or negatively). Adedoyin (2015) noted that the analysis helps to identify core conflicting actors, the shadow parties, their subordinates, positions, needs, interests and perceived incompatible goals with a view to applying the

appropriate management techniques. This, however, underscores the imperative of stakeholders analysis in the management of conflict in community development.

The Onion/Doughnut Method

This analysis tool likens conflict to an Onion/Doughnut that has three layers namely, endocarp (inner layer); mesocap (middle layer); and, epicap (outer layer). These three layers respectively represent, ‗needs', ‗interests', and ‗positions' of the parties in a conflict situation. According to Best (2015), most conflicts, like an Onion, have many layers and the conflict analyst is expected to unravel these layers to get to the innermost part of the conflict where the needs and fears of the parties lie. This analysis is necessary given that in conflict situation, the position of the parties (which appears on the surface layer) represents a small proportion of the conflict and not the real needs (represented by the innermost layer) where the heart of the conflict lies. In community development, this analogy of conflict to the Onion/Doughnut method helps in understanding the substantive issues of conflict. The analysis aids community workers to explore all areas of conflict and be able to distinguish real needs of the parties in a conflict from mere claims. This is because, without getting to the real needs of the parties, any management technique applied will amount to exercise in futility.

Armed with the above conflict analysis tools, the following are the conflict management techniques that will aid in effective delivery of community development projects:
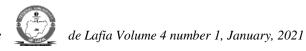
Negotiation

In Africa and indeed Nigeria, there is a preference for peaceful settlement of disputes along the lines prescribed by institutions and values of the community (Madu, 2015). The disputants, to this effect, realize the existence of a conflict in their midst and seek ways of getting out of the case without involving the third party. In other words, negotiation domesticates power to resolve conflict in the hands of the disputants. They see their differences as a domestic affair that needs to be nipped in the bud and resolved internally without involving any external intervention. This involves dialogue, bargaining and peaceful discussions by all the members of the parties involved or through their representatives.

In negotiation, the power to decide what happens in the conflict resides with the conflicting parties and to Best (2015), negotiation is a direct process of dialogue and discussion taking place between at least two parties who are affected in a conflict. This management tool is handy in attending to community matters relating to development projects. It gives the contending parties a sense of belonging and the power to decide their case to the best of their ability and satisfaction. Decisions arrived at through negotiation is a uniting force towards achieving effective development projects.

Conciliation

Parties in a dispute (e.g., chieftaincy institutions and town unions) can opt for a third-party intervention by way of conciliation. This is a neutral third party where the conciliator facilitates dispute settlement by convincing the parties to a conflict to come together and amicably settle their differences. The conciliator can have confidential and separate discussions with the disputants while rendering useful assistance. He breaks barriers and builds positive relationships between the belligerents and sets the stage for other relevant conflict management techniques to follow. In this way, conflict can be contained and normalcy returned. A key aim

of conciliation according to Best (2015) is to reduce tension between parties and in a conflict situation.

Mediation

Within the context of the family, community, and organizations, mediation is used as a nonviolent method of resolving conflict and attaining peace and justice (Godons, 2015). It is a third party intervention in a conflict where negotiation and dialogue are applied in managing conflict between the belligerents without imposing any decision or solution on them. In order words, the disputants retain the power to decide their fate in a conflict.

In the context of community development, the mediator could be anyone: other community-based organizations not involved in and/or have no interest to protect in the case; well respected and influential individuals in the community who are not involved in the case; or, people from the neighboring communities or even from the local authority who wish to make peace between the conflicting parties. The most important thing is that the mediator must be accepted and trusted by the parties. Godons emphasized the need for the mediator to be objective, neutral, balanced, supportive, non-judgmental and astute in questioning; and, should try to drive the parties towards a win-win as opposed to win-lose outcomes. Therefore, the prime purpose of mediation is to assist parties to a conflict identify their problems and reach amicable solutions to the problems.

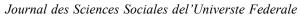## Conclusion and Recommendations

What the paper has tried to achieve is to call the attention of community workers to the knowledge of conflict and its management in community development projects so as to serve as a roadmap. It discussed the concepts of conflict and community development projects and makes it obvious that conflict is inevitable in the management of community development projects. Analyzing the causes, manifestations and effects of conflict on community development projects, the paper found that conflict emanates from various sources and argued that if it is not properly managed, it can affect community development projects negatively, and if properly managed, can be a source of development and change. On the strength of this, the paper moved to discuss the various ways to skillfully manage conflicts for effective delivery of development services and consequently makes the following recommendations:

Involvement of the Stakeholders in Community Development

According to Omoruyi (2001), involvement of stakeholders is to foster the participation or genuine involvement of the people in activities designed to improve their lives. This is anchored on the realization that the community members who are the beneficiaries of community development projects are critical stakeholders whose impacts are not only significant in the planning and execution of the projects but also in their sustenance. Their involvement builds community cohesion, and according to Padilla, *et al*. (2008) builds trust as well as contributing significantly to the beneficiary satisfaction and, improves development projects (Kimenyi, Deressa, Pugliese, Onwuemele & Mendie, 2014).

Effective Communication

Communication is central to the study of community development processes; and the goal of community development and cooperative efforts are better known and useful only when they

are effectively communicated (Omoruyi (2001). In the finding of Adedoyin (2015), effective communication helps to remove any iota of doubts or suspicion that can disrupt confidence building and peaceful co-existence among the community members. To achieve the goal of effective communication, community workers are advised to use written notices, telephone calls, text messages, mails, publications, announcement in churches and mosques, meetings and personal contacts to keep in touch with the community members and update them on the stages of development projects.

Effective, Transparent and Accountable Leadership
Local leaders are the baseline to every successful community development project (Udensi, et al., 2012). This is because leaders have the capacity to make or mar the planning and implementation of development projects. Leadership based on transparency and accountability is people-oriented, exemplary, and capable of building community cohesion, and galvanizing community members for effective community development. On this note, effective and transparent leadership is worth adopting for effective community development as it draws its support and influence through interactions developed within the community. To this end, if the above recommendations are strictly adhered to, the path to community development will be smooth, safe and resounding.

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