FAMILY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NENI-ANAOCHA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to God Almighty who saw me through my academic pursuit.
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The researcher is profoundly grateful to God for making it possible for her by His mercy to undertake the study.

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This project is embarked upon as a result of the rising incidence of conflicts in our Social life as well as their debilitating effects on the family as manifested in rampant cases of marriage separation, divorce and other related vices. Any meaningful attempt to positively address these social vices should really begin with the family as a variable, hence, this study on the family and conflict resolution in Neni, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Forms of conflict that exist in the family include: (1) Conflict between husband and wife (2) Conflict between parents and children (3) Conflict between members of nuclear family and extend family (4) Conflict among children within nuclear family.

In undertaking this project, the writer is concerned with the conflicts between husband and wife in the family and how to resolve such conflicts. She embarked on extensive review of pertinent literature, the objective of which was to gain more insight into the project in relation to what scholars may have written on the subject or related subject. One fruitful result of the review is the revelation that conflict is a natural phenomenon which manifest itself in any social relationship. It has its positive attributes if carefully handled, but it also has its negative effect if not properly managed. The study revealed that Neni people in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State adopt different methods and strategies in settling disputes in their homes. Among these methods are; keeping quiet all the time, running away, discussing with family members to arrive at a common solution, etc. The writer made some suggestions on
how to improve on the methods. The work is divided into three chapters. Chapter one leads the reading public into research problem, its objective as well as its significance. The second chapter deals with the review of empirical studies on concept of conflict, conflict in the family, causes of conflict, conflict resolution and consequences of conflict in the family. Also included in this chapter are – review of relevant theories, theoretical framework and resolutions of family conflict in Neni Community. Chapter three presents summary, conclusion, recommendation and references.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Conflict is a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in serious disagreement or argument. Conflict is a necessary process of life. Within the individual, there is always conflict of thoughts, choice and interest, to mention but a few. This is known as intra-personal conflict. This does not only make decision taking difficult, but also has been identified as one of the major sources of stress. On the other hand, the inter-personal conflict occurs between individuals, states, groups and organisations or members of an organisation, groups and states. Conflicts can also be either constructive or destructive (Peters, 2006). He further states that whenever disagreement arises, we say there is a conflict. While conflict is universal and
occurs naturally, crisis is almost always the key by-product of conflicts. If conflict is properly resolved, there will be peace. If on the other hand, resolution and reconciliation fail, the conflict will degenerate to chaos, crisis or war. According to Peters (2006), causes of conflict all over the world are midwifed by inordinate desires for political and economic advantages, greed, ego related problems and plain mischief. Injustice and inequitable distribution of resources invariably give rise to conflict situations.

Lutz (1999) states that a family can be compared to a four wheeled cart, where each of the wheels is free-wheeling. As long as all four wheels face front, the cart rolls along nice and smoothly. But if one of the wheels turns itself crossways to the other three, there will be problem. There will be a family conflict. That family is in need of some basic family conflict resolution skills. The first thing to do is to identify the problem, then make a plan and set goals on how the members of the family can jointly resolve the problem.

Conflict resolution is central to the survival and sustenance of a stable family system in our society. This is because conflict is a natural phenomenon in all human or organisational relationship (Agboeze, 2004). Various studies have been conducted on family conflict as one of the social
problems in the society. Early researchers and observers of the problem are of the opinion that the rate at which family conflict occurs in the society is increasingly alarming. Dudley (1992) states that “within our diversity as humans, there are differences in perceptions, needs, values, power, desires, goals, opinions, these differences often lead to conflict.” Cornelius and Faire (1995) hold that when people cannot tolerate others’ moral, cultural, religious and political differences, conflict is inevitable and often costly.

Aja (2007) holds the view that conflict is a permanent feature of human politics and it is man-made, that conflict resolutions is often misguided and misrepresented. He believes that conflict can never be absolute, rather conflict resolution comprises an agenda setting to assist parties in conflict or dispute to establish a common ground given certain guiding principles or conditions for peaceful co-existence. Conflict resolution should be seen as a set of peace and security guidelines or diplomatic and legal procedure for achieving relative order and stability.

Egbo, (1999) holds that studies on family conflict had predominantly focused on modern societies. It was in the early 40s that an initial attention was paid to families in Africa. In Nigeria, for instance research studies have been conducted and
articles written in newspapers and magazines on family and marital conflicts.

In recent times, many couples have abandoned their partners and their children to the risk of defective and improper socialisation. The wide spread of social problems like prostitution, juvenile delinquency, crime, alcoholism and truancy proves that the family is not fulfilling its basic function of primary socialisation of children. Such a situation, however, if not effectively addressed can undermine the objectives of, or become destructive to the family system in our society.

Generally, peace does not mean the total absence of conflict but the capacity to put conflict indications on conflict situations under control without destabilising the system.

1.2 Statement to the Problem

According to Agboeze (2004), family as an institution always experience one form of conflict or the other. In almost every family today, there is also one form of conflict or the other. These conflicts emanates from different sources and may include poverty, sexual incompatibility between couples, infertility, infidelity, unnecessary interference by in-laws, opposing religious interests, procreation of only female children in the family etc.
Records of registration of cases in most social welfare offices of local Government Areas in Anambra State contain applications and requests for separation or divorce of marriages by either of the couples or both, because of their inability to resolve conflicts arising from different sources. Some of the local government areas are – Anaocha Local Government, Awka North Local Government, Onitsha North Local Government, Aguata Local Government, to mention a few. Some children have sent their parents to their untimely death by the use of dangerous weapon because of slight disagreement. For example, the shepherd newspaper (2003), reports how an old woman from Ibagwa-Aka in Igboeze South Local Government Area in Enugu State was “butchered to death” by her first-son, and also a case of a wife who slaughtered her husband with a knife in October, 2003.

Scott, (2008) maintained that with most conflict, it is important to find a resolution. This seems like a statement of the obvious, but many people suppress their anger or just ‘go along to get along’. They think that by addressing a conflict, they are creating one, and simply keep quiet when upset. Unfortunately, this is not a healthy long term strategy. For one thing, unresolved conflict can lead to resentment and additional unresolved conflict in the relationships. Even more important,
ongoing conflict can actually have a negative impact on one's health and longevity.

Akujobi (2006) states that woman bears the brunt of conflict in which she rarely plays a part. Examples abound in Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Sudan, where some peace keepers took advantage of the woman’s helplessness to abuse, debase and rape the woman before the so-called “ration” was given to her. There is also the case of women being executed in Afghanistan for the simple reason that they are not “conforming”, there are also cases in Northern Nigeria where women are kept in bondage all in the name of “beliefs”. Women are also victims of violence within their own homes, families, communities and even in their countries, because when conflict break, tension mounts, living conditions deteriorates and women are particularly vulnerable. The principle of respect for the life, dignity, and the physical integrity of the individual which is embedded in the humanitarian laws and actually is in favour of women must always be adhered to in times of conflict. If women have to bear so much of the tragic effects of conflict in the family, they must be aware of an impending conflict. Efforts must be made to enlighten the woman about issues in question so that she can be fully equipped to handle whatever may come out of the conflict, perhaps resolve it before it degenerate.
There is a case reported at social welfare office, Anaocha Local Government, Neni, Anambra State (welfare office Records, 2007) on how a pregnant woman from Neni was seriously beaten by her husband and she narrowly escaped death, though she lost the foetus. Another case was lodged in 2008 with same office on how a father of four in Neni abandoned his children and denied them of their right to education, because of a disagreement between him and his wife. A lot of family conflicts were reported from almost all the ten communities in Anaocha local government to the welfare office, ranging from abandonment, neglect, serious beating, separation to divorce.

The existence of most of these destructive, threatening and serious problems in the family impacts negatively on its stability and cohesion. Unfortunately, adequate and proper attention were not given to these family conflicts due to the town’s prevailing constitution that forbids them from reporting family conflicts to the government through social welfare office. As a result, most families have been separated, some divorced and others are living in fear. Hence, due to this incidence of conflict and its debilitating effects on the family and Neni community at large, this demands urgent attention.
1.3 Research Questions:

1. What is the nature and extent of conflicts in the family?
2. What factors are responsible for the conflicts in the family?
3. What are the consequences of unresolved conflict within the family?
4. What strategies should be adopted for proper conflict resolution in the family?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to determine the extent family conflicts are resolved in Neni community in Anaocha L.G.A. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the nature and extent of conflict in the family.
2. To ascertain the factors that are responsible for the conflict in the family in Neni, Anaocha Local Government Area.
3. To find out the consequences of unresolved conflict within the family in Neni, Anaocha Local Government Area.
4. To suggest strategies to be adopted for proper conflict resolution in the family.

1.5 Significance of the Study
The study has the potentiality of generating comprehensive and effective conflict resolution strategies capable of addressing the various conflict situations in the family. Consequently, it will now be possible for couples and children to learn how to resolve and manage conflict carefully and fruitfully for the benefit of the family. Secondly, the study and its findings will contribute significantly to the existing literature in the subject area. Thirdly, the findings will be of benefit to policy markers as well as government and non-government agencies/organisations towards effective policies for conflict resolution and stability in the family system.

1.6 Definition of Concepts

Family:

This is a group consisting of one or two parents and their children. There is the nuclear family which is a group consisting of one or two parents, their children and close relations, and the extended family consisting of all the people who are related to each other.
The World Book Encyclopedia (vol. 7) has family as one of the oldest and most common human institution in which the members belong through birth, marriage or adoption.

**Conflict:**

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary (Vol.II) defines conflict as a state of discomfort or stress caused by an individuals experiencing two or more desires or needs that are incompatible. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary has conflict as a serious disagreement, difference of opinion and wishes.

**Resolutions:**

This is defined by Encyclopedia American as solving or settling peoples problems or doubts.

**Conflict Resolution:**

This is the process of settling or solving peoples problems, doubts or serious differences in opinion and wishes.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Empirical Literature

2.1.1 Concept of Conflict:

The literature on family and conflict resolution contains many definitions. Most of these definitions treat conflict as a negative pathological condition characterised by lack of cooperation, hostility, struggle, breakdown and destruction. Perhaps, the reason for this bias lies in the value system of the observer (Agboeze, 2004)

Nwankwo (2007), asserts that the entire family set up today seems to be very complex. The sweet and harmonious relationship that exists no sooner than later pave way to strain and stress in the family. Whether the reason behind it is convincing or not, the story is that all these revolve on the orbit of social, economic, traditional, cultural and psychological realms for a proper understanding of it all. One has to cross-examine our family lives under different cultural backgrounds from typical Western societies to African traditional milieu.

Akumuo (2003), said that conflict is an inevitable circumstance that happens in all spheres of life. It can not be totally eliminated from life activities but it can be controlled. Conflict in Nigeria industrial organisation is known to be
inevitable. This has often invaded Nigerian industries leaving many workers with dismissal or lockout and retrenchment.

Ezea (2001), maintained that conflict is absence of love, peace and unity between or among parties. Continuing, she outlined the following as the major sources of family conflict:

i. External interference particularly from in-laws.

ii. Sexual incompatibility between couples.

iii. Infertility of either of both couples.

iv. Poverty especially of the bread winner.

v. Infidelity/lack of faithfulness

vi. Peer group influence

vii. Quest for women liberation

viii. Religious differences

ix. Differences in educational attainment.

x. Drunkenness and related social vices.

xi. Procreation of only female children, etc.

According to Ezea, the existence of any of the fore-going factors in the family breeds suspicion, misunderstanding and quarrel which eventually culminate in conflict. And if it is not effectively managed, such conflicts may lead to unpleasant consequences, such as frequent verbal wars, continuous fighting at the slightest provocation, separation of marriages
and in some extreme situations, the parties could seek for divorce

Ezeh and Mbah (2004), noted that the tendency for conflict to occur exists whenever and wherever people have personal and group interaction. As people are organised into groups to seek a common goal, the probability of conflict greatly increases. Conflict has a negative connotation, for many people and communities face conflicts at all levels. Conflicts are rarely resolved easily. Various authorities have different views regarding the types of conflict. The Ohio State University has three basic types of conflict – task conflict, interpersonal conflict and procedural conflict. Okorocha (2001) stated that marital instability is attributed to such factors as sexual incompatibility between couples, insubordination due to equal social or economic status, age of spouses, polygamous marriage, tradition and culture, etc. According to him such instability often leads to marriage break-ups.

Okonkwo (2007) has conflict as a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or groups of people, which is sometimes characterised by physical violence. Conflict is a part of life and inevitable. It can be experienced in various places such as home, school, work place, communities, states and countries, etc. Some people think that
conflict is bad and should be avoided. We cannot avoid having conflicts. We have different view points on issues and ideas. Our ideas will differ with other people’s view points and this may result in conflict. In a larger context, if we look at what is happening around the world today, we will find out that the majority of the conflict occur as a result of clash of interest or opposing positions on issues. Currently Iran is having a problem with international communities on the issue of its nuclear program. Iran believes that its project is for peaceful process while the international communities think that Iran has a hidden agenda to develop nuclear weapons. Handling and resolving conflict in a proper way are needed. Understanding how to manage or resolve conflict is very important.

From the fore-going, it can be seen that conflict is a natural phenomenon in all human or organisational relationship, including family relationship. Conflict is therefore a part of life and often a part of growth and change. We can live with it, which implies learning about it, making choices and seeking to transform it in a creative way or we can live in it, and allow it to undermine objective or become destructive (Asuru and Ihejirika 1996)
2.1.2 Conflicts in the Family

The family is a conjugal unit which develops as a result of couple entering into a marriage partnership. Family living then is the way and manner family members stay together. Ideally, every family should be built on solid foundation devoid of rancour and acrimony. Failure in marriage may arise out of unforeseen circumstances that could befall a couple. Family should not be taken for granted. Just as we strive for years to become professional teachers, doctors, lawyers, home economists, engineers, musicians, accountants, etc. It is claimed that one should also struggle to develop a sound and stable family which is built on the rock of love (Maduekwe 2008). She also states that we have two categories of couples in our society today, viz:- successful and unsuccessful couples. A lot of social problems pervade our society today. The reason for the problems is lack of effective knowledge of practical psychology on how to service their marriage relationship by the couples.

The increased rate at which family conflicts occur in the society makes one to wonder at the actions of the spouses, whether they take into considerations the possible consequences on their children and the society at large. The phenomenon of family conflict is as old as the institution of
marriage itself. In any family, irrespective of the degree of love and affection among the members, conflicts, quarrels, disagreement, misunderstanding occur in between times.

Conflict can occur when family members have different views of beliefs that clash. Sometimes conflict can occur when people misunderstand each other and jump to the wrong conclusion. Issues of conflict that are not resolved peacefully can lead to arguments and resentment. It is normal to disagree with each other from time to time. Occasional conflict is part of family life. However ongoing conflict can be stressful and damaging to relationships. Some people find it difficult to manage their feelings and become intentionally hurtful, aggressive or even violent.

2.1.3 Causes of Conflict in the Family:

Egbo (1999) said that in as much as conflict exist in the home with its attendance consequences, educationalists and social scientists among other scholars on social problems have never left this crucial area untouched and addressed. Studies of educational significance have therefore revealed numerous courses of family conflict. The factors identifiable with family conflict are classified under the following categories:

1. Socio-cultural factor
2. Economic Factor
3. Religious factor
4. Psychological factor
5. Other factors.

Segal (2009) recognised that the transitions a family goes through can cause conflict. Some common causes of family conflict include:

1. Learning to live as a new couple
2. Birth of a baby
3. Birth of other children
4. A child going to school
5. A child becoming a young person
6. A young person becoming an adult.

Ezea (2001) maintained that the major sources of family conflict include:

i. External interference particularly from in-laws.
ii. Poverty especially of the bread winner
iii. Sexual incompatibility between couples
iv. Infertility of either of both couples.
v. Religious differences
vi. Infidelity/lack of faithfulness.
vii. Peer group influence
viii. Quest of women liberation
ix. Differences in educational attainment
x. Drunkenness and related social vices.
xi. Procreation of only female children, etc.

According to Ezea (2001), the existence of any of the foregoing factors in the family breeds misunderstanding, suspicion and quarrels which eventually culminate in conflict.

2.1.4 Conflict Resolution in the Family

While every family has their problems from time to time, long term conflicts cannot only cause chaos in the family setting, but they can also lead to significance long term damage. When family members cannot get along, not only can they fight, but they can also affect the relationship of other members of the family as well. But with family conflict resolution services, families can get the help they need. From communication, guidance to just having a safe place to talk to each other about feelings in the family. Family conflict resolution helps families learn how to be supportive and respectful once more. A family can be compared, to a four wheel cart where each of the wheels is free-wheeling. As long as all four wheels face front the cart rolls along smoothly. But if one of the wheels turns itself cross ways to the other three, we have a problem. A family in conflict
need some basic family conflict resolution skills. These include:- alternative listening, assertive statement and clear opinion.

Dealing with family conflict begins with finding out what the actual problem is. The family can by going to a mediation service and by talking about what the feel is the issue. Each involved family member should have a chance to talk about their feelings and what they think might be the issue. This way everyone has a chance to say what is on their mind, while also beginning the healing process. Identifying the problem is the first step toward a solution, and it can also help to calm down even the most difficult situations (www.better.health.vic.gov.au (1999/2010).

Next step to conflict resolution in the family is to begin to talk about what each family member’s feelings are in relation to this problem. This should be a time in which every family member has a chance to speak and to be heard by others in the family. Sometimes, just being able to express ones feelings about a frustrating event can help to begin the healing process and it can help others see how their actions and emotions affect others as well (www.better.health.vic.gov.au(1999/2010).

After both partners have identified what their problem is, they move to making a plan on how they can jointly master this problem. They can also find out their goals for a good outcome.
If it is money problem, budgeting and spending habits need to be addressed. There are organisations and institutions that can offer help. If the problem is with the kids, particularly with younger kids, one of the best thing to do is to have an established routine and stick to it. That includes bedtimes, meal times, play times. Children really want parameters of expected behaviour, this helps them to grow and mature.

Conflict is a normal and even healthy part of relationship. After all, two people cannot be expected to agree on everything at all times. Since conflicts are inevitable, learning to deal with them in a healthy way is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship. But when handled in a respectful and positive way, conflict provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people. By learning the skills needed for successful conflict resolution, one can keep her personal and professional relationships strong and growing (www.better.health.vic.gov.au)

Pondy in Radin and Buntz (1983) outlined three general modes of conflict and conflict resolution. These are bargaining, bureaucratic and systems conflict resolution. Additionally voluntary co-ordination that requires mutual accommodation can be thought of as an approach to resolving conflict which is linked to co-operative problem-solving.
Follet in Ebo (1990) developed a three prolonged model for dealing with conflict. These are domination, compromise and integration. Asuni (1996) set out the following model for resolving conflict in the family; controlling, compromising, problem-solving, accommodating and avoiding. He noted that people, especially husbands use avoiding model to make their ever-nagging wives change their minds.

2.1.5 Consequence of Conflicts in the Family

Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. When handled in an unhealthy manner it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments and break ups. But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases understanding of one another, build trust and strengthens relationship bonds. Conflicts can also undermine objectives or become destructive if not effectively managed (www.better.health.vic.gov.au)

Umeanadi (2002) holds that family conflict often results to divorce, the children are left in the custody of one of the parents. The implication of this is that the children no longer enjoy the full physical and psychological support of the absent parent. The tension and quarrels which proceed divorce create negative emotional conditions within the home. The children are disturbed, abused and neglected when the relationship between
the parents is not cordial. They can be exposed to wide spread degree of social problems like prostitution, juvenile delinquencies, crimes, alcoholism, truancy, etc.

According to Aja (2007), the interactionist of concept of conflict goes beyond the acceptance of conflict as inevitable to that of encouraging conflict on the ground that harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and co-operative relations grow out of conflict.

2.2 Review of Relevant Theories:

The relevant theories to be reviewed include;

1. Social system theory by Karl Marx (1818-1888)
2. Problem Solving Model by John Dewey (1933)

Social System Theory:

Social system theory propounded by Karl Marx (1818-1888) a protagonist of the conflict theory, is one of the theories of group work, which maintains that the group exists because the different components function effectively and thus enable the group to maintain its equilibrium. The family is a group that has the members as different components.
According to Karl Marx, conflict is inevitable in any social relationship. This is due to inherited contradictions, complexities and inadequacies that are apparent in the social system, especially the economic sub-system of the society. He states that what brings about conflict in the society is the differentiation in roles. Explaining further, Marx states that conflict is a process of social interaction in which two or more persons struggle with one another for some prized object or value. He further maintains that conflict arises because the benefits and rewards of society are relatively limited, while the interests of individuals pursuing these scarce resources clash as each tries to subdue the other as much as necessary to satisfy his own interest.

**Problem Solving Model:**

John Dewey (1933) in his problem solving model describes human beings as being constantly involved in problem solving process. For John, when using problem solving model, the client and the social worker should begin with the problem as seen by the client and at what ever level the client may present it. Defining the problem, identifying the goals, exploring, investigating and collecting data. He further maintains that problem solving model rests on the assumption that every
human individual has the desire to be active in life and to exercise meaningful control over his purposes and life, and thus given the needed assistance can bring about positive changes in life. Dealing with family conflict begins with finding out what the actual problem is. The family can by going to a mediation service and by talking about what they feel is the issue. Identifying the problem is the first step towards a solution, and it can also help to clam down even the most difficult situations.

**Conflict Theory:**

Max Webber (1995) another proponent of conflict theory states that conflicts cannot be excluded from social life. He maintains that conflict is a normal occurrence. For Webber, conflict occurs to bring a change and that it measures the extent of relationships within the society. Using this theory by Webber which its basic tenets is that conflict is inevitable and must occur in any social relationship, whether at the family or organisational level, members or couples in the family have to learn to deal with any conflict in a healthy manner. Handling a conflict in a respectful and positive way provides for an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people.
Crisis Intervention Model:

Crisis Intervention Model propounded by Kaplan, and Erick Linderman is based on the assumption that individuals can have crisis state they may not be able to solve using their usual coping capacity. Such problem of divorce as a result of conflict in the family, unemployment, etc. The goal of Crisis Intervention Model is usually to help the person adjust to the crisis state by offering emotional first aid and strengthening the person in his coping integrative struggles. Conflicts exist in the family with its attendance consequences like divorce, prostitution, neglect and abuse, etc which members of the family involved cannot cope with. Using this model/theory, they can now be assisted to adjust with their crisis state.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Our focus in this framework is on the family and conflict resolution. Specifically, two key elements form our particular perspective.

a. an explanation of the nature and sources of conflict using conflict theory and
b. an examination of the general mode of conflict and conflict resolution as drawn from the social system theory by Karl
Marx and crisis intervention model by Kaplan and Erick Linderman.

The conflict theory therefore, provides a good framework for understanding and explaining family conflict. The family, we know is a social unit in the social system that is made up of two or more people related blood, marriage, or adoption and living together.

The second element in our conceptual framework examines the general modes of conflict and conflict resolution. Karl Marx outlined the general modes of conflict resolution. The first is that of effective functioning of individual members of the family while performing their different roles. As an approach to conflict resolution, it involves a search for winning strategies and each member of the family as a group should be mindful of his/her own business and have consideration for others.

Kaplan and Erick Linderman maintain that for adequate conflict resolution in the family which is seen as a crisis state, emotional first aid must be offered to the persons involved to strengthen them in their coping integrative struggles.

**2.4 Resolution of Family Conflict in Neni Community**

This study was carried out on hundred (100) families randomly selected from the whole families in Neni. Ten (10)
families were selected from each of the following ten villages in Neni; Etitinabo, Eziaja, Ezeni, Okofia, Ugwudunu, Umuabani, Umudioka, Umueze, Umukabia and Umunri. In-depth interview was used for collection of data from men and women, members of the families in conflict and some elders in the community. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also done on two (2) groups of women and two (2) groups of men comprising of eight members for each group in Eziaja and Umudioka villages. Data was also obtained from social welfare office in Anaocha Local Government Area, Neni.

Family conflicts are resolved in Neni Community through some institutional arrangements like; immediate family members ("Umunne" or "Ezi-na-ulo"), "Umunna", "Umuada", extended family members – this is called "Ikwu-na-ibe" and it includes the paternal and maternal relations "Ikwunne", in-laws "ndi go" the village, the age grade and the town.

Depending on the nature of the family conflict, the "Umunne" or "Ezi-na-ulo" that is the immediate members of the family first sit together on the issue and find out the root cause of the problem and decide on the solution to that. Most often, the conflict is resolved within the immediate family members. In situation, when the conflict was beyond the capacity of the immediate family members, the problem would be reported or
handed over to “Umunna” members of the patrilineage descent from one common male ancestor, to look into the issue and resolve the conflict. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the “Umunna” often involve the “Umuada” – their married daughters in the issue, or the family concerned might report the problem to them (“Umuada”). These daughters – the “Umuada” have powers in the resolution of family conflicts. They do not fear anyone and most often their decision or ruling is the final.

Any conflict that is beyond the capacity of “Umuada”, “Umunna” is considered very serious and viewed by those concerned as heading to irreparable rifts, resentments and break ups. The issue is then reported to the Extended family “Ikwu-na-ibe”. The “Ikwu-na’ibe” institution which includes the in-laws, is rather all embracing – (“Umunne”, Umunna”, Umuada, “Ezi-na-ulo”, ndi-ogo”) and was concerned with the total welfare and well-being of its members. The extended family is mobilised only in extreme or crisis situation when the lower levels of familial institutions were unable to take proper care of the needs of a member(s).

The decision of the extended family during resolution of conflict is normally sort for, by the village, age grade or the town, whenever the issue is reported to them. Other ways of resolving family conflict in Neni community include; -
surrendering, running away, over powering the opponent with violence, involvement of mediation services.

Family conflict, the inevitable part of family life often occurs in the family between husband and wife, or children and their parents. A member in the family could decide to surrender and suffer inwardly or die in silence for peace to reign. On the other hand a wife in order to escape from being beaten up, starved or punished by her husband often run away from the family. Some children also run away from the family when committed offence or felt they are not given adequate or proper attention/treatment by their parents. Parents often resort to violence so as to overpower or subdue their children from requesting for their right and freedom as members of the family. Some husbands often overpower their wives with violence as a way of disciplinary measure. Some wives also use violence to overpower their husbands by resorting to nagging, quarrelling and fighting, believing that to be the best method of resolving their conflict.

There are also mediation services – which is voluntarily and confidential. The process involves a third party to help people discuss difficult issues and negotiate on agreement. This takes less time and cost than litigation. Parties in mediation create their own solution and the mediator does not have any
decision-making power over the outcome. For all the institutional arrangement for resolving family conflict, only the government recognised institution has legal backing.

The Customary Court and the social welfare unit are government recognised institutions for the resolution of family conflict, but only few people from Neni report to such institution because of their family, village or town constitution against reporting family issues to court/ government without having the dispute being deliberated upon first by the family, village or town. The necessity of this study is therefore very timely.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Summary

The findings of the study according to research questions revealed as follows:

Major factors responsible for conflict between husband and wife in the family are socio-cultural factor, economic factor, religious factor, psychological factor and individual behavioural factor.

In any family, irrespective of the degree of love and affection among the members, level of education of the husband and wife; conflicts, quarrels, disagreement and misunderstanding occur in-between times.

In as much as two people cannot be expected to agree on everything at all times and since conflicts in relationship are inevitable, learning to deal with conflict in a healthy way is crucial.

The study which aimed at finding out how family conflicts are being resolved in Neni, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra state, concluded that conflicts handled in an unhealthy manner cause irreparable rifts, resentments and break ups, but when resolved in a healthy way increase understanding of one another, build trust and strengthens relationship bonds.
3.2 Conclusion

Conflicts in the family originate in order of importance, from the following sources: poverty, childlessness, infidelity, interference from in-laws and relations, communication gap, etc. Family conflicts have been accepted beyond being inevitable to that of encouraging it, on the ground that harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and co-operative relations grow out of conflict.

Conflict resolution strategies adopted by husbands and wives are not altogether effective, neither are they adequate. The various techniques can be improved upon through counselling services by qualified social welfare workers and agencies. When members of the family especially spouses approach family conflict as win/lose propositions, they are likely to be left with feelings of anger and the problem may get worse instead of better. As long as the goal of dealing with conflict is winning, both parties will remain stuck in the conflict.

Therefore, working together to resolve family disputes can lead to better, stronger relationships and better feelings about oneself and others. Finally, conflict is not negative pathological condition characterised only by lack of co-operation, hostility and struggle, rather, it is a process which signals a need for change.
3.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings in the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Members of the family especially husband and wife should always strive to see conflict as inevitable as well as a process of change, and thus try to resolve it in such a way that both parties are winners.

2. For the successful resolution of a conflict in the family, both partners should first endeavour to identify what their problem is. They can sort the problem out by going to a mediation service or talk about what their feelings are in relation to the problem identified.

3. More importantly, members of the family should constantly look up to the Almighty God for their family problems, by praying together whether or not there is conflict in the family or not.
REFERENCES


Scott, M.S. (2008). *Conflict Resolution Skills for healthy Relationships*. The Counselling and Mental health centre at the University of Texas at Austin.


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In-depth Interview Schedule (IDS)

1. What do you understand by the word family?
2. What is conflict?
3. Why is there conflict in the family?
4. What are the causes of conflict in the family?
5. What factors do you think are responsible for the conflict in the family?
6. What are some of the consequences of family conflict in Neni Community?
7. Is conflict of any advantage to the family?
8. Who do you think suffers much when there is conflict in the family?
9. How is conflict being resolved in Neni town?
10. Is there any constituted strategies for resolution of conflicts in the family in Neni town?
11. Who are responsible for resolving conflict in the family in Neni community?
12. Can family conflict be resolved within the family without involving outsiders?
13. Why are most family conflicts in Neni not reported to the Local Government Social Welfare Unit for resolution?
14. Family conflicts are inevitable, how do you think most successful family in Neni manage or resolve their conflicts in the family?
Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide:

1. We have two types of families – successful and unsuccessful one. How can we identify them?
2. What are society’s expectations from the head of the family who wants his family to be a peaceful one?
3. List expected roles of women in the family.
4. When women do not perform their expected roles. What are the consequences in the family?
5. Is resolution of conflict in the family only men’s affairs in Neni community?
6. Is it proper for any family member to report/complain any of her grievances to the outsiders?
7. Identify causes of conflict in the family in Neni Community.
8. How can conflict strengthens relationship bond or cause resentment in the family?