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ASSIGNMENT

In not more than 3000 words, discuss the traditional methods of resolving conflicts in a non violent way in your local community.

Conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or groups of people, which is sometimes characterized by physical violence. Non-violent ways of resolving conflict achieves the best result and can be seen as the best way for resolving conflict. If a person breaks the rules in Ikare or if there are any dispute between two people, family or community. The step taken towards peace is arbitration. In the local community of Ikare which is located at the North- eastern part of Ondo state, there are several ways of resolving conflict in a non violent way, but it usually depends on the magnitude of the reason of the conflict. The non violent ways are as follows:

1. Conflict between Couples: conflict between couples is settled between both parties on trivial and matters that are considered to be light. The couples are expected to settle at home and if the husband is wrong, he buys clothes for his wife as a form of apology. If the wife is wrong or at fault, she cooks for her husband, kneels and orally apologizes. In issues like divorce, the husband must send the bride price of the wife back to her people and the King of the community must be present when he is doing so or it is not regarded as valid. In problems like Adultery(a crime whereby either the husband or wife is guilty of having sexual intercourse with a person that either of them is not married to, guilty offenders are asked to take an oath before the village deity and if he/she is guilty, drops dead or runs mad but if he/she is innocent is compensated heavily for it and is allowed to go.

**Take a case Study:** In the 1800s, the wife of the King of the community of Ikare was caught in the act of having sexual intercourse with a man. She was caught by the lady with whom this man was apparently supposed to get married to. She brought the issue before the King and his Council. The king was furious but even in his rage still had to comply with the rules and regulations of the community. He called the Queen and asked her to stand trial for the offense she had been accused of committing knowing fully well the consequences (for her would be worse because she was a leader in the community). She denied being guilty of this crime and said she would take the oath to prove it. A day before the oath was to be taken, she took some cowries from the man with whom she was accused of committing the offense with and she added it to the cowries that were used as decorations on her head. A day to when she was to take the oath. She stood before the god Agolo and said. “If it is not the olowo ori mi(person who paid money on my head; the name wife call their husbands in Yoruba ) that I slept with, let agolo do with me as he pleases.” Unknowingly to them she meant the owner of the cowries with which she added to her hair decorations. Olowo ori mi( the person that owns the money on the head) because cowries were a form of currency then. Because the god knew she wasn’t lying she was not harmed and was allowed to go scot free. If she had not done that she would have died because of the oath. One can say wisdom is also a way of resolving conflict without violence. This story was gotten from my grandma who has lived in the community of Ikare all her life, till date.

1. Conflict between two or more individuals: In a conflict between two or more people, it is settled by the local head chief, who listens to the reason for their conflict and makes a decision. Whoever the head chief deems guilty or finds at fault and pays whatever it is the head chief has asked him/her to other party.
2. Conflict between a person and the community: In cases whereby the person offends the community by breaking the law of the land and he/she is seen as guilty by the king, the people of the community start killing goats either owned by them or at random and the number of goats killed has to be paid by the guilty offender regardless of how many goats were killed.

In cases where the offense committed by the person is terrible offense (an abomination), he/she is taken to AGOLO. Agolo was a powerful warrior who was said to be a giant thousands of years ago that lived with the people of Ikare. He never lost a single battle. It was said that his ring alone was as large as the houses then During times of war, he won by digging giant holes the size of wells around the community and covered them expertly so trespassing warriors would fall In them and he would swiftly finish off the rest. Upon his death, his famous ring became very significant because during his time on the earth he was seen as a god. In relation to offenders, they would put water in Agolo’s ring and he/she would be asked to drink from it. Who was guilty would die on the spot and an innocent person would be allowed to go free. Apart from Agolo, the people of Ikare Also have what is called the Evil forest. The Evil forest is a forest cursed and damned by the gods the people of community serve. Over the centuries, people of the community who have been guilty of sacrilegious acts have been sent there to live out the rest of their days. It is believed that people who are sent there, die not long after because of the dangerous and evil spirit that harbor there and some of them join these evil spirits after their deaths because their spirits do not find peace in death because of their crimes.

In other minor offenses such as theft, the offender can be asked to go dance naked around the community as he/she is shamed along the way. Guilty offenders can also be asked to go and work in the king’s farm for a period of time as punishment. The most popular punishment for theft, was asking the person who was guilty to go and dance in the market square, with the stolen item placed on his/her head while he/she dances. The king can also ask these offenders to be flogged heavily in the open.

 The local community also had dungeons where guilty offenders are kept for a period of time depending on the severity of their offenses. In rare cases, the King can collect the offender’s wife if he has one depending on how powerful the king is.

There have also be cases whereby a person is accused of witchcraft and other sacrilegious offenses because it was seen as a crime and no person was allowed to use it on another person in the community. The king can order the person guilty of this offense to be stoned to death or to be banished from the community. Families of the person who are guilty of these sacrileges can be banned from attending public meetings, buying food stuff and other properties from other individuals in the community for a particular period of time. Their families can also be banned from visiting other people in their homes or anywhere else within the community and even other members of the community will not be allowed to visit their homes as well.

There have been problems of land between families in the community whereby families are claiming one land as their own, the king listens to the stories that both parties have to say and makes a decision on who gets the land. During the times where the parties are not satisfied with the decision of the King and keep the problem going on amongst them, the King can take the land and convert it to his own. He can also convert the land to a community land where people of the community go and farm crops that can be used for exchange between other communities.

 These are various ways available in my community for resolving conflict without violence in my community.