

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES IN ETHNIC CONFLICT  
MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION IN THE EAST GONJA AND  
KPANDAI DISTRICTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

**TINAB MOHAMMED**

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KPANDAI DISTRICTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

BY

TINAB MOHAMMED

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Development Studies

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**DECLARATION**

**Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Name: Tinab Mohammed

Candidate's signature ..... Date .....

**Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Name: Prof. J. V. Mensah

Signature..... Date.....

Co-Supervisor's Name: Dr. Patrick Osei-Kuffour

Signature..... Date.....

## ABSTRACT

The study examined the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts in the Northern Region of Ghana. Case study research design was employed for the study. The study population included chiefs, opinion leaders, youth leaders, governmental and non-governmental agencies interested in peace building and development in the two districts. Purposive sampling technique was employed to sample 28 respondents for the study. Both the primary and secondary data were used. In-depth interview guides were used in interviewing the respondents. The contents, case and inductive analyses were adopted in organising and analysing the data.

The study revealed that the origins of the violent ethnic conflicts between the historically non-centralised ethnic groups and their centralised neighbours in the districts are rooted in the colonial legacy and policy, and strengthened by globalisation. These factors undoubtedly influenced the conflicts. Most of the actors in the ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts involved all the feuding ethnic groups but politicians and the elites in the society worsened the situation. The analysis showed that, to be able to manage and resolve ethnic conflicts effectively, the root causes and the actors of the conflicts need to be examined. The findings of the study revealed that state mechanisms have failed in resolving the ethnic conflicts leading to their recurring. It was recommended that the government should give due attention to the traditional authorities in ethnic conflicts management and resolution since the use of state mechanisms alone over the years has proved to be ineffective, compromised and biased.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and relatives for their support.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Content	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xi
CHAPTER	
<b>ONE            INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Background to the study	1
Statement of the problem	6
Objectives of the study	8
Research questions	8
Scope of the study	9
Significance of the study	9
Organisation of the study	10
<b>TWO            REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>	<b>12</b>
The concept of conflict	12
Theories of conflict	15
Ethnicity and ethnic conflict	20
Ethnic identity, globalisation and ethnic conflict	25
Causes of ethnic conflict	30
Actors of ethnic conflict	39

	Effective conflict management and resolution	41
	Traditional conflict management mechanisms	45
	Conceptual framework for ethnic conflict	51
<b>THREE</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	57
	Study area	57
	Research design	64
	Target population	65
	Sampling technique	66
	Sources of data	66
	Data collection instrument	67
	Data collection	67
	Data processing and analysis	70
	Limitations of the study	70
	Ethical issues	71
<b>FOUR</b>	<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	73
	Causes of ethnic conflicts in the East	
	Gonja and Kpandai districts	73
	Actors of the ethnic conflicts in the East	
	Gonja and Kpandai districts	84
	Approaches to ethnic conflict management and resolution	89
	Factors that promote effective ethnic conflict management and resolution	94
	The role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution	97



<b>FIVE</b>	<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND</b>	
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	102
	Summary	102
	Conclusions	104
	Recommendations	105
	Suggestion for further study	106
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	108
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	121
	A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY CHIEFS	121
	B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OPINION LEADERS	122
	C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR YOUTH LEADERS	123
	D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY	
	ORGANISATIONS	124

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table	Page
1 List of people Interviewed	68

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure	Page
1 Causes of ethnic conflict	53
2 A map of East Gonja and Kpandai districts	63

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
DISEC	District Security Council
EGOCSA	East Gonja Civil Society Organisations Association
HIIK	Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
LA	Land Administration
LI	Legislative Instrument
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPI	Nairobi Peace Initiative
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PPNT	Permanent Peace Negotiation Team
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
REGSEC	Regional Security Council
SIT	Social Identity Theory
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organisation

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the study**

Since the end of World War II and particularly Cold War, ethnic conflicts have emerged as one of the most pressing security issues in the world (Posen, 1993). According to Saad (1998), those conflicts that have occurred apart from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, have been over internal ethnic issues. Currently, ethnic conflicts span over the world. Typical examples include those in Burma and Sri Lanka in Asia, the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Yugoslavia in Europe. In the view of Jackson (2007), ethnic conflicts have occurred since the demise of the Cold War in the early 1990s, especially in Africa making it most prone to conflict situation than any other continent. The trend of this ethnic conflict is salient throughout the continent.

Africa as a continent has suffered from various kinds of ethnic conflicts. The worse of all these include those in Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo providing the most visible cases (Gurr & Harff, 1994). As noted by Adedeji (1999), Africa continues to be devoured by various types of conflicts. According to Deng (2005), the majority of the sub-Saharan population live in countries that are at conflict within themselves.

The end of the Cold War brought a new momentum to the study of conflict management and resolution. The West African Sub-region for example, has been plagued by intra-state conflicts mostly caused by ethnic differences. Notably among them are the civil wars of Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, with negative consequences. Accordingly, many scholars have tried to develop a theoretical approach to the study of ethnicity and ethnic conflict for a long time. Some, like Gurr (1970), Horowitz (1985), Azar (1990), Rothschild (1997), agree that the ethnic conflicts experienced today, especially in Africa are deep rooted.

Ghana is commonly regarded as one of the most peaceful countries in Africa but the Northern Region of Ghana cannot share this pride because for the past two decades, more than twenty violent ethnic conflicts occurred (Brukum, 2004). These conflicts have been between the minority and the majority groups. Since 1980, a number of studies have attempted to explain these ethnic conflicts (Talton, 2010; Awedoba, 2009; Bombade, 2007; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Mahama, 2003; Skalnik, 2000).

Basically, these studies approached the conflicts from primordialist, instrumentalist or constructivist perspectives. Primordialists view the ethnic conflicts as a consequence of ancient hatred between the minority groups and their centralised neighbours. The instrumentalists see the conflicts as caused by the colonialists and local elites' construction of the social relations between the minority ethnic group and their centralised neighbours (Talton, 2010; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Constructivists are of the view that ethnic conflicts are the product of historical processes. Past historic memories of conflict between two ethnic groups can influence their current relations.

Within the instrumentalists' framework, emphasis is placed on the role of unequal power relations and marginalisation fostered by years of colonial rule. It is argued that the British constructed an unequal relationship between the minority groups and their centralised neighbours and defined the former as politically subordinate to the latter (Talton, 2003; Pul, 2003). The difficulty with these earlier approaches to the study of these conflicts is that they do not account for why these conflicts have become more frequent.

It is obvious that these approaches also underestimate the role of other motivations for conflict mobilisation such as economic, political and above all the ideas of self-determination formed from abstract ideas and images that cascade through the media (Ojeili & Hayden, 2006). Contemporary ethnic conflicts can no longer be adequately understood by primordial, instrumentalist and constructionist explanations alone. This is so because ethnic conflicts occur when certain set of factors and conditions such as major structural crisis; presence of historical memories of inter-ethnic grievances; institutional factors that promote ethnic intolerance; manipulation of historical memories by political entrepreneurs; and an inter-ethnic competition over resources and rights converge (Blagojevic, 2004).

What makes conflicts of a serious concern to many is because of its devastating effects on lives and property. By official counts, the conflicts between Konkomba and Bimoba in 1984, 1986 and 1989 led to the death of about 60 people and others displaced. The Nawuri-Gonja conflict of 1991 left 78 people dead and hundreds wounded. Other conflicts that took heavy toll on lives in the region included the Gonja-Valga conflict of 1980, Konkomba-Nanumba conflict of 1981; Mamprusi-Kusasi conflict of 1992; Gonja-Nawuri

conflict of 1992; the Konkomba and their allies against the Gonja in 1992; and the 1994 popular 'guinea fowl conflict' between the Konkomba on one hand and Dagomba, Nanumba and Gonja on the other took at least 2,000 lives, 200,000 internally displaced and about 441 villages got completely destroyed (Brukum, 1995). Conflicts also result in the death arising from malnutrition and infections often outweigh the numbers of people who died due to the violence of conflicts (WHO, 2001).

In response to these numerous devastating ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana, and East Gonja and Kpandai districts in particular various conflict management and resolution mechanisms have been put in place towards resolving them. These mechanisms are among various government interventions such as deploring of military platoons, imposition of curfews, disarmament of the combatants, forming of committees and mediation bodies, Civil Society Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and many others. For example, after the Konkomba-Nanumba conflict in 1981, a committee was set up by the government known as Justice Lamptey committee. This committee was tasked to investigate the causes of this conflict and suggest measures to resolve it and to prevent future occurrence of such ethnic conflict but, unfortunately it failed. The inability of the state and other bodies to resolve this conflict led to its occurrence in 1994 which was popularly termed as the 'guinea fowl war'.

Again, in 1994 the government set up a Permanent Peace Negotiating Team (PPNT) tasked to find out the causes and measures to resolving the ethnic conflicts in the Northern Region. Another committee known as Ampiah Committee of Inquiry was also set up to this effect and no positive result was



seen. Due to the failures of these committees and team, the government engaged an Inter-Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Consortium and the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) under the auspices of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU), to organise and facilitate a number of workshops on peace and reconciliation among the various warring ethnic groups in the Northern Region.

Besides these efforts, a number of studies have also attempted to explain these conflicts and putting measures toward resolving the conflicts (Talton, 2010; Awedobah, 2009; Bombade, 2007; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Most of these studies approached the conflicts from different perspectives to the neglect of the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution, especially in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Even though there are some merits in these conflict management and resolution mechanisms and approaches, contemporary ethnic conflicts can no longer be adequately managed or resolved by such mechanisms alone. This therefore calls for the need in considering the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution since they are directly related to the conflicts.

Given that the majority of conflicts in the Northern Region are ethnic in nature, and the effects that conflicts have on lives and property, their occurrence require prudent means of management and resolution which will restore life to normalcy. This way, people in the communities in which the conflicts take place can then have an environment that facilitates growth and development.

### **Statement of the problem**

In the East Gonja and Kpandai districts, there is no clear administrative demarcation of social and traditional boundaries. Also, there is overlapping of different ethnic groups in each of the areas creating clashing of interest over simple issues leading to conflict. The main and visible ethnic groups in the two districts included the Gonja, Dagomba, Konkomba, Nawuri, Nchumburu, Kotokoli, Basari, Bator (Ewe) and other minority groups. Ethnic politics has been one of the major sources of social mobilisation for ethnic identity and supremacy.

Historically, the Gonja had been the conquerors of the other ethnic groups mainly because the latter were people with no strong leadership like the Gonja. This background led to the putting of Gonja chiefs in all villages and towns in the then East Gonja district to rule over the other non-centralised ethnic groups. Most of the non-centralised ethnic groups were automatically annexed to the Gonja chiefs. This practice was to ensure that the conquered groups paid their allegiance to the East Gonja overlord, “the Kpembewura” and for easy ruling.

The area is remote without good road networks making it inaccessible. More so, there are no strong and effective national institutions and agents responsible for resolving grievances among people in the area. The absence of credible enforcement mechanisms lead to security dilemmas. These security dilemmas encourage actors to engage in violent acts with the fear of being victimised or suppressed by their opponents.

Similarly, this absence encourages the local agents in the communities to mobilise groups to fight in order to satisfy their parochial interest. Not only

this, the actors also seek their own violence means of resolving their grievances. Though, various mechanisms such as curfews, military and police interventions, court systems, and Alternative Disputes Resolution, Youth Associations interventions for conflict management and resolution have been used to resolve the conflicts, the outcomes have not been satisfactory. This is true because these conflicts keep on recurring in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts.

Looking at the state structures and committees set up by various governments since independence for resolving ethnic conflicts in Ghana including cases of the East Gonja and Kpandai districts and their outcomes, it stands to reason that they are weak and compromised (Awedoba, 2009). Because of the weakness of the state and its agencies in preventing and resolving ethnic conflicts in East Gonja and Kpandai districts, it is critical that attention be given to traditional authorities as an alternative means of resolving the conflicts. Traditional authorities have been playing a pivotal role in conflict management and resolution process across the African continent yet little attention has been given to them in Ghana. This role must be understood, affirmed and improved.

Despite this, minimal recognition is given to Traditional Authorities that underpin most of the shared cultural values and customs of the people. This calls for the need to examine the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution. This thesis, therefore, attempts to explore this lacuna to examine how traditional authorities could be used to achieve sustainable peace in East Gonja and Kpandai districts.

### **Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study was to examine the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts in the Northern Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine factors that cause ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts;
2. Identify actors of ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts;
3. Examine approaches to ethnic conflict management and resolution;
4. Identify factors that promote effective ethnic conflict management and resolution;
5. Examine the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution;
6. Make recommendations for management of ethnic conflicts.

### **Research questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that cause ethnic conflict in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts?
2. Who are the actors of ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts?
3. What are the approaches to ethnic conflict management and resolution?
4. Which factors promote ethnic conflict management and resolution?

5. How can traditional authorities manage and resolve ethnic conflict?

### **Scope of the study**

The study was limited to only East Gonja and Kpandai districts in the Northern Region of Ghana. These districts have experienced long standing ethnic conflicts which have not been resolved. The study looked at the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution in these areas.

It examined factors that cause ethnic conflicts, actors of ethnic conflicts, approaches to ethnic conflict management and resolution, factors that promote ethnic conflict management and resolution, and how traditional authorities manage and resolve ethnic conflict.

### **Significance of the study**

The results of the study will provide information and recommendations that will help to improve upon the effective ways of conflict management and resolution. It will help stakeholders, chiefs and opinion leaders in conflict management and resolution. Also, the results of the study will provide clear directions for policy formulation in the area of conflict management and resolution. The study will provide suggestions and make recommendations for ethnic conflict management and resolution.

Again, the findings of the study will help to identify effective conflict management and resolution approaches and mechanisms. These may be useful to traditional authorities, stakeholders, government and Non-Governmental

Organisations interested in conflict management and resolution who wish to find lasting solutions to ethnic conflicts.

Finally, the results of this study will be an addition to the existing knowledge on conflict management and resolution. The results may serve as a baseline for further research studies to be conducted in conflict management and resolution and allied fields of study.

### **Organisation of the study**

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One provides the framework for the rest of the study. It deals with the introduction which covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions that guided the study, scope of the study, significance of the study and organisation of the study.

The second chapter reviews literature that is relevant to the issue under investigation. The chapter examines the concept of conflict, theories of conflict, ethnicity and ethnic conflict, causes of ethnic conflicts, actors in ethnic conflict, factors that promote effective conflict management and resolution, and traditional conflict management mechanisms. It provides the theoretical, conceptual and empirical framework for the study.

The procedures and techniques that were employed to carry out the study are described in Chapter Three. It describes the study area, research design, target population, sampling technique, sources of data, data collection, instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, limitations and ethical issues.

Chapter Four is devoted to results and discussion. It describes how the data was collected and discussed in relation to the research questions and literature review. Chapter Five contains summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research to improve practice.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The main objective of this chapter is to review literature that relates to the topic. The chapter examines the concept of conflict, theories of conflict, ethnicity and ethnic conflict, causes of ethnic conflicts, actors in the conflict, factors that promote effective conflict management and resolution, traditional conflict management mechanisms. Both theoretical and empirical studies as well as a conceptual framework are presented in the chapter.

#### **The concept of conflict**

Conflicts are as old as human societies. People have disputed and competed against one another over scarce commodities, land, power, resources, and ideology (Talton, 2010). Conflict in teams or groups is inevitable. This means that at any point in time people are bound to disagree over issues. There is no human ability that can predetermine the results of these conflicts. However, when conflicts are not managed well, they can escalate and this would lead to negative results, or conflict can be resolved amicably and lead to positive results.

In the view of Awedoba (2009), conflict is a clash of ideas, wills, interests or opinions a relationship between two or more parties that centre on differences, disagreements, incompatibilities. Most of these conflicts are within state as opposed to interstate and often occur between ethnic groups.



The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) (2005, p. 2), on its part defines conflicts as: “the clashing of interests (positional differences) on national values of some duration and magnitude between at least two groups that are determined to pursue their interests and win their cases”. Conflict occurs at different levels from household, family to national.

Looking at conflict as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals, there is the need to examine the nature and type of conflict that existed at a particular place in a period of time. To this far, Coser (1956, p. 8) describes conflict as “a struggle over values, claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the opposing parties are not only to the desired values but also to neutralise, injure, or eliminate rivals”. Most of these conflicts are ethnic in nature which make people to see themselves as one with common interests and values.

However, the majority of today’s violent conflicts in the Northern Region and the case of East Gonja and Kpandai districts, for example, the Gonja-Nawuri war of 1992; the Konkomba and their allies against the Gonja in 1992; and the 1994 popular *guinea fowl* war between the Konkomba on one hand and Dagomba, Nanumba and Gonja on the other reside in ethnic identification, creates a phenomenon which renders ethnicity as a terrible destructive force. Therefore, for ethnicity to become a positive rather than a destructive force, ethnic conflicts need to be managed and resolved (Bombade, 2007).

Most conflicts are resolvable and some are intractable. Intractable conflicts are those that remain unresolved for long periods of time and then become stuck at a high level of intensity and destructiveness. At the core of

most intractable conflicts are deeply rooted divisions affecting parties, fundamental interests, needs, values and among others. These include irreconcilable morals, matters of justice, unmet human needs and identity crisis (Brukum, 2004). Conflicts that tend to be protracted have very damaging effects. Within the field of conflict resolution the main aim is not to eliminate all conflicts, which would be impossible and probably damaging, but to transform violent conflicts into processes of peaceful social change. The basic vocabulary and principles of conflict resolution can be used to analyse and resolve conflicts at all levels.

In the view of Bombade (2007), conflict is not inherently bad; it can bring about new ideas into the society, and unify people. Conflict is not bad in and of itself. It is how we deal with conflict that brings good or bad results. Thus, how we manage conflicts when they occur have long lasting effects. It is inevitable, that most of the time we are going to have emotions in conflict situations. Our position is not to eradicate emotions, but to control our emotions instead of allowing our emotions and sentiments control our urge for revenge.

According to Mayer (2000), conflicts can be explained through a three-dimensional lens. These include; conflict as a perception, conflict as a feeling, and conflict as action. In the first place, conflict as perception, is often seen as the conviction that one's own needs, interests, values or wants are incompatible with someone else's. Conflict as a feeling, can be expressed through several emotions including 'fear, anger, bitterness, sadness, hopelessness' or the combination of these. Finally, Mayer (2000) highlights that conflict involves actions which may be violent or destructive.

In this thesis, conflict could be seen as an act of violence, expression of disagreements, anger, and frustration often arising from unmet needs and aspirations among groups or individuals. Though not all conflicts are violent as indicated earlier, some have been characterised by violence and brutality.

### **Theories of conflict**

There are several theories to the studies of conflict. Conflict theory is especially useful in understanding conflict, wealth and poverty, political strife, exploitation, discrimination and prejudice. These theories provide useful analytical views to the factors that cause conflicts and means through which these conflicts can be managed and resolved amicably. There are no simple and easy explanations for conflicts in Northern Region, and the theories that have been advanced are both numerous and contradictory. Rather than attempt to catalogue these many theories, it is better to look at some of the rather haunting paradoxes that seem to explain conflicts in Northern Region of Ghana, especially in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts.

#### *Structural Violence Theory*

Structural violence is most often not visible, implicit, and can be formed by some structures in the community and leaders. Structural violence occurs “whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, economic, and cultural traditions” (Winter & Leighton, 2001, p. 4). Inequality and injustice causing a deep harm to individuals within structures cause structural violence against people living within a particular area. This eventually manifests and

brings about direct violence on the personal level since those oppressed are those to resort direct violence in accordance (Winter & Leighton, 2001).

Saidemen (2010) supported the view that concentrated groups in divided societies are more likely to demand self-determination and to be engaged in violent conflict in order to get access to scarce resources and power. In a circulation, structural violence is greatly attached to human rights violations and human needs detainment (Winter & Leighton, 2001). Structural violence matches up with human rights violations and unmet human needs. Human rights violations revolve around the idea that if these two come together, they must create conflict and violence in a relative degree.

The above analysis demonstrates how well unmet human needs and human rights violations are related to structural and direct violence. From theory to application, conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts borders mainly on unequal distribution of resources and control over land and ownership, which invariably leads to clashes, so that the dominant power establishes control finally. This is supported by Scarborough (1998) when he points to the fact that in situations where existing structures in a society are tilted in favour of a particular group to the disadvantage of others, and when people find it difficult to identify with political and economic ideas of the society, violent communal conflict is likely to emerge and escalate when not properly managed.

### *Relational Theory*

Relational theory analysis provides the significance of relationships in social and political interactions between communities themselves and between

them and states in a specific geopolitical context (Schluter & Lee, 1993). Well-being of individuals, groups, states, and communities is defined in terms of the factors that determine relationships among them. The basis of understanding conflict, security and collective well-being of people includes relationships that dominate interactions of two or more entities in contact with one another at a particular place within a period of time. Conflict and security situations in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts can be explained in terms of factors such as poor economic performance, uncertainties in governance, breakdown of law and order and recurrent violence among people.

#### *Dynamical System Theory*

Systemic theory looks at conflict in relation to the contexts in which conflicts erupt. The issues involved and the relationships between the processes that shape the issues are of great concern. A system is a group of interrelated body interacting with each other at different levels within time and space and as such conflict is bound to occur. According to Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak, and Bui-Wrzosinska (2006), intractable social conflicts are viewed as destructive patterns of social systems, which are the result of a multitude of different hostile elements interacting at different levels over time, culminating in an on-going state of intractability. In their view, power and influence in these social systems are multiply determined, and substantial change is thought to occur only through transformative shifts in the deep structure or pattern of organisation of the system.

There are three basic assumptions underlying general systems theory. These include the non-linear nature of the relations between elements in a

system; systemic openness and the importance of the internal and external environment; and the structure of nested systems within systems. Coleman (2006) asserts that, a systemic approach to social conflict assessment not only captures the multiple sources and complex temporal dynamics of such systems, but it can also help identify central nodes and patterns that are unrecognisable by other means.

The conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts occurred within a particular geographical location with social groups interacting with each other with different interest and motives. To be able to analyse such conflicts, there is the need to know the context within which they occurred.

However, general systems theory has been criticised for its imprecise definition, lack of specificity, and contributing relatively little to the generation of testable hypotheses in research in the social sciences (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). It is as a result of these criticisms that the dynamical systems' principles and methods for applications to conflict and peace dynamics have been developed. Dynamical systems have been used to gain a better understanding of how local interactions between small parts in a physical system can produce "emergent" global behaviour (Brown & Liebovitch, 2010).

Dynamical systems have been useful in analysing physical and biological systems to understand threshold effects, how emergent patterns self-organise, sensitivity to initial conditions, whether chance is really needed to explain seemingly random data, and the statistical properties of the variables of those systems. This suggests that the use of dynamical systems may be

equally valuable in understanding similarly important issue in the social psychology of conflicts.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Most social conflicts become deeply anchored in the way people define themselves and their own groups. This contributes greatly to their intractability and resistant to change. Tajfel and Turner (1979) supporters of Social Identity Theory (SIT) argued that the understanding of the individual psychological processes is at the root of ethnocentrism and intergroup conflict. These authors emphasise the link between group identification and intergroup relations in the context of research on realistic conflict theory, where intergroup hostility is viewed as the result of competition over real or perceived scarce resources. In their study, it was realised that simply categorising people into arbitrary groups seemed to elicit ethnocentric in-groups bias.

From this point of view, it is clear that social identity theory suggests that people are motivated to achieve and maintain their positive self-esteem, and one avenue for them to achieve this is through positive in-group associations when compared to out-groups. In extreme cases, the mere presence of an out-group may be seen as a threat to a positive social identity or even to a group's existence (Kelman, 1999), and thus fuel conflict intractability due to a zero-sum perception of the opposing groups identities.

De Zavala, Cichocka, Eidelson, and Jayawickreme (2009) in their study have established an intricate link between self-esteem and intergroup conflict at the individual and group level. Social identity theory in their

opinion has therefore contributed to better understanding of collective behaviour including in-group bias, responses of subordinate groups to their positions of unequal status, and intra-group homogeneity and stereotyping. Though, the relationship between group identification and in-group bias is still unclear (Brown, 2000).

### **Ethnicity and ethnic conflict**

The concept of ethnicity has a long and contentious history in the social sciences. According to Davies and Rothschild (1996), ethnicity is the condition of belonging to an ethnic group, the sense of ethnic identity is felt by members of an ethnic community. This definition of ethnicity largely coincides with the concept of an ethnic group. Thomson (2002, p. 58) described an ethnic group as “a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on their history, origin, tradition, kinship ties, cultural uniqueness, and a common language”.

Ethnic groups in this sense are a community of people who share cultural and linguistic characteristics including language, history, tradition, myth, and origin. Ethnicity establishes a distinct culture or subculture within which members feel themselves bound together by such commonalities as history, geographic location, language, norms, traditions, values, and behaviour through which they have a strong sense of ethnic identity and people hood (Thomson, 2002, p. 58).

Horowitz (1985), Azar (1990) and Rothschild (1997) refer to the concept of ethnic conflict as a myth and argue that the root causes of ethnic conflicts do not involve ethnicity alone but also other related social factors



such as economic and political. It is further argued that the concept of ethnic conflict is misleading because it leads to an essentialist conclusion that certain groups are doomed to fight each other when in fact the cause of the conflict could be politically motivated. Smith (1992) refers ethnic conflict to a continuum of events which range from the articulation of dissatisfaction, protest, mobilisation, confrontation, sporadic or sustained violence, and civil war or insurrection, in which ethnicity plays a key role.

Once conflict has emerged, it develops further with certain dynamic and intensity. In this case, knowing how conflicts start and their categorisation is crucial because it may provide indications of what might happen next and what can facilitate the conflict management. An ethnic conflict is a conflict between ethnic groups often as a result of ethnic nationalism. Academic explanations of ethnic conflict generally fall into one of three schools of thought: primordialist, instrumentalist and constructivist.

Proponents of primordialist accounts of ethnic conflict argue that ethnic groups and nationalities exist because there are traditions of belief and action towards primordial objects such as biological features. The primordialist account depends on the concept of kinship between members of an ethnic group. Horowitz (1985, p. 57) argues that this kinship “makes it possible for ethnic groups to think in terms of family resemblances”.

Anthony (2001) notes that the instrumentalist account came to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, a period which ethnic persistence were supposed to have been an effective melting pot. This new theory sought to explain such persistence as the result of the actions of some influential people, who used culture and ethnic identity as a means of organising their people to

fight for their right. Under such conditions of culture and ethnic identity, people viewed ethnicity as a means to an end.

Whether ethnicity is a fixed perception or not is not crucial in the view of the instrumentalists. They do not oppose neither that ethnic difference is a part of many conflicts nor that a lot of belligerent human beings believe that they are fighting because of their differences. These scholars perceive ethnic difference as not sufficient to explain conflicts. According to Pul (2003), the disposition of a locale or ethnic group to violence is highest when the structures and systems exclude some ethnic groups from access to power and economic resources.

Again, ethnic elites engage in reconstructing ethnic histories and leading factions in the struggles for or against exclusion in traditional authority arrangements. Also, state neutrality in the conflicts is compromised when ethnic elites on one side of the conflict are able to co-opt state processes and resources for their ethnic agendas and/or influence the crafting of state laws, policies, programmes, actions and/or inactions to reinforce the exclusion of the other group. The presence of all three factors in a locality increases the incidence of violence more than any one of the factors can do alone (Pul, 2003, p. 12). This approach overestimates the role of the elite manipulation of the masses and undervalues social movements and group mobilisation. This assumes the principle of primacy of rational and strategic calculation.

Korostelina (2007), one of the proponents of the constructivists, argued that social identities are socially constructed phenomena influenced by the processes of existing social structures. It is generated, confirmed and transformed in the process of interactions between groups and individuals and

reflect their perceptions and behaviours. For Volkan (2006), ethnicity is a mode of thought and not a category in nature and has no existence outside of inter-ethnic relations. This is the constructionist view of culture which sees all social phenomena as imagined realities which can be constructed by the elites to achieve political and economic aims. This view rejects the idea that ethnicity is strongly associated with the primordial feeling of emotional attachment to blood ties and bonds of common culture, and identity (Thomson, 2002).

Croucher (2004) argues that ethnicity is a constructed identity but it is constructed on the appeal to primordial sentiments of belonging. This, she contends, takes place under specific circumstances and can only be understood through a careful examination of those circumstances. In the case of the Konkomba, Gonja, Nawuri, Nchmburu and their neighbours, it is not only the perceived marginalisation, political and economic exclusion that serves as a common unifying force, but also stories of common origin, culture and history. Talton (2010), however, views the emergence of a Konkomba ethnicity from a constructionist perspective by arguing that the emergence of the Konkomba ethnic group was as a result of their subordination under the Dagomba Naa by the British system of indirect rule. In their attempt to gain their independence, the Konkomba were pushed beyond lineage and clan politics toward a unified Konkomba ethnicity.

Even though the British colonial policy in Northern Ghana laid so much emphasis on ethnicity than other forms of identities; they did not create the ethnic groups in the Northern Region especially the East Gonja and Kpandai districts. What the British did was to construct rigid social relations

between the centralised and non-centralised ethnic groups by empowering the former and marginalising the latter. By this, the fluidity and flexibility involved in ethnic relations was replaced with a more rigid and less negotiable relationship. This arrangement was continued by the post-colonial governments making ethnicity the only avenue by which state resources and political power is acquired (Lentz & Nugent, 2000). Thus access to political power and economic resources came to be based on ethnicity.

With increased competition for scarce resources, ethnic identity formation has intensified and the struggle between ethnic groups has become more violent. Sen (2006) contends that identity can be a potential source of conflict. The presumption that people are inherently different on account of religion or culture leads to formation of identity around one category. Identity with one group leads to the exclusion of others and forms the basis for deprivation, marginalisation and poverty which ignites latent conflicts. This is a powerful weapon which can be used for the brutalisation of others. Volkan (2006) also links ethnic identity to conflicts by arguing that when ethnic groups define and distinguish their groups from others, they end up developing some kind of prejudice for their own group against the other group. They tend to idealize their groups' values and suspend critical reasoning which can be a serious source of conflict.

Cultural identity defines people's cultural bonding, the group to which they belong. Within mobilisation tactics cultural identity is usually portrayed as a fixed characteristic, which must be defended against 'others' who are generally viewed as competing for the same resources, power or status. Most contemporary definitions of identity denote a move from bounded or fixed

objects in the natural world namely that identity (singular) is essential, fundamental, unitary and unchanging to the idea that identities (plural) are constructed and reconstructed through socio-historical actions (Lapid, 1996; Kaufman, 2006). Hence identities are emergent and constructed not fixed and natural; contested and polymorphic not unitary and single; and interactive and process-like not static (Kaufman, 2006). It is generally found that for effective mobilisation of cultural diversity in conflict situations, leaders emphasise the fundamental and unchanging aspects of culture, which can be simplified and contrasted more easily with other cultural communities.

Horowitz (1985) in analysing ethnic conflict combines primordialist and instrumentalist elements. One of the most crucial elements of the analysis is the role of self-esteem that individuals derive from seeing members of their ethnic group succeed in business and, especially, in politics. This allows group leaders, who view ethnicity instrumentally to mobilise ethnic support whether in the form of votes for ethnic parties or participation in violent confrontations. The view that group self-esteem and considerations are important in ethnic conflict seems extremely plausible.

### **Ethnic identity, globalisation and ethnic conflict**

Ethnic identity is the product of globalisation and that rather than destroying cultural differences; globalisation has been perhaps the most significant force in creating and proliferating cultural identity (Kaufman, 2006). As interactions between groups intensify and people become more aware of their neighbours, they begin to emphasize their uniqueness. Thus globalisation gives rise to the acquisition and maintenance of group identity.

Today, globalisation is giving rise to all forms of identity formation and seen as the force producing identity rather than obliterating it. How people view themselves against others in this period of high globalisation has become important making the acquisition and maintenance of identity both vital and problematic.

Tomlinson (2002) viewed ethnic identity as much more a product of globalisation as globalisation distributes the institutional features of modernity across all cultures and produces identity where none existed. Identity itself is a contested term. According to Ojeili and Hayden (2006), identity is unstable and fractured, involving several shifting factors. This is because identity as 'peoples' source of meaning and experience' about themselves does not develop in a vacuum (Tomlinson, 2002). It is developed in relation to others and therefore how a group of people perceive themselves is to a large extent determined by the knowledge about others.

People begin to emphasize their differences when they become more aware of others and these differences are mostly expressed in the form of reasserting group identity through ethnic mobilisation. Identity is therefore a socially constructed category based on perceived difference from others (Sen, 2008). It is after having become aware of other people's condition that people begin to assert their uniqueness and the necessity to protect it.

Furthermore, there are several categories around which identity can be constructed but the importance of a particular category around which identity is built depends very much on the social circumstances (Sen, 2008). In Northern Ghana the most dominant category in identity formation is ethnicity. Horowitz (2001) supports this and defines ethnicity as a categorisation

characterised by a feeling of a common ancestry and shared culture which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate. Thus, an important element is not only the objective fact of common blood ties but also a 'subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of tradition, or because of past events' (Croucher, 2004, p. 117).

The concepts of globalisation and identity formation seem to depict an awkward combination (Tatoln, 2003). Increased interactions and speeding up of social relations which leads to the distribution of western lifestyles, taste and cultures imply that the world would be moving towards homogenization and cultural uniformity. It presupposes therefore that cultural differences would disappear and give way to cultural homogenization and standardization, which will intend bring about peaceful coexistence. However, globalisation is far from bringing about uniformity and cultural standardization. Ina and Rosaldo (2008) saw globalisation as not a uniform process of exportation of western ideas and culture but it encompasses both homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies.

Globalisation engenders cooperation, integration, conflict including fragmentation, inclusion and exclusion, convergence and divergence, order and disorder (Held & McGrew, 2000, p. 7). This means that globalisation produces contradictory outcomes. It therefore, implies that it will be a mistake to associate globalisation with the end of local identity formation and cultural diversity. Increased interaction does not mean reduce cultural diversity. Indeed, globalisation could just as well increase cultural pluralism because by significantly influencing the rate, dynamics, and global access to flow of information, globalisation could build up a social infrastructure for the

emergence of identity formation (Das & Kleinman, 2001). Following this conceptualisation of globalisation, it is easy to argue that globalisation generates local identity formation rather than obliterate them.

The link between globalisation and ethnic conflicts has been put forward by Chua (2003). The thrust of the argument is that, the current waves of globalisation conceptualised in terms of liberalisation and democratisation are increasing ethnic violence in most of the developing world. It is further argued that pervasive poverty, market liberalisation and democratisation repeatedly catalysed ethnic conflicts in highly predictable manner, with negative effects, and destruction of markets and democracy themselves. This theory is based on the premise that globalisation breeds inequality along ethnic lines and engenders ethnic hatred for rich ethnic minorities. Increased democratisation makes latent conflicts manifest since people are now free to express their dissatisfaction.

According to Chua (2003), during authoritative regimes, hostilities between ethnic groups are suppressed which then erupt into violent conflicts with a shift towards democratisation. With increasing democratisation, and periodic elections, politicians with political ambitions are likely to instigate the majority ethnic group against the rich minority through the use of hate narratives. The conflicts generated by this process are referred to as 'globalisation wars' because they are directed towards gaining state power (Tomlinson, 2002). This kind of reasoning seems to contrast the liberal peace theory which contends that increase democratisation and international trade reduce conflict propensities. But it must be pointed out that the liberal peace



theory focuses on cross border conflicts which are different from ethnic conflicts we experienced in the Northern Region of Ghana.

While Chua's theory of globalisation provides a powerful framework for understanding the Konkomba, Nawuri, Nchumburu insurgency in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts, few observations have to be made. First, the case diverges from globalisation wars, in that it was not a case of rebellion against the state, but rather a mobilisation against another ethnic group to demand equal access to political and economic resources in the region. Second, the Konkomba, Nawuri, Nchumburu do not dominate their centralised neighbours economically and therefore even though they are regarded as minorities, they are not richer than their centralised neighbours.

Notwithstanding the above observations, however, the theory is still applicable in this case since it focuses on identity formation which centres on a feeling of a common problem. For the Konkomba, this is their perceived marginalised position in the region vis-a-vis their centralised neighbours which generates a feeling of hatred against their centralised neighbours and the desire to unite to demand their rights. Moreover, Tomlinson (2002) has argued that a far more prevalent form of globalisation conflicts in the world today is the demand for greater share of resources and increased political participation instead of separatist and anti-statist mobilisation (OJeili & Hayden, 2006). The Konkomba, Nawuri, Gonja conflicts can therefore, be placed squarely in this category of globalisation conflicts and analysed from such a perspective.

This trend of discussion reinforces what Hutchful (1998) saw as security hazard in many African countries. In his argument, economic

development, governance, control of power and using legitimate force to subjugate fellow citizens are the common factors that cause insecurity in Africa. This is true because, these issues are relevant to the situation in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts. In examining conflict and security situation in this country, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that governance is monopolised by ethnic or ideological small groups. Mostly, it occurs to the detriment of a greater number of ordinary citizens. They control economic resources to the detriment of other nationalities in the country.

### **Causes of ethnic conflict**

Considering the range and diversity of ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana, it stands to reason that their causes are as varied and complex as their courses and consequences. These conflicts are attributed to the lingering legacies of colonialism, but for many, especially in the Western popular and academic media, singular historical and internal explanations tend to be offered, assigning the conflicts to either Africa's primordial afflictions of 'tribalism', or the depredations of the continent's proverbial poverty and inequalities, or authoritarianism and poor governance (Brukum, 2004; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Awedoba, 2009; Talton, 2010).

To be sure, these conflicts are often provoked and sustained by ethnic rivalries and polarisations, globalisation, economic underdevelopment and inequalities, poor governance and elite political instability and manipulations. But these factors, individually or collectively, have a history rooted in the political economy of colonialism, post colonialism, and neo-liberal globalisation. They are as much internal in their causation and scale as they

are regional and transnational, involving national, regional and international actors and networks that are simultaneously economic, political, military and social (Tomlinson, 2002; Sen, 2008).

Prior to colonial rule, two distinct systems of traditional rule existed in Northern Ghana. These were the highly centralised systems of the Dagomba, Gonja, Nanumba, and Mamprusi, referred to as the “invader tribes” (Stride & Ifeka, 1971; p. 83), and the decentralised systems of the majority of ethnic groups in the north including the Konkomba, Nawuri, Nchumburu, and Basaari. Among the highly centralised tribes, royal dynasties have constituted the locus of power in these societies, and succession to the seat of power is by patrilineal inheritance (Staniland, 1975). Conversely, the decentralised tribes had no single apical head as the locust of political power for the entire ethnic group. This constituted the basis of their being described as “acephalous” (Talton, 2002).

Despite years of coexistence, the two traditional systems of governance remained distinct. During the time of colonial rule in 1899, the need to have control over a large landmass forced British to attempt to streamline and universalize the chieftaincy system which existed before their arrival. This became clear when Irvine, the Provincial Commissioner, South, stated in the handing over notes to his successor in 1909:

As it is impossible to govern the country successfully except through the hands of the chiefs, every effort should be made to strengthen them in their dealings with their people as far as it is compatible with equity and good governance (cited in Staniland, 1975; p. 58).

This statement undoubtedly gave birth to the principle of indirect rule in Northern Ghana. Much of the political structure in which ethnic groups in Northern Ghana interacted under colonial rule was defined by Britain's indirect rule policies. The Governor, Gordon Guggisberg implemented this policy and made a clear statement that:

Our policy must be to maintain any Paramount chiefs that existed and gradually absorb under these any small communities scattered about.

What we should aim at is that one day the Dagomba, Gonja and the Mamprusi should become strong native states... (cited in Staniland, 1975; p. 58).

From the period of 1930s and 40s, the socioeconomic change that accompanied indirect rule led to an emphasis on ethnicity, or 'tribe,' over other identities (Iliffe, 1979; p. 318). A collection of these 'tribes,' from the British officials' view was what comprised African societies, and each 'tribe' was unique, mostly isolated and ruled by a single powerful chief.

Interestingly, Mamdani (1996) explained that the colonial authorities constructed ethnic identity in Ghana and imposed them on the people through colonial policy. Ironically, while the British were forcing Africans to adjust to an ethnic-based political framework that defined a group's legal status and its relationships with others as unchanging, they influenced social and political change as Africans attempted to adjust to this imposed political system.

Lentz and Nugent (2000, p. 9) suggested that, as they constructed these polices from a misreading of African society, politics, and culture, "the British automatically laid a solid foundation for today's ethnic identities. They did so by imposing a number of 'native states' which they imagined corresponded with established tribal boundaries". But, soon after the colonial authorities

imposed their power and authority over what they defined as the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, they became aware that what they labeled 'tribe' did not reflect the political and social realities that they encountered.

Through divide and rule policies, colonial powers based identity on European racial classification and made opposing identities more rigid and unequal (Rubin, 2006). One historical condition, especially in the settler economies of Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, to some greater extent, relates to the privileges granted to settlers by the colonial state, the colonial state's land policies, and its practices of 'divide and rule.' Many similar measures poisoned relations among communities and established a context for communal conflicts in many parts of Africa.

The underlying historical causes for these ethnic conflicts can be attributed to domestic grievances or circumstances that may prompt irregular warfare. According to Botha (2007; pp. 4–5), causes based on domestic grievances may be: weak and failed governments providing favourable conditions for warring parties to plan, train, strategize and launch attacks on ruling government and the local population. The absence of local authority can bring about the growth of safe havens for powerful non-state elements, such as organised crime and ethnic conflicts to occur. The result of these fertile circumstances can lead to irregular warfare and develop into widespread conflicts (Plant, 2008; p. 7). Ethnic motivations where heterogeneous groups, such as the Konkomba and the Dagomba, Nanumba, Gonja, Nawuri Kussasi and Mamprusi, clash over superiority and self-determination and feel that they are not adequately represent in government can lead to violence. Thus, feelings of marginalisation can therefore lead to violent conflicts.

In the view of Collier and Hoeffler (2002), grievance-driven cause conflicts and the case in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts cannot be exempted. According to these authors, greed outperforms grievance as a motivation for conflict. They constructed two contrasting models, the grievance and greed models to explain the difference in motivations. The grievance model refers to political inequality, oppression, ethnic and religious motivations for conflict, and it corresponds with the domestic grievances cited by Botha (2007), while the greed model refers to the sources of finance to maintain the civil war. Collier (in Berdal, 2005; p. 1) holds that the key to understanding why such wars erupt lies in greed and the quest for loot by rebel actors.

According to Odonkor and Manson (1994), ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana are highly cyclical in nature and steeped in centuries of historically evolving relationships. Following the outbreaks of violence in the northern part of Ghana, various analysts have tempted to assign various reasons such as poverty, unemployment, shortage of arable land and political interference as the causes of such conflicts (Tonah, 2007, Awedoba, 2009). These factors and among others raise tensions and create the conditions for specific outbreaks, but they are not the root causes of such ethnic conflicts.

These ethnic conflicts in the northern part of Ghana have always involved one group or faction trying to change the status quo with regard to one or more of the following issues: inter-chieftaincy disputes over land and boundaries between chiefs; inter-chieftaincy attempts to alter long-standing hierarchical relationships; intra-ethnic succession disputes over high chieftaincy office; inter-tribal disputes over land and boundaries between

tribes; and inter-ethnic efforts to alter ruler-subject relationships. For example, the conflicts between the Konkomba and the traditional kingdoms of Northern Ghana have been described by Brukum (1995) as conflicts of emancipation, with one group determined to maintain the status quo and the other fighting to overthrow it.

Traditionally, the social structure in the Northern Region has been divided into chiefly and acephalous societies. The chiefly have organised themselves around hereditary chieftaincy structures that have a hierarchy from lower level chiefs to divisional chiefs, paramount chiefs, and even some that are superior to paramount chiefs who acts like kings. Four ethnic groups, the Gonja, Dagomba, Nanumba, and Mamprusi, have organised themselves this way. The acephalous groups such as the Konkomba, Nawuri, Basare, and Nchumuru, are segmentary societies that have not had hierarchical structures such as chiefs and chieftaincies. To a very large extent, they are migratory yam farmers who settle on a land and till it until it loses its fertility, at which time they abandoned it and search for another area where the land has lain fallow for some time (Brukum, 2004).

The traditional land tenure practice has not recognised individual ownership of land in most part of the Northern Region. Land ownership, to some extent, has been vested in paramount chiefs and is held in trust or on behalf of the ethnic groups to which the chief belongs (Abdulai & Ndekugri, 2007). This, therefore, has restricted land ownership to chiefly groups. Land acquisition for farming and other purposes, which are normally acquired through chiefs, is therefore a major source of tension between different ethnic

groups in the north such as the Konkomba and the Nanumba due to long standing difference of opinions between them.

Specifically, the role of traditional leaders in relation to administration and control of communal lands has been questioned. For example, Peters (2004) indicates that in Sub-Saharan Africa the image of negotiable and adaptive customary systems of landholding and land use is flawed; instead exclusions, deepening social divisions and class formation are intensifying land conflicts. This has in some instances resulted in outright conflicts in certain localities, de-stabilising communities and impeding prospects for peace and development.

The communal nature of customary land tenure is a disincentive to individual initiative and obstructs economic development (Kwadwo, 2006). There exists the notion that the traditional land ownership system does not permit individual ownership of land, which does not provide incentives to individuals to invest in land based activities (Abdulai & Ndekugri, 2007). In the view of Kwadwo (2006), customary landownership restricts the opportunities for obtaining and parting with land rights. This traditional informal land transaction has led to rising land prices, lack of control over land transactions and limited the uses of land (Smith, 2007). The communal land ownership in this sense, has therefore constrained the development of the Ghanaian land market. It is partly based on the perceived inefficiencies of the traditional landholdings that there have been calls in the country for land reform including land nationalisation (Abdulai & Ndekugri, 2007).

A stable customary tenure system is a source of social security and continuity. In general, in well-defined and socially cohesive groups, individual



land rights have proven to be secure, long-lasting, and in most cases, inheritable and transferrable (Deininger, 2003). At least when land is plentiful, farmers have no need to 'own' land, in the western sense. The continuous, unchallenged use of land by individuals and the recognition of individuals' land rights by the group mean that indigenous people in such systems do not face the problem of insecurity of tenure. Likewise, access to land and security is potentially guaranteed to those who do not belong to the group. Security of tenure not only relates to land use, but also to the transfer of and investment in land (Kasanga, 1999).

Hidden under the issues of chieftaincy and title for land are deep resentments based on perceptions of political inequalities, economic, social and cultural prejudices, and competition for limited resources and power. More so, the period of multiparty politics in Ghana has made population a sensitive issue for politicians. Some of the acephalous ethnic groups' population has been increasing rapidly, and this has made them to demand for more representation in politics at national and regional levels. This is threatening traditional authority in the area, which is based on ethnicity and control of land (Lentz & Nugent, 2000).

The religious composition in the northern part of Ghana can be largely associated with ethnicity. Ethnic and religious affiliations in the north are very strong and they have been sources of tension which often leads to a crystallization of identities (Linde & Naylor, 1999). To complicate issues further, religion also played a role in reinforcing the fault lines in the ethnic conflicts. Majority of the acephalous groups are predominately Christian and

have close relations with the Western churches and missionaries, while the chiefly groups are primarily Muslim (Assefa, 2000).

Again, despite isolated cases of violence due to differences in religion, identity, farming and other cultural practices, the formation of tribal youth associations in the northern part of Ghana creates fertile grounds for fermenting of ethnic and tribal conflicts in the region. The 1970s witnessed the formation of ethnic based youth associations, whose activities are believed to be the major factors that led to the violent conflicts in 1981, 1994 and 1995 (Skalnik, 1983; Linde & Naylor, 1999; Brukum, 1999; Oquaye, 2000).

Indeed, one of these conflicts, the struggle between Gonja and Nawuri in Kpandai in April and June 1991, was directly sparked off by the activities of a youth association, namely the announcement of the Gonjaland Youth Association in 1991 that they wished to hold their annual convention in Kpandai, which the Nawuri regarded as having been their own land since time immemorial and in no sense a part of Gonjaland, the area ruled by the Gonja paramount chief.

In addition, cultural diversity leads to conflicts. Culture is a complex concept, and there is no single explanation of how it is transferred and works, and there are within-culture variance problems. An understanding of the relationship between cultural diversity and conflict and peace therefore requires clarity on historical and structural aspects of culture, conflict and the state, within specific geo-political situations and regional contexts and beyond, and the relationship between these aspects. Research highlights the following key factors in conflict in Africa: Colonial legacies of division of cultural groups in different states, the emphasis on enforced nation-building with a

single dominant cultural identity to the detriment of cultural identities of different groups, the failure of nation-building through democratic processes, internal and regional economic and institutional fragmentation and lack of economic cooperation between ethnic groups, use of ethnic and cultural difference for political support by the elite in power, and the high prevalence of the use of cultural identity as emotional mobilizing instrument in conflict (Croucher, 2008).

According to Autesserre (2010), local violence in post-civil war contexts occurs due to ‘micro-level rivalries over land, resources and power’. Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak, and Bui-Wrzosinska (2011) supported this and concluded that the proximate and possible causes of intractable social conflicts for example, competition over scarce resources, ideological differences, protection of personal or group identity mark a more fundamental tendency for the parties to the conflict to become locked into a destructive pattern of thought and action that resists change.

### **Actors of ethnic conflict**

In today’s contemporary world, it is almost impossible to find an ethnically homogenous state. The relationships that exist between ethnic groups are also rarely harmonious and without any form of friction. This means that, it would be out of place or equally wrong to consider ethnic groups as living in a constant rivalry for physical survival overwhelmed by fear of mutual annihilation. Though differences may exist but that should not serve as basis for violent conflict.

Obviously, parties or actors are important for the emergence and continuation of the conflict and therefore we need to consider and gather information related to the parties. Knowing the history, interest, and motivations of the actors in conflict and their role in the formation of conflict is important. Actors' perception as well as their feelings and emotions are important when dealing with them. Parties' approaches and tactics in dealing with conflict are also important bellicose, contentious, bargaining, deliberation, dialogue. Wallensteen (2002) contends that parties and actors to the conflict are important for conflict resolution and peace-processes. That conflict is transformed from violent to non-violent behaviour by the parties that are involved in the dispute and not by other people.

The people involved in conflicts play many roles. The disputants are the first parties in conflict. They are referred to as primary parties who have keen interest in the conflict. They differ in the directness of their involvement and the importance of the outcome for them. The actors of the conflict in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts for that matter are Gonja, Nawuri, Nchumburu, and Konkomba.

There are two basic parties in every conflict. These are primary and secondary parties. Primary parties are those who oppose one another, are using fighting behaviour, and have a direct stake in the outcome of the conflict. Secondary parties are those who have an indirect stake in the outcome. They often form allies with primary parties or they are sympathizers of primary parties but are not direct adversaries (Best, 2006).

These interest groups are most often divided into moderates, hardliners, external supporters, conflict profiteers, and spoilers. Some of them

may be acting as arbitrators, or dialogue facilitators, mediators, and others may be by-standers. As conflicts become increasingly polarised however, the by-standers are being forced to join one side or the other, and polarizing the conflict even further. They complicate conflict situations because they are not easily identified with any party (Best, 2006).

Furthermore, in this era of globalisation and democracy, many elites and politicians have complicated issues leading to mobilisation of local people against each other. The elites and politicians in the communities are those behind the screen fueling and manipulating the local people into conflict. This is an undeniable fact though, contested.

### **Effective conflict management and resolution**

Conflict resolution and peace-making and building processes are very complex, time and resource consuming. Success stories are extremely rare (Kaufman, 2006). On the road to peace, there are often more failures than successes. One reason may be the assumption that leaders make rational choices about the costs of war and the benefits of peace (Kaufman, 2006). Conflict management is the art of appropriate intervention to achieve peaceful settlements of issues, through those who are powerful and having the power and resources to bring pressure on the conflicting parties in order to induce them to settle. It is also the art of designing appropriate institutions to guide the inevitable conflict into appropriate channels. In the words of Bloomfield and Reilly (1998, p. 18):

Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods

for removing conflict, it addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference.

Zartman (2000, p. 7) contends that “conflict management practices are considered traditional if they have been practised for an extended period and have evolved within African societies rather than being the product of external importation”. Brukum (2004), on his part, views conflict resolution as the practice of transforming relationships as a means of ironing out the underlying issues in conflict. It explains the process of changing the drama of conflict from its tragic course to a more comedic or peaceful course.

Cultural diversity can be mobilised in conflict resolution and peace-making processes. Diversity can be used for more cross-balanced negotiations; cultural diversity seems to be promoted as something inherently good, a common heritage of humanity, a source for innovation, exchange and creativity, and an important source of identity. Culture itself is a complex concept, and there is no single explanation of how it is transferred and works, and there are within-culture variance problems (Ross, 1997).

However, the issue of cultural diversity keeps emerging in analyses of conflict, particularly in its relation to emotion-laden symbolic processes (Kaufman, 2006). In addition, cultural diversity has a strong local flavour, and it is risky to generalise. This also explains the tension between cultural rights as universal human rights and local phenomena and practices. Yet, the need

for African peace making processes highlights the imperative to investigate the African nature of conflict, its cultural identity.

An understanding of the relationship between cultural diversity and conflict and peace therefore requires clarity on historical and structural aspects of culture, conflict and the state, within specific geo-political situations and regional contexts and beyond, and the relationship between these aspects. Such understanding may enable stakeholders in peace-making processes to apply principles and methods in practical and sustainable ways (Zartman, 2000).

Recognition of cultural identities through proportional representation in institutional arrangements easily entrenches cultural identities and does not motivate for national integration. This may increase tensions, rather than resolve them (Kotzé, 2002). Despite its vagueness as a concept, culture exists as a determining factor in society, structuring people's vision of 'others' in terms of history, traditions, language, customs, values and products. It is for this reason that culture has become a key concept in development, democratisation and nation-building. Culture influences ideas about community, common identity, authority and conflict (Ross, 1997). According to Ross (1997), there are five ways by which culture influences ideas about community.

In the first place, culture frames the context in which politics occur: culture offers an account of political behaviour through shared worldviews; understanding a party's culture leads to better understanding of motives and ways of thinking. Also, culture links individual and collective identities, based on identification, a sense of common fate, linking individual and group.

Common identity is one precondition for mobilisation of communities (Ellingsen, 2000). Cultural attachments are connected to very primary emotions about identity, which may convince people to participate in conflict despite general normative objections (Kaufman, 2006). Cultural attachment can be used for all types of engagement in conflict, from funding by supporters in the diaspora to recruitment for participation in conflict (Weinstein, 2002).

Again, culture defines the boundaries and organises actions within and between groups. Cultural norms regarding inter-group relations can be elaborate and ambiguous, and cultural learning involves messages about groups' motives, expectations about their behaviour, and how one is to act towards members of each out-group. We cannot ignore the role that culture can play in enabling people to resolve their disputes and to strengthen the ties that bind them together. People derive their sense of meaning from their culture. These notions feed into the attitudes and values that we choose to embrace, which in turn determine how we interact with each other. Cultural attitudes and values, therefore, provide the foundation for the social norms by which people live (Abu-Nimer, 2000).

Added to these is also the fact that, culture provides a framework for interpreting the actions and motives of others. This framework is often manipulated by leaders to ensure compliance with their own interpretation and strategic direction. Not all, but culture provides political resources for political organisation and mobilisation, by defining group distinctiveness, communication means and messages, offering decision making mechanisms, providing authority, ideology and discipline.



Analysing these influences can strengthen our understanding of cultural identity in conflict and war, particularly in the African context, with its history of cultural ascription, racial discrimination and divide and rule strategies. In particular, understanding cultural diversity can explain in many cases why conflict resolution initiatives succeed or fail (Coleman, 2003).

Some conflicts resist change, grinding on and on for months, years, decades, even generations without amicable resolutions. Although these types of conflicts are relatively uncommon, they can cause disproportionate amounts of misery and instability, wreaking havoc on families, communities, nations, and at times entire regions of the globe (Coleman, 2011). Such conflicts tend to respond to direct attempts at intervention such as conciliatory gestures, mediation, or even threats of violence in odd and unpredictable ways.

### **Traditional conflict management mechanisms**

The assertion that Africa is the least developed continent of the world yet one with the highest number of conflicts in recent times, is not only true for Africa. Beyond the claim that Ghana enjoys relative peace and stability compared to its neighbours in the West African sub-region, there are pockets of persistent protracted communal conflicts that thwart efforts towards poverty reduction and accelerated growth and development in northern Ghana (Tonah, 2007).

Given the intensity and violent nature of the conflicts in northern Ghana, especially those between the Mamprusi and Kusasi in Bawku, the Nanumba and Konkomba in Nanumba North District, Gonja and Nawuri in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts and the Dagbon crisis over the Dagbon

Kingship, it is enough for one to draw conclusion that conflicts undoubtedly, retard progress of development and need prudent means in managing and resolving them.

Colonialism did not only destroy the basis upon which Africans could define themselves, but where it could, it also co-opted the indigenous structures and mechanisms of governance and dispute resolution to serve the interests of the colonial administration. In Africa, indigenous traditions with regard to governing and resolving disputes in societies were therefore corrupted by the centralising power of colonialism. Africa is not a monolithic continent; there is a multiplicity of ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups, so it is not possible to generalise the extent to which cultural traditions do or do not have progressive norms and principles which can inform approaches to building peace and social solidarity.

In some parts of African continent, various traditional mechanisms have been employed in resolving communal conflicts. There are various indigenous traditions for peace building that can teach us a lot about healing and reconciliation, which create the basis for re-establishing social solidarity (Zartman, 2000). In the post-conflict era in Mozambique for example, traditional healing and reconciliation practices were used to enable combatants, particularly child soldiers, to be re-integrated into their communities. In Chad, Niger and Ghana, traditional institutions have been used in the past to address low intensity conflicts.

More so, in Northern Somalia, also known as Somaliland, traditional leadership institutions and methods for resolving disputes were used to bring together the clans and create a legislature and government. By drawing upon

Somali tradition and combining these traditional structures with modern institutions of governance like the parliament, Somaliland, with its capital in Hergesia, has succeeded in maintaining a degree of relative peace and stability.

Also in Rwanda, the government used the traditional justice and reconciliation system known as *gacaca* to enable it to try and judge some of those who are accused of having been among the perpetrators of the genocide in 1994. The interesting lesson to learn from this *gacaca* system is that it is largely organised on the basis of local community involvement. The local community is involved in encouraging the perpetrators to acknowledge what they have done and the victims are involved in determining what reparations need to be made so that the perpetrator can be re-integrated into the community.

There have been criticisms of the way that *gacaca* tribunals have been implemented. This is bound to happen because the use of indigenous traditional approaches to administer justice in a modern nation state is uncharted ground. But the fact that the Rwandese government has resorted to using the *gacaca* approach is the most clear illustration that there is a role for African indigenous approaches in efforts to consolidate peace and restore social solidarity in this modern times.

Another significant African indigenous approach to resolving conflicts is the *Ubuntu* practice among the countries of East, Central and Southern Africa. In terms of its definition, *ubuntu* tries to articulate what it means to be human. In the societies found in these regions of Africa a person who possesses *ubuntu* is a person who is considered to be generous, hospitable,

friendly, caring and compassionate (Ofuho, 1999). The idea behind this world-view of *ubuntu* is that 'a person is a person through other people'. A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others and does not feel threatened when others achieve because he or she recognises that they belong to a greater whole (Tutu, 1999). The lesson for peace building from this tradition is that by adopting and internalising the principles of *ubuntu*, people can contribute towards creating healthy relationships based on the recognition that within the web of humanity everyone is linked to everyone else.

More specifically, it is a cultural world-view that tries to show how people relate with each other. This is seen among the Nguni group of languages in Southern Africa. This notion of *ubuntu* sheds light on the importance of peace-making through the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between peoples (Maphisa, 1994). This creates opportunity for people to be forgiven and to forgive others.

Also, it serves as a base for judging people and suggests guidelines for resolving conflicts that will promote reconciliation and peace building. In short, it can 'culturally re-inform' our practical efforts to build peace and heal our traumatised communities. Critical reflection and re-appraisal of this notion of *ubuntu* can serve to re-emphasise the essential unity of humanity and gradually promote attitudes and values based on the sharing of resources and on cooperation and collaboration in the resolution of our common problems (Khoza, 1994; Maphisa, 1994).

In many African countries where land related conflicts has occurred, customary land conflict resolution mechanism has proved to be an effective response to these problems (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001). Customary land conflict

resolution is usually based on consensus-building, mediation and arbitration. Having a flexible, informal, confidential environment is essential for maintaining peace within customary communities (Paterson, 2001), scaling down or avoiding litigation, and reducing costs. On the whole, decisions relating to conflicts resolved using customary procedures bind the parties, although such decisions can be appealed in higher customary courts.

Added to the above, is also a fact that a range of traditional and faith-based conflict resolution mechanisms have provided means for conflict resolution among South Sudan's various ethnic groups. The mechanisms employed by these bodies have served to minimise conflict in Wanglei and South Sudan. This has been done by dealing with proximate causes of ethnic conflict and in part by mitigating the risk associated with wounded pride. With time these traditional mechanisms have become ineffective in this community, partly because traditional authority has been undermined (Williams & Denson, 2012).

The traditional conflict mechanisms that function in the region of South Sudan can be distinguished from the emerging justice system of the state insofar as they work in harmony with the local social hierarchy, cultural norms and traditional practices. Traditional courts are comprised of tribal elders who arbitrate disputes based on customary law at the village or county level. They are most often convened to arbitrate extraordinary disputes among people in the community. The customary laws used in the adjudication of the cases are seldom codified and are flexible enough to allow elders the possibility of adjusting rulings in order to accommodate particular circumstances (Jok, 2011). One feature of this relatively flexible approach is

that it provides elders with more space to promote reconciliation between parties to a dispute, rather than simply determining who is wrong and who is right.

The Dinka word for trial is 'luk', which also means 'to persuade' and as Francis Deng explains, 'Litigation among the Dinka is designed more to reconcile the adversaries than it is to find a right or wrong side' (Deng, 1984, p. 113). This approach has important implications for conflict management and resolution as far as the potential of creating winners and losers is limited and, as such, the possibility of a court decision wounding pride is minimised.

Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms also mitigate the risk associated with wounded pride by awarding compensation to victims' families. For example, when someone is murdered the killer's family must pay the victim's family 50 cattle for a man and 30 for a woman. Cattle are both a source of wealth and pride and the compensation in cattle therefore serves to offset both the economic cost of losing a family member, as well as part of the grievance that relates to the feeling of wounded pride experienced by the victim's family. As a result, it appears that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms function at least in part in order to redress pride imbalances (Jok, 2011).

Thus, when the system enters an 'at risk state', traditional conflict resolution mechanisms reduce the 'pride deficit' experienced by an individual or a group, thereby helping return the system to a 'normal state' and reducing the likelihood of violent confrontation. In this manner, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms provide an alternative to violence as a means of

restoring pride equilibrium between two competing groups (Williams & Denson, 2012).

The argument here is that, once traditional mechanisms have been used to resolve ethnic conflicts in some part of the African continent, similar cultural and traditional mechanisms can be used in Ghana. Hence, the need to examine and implement traditional mechanisms in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts.

### **Conceptual framework for ethnic conflict**

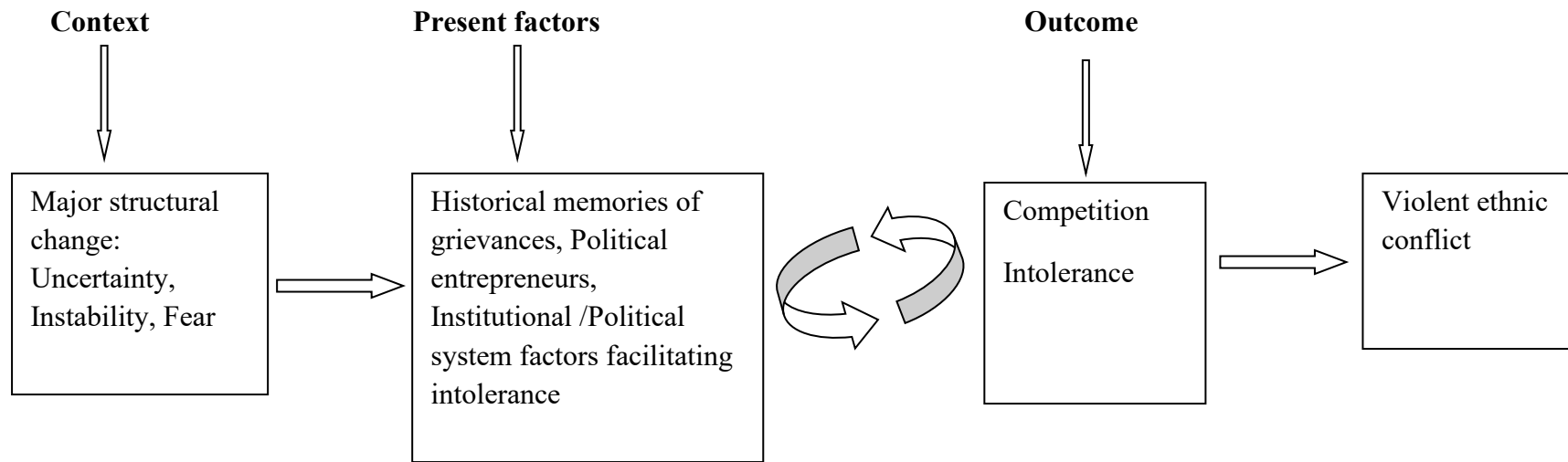
Developing conceptual framework for the study of ethnic conflict is necessary, so that we may get a better understanding of the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution. This would help to create a more comprehensive basis for peace-building and post-conflict development in ethnically divided societies in a country. In literature, some competing theories such as primordialist, instrumentalist, and constructivist views were used to explain the causes of ethnic conflicts. Jalali and Lipset (1996) argue that, given the variety of ethnic conflicts and their dynamic and fluid qualities, no single factor can provide a comprehensive explanation and resolution to such phenomenon.

It is not easy attempting to develop a comprehensive approach for understanding a phenomenon that manifests in various contexts across the globe. Rather than offering a comprehensive theory of ethnic conflict, it is better to explore some of the existing explanations and approaches and the ways and extent to which these approaches are complementary in helping to construct a broader conceptual framework for understanding the complexities

of violent inter-ethnic conflict. For the purpose of this study, a conceptual framework proposed by Blagojevic (2004) for understanding violent ethnic conflict that combines the various approaches is used.

Blagojevic (2004) argue that ethnic conflict occurs when a particular set of factors and conditions converge: a major structural crisis; presence of historical memories of inter-ethnic grievances; institutional factors that promote ethnic intolerance; manipulation of historical memories by political entrepreneurs to evoke emotions such as fear, resentment and hate toward the “other”; and an inter-ethnic competition over resources and rights. A sequentially ordered chain of causality among these factors and the relationship between each theory and the factors that contribute to ethnic conflict is illustrated in Figure 1.





**Figure 1: Causes of ethnic conflict**

Source: Blagojevic (2004).

Though each ethnic conflict has its own unique characteristics and in different contexts, some of these elements will be more prominent than others, but all of them lead to conditions necessary for ethnic conflict to occur. The primordialist approach from the framework helps in explaining the role of emotions and the conflict potential of ethnicity. The institutional, political entrepreneurs and competition over resources approaches explain how the interaction of institutional and political factors with ethnic emotions leads to ethnification, ethnic intolerance, competition, and eventually violent conflict.

Ethnically diverse societies carry various degrees of conflict potential. Ethnic emotions, rooted in hatred historical memories of grievances, are at the core of conflict potential. Ethnicity, as Horowitz (1985) argues, embodies an element of emotional intensity that can be readily aroused when the group's interests are thought to be at stake. When there is a sudden major structural change in a community of diverse ethnic groups it may lead to political and institutional disarrangements. When these institutional mechanisms are no longer in place, it will create a context of instability and uncertainty about the political, social, and economic future of the communities. A situation of this nature facilitates a manifestation of emotional antagonisms among various ethnic groups (Rothchild, 1996).

Political entrepreneurs, in their quest for power, mobilize ethnic constituencies by promoting inter-ethnic animosities using the rhetorical weapons of fear, blame, and hate. This results in an inter-ethnic competition over scarce resources and rights, which is accompanied by a reconstruction of social categories of inclusion and exclusion, ethnification and ethnic intolerance (Murat, 1997).

The primordialist approach from the framework helps explain the role of emotions in ethnic conflict and the conflict potential of ethnicity. While ethnic emotions appear to be primordial, they are a socially and politically constructed reality drawn from the historical memories of past injustices and grievances. Beverly (1998) notes that institutions play important roles in regulating the level of potential ethnic conflict and ethnicity. Institution either facilitates or obstructs inter-group cooperation. Furthermore, whether or not identity politics turns into violent conflict depends on the functioning of state institutions. This means that where identity politics is practiced, states' institutions can channel it into peaceful political competition as long as they can make credible commitments to shape and uphold agreements made among culturally defined political actors.

Explaining the framework, the instability and uncertainty that result from a major structural change and the institutional inability to regulate inter-ethnic relations provides a perfect condition for conflict. This allows political entrepreneurs to manipulate ethnic emotions in order to mobilize groups for their own political purposes. Politicians exploit ethnic differences by drawing upon historical memories grievances, injustice and "whip up" hatred in order to gain or strengthen their power. The dynamic that develops between political entrepreneurs and their followers causes an inter-ethnic security dilemma.

Kaufman (1996) explains this situation that, as belligerent leaders stoke mass hostility; hostile masses support belligerent leaders, and both together threaten other groups, creating a security dilemma which in turn encourages even more mass hostility and leadership belligerence. Political entrepreneurs manipulate fears and uncertainties of ethnic groups they

represent and are able to awaken a consciousness of common grievances and a desire to rectify these wrongs. They help create and reinforce ethnic polarisation in the society. This conceptual framework is used to support the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the procedures and techniques that were employed to conduct the study. It comprises a discussion of the study area, the research design, the study population; the sample size and sampling procedure, the research instrument used to collect the data, data collection procedure, and methods employed in data analysis.

#### **Study Area**

The study area comprised East Gonja and Kpandai districts. The districts were one until 2008 when the Kpandai District was carved out of the East Gonja. It was established under the Legislative Instrument (LI) 1845 of 2008.

#### *East Gonja District*

East Gonja District is located at the south-eastern part of the Northern Region of Ghana. The district lies between Latitude 8°N & 9.29°N and, Longitude 0.29°E and 1.26°W. It shares boundaries with Yendi Municipality and Tamale Metropolis to the North, Central Gonja District to the West, Nanumba-North, Nanumba-South and Kpandai districts to the East, and the Volta and Brong Ahafo regions to the South. The district has a total land area of 10,787 square kilometres. The district occupies about 15.3 per cent of the total landmass of the Northern Region. The district has the largest land size among the districts in the Northern Region (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2010).

The East Gonja District is located in the Tropical Continental climatic zone with the mid-day sun always overhead. As result, temperatures are fairly high ranging between 29°C and 40°C. Maximum temperature in the area is usually recorded in April, towards the end of the dry season. Minimum temperatures are also recorded around December-January, during the Harmattan period. Just like any part of West Africa, the district comes under the influence of the wet South-West Monsoon and the dry North-East Trades winds which are associated with the rainy season and the dry harmattan conditions respectively.

The rainfall pattern in East Gonja is characterised by irregularity and variability in terms of timing of onset, duration and total amount of rainfall. This has been a limiting factor affecting crop production in the district. However, the district has one main rainy season which is sufficient to support and sustain plant life. The total annual rainfall ranges between 1112.7mm to 1734.6mm.

The vegetation in the district is the Guinea Savannah Woodland with few grooves. The tree cover is relatively dense, compared to the rest of the Northern Region. However, the tree cover of the area has been destroyed through bad farming practices, intensive harvesting of the trees for fuel wood and charcoal burning, and also activities of the Fulani herdsmen.

The tree cover consists of semi-deciduous trees such as Dawadawa trees, Shea-nut trees; Acacia; among others. In addition, high grasses that characterised savannah areas extensively spread throughout the district. A large number of both plant and animal species inhabit the natural environment.

At the extreme southeast, the vegetation is dense with some semi-deciduous trees.

There are a number of large water bodies that flow throughout the district. These include the Volta Lake and the Dakar River both of which run across the district. A number of streams, dams, valleys, hills and mountains are also found at various locations in the district. The confluence of the Volta and some of its major tributaries including the White Volta and the Dakar River are found in the district. There is good flow of water from these rivers, which are collected and stored in the Volta Lake. This provides the potentials for water transport, irrigation development and fishing activities.

The soils in the district are classified into three major groupings. These include: Alluvial soils classified as Gleysols, which is found around the Volta Lake, particularly in the drawn-down zone of the Volta Lake, in the dry season. The soils along the Lake are medium textured and moderately well drained in parts. The soil is potentially fertile. The bulk of the district is covered by ground water laterites, developed mainly from Voltaian Sandstone materials, highly concretional with frequent exposures of iron pan and boulders. There are, however, deeper and slightly better soils in some locations, which could support shifting cultivation patterns. The other major soil group is the relatively fertile Savannah Ochrosols. This soil group is moderately well drained with good water retention. It occupies the Northern tip of the district bordering Tamale Metropolis.

The East Gonja District is linked to the adjoining districts and regions by a number of major trunk roads. These include the Tamale-Makango road, Salaga-Bimbilla road, Bimbilla-Kpandai road and Salaga-Kpandai road. In

addition, there are a large number of feeder roads linking the main marketing centres with their rural hinterlands. The road network is generally good but the conditions of most of the roads are poor. There is also large number of access roads that needs to be developed to further open the district.

On feeder roads, the total network in the district is 612.2km out of which 435.6km is engineered and 135.10km partially engineered. The un-engineered network is 45.50.4km. The district lies at the confluence of the Volta and some of its major tributaries including the White Volta and the Dakar River. There is good flow of water from these rivers, which are collected and stored in the Volta Lake. This provides the potentials for water transport, irrigation development and fishing activities. East Gonja also has an airstrip located at Nkwanta near Salaga that support some level of air transport including helicopter and Fokker to the district.

#### *Kpandai District*

The Kpandai District was carved out of the East Gonja District in 2008. The district is established under the Legislative Instrument (LI) 1845 of 2008. It was formally inaugurated on the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 in the capital Kpandai. The district can be located at the South-Eastern corner of the Northern Region of Ghana and lies between latitudes 8°N and 9.29°N and longitudes 0.29°W and 1.26°W. It is bordered to the north by Nanumba South District, East Gonja to the west, Krachi West District to the South-West, Nkwanta North District to the east and Pru District in Brong Ahafo Region to the south.



The district has a total surface area of 1,772.04 square kilometres with water covering about 5 percent. The district is strategically located at the central point between the northern part and southern part of the eastern corridor of Ghana. The district can therefore, take advantage of its strategic location to be a gateway to both the Southern and Northern Ghana. Similarly, strategic facilities of national importance aimed at wider coverage for both the southern and northern Ghana can be conveniently located in the district to achieve the desired results. Being strategically located in the transitional zone, the district has the advantage of experiencing mixed climatic conditions that have both positive and adverse implications for the district's development.

The district lies in the Tropical Continental Climatic Zone with the mid-day sun always overhead. As a result, temperatures are fairly high ranging between 29°C and 40°C. Maximum temperature is usually recorded in April, towards the end of the dry season. Minimum temperatures are also recorded around December-January, during the harmattan period.

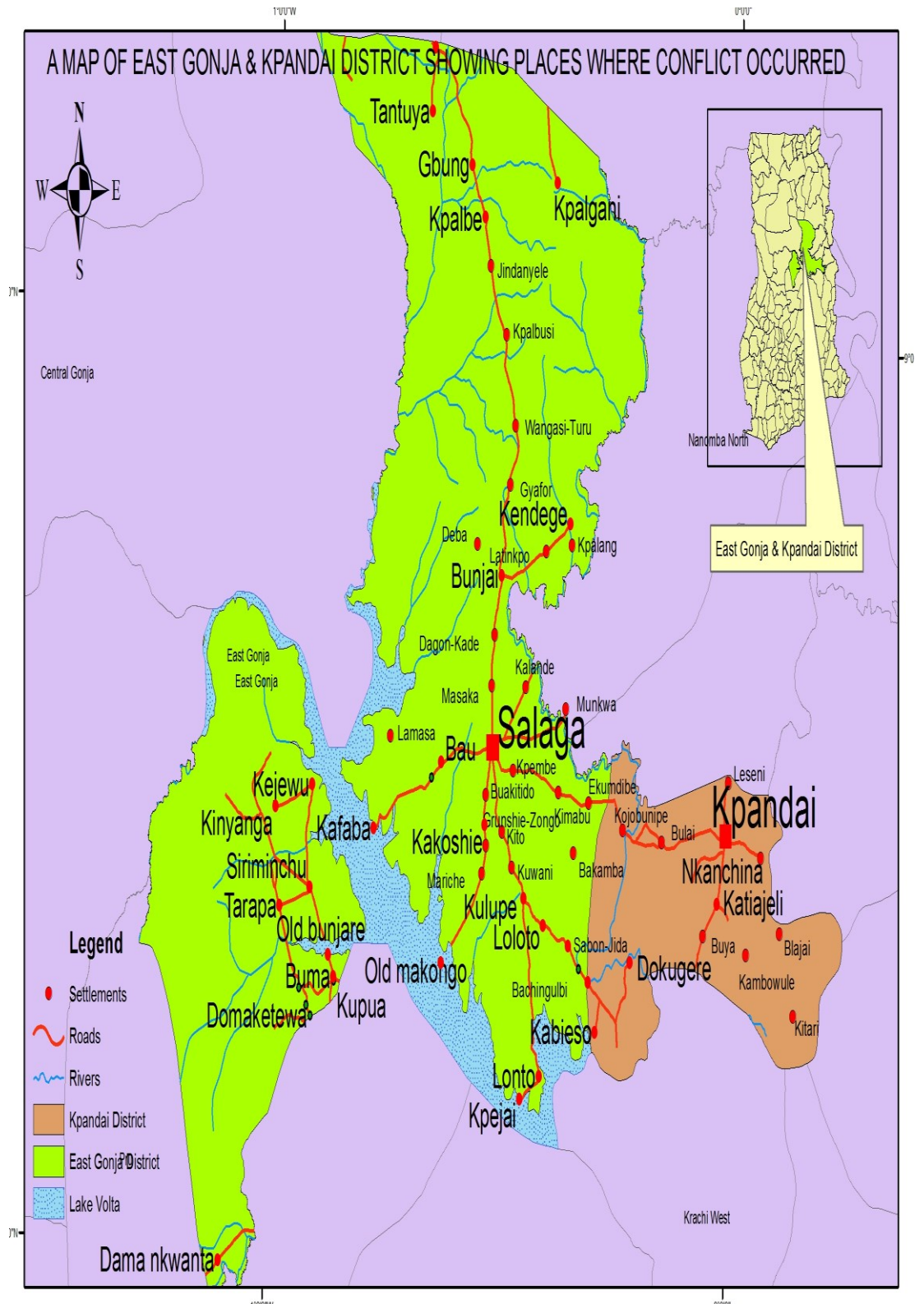
The rainfall pattern in the district is characterized by irregularity and variability in terms of timing of onset, duration and total amount of rainfall. This has been the key limiting factor affecting crop production in the district. The total annual rainfall ranges between 1150mm to 1500mm. This climatic pattern is good for food crop production and to some extent, forest development.

However, the concentration of the rains in three months period affects farming in the district. For most parts of the year, when the rains are off, usually declared as "off farming", the people spend most of this period idling. Similarly, the pattern affects accessibility to certain communities as most

roads become flooded during the peak of the raining season rendering them impassable or unmotorable.

The district is located in the transitional zone between the Northern Savannah and the moist semi deciduous forest. The natural vegetation in the district is the Guinea Savannah Woodland, which has evolved from climatic conditions and modified substantially by human activities. There are few grooves, which have been preserved over the years. The tree cover consists of semi- deciduous trees such as oil palm trees; raffia palm; acacia; shea-nut trees; dawadawa trees among others.

In addition, tall grasses that characterize Guinea Savannah areas are extensively spread throughout the district. A large number of both plant and animal species inhabit the natural environment. The tree cover is relatively dense, compared to the rest of the districts in Northern Region. However, intensive harvesting of the trees for fuel wood and charcoal production, and bad attitude of the Fulani herdsmen are fast reducing the tree cover.



**Figure 2: A map of East Gonja and Kpandai districts**

Source: Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC (2013)

## Research Design

The method best suited for this research is the qualitative approach. In the view of Silverman (2006) qualitative research design include analysis of words and images rather than numbers, observation rather than experiment, meaning, behaviour and hypothesis-generating research rather than hypothesis testing. According to Holiday (2002), qualitative research is increasingly being used by many social scientists because of the growing recognition that it is insufficient to rely on quantitative survey and statistics to understand human affairs. It has become more important to attempt to delve deep into the subjective qualities that govern human behaviour in the society.

More so, in the social sciences, statistical quantitative statements are subject to different interpretations and may sometimes be used for political spin. Qualitative method, on the other hand, allows a researcher to study selected themes and events into detail and effectively. Information gathered is not limited to a single case or predetermined by results; it provides detailed results which quantitative strategies could not have provided (Patton, 2002).

The study employed the case study approach. Yin (2003) identifies case study research to be the best strategy if the research questions are explanatory, when the research is on contemporary issue and when behavioural events within the research environment occurs within a real world context and outside the control of the researcher. A case study is empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in a natural setting when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not easily understood. Considering the nature of ethnic conflicts and the sort of unstructured

environment they occur involving social, cultural and organisational issues make the case study ideal for the research.

Yin (2003) further distinguished between single and multiple case approaches. The single case research methodology is the basis of making this assessment. The choice of using single case to investigate the phenomenon is by virtue of its ability to enable the researcher get closer, have an in-depth insight and a better exposure to its deep structure and enabling a right description. Case studies allow variation and individual differences to be fully recognised and characterised. Regardless of how the analysis is done, the method helped to describe the results in detail, and holistically without ambiguity.

The choice of the research design by the researcher was that, he took into consideration the view of Robson (1993) that, the choice of any research design for any study and strategy used must be appropriate for answering the research questions formulated. Furthermore, the reason for the choice of this methodology rested on Mason (1996) suggestion that as a researcher, the method you are using should be the one that would help you in identifying your data sources and methods of generation the data; the feasibility of the information, and whether the chosen method could assist in answering the research questions posed in a logical manner.

### **Target population**

The target population for the study included all the stakeholders in the two districts interested in finding lasting solutions to the protracted ethnic conflicts in the area. They include chiefs, opinion leaders, youth leaders,

governmental and non-government agencies interested in peace building and development. These people are those who are always involved directly in ethnic conflict management process and are abreast with relevant information and knowledge in conflict issues within the area. Most of these people have first-hand information relevant to the study. This was one of the basis for which the researcher targeted them for information.

### **Sampling technique**

The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select the respondents for the study. The rationale for the choice of the sample technique was to select respondents who are abreast with relevant information and knowledge in the issue under study. The sampling was done based on certain strategies. These were theory-based and critical case sampling techniques.

The theory-based was used to select respondents on the basis of their manifestation in ethnic conflict management and resolution in the study area. Critical case sampling was used to select most important sites and localities that could yield information which would have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge (Patton, 1990). This method permits logical generalisation and maximum application of information. The selected sites used for the study included Salaga, Kpembu, Kakoshie, Kitoe, Makango, Grunshie-Zongo, Kuwani, Kulpi, Kpandai, Kambowule, Balai, Ekumudipe, Sabonjida, Lonto, and Loloto.

### **Sources of data**

The main sources of data for the study were primary and secondary sources. With regard to the primary data, interview guides were used to collect

data from respondents (chiefs, opinion leaders, youth leaders and leaders of civil society organisations). For the secondary data, relevant documents, books, journals, internet search, libraries, publications were depended on for more detailed information. The secondary data provided the researcher with more information on the issue under study.

### **Data collection instruments**

In-depth interview guides were used to interview the respondents. The interviews gave the researcher the chance to read, interpret and redirect the questions to solicit for right information. There were four types of interview guides: the chiefs, opinion leaders, youth leaders and leaders of civil society organizations as provided in the appendices. For each type, several questions were designed in line with the research question to elicit for the most important information from the respondents. The questions were structured in a way that would help to gather the necessary information needed for the study.

### **Data collection**

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, in order to enable him secure trust from the respondents. The researcher was welcome by the authorities of the communities and the respondents. The consent of the respondents was sought first for them to let the researcher know their less busy time when they are prepared to grant him interview. In order to get respondents to respond to the instrument on time, the researcher made an initial contact explaining the

objective of the project in a systematic manner and soliciting the respondents' cooperation.

The respondents were contacted in their various localities to explain to them the rationale and purpose of the study and appealing to them to participate in the study. Rigorous procedures were followed in selecting respondents for the study. This was done gradually until the required sample was obtained for the study. Through the qualitative interviews the researcher gained a better understanding of the role of traditional authorities in conflict management.

In all, 28 respondents were interviewed. This was made up of 12 youth leaders, 10 opinion leaders from various communities, three community chiefs, one official each from the District Co-ordinating Council in Salaga and Kpandai respectively, and one leader of Civil Society Organisation. The response from these people was used for the analysis. The collection of the primary data took two months, July and August, 2013.

Secondary documents were also reviewed to make up any differences that might have occurred in the process of the data collection. Written materials and other documents from organisational, clinical, or programme records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries, letters were used.

**Table 1: List of people interviewed**

Respondents	Area
1. Youth Leader	Salaga
2. Youth Leader	Kakoshie
3. Youth Leader	Kitoe
4. Youth Leader	Makango



**Table 1: Continued**

5. Youth Leader	Kuwani
6. Youth Leader	Kpandai
7. Youth Leader	Kambowule
8. Youth Leader	Balai
9. Youth Leader	Ekumudipe
10. Youth Leader	Sabonjida
11. Youth Leader	Lonto
12. Youth Leader	Loloto
13. Opinion Leader	Kpembi
14. Opinion Leader	Loloto
15. Opinion Leader	Grunshie-Zongo
16. Opinion Leader	Kpandai
17. Opinion Leader	Kulpi
18. Opinion Leader	Makango
19. Opinion Leader	Balai
20. Opinion Leader	Lonto
21. Opinion Leader	Salaga
22. Opinion Leader	Ekumudipe
23. Community Chief	Kpembi
24. Community Chief	Ekumudipe
25. Community Chief	Kambowule
26. District Co-ordinating Director	Kpandai
27. District Co-ordinating Director	Salaga
28. Civil Society Organisation	Salaga

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source: Field data, July-August, 2013

### **Data processing and analysis**

The analysis of the data provided answers to the research questions and research objectives. The qualitative data analysis therefore involved gaining comprehensive understanding and analytical descriptions of statements made by respondents.

The written and recorded data were transcribed and put into various themes for easy analysis. The contents, case and inductive analyses were adopted in organising the data for analysis. The content analysis was used to code, identify patterns, themes, categorize patterns, and classify the data. Care was taken to notice convergence and divergence in coding and classifying. Case analysis was used to organise the data. This involved organising the data by specific cases, individuals, groups, sites, and communities for in-depth study and comparison. The case analysis allowed the researcher to understand each case as a unique, holistic entity. Each case represented and was understood as an idiosyncratic manifestation of the evaluation phenomenon of interest.

Inductive analysis is a process which leads to the discovering of patterns, themes, and categories in the process of data analysis. Results are gotten from the data through careful analysis by the researcher. Once patterns, themes, and/or categories have been established through inductive analysis, confirmatory statements are now drawn.

### **Limitations of the study**

In conducting a study of this nature, the researcher encountered certain limiting factors that might affect the validity and reliability of the results of the

study. A crucial limiting factor was inability of the researcher to employ multiple instruments to collect varied data from the respondents. The use of interview guides alone was not adequate enough since such instruments are liable to subject motivation (McMillan, 1996).

Also, due to the fact that the respondents were not located at one place, the researcher had to travel distances to the various places to establish rapport and conducted the interviews. Accessibility was a problem because it was rainy season and most of the roads were not in good condition for transportation. The researcher encountered problem in collecting the data because some of the respondents were not willing to grant him interview. Patton (2001) noted that interview data could have limitations that include distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and the emotional state of the interviewee and interviewer at the time of the interview. The data could also be subject to erroneous recall, reactivity of the interviewee, and self-serving responses (Patton 2002, p. 306). Information gathered from interviews was limited to some respondents. Perspectives of other respondents could add greater depth to the understanding of this complex phenomenon.

### **Ethical Issues**

Ethical issues are very important in any good research. For this reason, every good academic research is the one that is done taken into considerations the ethical issues in the study. Such a research is done in an ethical manner, and this must be in line with both moral and practical issues in a research (Oliver, 2003, Christians, 2005).

The consent of the respondents was sought before the study was carried out. Letters were written to the various respondents seeking permission and their consent to carry out the study. All the stakeholders and the participants were informed about the aims, purposes, likely publication of the findings of the study. Assurance was given to the participants that a copy of the final work would be made available for them upon their request.

The participants for the study were assured of anonymity and confidentiality in terms of how the findings are revealed. Participants were also assured that only pseudo names would be used and specific reference would not be made to communities or individuals to allow anyone to discern the real persons or communities which were being referred to in the study. However, the study remained focused on the important issues and neglected trivial issues.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter dealt with the presentation and discussion of the results that were collected from the respondents in order to find answers to the research questions. The results are discussed in relation to the research questions as well as the literature review.

#### **Causes of ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts**

The ethnic conflicts that took place in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts over two decades now have resulted in over 200,000 deaths and many more have been displaced leading to destruction of properties and government infrastructure (Bombade, 2007). These conflicts have been observed by many to be conflicts of insubordination, marginalisation and ethnic identity (Talton, 2010).

Some scholars such as Lentz and Nugent (2000) suggested that, most of these ethnic conflicts experienced today in the Northern Region of Ghana and that of East Gonja and Kpandai districts are as the result of British colonial legacy of indirect rule. These scholars are of the view that British re-invented African states to suit their agenda. The British constructed polices different from that of African society, politics, and culture, and this situation according to them automatically laid a solid foundation for today's ethnic identities in the Northern Region.

Most of the violence conflicts experienced in East Gonja and Kpandai districts are intimately related to the common well-known challenges of scarce resources, poverty, marginalisation, bad governance, and weak states mechanisms in managing and resolving conflicts. Conflicts and insecurity destroy economies, societies, and families. Moreover, conditions of poverty and marginalisation contribute to risks of conflict and violence in any society.

Generally, the root causes of these conflicts do not lend themselves to one factor. There are varied factors which led to these unending ethnic conflicts. Globalisation, ethnic identity and politics of misinformation spread through the mass media all contributed to the conflicts. Educated elites and politicians are not spared from being one of the causes of these ethnic conflicts.

From the interview, one of the chiefs had this to say:

We (Gonja) are the traditional leaders in this area. I hope you are aware that these people are strangers here. What I mean is that we are the indigenous people who own this land and ‘they’ (Konkomba, Nawuri, Nchumburu) are strangers and settlers and suppose to respect and pay allegiance to us in all matters. But, they continue to disregard our traditional authority and status of late without any tangible reason. In the past, they used to pay tributes to our chiefs. Every year, they mobilise themselves and come to farm for the chiefs. And during every harvesting periods food stuffs were brought to the chief. Not only that, but anytime there was a function or occasion at the chief palace, the minority tribes came to

dance. They used to do all these without any complaint. The surprising thing is even that, there has not been any pressure from us on them to pay tribute or do some of the things they were doing. There has not been any formal complaint from them also to show their displeasure of what they were doing formerly. Unfortunately, they decided to fight with us with the reason that they have been oppressed and marginalised by our chiefs and authority.

From the narrative, it is realised that the major claim made against the acephalous groups, especially the Konkomba was that they continually disregarded their centralised neighbours' traditional authority and status and refused to pay allegiance to the Gonja chiefs. Accordingly, the centralised group felt that their authority has been undermined by the non-centralised groups. They saw the non-centralised groups to be ungrateful and rebellious in their actions. The finding showed that there has not been any history of dispute between the Konkomba and the Gonja. So what happened was shocking and surprising to the Gonja. They least expected anything like that from Konkomba since they both co-existed peacefully for long.

One of the documents analysed reveals a similar findings to this. In the document, it was realised that notwithstanding the issue of misunderstanding between the acephalous groups and the centralised group, both had lived happily in the past. It was therefore unpleasing for them to be at conflict with each other especially the Konkomba and the Gonja. What led to this probably was the spilt over effects of the Konkomba and Dagomba, Konkomba and Nanumba long standing ethnic conflicts over land ownerships and paramount

chieftaincy. History has it that the Konkomba and Dagomba have engaged in several ethnic clashes before the 1994 conflict which engulfed all the Northern Region.

For their part, the acephalous groups especially the Konkomba argued that they had suffered long-term exploitation and subjugation by the centralised Gonja group and their chiefs. They have always been referred to as settlers. This sense of marginalisation and subordination led to ethnic clashes. In rejecting their neighbours' claims that they disregarded their authority and status, the acephalous groups' leadership insisted that they were only protecting their interests and rights as Ghanaian citizens and nothing more than that. This argument sought to present the conflict between the centralised and non-centralised groups as conflicts of insubordination and rebelliousness.

The Konkomba, one of the acephalous groups, argued that they do not contest ownership of land in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts as it is the case of Dagbon (Yendi) where Konkomba are at war with Dagomba over land ownership and paramount chieftaincy. The Konkomba agreed that they migrated from Saboba to the Gonja-land and do not contest for any ownership of land in Gonja-land. But, rather they have been oppressed, discriminated against, and marginalised by their neighbours for long. According to them, continually referring to them as settlers and strangers on their land was displeasing to them. In an interview with one of the community leaders, he gave the following:

You see my son; we are all the same people living together for long time. The problem is that we are always and most often being referred to as 'bush animals' or people who are



uncivilised. All these we do not mind, but we have not been given the opportunity to express ourselves freely. Most often than not, we are not recognised by our neighbours. For that matter, we do not have legal chiefs with authority to adjudicate our cases. To the best, we only have community elders and youth leaders. Because of this our voices are not always heard in national issues. To even complicate the issue, we are not represented at the regional and national house of chiefs which is one of the medium through which both national and local developmental issues are discussed. We do not resort to violence but, when it happens that way it is always difficult to tell... that is how we have been treated.

Relating this to literature, it confirmed the work of Pul (2003) who contended that, the disposition of a locale or ethnic group to violence is highest when the structures and systems of local chieftaincy institutions exclude some ethnic groups from access to power and economic resources. Again, ethnic elites, politicians and ethnic youth associations' leaders engage in reconstructing ethnic histories and leading factions in the struggles for or against exclusion in traditional authority arrangements. Such situations breed conflicts in the society.

This result is consistent with Scarborough's (1998) work when he pointed to the fact that in situations where existing structures in a society are tilted in favour of a particular group to the disadvantage of others, and when people find it difficult to identify with political and economic ideas of the society, violent communal conflict is likely to emerge and escalate when not

properly managed. The ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts could be attributed to this condition whereby the existing structures do not favour the minority groups. Also, when the minority ethnic groups or the non-centralised ethnic groups felt they do not get access to power and resources in the community they resort to violence means of acquiring that.

The Nawuri and the Nchumburu on the other hand, had argued that they are indigenes in the area they currently occupied. They are of the view that the Gonja usurped their authority. For them, especially the Nawuri, Kpandai belongs to them and that they are first settlers there before the arrival of any other ethnic group including the Gonja. So they do not see the reason why they should be referred to as strangers on their own land. The Nchumburu also held the same view with the Nawuri. To consolidate this assertion, one of the chiefs had this to say:

We are not strangers as the stories have always been told. The Gonja and any other ethnic group are much aware that we are the first settlers. Yes, it is true that we have been ruled by Gonja for some period. That was then. But, the fact still remained that we are the first settlers and for that matter owners of this land in Kpandai. We are not fighting with them for Kpembu and Salaga which is their land; we need to reclaim our lost glory. This kind of insubordination cannot continue.

The foregoing argument indicated that each of the ethnic groups in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts see themselves as unique. The causes of the ethnic conflicts in the area can be seen as ethnic identity, inequality, sense of marginalisation, subordination, and land ownership. Naturally, the root causes

of the disputes between these ethnic groups in the area run deeper than ethnic identity, inequality and land ownership. When people begin to feel that they have not been recognised and treated well in the society they begin to resist the authority in the society leading to violence. In such situations, people begin to identify themselves as one around certain lines.

Sen (2006) contended that identity can be a potential source of conflict. Linking this assertion to the findings here, it is clear that identity can be served as a source of conflict. The presumption that people are inherently different on account of religion or culture, leads to formation of identity around one category. Identity with one group leads to the exclusion of others and forms the basis for deprivation, marginalisation and poverty which ignites latent conflicts. When people begin to identify themselves as we and refer to others as they, it brings about discrimination and potential cause of conflict.

Volkan (2006) supported this and also linked ethnic identity to conflicts by arguing that when ethnic groups define and distinguish their groups from others, they end up developing some kind of prejudice for their own group against the other group. They tend to idealise their groups' values and suspend critical reasoning which can be a serious source of conflict. This study cannot escape from this ethnic identity factor since most of the feuding groups are of different ethnic background. They identify themselves as one people with common problem. It becomes easy for people to resist the authority of the existing structures in the society when they organise themselves.

One of the youth leaders explained in an interview that, the ethnic conflicts in these areas are as a result of history of institutional failures

strengthened by politicians. He felt that past governments in Ghana have not handled certain ethnic issues such as chieftaincy and access to resources very well. From the narratives he had this to say;

Please, if you really want the truth of this issue then you have to take note of what I am saying seriously. People always say history repeats itself but, I think it should not always be so. Our grandfathers told us that before the ‘white men’ came to Ghana and even in the North, we had our own way of ruling. When they came and colonized Ghana they defined new ways of ruling for us which did not suit our way of life. Much power was given to the people whom the ‘white men’ had contact with. In order to achieve their objectives, the ‘white men’ empowered the people they had contact with to impose any decision that they want to implement. After the ‘white men’ left, this system remained as norm. It is not fair to know the truth and refused it and follows the untruth. We are suffering because of our past.

This narrative shows that the origins of the violent ethnic conflicts between the historically non-centralised ethnic groups and their centralised neighbours have evolved around long standing history of political insubordination. It does not relent itself to a single phenomenon. This can be traced back to the period under British colonial indirect rule policy. When the British adopted the divide and rule policy, it placed the centralised ethnic groups above the non-centralised groups leading to subordination.

The post-colonial governments have maintained and strengthened this colonial policy. This sense of superior-subject relations continued till an extent that people can no longer withstand it. This led to some sense of resentment in people. At the end, people struggle to overturn the rule by resorting to violence.

This finding is in line with the view of Iliffe (1979) that from the period of 1930s and 1940s, the socio-economic change that accompanied indirect rule in Ghana led to an emphasis on ethnicity, or 'tribe,' over other identities. A collection of these 'tribes,' from the British officials' view was what comprised African societies, and each 'tribe' was unique, mostly isolated and ruled by a single powerful chief. This is consistent with Mamdani (1996) who explained that the colonial masters constructed ethnic identity in Ghana and imposed them on the people through colonial policy. Rubin (2006) supported this and concluded that through divide and rule policies, colonial powers based identity on European racial classification and made opposing identities more rigid and unequal.

The post-colonial administration upheld the chieftaincy centred political structures that had fomented the acephalous groups' frustration. This condition therefore, forced them to determine their own means of promoting social justice and political authority against the perceived social injustices in the society. The work of Lentz and Nugent (2000) supported this view and concluded that this arrangement was continued by the post-colonial governments making ethnicity the only avenue by which state resources and political power is acquired. Thus, access to political power and economic resources came to be based on ethnicity.

In the same vein, the formation of ethnic based youth associations could be blamed for the cause of ethnic conflicts. These youth associations which are mostly led by the educated elites in the communities are seen as channels of grievances. The leaders of these associations end up fermenting troubles in the communities since they are seen as 'eye openers' in their various communities.

The Gonja-Nawuri conflict in Kpandai in April and June 1991, was directly sparked off by the announcement of the Gonjaland Youth Association that in 1991 it wished to hold its annual convention in Kpandai, which the Nawuri regarded as having been their own land since time immemorial and in no sense a part of Gonjaland, though the area was ruled by the Gonja paramount chief. One of the youth leaders in Kpandai gave the following:

It is high time we rise to defend our rights. We do not see the reason why different people have to come and decide things for us in our own community. We know ourselves and what we need. Beside, you cannot just come into the community to do things without permission.

Another youth leader had something to add to what has been said earlier. He felt that there was much more than what has been said. He narrated that;

If people have stayed in a particular area for long, let us say over hundred years ... can you come and say that that place does not belong to them? No human being has created land. You see, these people also came from somewhere and settled where they are now. So, if by virtue of the fact that somebody

came here earlier means that he owns the land. Then, we own this land because we are the first settlers here. Look, nobody was created with land. So how do you tell me that I am a settler and that place belongs to you? I do not think it is easy to accept this. If that is the case we settled here first why then do you say the land does not belong to us?

The foregoing argument invariably shows how the formation of ethnic youth associations has become a source of mobilisation by ethnic groups to agitate for self-recognitions and identity. The associations were formed to assist in educating the people and to help in development of their communities. Unfortunately, these youth associations have rather turn to be sources for organising and launching of attacks on each other.

This finding agreed with the views of Linde and Naylor (1999); Brukum (1999); and Oquaye (2000) in literature that, the formation of tribal youth associations in the northern part of Ghana in the late 1970s created fertile grounds for fermenting ethnic and tribal conflicts in the region. The formation of these ethnic based youth associations and their activities are believed to be the major factors that led to the violent conflicts between the Konkomba and Nanumba in 1981, 1994 and 1995, and between Gonja and Nawuri in 1991 and 1992.

Ethnic pride and maintaining of political incumbency in our current politics have complicated the conflicts. An encounter with one of the youth leader in the East Gonja District lamented that:

We the Konkomba in this district do not get access to most of the top political positions. This is something that is making our

people worried. We cannot get access to most developmental projects if things continue this way. In fact, it is a source of worry. Something need to be done. It makes us feel inferior when it comes to decision making.

The ability to lobby for developmental projects now have political connotation. When a particular ethnic group is seen to be a sympathizer of a political party, it is believed that the ethnic group gets development. This is compounded with politics of misinformation through the mass media. With the advent of globalisation and technology, there is free flow and spread of information across borders.

The findings of De Zavala, Cichocka, Eidelson and Jayawickreme (2009) in their study have established an intricate link between self-esteem and intergroup conflict at the individual and group level. Linking their findings to the social identity theory in their opinion has therefore contributed to better understanding of collective behaviour including in-group bias, responses of subordinate groups to their positions of unequal status, and intragroup homogeneity and stereotyping.

From the conceptual framework, Murat (1997) argued that political entrepreneurs in their quest for power mobilise ethnic constituencies by promoting inter-ethnic animosities using the rhetorical weapons of fear, blame, and hate. This results in an inter-ethnic competition over scarce resources and rights, which is accompanied by a reconstruction of social categories of inclusion and exclusion, ethnification and ethnic intolerance. These situations create tension among the ethnic groups.



### **Actors of the ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts**

In every conflict situation, various groups or individuals are always involved. These individuals or groups of individuals have some interests which motivate them to engage in conflict. The actors of the conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts revolved around ethnic lines and identities. It is made up of ethnic groups, youth leaders, educated elites, traditional leaders, and invisible politicians with hidden agendas.

Civil Society Organisations have been noted for playing important roles in conflict management and development, but have been accused in the past for creating conditions for violence conflicts. One of the members of the Civil Society Organisation operating in the East Gonja district known as East Gonja Civil Society Organisations Association (EGOCSA) was interviewed concerning the actors in the conflicts. It was revealed that;

It is difficult to pin point one particular group in this area to conclude that it is the only actor in the ethnic conflicts. The reason is that, leaders of each ethnic group felt that they were fighting to protect and defend their status and rights. But to be honest with you the issues have been complicated by the activities of the educated elites in the society such as the youth associations with some kind of political undertone. Traditionally, the people know their levels of authority. You may not understand this but it is true that there is free flow of information among the various ethnic groups concerning about what is happening in other areas. This makes some of the ethnic

groups especially those referred to as strangers trying to resist certain decisions by their overlords.

When individuals or group of people in a particular community begin to feel that resources, power and authority are vested in the hands of some particular dominant groups, conflict is bound to erupt. Access to scarce resources and power in a concentrated community of different ethnic groups breed misunderstanding between them. Competition for these scarce resources and political dominance automatically push people into conflict when inequality and injustice exist.

The work of Beverly (1998) supported the findings and noted that institutions play important roles in regulating the level of potential ethnic conflict and ethnicity. Institution either facilitates or obstructs inter-group cooperation. Furthermore, whether or not identity politics turns into violent conflict depends on the functioning of state institutions. This means that where identity politics is practiced, state's institutions can channel it into peaceful political competition as long as they can make credible commitments to shape and uphold agreements made among culturally defined political actors.

Winter and Leighton (2001) in their view about structural violence theory concluded that whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, economic, and cultural traditions they resort into violence acts. When there is inequality and injustice causing a deep harm to individuals within structures it will definitely cause structural violence against people living within a particular area. This means that structures put in place to govern a group of people in a particular area when tilted towards one group to the disadvantage of the other can lead to conflict.

A youth leader from the East Gonja was of the view that, their people do not get developmental projects and that the politicians take them for a ride. According to him, the politicians are only interested in their votes but not their welfare. In an interview he noted that:

These politicians think that we are fools. It is only our votes they need. You see, during election periods different kinds of promises are made but after that nothing is done. We do not get the same privileges like our other brothers. This is because all the key political positions are in the hands of their people. We are gradually moving towards a point whereby we will also get our people to represent us so that we can get access to developmental projects.

Politicians and the educated elites in the society including the government have a hand in these ethnic conflicts from this point of view. It means that leaders in the communities are those in the centre of these conflicts. If the government structures in charge of distribution and management of scarce resources in the community need to be neutral. When the distribution of resources and developmental projects are left in the hands of the politicians and the influential people it will not favour some group. The influential people will use their power to mobilise people to fight for their rights. Saidemen (2010) supported this view that concentrated groups in divided societies are more likely to demand self-determination and to be engaged in violent conflict in order to get access to scarce resources and power.

It is better to understand these conflicts by linking the analyses to the historical and political contexts of actors and state institutional actors. Some of the traditional leaders from the analysis were of the view that some groups of people were given assertive powers to exert on others. In this case, the role of emergent interest groups both at the local and national level cannot be overlooked. These emergent groups are engaged in the reconstruction and reinvention of ethnic histories, myths, symbols, traditions and customs which has sustained hostilities and possible outbreak of violence in this our modern time. Inability of politicians to fulfil political promises aggravates the conflicts. This made the politicians to be interest groups in the conflicts, since they stand to gain political favours from the majority groups.

The findings are consistent with the view of Pul (2003) that ethnic elites and politicians engage in reconstructing ethnic histories and leading factions in the struggles for or against exclusion in traditional authority arrangements. It has been argued further that state neutrality in the ethnic conflicts is compromised when ethnic elites on one side of the conflict are able to co-opt state processes and resources for their ethnic agendas and/or influence the crafting of state laws, policies, programmes, actions and/or inactions to reinforce the exclusion of the other group. This brings about marginalisation and subordination in the community with its negative consequences.

### **Approaches to ethnic conflict management and resolution**

There is a history of hostilities among the various ethnic groups in the Northern Region including East Gonja and Kpandai districts creating fear and suspicion among the people. This hostile situation can be resolved by developing strategies that can contain fear and suspicion. One easy way to achieve this is by putting structures in place to deal with issues that could possible breed fear and suspicion.

More so, it has been discovered that there are no strong, credible, and effective national institutions in the management of ethnic conflicts. Also, the few existing ethnic conflict enforcement mechanisms and agents responsible for resolving grievances among people in the area have been weak, biased and compromised. The absence of these credible enforcement mechanisms lead to security dilemmas.

These security dilemmas in the community therefore, encouraged actors to take advantage of the situation and engage in violent acts. They do this with the fear of being victimised or suppressed by their opponents. This creates more tension, fear, suspicion among the people living within the community. Everybody becomes security alert with every little thing without adequately taking into consideration the possibility of such situation.

Similarly, the absence of strong and local institutions to adjudicate cases encouraged the local agents in the communities to mobilise groups to fight in order to satisfy their parochial interest. Not only this, the actors also seek their own violence means of resolving their grievances since the state has failed to do so. In a community whereby the affairs of the state are left in the

hands of individuals, the most influential in the community will manipulate the system to their own benefit.

The approaches that have been used in management of ethnic conflict in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts are curfews, military and police interventions, court systems, and Alternative Disputes Resolution, Youth Associations interventions. However, these approaches have not been effective. There have not been effective conflict management mechanisms in the districts. The absence of a strong and active conflict management mechanism encourages the local agents in the communities to mobilise groups to fight in order to satisfy their parochial interest. Not only this, the actors also seek their own violence means of resolving their grievances. Because they felt that the state mechanisms used so far in dealing with these conflicts are weak and compromised. The point is that, these mechanisms' recommendations have not been implemented by the government. Such a situation leaves much doubt in the minds of the feuding groups.

An opinion leader in the East Gonja District noted that it is good and better for the leaders of the feuding groups to be involved in finding long lasting solutions to the conflicts. He felt that the state agencies and other organisations working hard in ethnic conflict management and resolution could be complemented with traditional methods. The respondent noted that:

We fight with each other over a particular thing or issue which is known to all of us. Involving our traditional leaders who know the real issues under contestation would help in resolving the issues. The government and the organisations working towards

peace could involve the traditional authorities and any decision arrived at would be binding to all parties.

The use of systems methods of conflict analysis in resolving conflicts is gaining ground because of its success. This method enables people to make sense of the inherent complexity of social processes and to move beyond simplistic and potentially dangerous 'one size fits all' peace building strategies (Coleman et al., 2011).

Dynamical system is a set of interconnected elements that influence one another over time to promote the emergence of a global state (such as war or peace), which in turn provides common meaning for the elements. In social conflict, the elements are specific thoughts, actions and feelings relevant to the conflict, and the emergent higher-order state is a generalised negative (or positive) view of the relationship and a readiness for like action. This type of conflict analysis is very important and should be used in dealing with ethnic conflicts.

One advantage of dynamic system approach to conflict analysis and management is that it does not only capture the multiple sources and complex temporal dynamics of such systems, but it can help identify central nodes and patterns that are unrecognisable by other means. This means that it does not only look for the trigger causes of conflict, but also the root causes and possible measures to resolve the conflicts are provided.

This method also helped to explain why some conflicts resist transformation (intractability) and why some conflicts change rapidly or react unexpectedly to intervention. Hence, applying it to the case of East Gonja and Kpandai districts complemented the existing approaches. The use of systemic

approach to conflict analysis of the ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts could help to explore the complex relationships that existed between actors, their goals, actions and feelings and the events that influenced the evolution of the conflict. It further helped in revealing otherwise hidden patterns that sustained the conflicts.

Furthermore, the motivations and the emergent interest groups are identified. Knowing the actors, their motivations, it becomes easy to provide suggestions and measures in dealing with the conflicts. Appropriate interventions are put in place to prevent future occurrence of such similar conflicts.

When the respondents were interviewed it was realised that sustainable peace for development was needed and any avenue that could be used to achieve it was welcome. A chief and two opinion leaders shared similar view. The chief noted that:

If we are living in the same compound and something bad is happening, we do not need to wait for outsider to come and make it good for us. What I mean is that we need peace and cannot wait for government or some other bodies to come and provide the peace for us.

One of the opinion leaders gave similar responses when he noted that:

There is always a common way we solve our differences. Most often than not fowls, animals, kola nut and some drinks are used to appease the gods and our ancestors whenever we had some problems with each other. The government has to summon all the parties in the conflict and task the leaders to help find



solutions to it because they are part of it and know the root causes and can help in finding solutions to it.

Another opinion leader said:

Two people cannot be fighting and you want to settle the case without involving them. Care need to be taken when dealing with ethnic issues. We were here and the government selected some people to investigate into these conflicts and make suggestions and recommendations and that was all. Some people do not even know if the outcomes of those committees have been implemented. It is high time and better to find our own local ways of resolving our problems.

The narratives above support the view of Wallensteen (2002) who contended that parties and actors to the conflict are important for conflict resolution and peace-processes. That conflict is transformed from violent to non-violent behaviour by the parties that are involved in the dispute and not by other people. This means that the ethnic groups that are involved in the conflict are the best to initiate a resolution process. The people involved in conflicts hold many roles as explained in literature. The disputants are therefore the first parties in conflict who need to be involved in any resolution process. They are referred to as primary parties who have keen interest in the conflict.

### **Factors that promote effective ethnic conflict management and resolution**

Effective and successful ethnic conflict management and resolution is very important. There is the need to abandon power-oriented strategies and state coercive means of managing and resolving ethnic conflicts which only treats the symptoms of conflicts. It is better to adopt the participatory, analytical, and non-coercive methods which provide opportunities for people to bring out their feelings, core values, motives and perceptions in conflicts (Bombade, 2007).

Most of the means through which conflicts are managed and resolved in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts by the government are curfews, deploring of police and military platoons and disarmament of combatants to cease hostilities. In addition, the governments most often set up various committees to investigate into the causes and possible means of resolving the conflicts.

However, the findings are not always known. It is regretting to even hear that the recommendations made by committees have never been implemented. In this way, it is only the symptoms of the conflicts that are treated but the real issues are ignored. The people begin to feel that the state and its agencies are not serious. Therefore, there is no sense relying on the state to manage the disputes confronting them. Once there is loss of trust in the government and the state institutions in management of the conflicts, alternative measures should be used.

Though various mechanisms such as curfews, military and police interventions, court systems, and Alternative Disputes Resolution, Youth Associations interventions for conflict management and resolution have been

used to resolve the conflicts, the outcomes have not been satisfactory and sustainable. This is true because these conflicts keep on recurring in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts since the mechanisms have not been able to contain the scale of violence. The emerging state institutions (particularly the judicial system) have also been ineffective and have actually served to exacerbate the conflicts. As a result, the people have remained in an 'at risk state' where violence is likely to occur at any time.

Due to political reasons, the government is not always able to come out with clear policies and implementing them to resolve the conflicts permanently. This situation makes the people to continue to live in a state of insecurity and security dilemma. One of the government officials explained that;

The state mechanisms for resolving these ethnic conflicts have been the REGSEC and DISEC. These have put pressure on the district funds which could have been used for development. After the 1994 conflict, there was a roadmap to peace at Salaga in 1996 by the then President J. J. Rawlings to settle the dispute. The Konkomba attended but the Nawuri refused to attend. The DISEC alone could not effectively handle some of the issues since most of the cases were linked to customs and traditions of the people involved.

In a related interview with the office, it was revealed that most of the state mechanisms used so far in resolving the ethnic conflicts have been successful to some extent, but have not been satisfactory. The following represented his view:

If the state mechanisms have been successful, we should not be experiencing similar issues now. Some of the ethnic groups here feel they are not well represented by the state agencies. Hmm! It is difficult to disagree with the people. You see they argue that some of the committees set up by both the past and presents governments in management and resolving the conflicts have been bias if not weak. The simple reason given is that the recommendations of the committees in their reports are not known to all of them. Besides that, the recommendations have not been implemented.

According to one of the community leaders, the government and the members of the committees that have been set up in settling the disputes in the area are weak, compromised, and bias. The government is not prepared to face the realities underground holding to the fact that the issues are not beyond the strength of the government. The following represented his view:

Why is it that people do not like telling the truth? Well, since the truth is the only thing that has no alternative, I will tell you. Let me ask you this question first. If you have two sons and they are fighting and you want to settle the case do you beat one or you give a weapon to one to fight the other? I know you will definitely say no, but that is the situation we find ourselves. The government and the people in authority are not interested in telling the truth. As long as the truth is hidden people will continue to suffer in the hands of their superiors till a time when they would not be able to withstand the pressure

and rise up against them. If the government is not prepared to settle the issue the people will find their own ways of settling it.

We are always prepared to live peaceful with each other...

Looking at the root causes of ethnic conflicts, it is difficult to think of an easy way of managing and resolving them. Compounded with security dilemma, most of the parties are always armed to the teeth with suspicion that their opponents can launch an attack on them at any time. To be able to handle such situation, the root causes of the conflicts need to be examined and the actors in the conflict need to be known.

### **The role of Traditional Authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution**

In the past, great efforts were made at resolving disputes peacefully and promoting social harmony among the people. This was done by upholding the principle of fairness in relation to customs and traditions. In the process of adjudicating of traditional cases, the customs and traditions of the people were known and respected. Various means such as deliberations and discussions, use of impartial elders for adjudication, and compensation were employed in resolving disputes amicably based on the principle of fairness. Clan heads and respected personalities in the society were consulted whenever there was an issue of disagreement and misunderstanding. This system has been used by many governments in Africa in management of ethnic conflicts (Zartman, 2000).

With the introduction of democracy and modernisation, little attention has therefore been given to traditional system of resolving conflicts. The

modern means for management and resolving ethnic conflicts have proven to be ineffective for some time now. Due to the failure of the modern means of resolving ethnic conflicts, there have been calls for rethinking of how ethnic conflicts can be managed and resolved to produce the desired results. Based on this, it has therefore been argued that attention be given to local initiatives in resolving conflicts. Much of the African traditional systems of resolving conflicts are embedded in chieftaincy. This system need to be assessed and strengthen to help manage ethnic conflicts (Jok, 2011).

When one of the chiefs in the East Gonja district was approached to comment on their role in management and resolution of ethnic conflicts, he had this to say:

We the traditional authorities have been accused by many, especially the politicians that we are part of the conflicts and for that matter cannot manage the conflicts. But, my son, this is unthinkable and unfortunate. The politicians are rather worsening the issues in this area. Had it not been for the sake of we the traditional leaders, the peace we are currently enjoying would not have been there. Yes, some of the issues related to the conflicts have to do with chieftaincy and land ownership; we understand the issues much better. Our subjects respect us and listen to our voices in any matter. So given us the full support and enhancing our authority in dealing with our people will not be a problem. It is the educated elites and politicians who are influencing the decisions of the people making the issues complex.

The discussion showed that traditional mechanisms for management and resolving ethnic conflicts have been effective and need to be encouraged. According to Jok (2011), traditional courts comprised tribal elders who arbitrate disputes based on customary laws at the village or country level. The traditional courts are most often convened to arbitrate extraordinary disputes among people in the community. In his view, the customary laws used in the adjudication of the cases are seldom codified and are flexible enough to allow elders the possibility of adjusting rulings in order to accommodate particular circumstances.

One feature of this relatively flexible approach is that it provides elders with more space to promote reconciliation between parties to a dispute, rather than simply determining who is wrong and who is right. Applying similar mechanisms in Ghana and in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts in the Northern Region in particular, has the potential of bringing the long unending ethnic conflicts to an end.

Added to this, traditional mechanisms for resolving conflicts have proven effective in some parts of Africa. The argument is that, once traditional mechanisms have been used to resolve ethnic conflicts in some part of the African continent, similar cultural and traditional mechanisms can be used in Ghana. Applying this to cases in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts in Ghana would be good. In responding to the issue of traditional authority in management and resolving of ethnic conflict, one youth leader from East Gonja said that:

The elders know the customs and traditions of the people in the community so when there is a problem related to the people

customs and traditions why not allow them to find means to resolving them. When the elders adjudicate their own traditional cases and come to consensus it will bind their people. Looking at the way the disputes have been handled for some time now, it is clear that the government alone cannot solve the disputes. This is the reason why we the youth have been organising educational sensitisation campaigns in the communities to help maintain the relative peace that is currently existing.

Williams and Denson (2012) in assessing traditional mechanisms in management of ethnic conflict in Sudan concluded that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms reduce the 'pride deficit' experienced by an individual or a group, thereby helping return the system to a 'normal state' and reducing the likelihood of violent confrontation. According to them, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms provide an alternative to violence as a means of restoring pride equilibrium between two competing groups.

This approach has important implications for conflict management and resolution as far as the potential of creating winners and losers is limited and, as such, the possibility of a court decision wounding pride is minimised. It means that traditional mechanisms for conflict management have proved to be effective and similar methods can be applied in Ghanaian context. Conflict management and resolution is a priority of every government. Effective action to manage and resolve conflict requires thorough understanding of the sources and dynamics of the conflict. In addition to this, detailed and well developed conflict management and resolution strategies are necessary.



In analysing the secondary documents, especially the Nairobi Peace Initiative, it was realised that bringing together of the various warring ethnic groups was an effective tool for resolving the conflicts. This suggests that traditional mechanism in management of ethnic conflicts has been effective and even economical. All the various feuding ethnic groups came together to deliberate on how to resolve the conflict. Through this, the hidden issues that led to the conflict were brought out for discussion. At the end, there was some kind of consensus.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented and discussed the results and findings of the study in relation to the research questions and literature review. It has pointed out that the conventional government interventions have proven to be ineffective in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents summary of the study, which includes the key findings that emerged from the research. The chapter also contains the conclusions and recommendations that are made based on the findings of the study. It also contains suggestions for further studies.

#### Summary

The study set out to examine the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management and resolution in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts in the Northern Region of Ghana.

The case study type of research was used for the study. The target population for the study included all the stakeholders in the two districts interested in finding lasting solutions to the protracted ethnic conflicts in the area. They included chiefs, opinion leaders, youth leaders, governmental and non-government agencies interested in peace building and development. The sample was drawn using purposive sampling technique. In-depth interview guides were used in interviewing the respondents. The content, case and inductive analyses were adopted in organising the data for analysis. The collection of the field data took two months, July and August, 2013.

Based on the analysed data and discussion of the results, the following represent the summary of the findings.

1. The causes of the violent ethnic conflicts between the Gonja and Nawuri, Konkomba and their allies against the Gonja in the districts are rooted in the colonial legacy and policy, and strengthened by globalisation. Ethnic identity, inequality, sense of marginalisation, subordination, and educated elites and political manipulation were also seen as some of the causes of the conflicts.
2. The actors in the ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts involved all the ethnic groups but politicians and educational elites in the society worsen the situation. These people collectively or individually are able to create some sense of feelings of marginalisation among the people.
3. The approaches that have been used in management of the ethnic conflict in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts were curfews, military and police interventions, court systems, formation of committees, and Alternative Disputes Resolution. Failure to make reports and the recommendation known to the public, and the subsequent failure to implement the recommendations increases, suspicion, anxiety and mistrust between the people.
4. Participatory, analytical, and non-coercive methods in conflicts resolution were factors identified to promote effective ethnic conflict management and resolution.
5. The traditional mechanisms for management and resolving ethnic conflicts have been effective and need to be encouraged. The people engaged in the conflicts have some common culture, customs and traditions which could be used to resolve the conflicts. The findings

concluded that these ethnic conflicts in the East Gonja and Kpandai districts have resisted resolution because traditional ethnic conflict mechanisms have not been used effectively or given the needed attention.

These findings reveal a traditional dimension or approach to ethnic conflict that might have been overlooked in conventional approaches to conflict management and peace building. Although this case study is not to be generalised to all ethnic conflicts in Ghana but the findings are relevant to contemporary conflict studies.

### **Conclusion**

The causes of the ethnic conflicts in the two districts were as a result of breakdown of states' structures and others are tilted to the advantage of some ethnic groups. However, the awareness of this has been facilitated by globalisation and ethnic identity creating the sense and feelings of marginalisation.

The actors of the ethnic conflict included all the ethnic groups involved in the area, politicians, educated elites and the youth associations. Politicians, educated elites and youth association leaders in the communities often worsen the issues of ethnic conflicts. More so, the use of state mechanisms alone for management and resolving of ethnic conflicts has not been satisfactory. That is why most of the reports and recommendations of the various committees have not known by the public. The ethnic conflicts continued to recur in the area because there are no effective state's institutions to manage the conflicts.

Added to this, the role of traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management should be encouraged and strengthened. Most of the issues relating to the conflicts have traditional or customary factors. To be able to understand the depth of the issues, traditional leaders should be involved because they know the shared values, tradition and customs of the people.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are deemed necessary to improve management and resolution of ethnic conflicts:

1. State agencies, non-governmental organisations and traditional authorities should identify the root causes of the ethnic conflicts and provide appropriate measures to solve the conflicts. The government should give due attention to traditional authorities in conflict management and resolution.
2. The chiefs and elders of the feuding ethnic groups should engage in discussions with each other to come out with suggestions, measures and procedures to resolving the disputes.
3. The government should strengthen and equip the existing state structures and institutions to settle disputes and provide early warning systems due necessary to help identify and handle conflicts effectively before they escalate into violence. The institutions should be devoid of tribal or ethnic alienation.
4. Politicians and educated elites seen to have hidden agenda in the conflicts should be sanctioned by the government, civil societies and

the people through awareness creation. The activities of ethnic and tribal youth associations should be regulated and checked by the government in the society.

5. Each of the ethnic groups should form their independent bodies for investigating into conflict issues. They should respect each other customs and traditions. Whenever an issue of conflict erupts or an attack is made against an ethnic group, the chiefs, elders and opinion leaders of the various ethnic groups should quickly come together to investigate into the case to avoid escalations of conflicts.
6. Reports and recommendations of committees set up by government to investigate into any conflict case should be known to the public. These reports and recommendations should be made public and not be kept on shelves.

### **Suggestions for further studies**

Further research would be valuable to verify the findings of this current study, particularly by objectively measuring globalisation and ethnic identity as a cause of protracted ethnic conflict. Again, it would also be interesting to test whether it is ethnic identity *per se* or sense of marginalisation between groups that induces conflict. The relationship between state agencies and traditional authorities in ethnic conflict management should be investigated into. Challenges in conflict management and resolution should be considered. Since most of the mechanisms, strategies, and methods employed previously in conflict management and resolution

seems to be weak and compromised, their strengths and weaknesses need to be assessed.

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**APPENDIX A**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY CHIEFS**

1. What is the history of the ethnic conflicts in this area?
2. What do you consider to be the causes of the ethnic conflicts in this area?
3. Which factors fuel this conflict?
4. What are the effects of the ethnic conflicts in this district?
5. Who are the actors of the ethnic conflicts?
6. What motivates these actors to be involved in the conflict?
7. Are there any other parties involved in this conflict? If yes, who are they?
8. Have there been any interventions to resolving the conflicts? If yes, what are they?
9. Do traditional authorities take part in the ethnic conflict management in this area?
10. What conflict management approaches have been implemented so far?
11. How efficient have been the approaches used?
12. Why do these ethnic conflicts persist in spite of all the interventions?
13. Which factors promoted the ethnic conflict management approaches that have been used?
14. Is there any tradition or customary practices that could be used to resolve the ethnic conflicts in this area? If yes, mention them.
15. How can the ethnic conflicts be resolved?
16. Do you think traditional authorities can manage and resolve the ethnic conflicts? If yes, how?
17. What other measures do you think can help in bringing peace?

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OPINION LEADERS

1. What do you consider to be the causes of the ethnic conflicts in this area?
2. Which factors fuel this conflict?
3. Who are the actors of the ethnic conflicts?
4. What motivates these actors to be involved in the conflict?
5. Are there any other parties involved in this conflict? If yes, who are they?
6. Have there been any interventions to resolving the conflicts? If yes, what are they?
7. Have you been part of resolving the ethnic conflicts?
8. What conflict management approaches have been implemented so far?
9. How efficient have been the approaches used?
10. Why do these ethnic conflicts persist in spite of all the interventions?
11. Which factors promoted the ethnic conflict management approaches that have been used?
12. Is there any tradition or customary practices that could be used to resolve the ethnic conflicts in this area? If yes, mention them.
13. How can the ethnic conflicts be resolved?
14. Do you think traditional authorities can manage and resolve the ethnic conflicts? If yes, how?
15. What other measures do you think can help in bringing peace?

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR YOUTH LEADERS

1. What do you consider to be the causes of the ethnic conflicts in this area?
2. Who are the actors of the ethnic conflicts?
3. What motivates these actors to be involved in the conflict?
4. Are there any other parties involved in this conflict? If yes, who are they?
5. Have you been part of resolving the ethnic conflicts?
6. Do you think the youth have a role to play in resolving the ethnic conflicts in this area? If yes, what is the role?
7. What conflict management approaches have been implemented so far?
8. How efficient have been the approaches used?
9. Why do these ethnic conflicts persist in spite of all the interventions?
10. Which factors promoted the ethnic conflict management approaches that have been used?
11. Is there any tradition or customary practices that could be used to resolve the ethnic conflicts in this area? If yes, mention them.
12. How can the ethnic conflicts be resolved?
13. Do you think traditional authorities can manage and resolve the ethnic conflicts? If yes, how?
14. What other measures do you think can help in bringing peace?

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

1. Who are the protagonists in this conflict?
2. What motivates them to be in conflict?
3. Did you take part in management of the ethnic conflicts in this area?
4. What motivated you to take part in the conflict management?
5. What efforts has your organisation made toward bringing peace into this area?
6. How efficient has been the efforts?
7. Are there any other organisations involved in management of this conflict? If yes, who are they?
8. What conflict management approaches have been implemented so far?
9. How efficient have been the approaches used?
10. Why do these ethnic conflicts persist in spite of all the interventions?
11. Is there any tradition or customary practices that could be used to resolve the ethnic conflicts in this area? If yes, mention them.
12. How can the ethnic conflicts be resolved?
13. Do you think traditional authorities can manage and resolve the ethnic conflicts? If yes, how?
14. What other measures do you think can help in bringing peace?