

## **Yira-Yii (Traditional Oath-Taking): Revisiting the Ogoni Tool for Peace-Building and Social Stability**

**DEEZIA BURABARI SUNDAY**

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt

Email: burabarisunday@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

The thrust of this paper is on the institution of *yira-yii* (traditional oath-taking) and its role in curbing disharmony, disequilibrium and socio-political instability among the Ogoni indigenous people, as well as how it has brought social order and peaceful-coexistence. Living in a physical and moral isolation is considered alien, as the Ogoni socio-cultural values emphasize on wholeness, solidarity and tenacity of purpose. Hence, *Yira-yii* (oath-taking) strengthens community networking as well as performing the healing function in the society. Using the historical and ethnographic approach, the paper focuses on the Ogoni philosophy of *yira-yii* (oath-taking), personnel involve in administration, the instrument used, the sacred places of administration, the socio-cultural significance, as well as the continuity and discontinuity in the practice of *yira-yii* (oath-taking). It is regrettably observed that despite the importance of *yira-yii* (oath-taking) in the Ogoni indigenous society, this religious and socio-cultural practice which hitherto occupies a central place in maintaining peaceful co-existence and social stability is almost on the verge of extinction, as the modern day Ogoni people have relegated this practice background and thus denying their identity, religion and socio-cultural values. The paper therefore advocates for a practical effort and religious revival in the institution of *yira-yii* (oath-taking) especially, where other known awareness seems to have failed.

**Keyword:** conflict, oath-taking, peace building, social stability, indigenous.

## Introduction

The belief in the ability of the gods in giving impartial judgment has been the bedrock of *yira-yii* (oath-taking) among the Ogoni indigenous people of Nigeria. Not only are the gods presumed to be custodian of morality, and up-holders of truth and honesty, but they are also believed to act decisively in acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty. Hence the concept of *yira-yii* (oath-taking) among the Ogoni indigenous people amplifies the sacredness of divine order. The various prohibition rules guided the people against acts considered harmful to their well-being as individuals and society in general. The people believe that the DOs and DON'Ts of the Ogoni society are willed by the gods. Thus, defaulters are sanctioned, and in extreme cases, such persons are put under oath for the rest of their lives.

Among the Ogoni indigenous people, *yira-yii* (oath-taking) performs the healing function to the society. It enhances the maintenance of integration, harmonious interaction and mutual strengthening. It is an institution of fundamental importance across a wide range of social interaction throughout the six kingdoms – Babbe, Eleme, Gokana, Ken-Khana, Nyo-Khana and Tai – along with Ban-Ogoi (special unite) that make up the Ogoni indigenous nation.

However, the abandonment of this highly respected traditional institution (*yira-yii*) in favour of the modern age judicial system has given room to unhealthy competitive rivalry between friends, families, social groups and communities. This is evidence as everyone tends to defend their ideologies, needs, values, egoism and selfish quest at the expense of the people's harmony and social stability. This situation therefore raises the following posers: What is the Ogoni philosophy of *yira-yii* (oath-taking)? What is the social-cultural significance of *yira-yii* (oath-taking)? How can the Ogoni indigenous institution of *yira-yii* (traditional oath-taking) be maintained in the light of westernization?

Consequently, the increased evidence of cult battle for supremacy, chieftaincy tussle, land boundary adjustment and communal conflict which often degenerate to direct violence and the inability of the modern methods of conflict resolution in fostering peace to the Ogoni indigenous society calls for a great concern. Hence, the need arises to revive the *yira-yii* as a tool for peace building and social stability among the Ogoni people.

## Conceptual Framework

Conflict is derived from the Latin word ‘configere’ meaning ‘shocking together’. Conflict is generally accepted to be an inevitable phenomenon in the lives of man (Ezenwoko & Osagie, 2014). It cannot be completely separated from the inter-relationship that exists among human beings. Hence, in the African society, conflict may generally exist whenever or wherever incompatible events occur and may result in “win-lose character” (Ajayi & Buhari 2014). It is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Onigu-Otite & Albert 2001). In Ogoni indigenous society, cult supremacy battle, land dispute, chieftaincy tussle, political desire, inter and intra communal conflict have become the order of the day due to different perception, ideologies, value and modern influence.

Oath-taking is one of the rituals and a highly respected institution in Africa. The African society is a dynamic one in which people interacts with one another at different levels. Oath is therefore seen as a solemn to a deity or to witness one’s determination to speak the truth or keep a promise (Merriam Webster’s Dictionary, 2010). It is a conditional self-curse which draws attention to the pervasive presence of conditional divine punishment looming larger over the swearer. It is a curse which a man lays upon himself to take effect if what he declares is false.

Peace building refers to a conscious effort that supports the structure for peaceful co-existence and inter-communal wellness through which groups, individuals and communities are seen as belonging to one single family.

Social stability refers to the process by which a group seeks to maintain equilibrium by forcing out ideas and individuals that disagree with popular opinion (Ogunleye, 2008).

### **Ogoni Philosophy of Yira-yii (Traditional Oath-taking)**

The Ogoni indigenous people perceive the world as being divided into three spheres viz. the sky which is inhabited by ‘Kawaa-Bari’ (The Mother of Creation or the Supreme Being), the earth which is inhabited by ‘Nwi-nee’ (human beings), and beneath the earth, the abode of *Nama-te* (ancestors) and ‘adô’ or *adorn* (guardian spirit and evil spirit etc). Among the Ogoni indigenous people, the indigenous religion played a vital role in regulating the lives and daily activities of the people. Hence, the concept of *yira-yii* is preserved in their mythical stories. It is seen as an aspect of the people’s culture, religion and a way of life. There is the existence of *yira-yii* in such institution as marriage, among members of the society, gangs and among people of the some profession. Yira-yii is further seen in such activities for rites as the initiation of new members into some organizations such as traditional secrete societies, as well as among kings and their subordinates. Yira-yii therefore serves as a means or way of expressing the people’s religious belief.

Yira-yii (Traditional Oath-taking) as observed among the Ogoni ingenious people is a means of establishing and maintaining good human relationships. Such sacred agreements are not made without blood being either shed or exchanged. “The central idea of these practices is the natural notion that blood is life, thus the commingling of the blood of two persons is equivalent to the commingling of their lives and personalities” (Nabofa, 1994), and they are thus indivisibly united. When *yira-yii* is embodied in any judgment, one party to the dispute is asked to provide the deity for the contending party to swear. If the deity is sworn as agreed to them, the matter is regarded as closed. A date of potency is fixed, after which, if the swearer or the accused does not die, he is adjudged the winner of the suit. This declaration of innocent is also followed with traditional all cleansing called *aa biae-yii*. Sequel to this, some of the formal types of *yira-yii* (oath-taking) among the Ogoni people include:

- *Yiibae-loo* (oath of security)
- *Yii Wu-Mene* (Oath of coronation)
- *Yii Lea-Ueloo* (Oath of exoneration)
- *Yii ne-dam* (Oath of marriage)
- *Yii Wura yee bae-bue* (Oath of inter-communal dispute resolution)
- *Yii yee kuma-nam* (Oath of boundary adjustment)
- *Yii kuune-mue* (Oath of agreement) etc.

## **The Personnel in charge of Nè-yii (Oath Administration)**

Among the Ogoni indigenous people, the administration of *yii* (oath) takes a number of forms. The nature of the case, the types of *yii* (oath) and the desired effect determines the procedures, instrument as well as the personnel to administer the oath. The personnel include the following:

### **1. Aa-yor (Priest/Priestess)**

Among the Ogoni people, the priest acts as a mediator, a link and a channel of communion between the people and the deities. The priest performs a number of functions, some of which are religious, socio-cultural, political, military and economic. A good example of such priest is the Aa-yor *si-asaa-buè* (priest of the earth goddess).

According to Ken-Gbogbo (personal communication, July 17, 2014), the priest must have good morals, good knowledge of the culture and tradition of the people is a *since-qua-non*. If this mediatory role should be entrusted on someone who does not have a good knowledge of the custom and tradition of the people, he is bound to discharge of his duty. He must be conversant with the taboos of the land and capable of semiotic symbols. Aa-yor *si-asaabuè* is usually appointed from the first settler of every community. This is irrespective of their size, population, wealth and political dispensation or otherwise.

A man with his household or a number of household will migrate from an original place of abode to set up a new settlement. While setting up the homestead, the first person to arrive equally sets up a

shrine ‘si-asaã’ or ‘si-yor’ to represent the centre of the earth. From that moment, he begins to make offerings, sacrifices and petitions. Any newcomer will meet all these institutions already in place. Hence, the aa-yor si-asaã (Priest of the earth goddess) is the religious head of the community; she/he heads in all rituals and functions prominently in the place of *yira-yii* (oath-taking).

## **2. Mènè-Buè (Village Head)**

Mene-bue is the political head of the community. However, he also carries out some of the functions of the priest such as administration of oath, pouring libation, offering sacrifices, as well as soliciting for the well-being of the community.

## **3. Mènè-Gã (Clan Head)**

The clan head intercede on behalf of the clan. He is in charge of all the religious functions of the clan. Best example is the ‘*Gã-waagu*’ fond in Luawii, the traditional headquarter of Babbe Kingdom.

## **4. Mènè-Bua (Lineage Head)**

This class of person also functions as a priest in all ramifications. They perform similar function as family heads, apart from the fact that their areas of jurisdiction are usually smaller. It is a fraction of a kindred family or lineage head as religious specialists mediate between their lineages and the departed members of their lineages. They present offerings, make sacrifices and channel the petition of their people to their ancestors. They also make invocations and intercede on behalf of them during periods of crisis.

## **5. Mènè-Be (Family Head)**

Every family in Ogoni enjoys a degree of political independence. This grants them the right to have a political as well as a religious head. The eldest male in the family occupies these positions; thus, family heads serves as priest for their respective families. He is the person to

pour libation, and make sacrifices, etc. on behalf of their families. He stands as the mediator between the family and the ancestors.





	<p><i>Yira-yii</i> (oath-taking) during inter communal dispute resolution in Ogoni</p>
	<p><i>Yii wu-mene</i> (oath-taking) during coronation in Ogoni</p>
	<p><i>Yira-yii</i> (oath-taking) in restoring trust and confidence and peaceful coexistence in Luawii (an Ogoni community)</p>
	<p>Tee-Gwaara (a prominent deity that give justice without delay) of NYo-khana kingdom in Ogoni.</p>

Fig. 1. Administration of *Yii* (oath) in Ogoni

## The Non-Priest

Apart from the priest, elderly men and women, boys and girls as well as children are the categories of the non-priest in Ogoni. They also administer oath but not in the shrine. It is observed that children and youth easily collect sound from the ground while they make affirmative statements just to prove their fact during arguments. Another instance is observed between young boys and girls who are in love. In a way of proving deep love to each other they use razorblade or any sharp object

to piece their fingers to lick each other's blood. This serves as a bond between them.

Oath-taking is also noticed in most polygamy homes, especially in a situation where there is no trust and confidence among the wives – the man can decide to give them oath. In this kind of oath, they swear with kitchen utensils like mortar and pestle, pots and cooking spoons, etc. This might be administered by either their husband or the family head in the presence of other family members. This is normally done in order to regain trust among them.

### **Sacred places where oath is administered**

The types of oath to be administered determine where the administration of the Oath is to be held. Thus, oaths take place in the following places:

#### **1. Shrine (Si-yor)**

A shrine is a front or a place dedicated to the gods at home or away from home. Among the Ogoni indigenous people, shrines are the commonest places where oath can be administered and they are built with such trees like *kionor*, *agbii*, velvet and o-ha trees etc, which do not die, even during dry season.

Before oath-taking takes place, the case is first of all reported at the shrine before the final day of administering the oath. Like in the bari-aa-yor shrine, there are seven (7) human skulls among which three (3) females and four (4) males, including that of his only son. All these represent gods who provide protection, healing, justice and good future etc, in return for veneration, and sacrifices etc. The shrine is also seen as a refuge for some defenseless persons when they threatened by superior forces. Nwideede N. L. (personal communication November 5, 2015), asserted that, administration of *yii* (oath) in a shrine is headed by a priest alone who performs all incantations and prepares the person for the rituals by calling upon the gods to act as witness. The accused family ensures their family members clears his/her name by taking the oath.



## 2. Si-asaã buè (Front of the earth goddess)

Asaã (the earth) is regarded as the symbol of community. She is believed to have conceived the world in her womb. She is responsible for procreation and keeps surveillance over the activities of all individuals. As a mark of stability, innocent persons accused of wrongdoings may demand that they swear by ‘asaã-buè’ (the earth goddess) to vindicate them. In this sense, it is believed that any false swearing by the earth causes offenders to die. To bury such persons who die within the stipulated time of the oath with such diseases like small pox, leprosy, chicken pox, and swollen stomach etc. in the community amount to defilement. Hence, such corpse is taken to the *kue-taa* (evil forest). Si-asaã can also be referred to as the scene of agreement i.e., an oath can be administered there because it is believed that the ‘asaã’ can never be partial in a judgement.

## 3. Si-Kpo Eeteh (A sacred spot at the town square)

*Si-kpo ee-teh* is a sacred spot at the town square of the community. It is believed that the seat of power is capable of vindicating the just and punishing the unjust. This punishment can even lead to death.

## 4. Bee Gboor (frontage of a compound)

The frontage of a compound (*bee gboor*) is located at the front of a particular building said to be a mere floor or ground. Administration of oath at this place is performed by a family head or an invited priest as the case may be to act as intermediary between the family members and the gods. Such oaths include oath between co-wives, and with a whole family who no longer have trust and confidence within each other. After the oath has been taken by the family members, the next thing that happens is the celebration of unity and peace among them.

## Instrument of Oath-taking

Among the Ogoni indigenous people, the sacredness and significance of objects are emphasized without which the exercise cannot be held. Some of such instruments include the following:

### **i. Asaá (Earth)**

It is observed that the chief object of oath-taking is the earth goddess. She is believed to be the guardian of morality, the great mother spirit and the queen of the underworld. The oath is administered by the aayor (priest), bongènè-mènè (council of chiefs) which is made up of mènè-buè (village head), mènè-gam (clan head), mènè-bua (Lineage head) or mènè-be (family head) with other elders in the community. It either takes place at the shrine, town square, or any sacred spot in the village. This oath is prepared by applying the asaá (earth) into the *mii-gini* (dry gin), before handing to the accused person.

### **ii. Korn (Ritual staff)**

*Korn*, regarded as a judicial instrument and also a symbol of authority which transcends to the user, is used only by the priest. All pronouncements made with *korn* in hand during administration of oath carries religious implications – positive or negative – depending on the circumstances. To this end, it is safer to avoid wrong doings and making wrong utterances with the *korn* in hand than saying something which the priest will later regret. Any pronouncement, whether good or bad, with the *korn* is sealed and to reverse, if possible, must require rituals.

### **iii. Mii-Gini (Dry Gin)**

*Mii-gini* (dry gin) popularly known as *kai-kai* is also another compulsory object of oath taking in the Ogoni indigenous society. Nwideede-Lucky (personal communication, August 7, 2014), asserted that *mii-gini* symbolizes the ancestors as well as the only acceptable drink to the ancestors especially in issues that concerns oath-taking. *Mii-gini*, when presented, is a symbolic way of expressing welcome, safety or a sign of showing hospitality. *Mii-gini* can also be used when preparing an oracle, and can also be used to trigger the anger of a deity. *Mii-gini* can also be used to bless, like in marriage and other occasions; it is also used to curse, and to invoke, etc. Therefore, *mii-gini* plays both positive and negative roles in the Ogoni society.

#### iv. *Nem* (Native Chalk)

*Nem* is another object of religious importance; it is also a sign of purity and peace. Priests use it to distinguish themselves among ordinary people during any celebration. *Nem* is equally used to decorate sacred areas. At such places, drainage of various kinds is made to symbolize the religious function of such a place. During sacrificial rituals, the native chalk is one of the items required. At shrines of deities, it is common to see pieces of native chalks. At any point this native chalk is removed to a person's house – it means that a deity has been invoked for that person. That is why the sight of this native chalk at unexpected places causes serious concern among the Ogoni people, but when given as present it signifies calmness and strictness.

Apart from individual cases, *Nem* is equally required when preparing an oath. When the *mii-gini* (dry gin) has been poured into the keg, the native chalk is ground with hand straight into the keg of gin by the priest. Other instruments include *Teer* (shark fish) or *Aka* fish, *Abue* (plantain), *Zia* (yam), *Ako-kuru* (tortoise-shed), *Akpa-Okoro* (oyster-shell) and *apa* (keg) etc. The uses of these instruments are being determined by the deities.

Sequel to this, there exist contrary view on the possibility of neutralizing oath already taken. Barile Nwiworgor (personal communication, December 15, 2004), asserted that, if someone is accused of theft or murder, and the person himself knows that he is guilty of such accusation, the accused goes to fortify himself before taken the oath or after taking the oath goes to neutralize it. Such a person may be required to eat *bee-orn* (a forbidden fruit) or to swallow *ke-dere* (vulture egg) etc. Nwiworgo further explained that neutralizing oath is a private affair because, in some cases, such attempts do not always work. Rather, it may elongate the time far beyond the period of isolation, but at the end, if the accused is guilty, he will still die.

Tuasor-Kakorn (personal communication, August 19, 2013), is of the view that no matter the kind of sacrifice and rituals carried out by the accused, he cannot blindfold *asaá-bu* (the earth goddess). As the

earth goddess is believed to be strict without mercy, not minding what the accused has licked or swallowed.

Deekae-Nwaakara (personal communication, September 12, 2004) asserted that despite the fact that Oath-taking helps to bring about social stability among individuals, groups and the society at large, oath-taking also have some negative impacts. He further explained that “having sworn an oath after one have been accused, that oath exposes the person’s life to danger, as accusers and enemies through their agents will always attempt to eliminate the accused within the stipulated period of the oath. This is aimed at creating false impression that the accused is guilty, hence the death.”

It is however observed that the Ogoni custom and tradition forbids one who is under oath from public gatherings, night meetings and unnecessarily exposure. He/she is to avoid eating or drinking in public, especially in the home of those that are not trusted. The person is also forbidden from climbing trees as well and exempted from going into the battle field. If the person is a polygamist, he might stop eating food prepared by any of his wives he did not trust. In some cases, he would prepare food for himself. Secondly, the gods does not sleep –they are able to vindicate the just and could not be bribed.

### **Ee-bu Nee Yii Lee (Celebration of Incense after the expiration of the isolation period).**

Nudee and Gbaradeekor (personal communication December 28, 2013) both asserted that someone who swore an oath is declared innocent if such persons stay alive to the expiration of the stipulated time gap or period of isolation. The people believe that good name is better than riches. Hence, the celebration of a man’s vindication is a mark of honour and sincerity; it is a day of joy for the family and well-wishers. Elaborate preparations are made before this celebration, invitations are sent out to friends both far and near, the *gere-gere* (traditional drummers) is also invited. The status and financial background of the celebrants determines the elaborateness of the celebration.

After the revocation rituals and the offering of sacrifices at the shrine of the deity, the celebrant is being welcomed by a large crowd who took him round the village and market squares. In some cases the celebrant is being carried on the shoulder by two hefty men, while the jubilant crowds sing and dance alongside.

This clearly shows how the people believe in the ability of the gods in giving impartial judgement. Hence, such consolatory names like *Bari-Biae* (God Will Judge), *Bari-Mue* (God Sees), and *Bari-be* (God Will Fight) etc. are cheered to the gods. These expressions are believed to give assurance to the innocent of the impartiality of the gods. On the other hand, a man's death within the stipulated period of an oath is a big disgrace to his family, relatives and the lineage.

### **Oath-taking and its significance in Peace- building and social stability**

The Ogoni indigenous people believe that Ka-waa Bari (The Supreme Being), which could as well be interpreted as the mother of creation, created the world and thus owns the world as well as the individual persons that make the socsociety. Hence, every institutions in the society is therefore religiously oriented, including the *Yira-yii* (oath-taking) institution.

*Yira-yii* (Oath-taking) could be made between man and God, or between man and divinities. The term of this kind of *Yira-yii* are dictated by the divine, and man on his part, has to accept the terms and take on himself the yoke of obedience to the divine will. While the types of *Yira-yii* made between group of persons are also being made effective with divine sanction.

For instance, a situation where two parties are contesting over ownership of a property or even demarcation between lands etc., the Ogoni sense of justice is always brought to bear, using the *Yii kuune-mue* (oath of agreement) or *Yii yee kuma-nam* (Oath of boundary adjustment). To make this Oath effective, the people go to the presence of a divinity to make and seal such an Oath or they call on a divinity to bear witness to the Oath. In this way, the oath is believed to have divine sanction.

Again, if a person is being accused of stealing or murder, the same process of oath-taking is applicable for both. That is to say that when a person is accused of having a hand in the death of someone else, he is made to swear an oath. The accused is arraigned before his family or community to explain his/part. Though handling of such important case varies in the different communities of Ogoni. It is however important to note that the Ogoni indigenous people believe that good name is better than riches, hence when a person is charged for having a hand in the death of another, the relatives (bua-wuga) of the deceased may demand that the accused swear an oath, if he is denying the charge. On the other hand, the accused relations may equally demand their relation (the accused) to be given an oath to prove his incense. In such situation, the *Yii Lea-Ueloo* (Oath of exoneration) is adopted.

*Yira-yii* (oath-taking) also play an important role in inter-communal dispute resolution. This oath-taking give meaning and cohesion to society. As an instrument of social stability, oath-taking enhances a bond between man and man and between man and the object of worship. Some of the socio-cultural significance of Oath-taking includes the following:

- *Yira-yii* maintains mutual trust and confidence among families, friends, groups, and the society at large.
- *Yira-yii* serves as a means of spiritual rejuvenation, and cultural reawakening. It revitalizes people's inner drive to be conscious of their customs and traditional norms, and customs, when breached, attract divine sanction. Hence, *yira-yii* instills fear into members of the community.
- *Yira-yii* serves as a means of peaceful co-existence and societal solidarity. It strengthens and guarantees individual responsibility within the communal ownership and relationship. It also enhances the realization of the Ogoni popular adage *do it or torn* (live-and-lets-live), with its principles of respecting every individual in their worth.
- *Yira-yii* serves as a means of social stability; it strengthens and unifies the Ogoni social structures as well as guides the people on the DOs and DON'Ts of the society.

- *Yira-yii* serves as a means of moral stability. In the Ogoni indigenous society, morality refers to the models or standards of conduct that people adhere to. It is concerned with the principles of good and evil, right and wrong, etc. Hence, the acts of theft, witchcraft and shedding of blood or murder are abhorred in the Ogoni indigenous society. This is to ensure societal harmony, confidence and banish fear and suspicious.

## **Continuity and Discontinuity**

The institution of *yira-yii* with its high importance and great significance has been relegated to the background as a result of westernization and its agents. Like the opening of the Pandora's Box in the ancient Greek myth of origin, westernization has caused a lot of damages on the socio-religious system of the Ogoni people. The indigenous values and traditions have been sacrificed on the altar of westernization because of the belief that whatever is western is good for emulation and whatever is indigenous is devilish and demeaning, hence the rejection and denial of their cultural heritage and identity which has turned the modern day Ogonians to indigenous strangers (Deezia, 2016). In attempt to modernize *yira-yii*, the practice of oath-taking has become a meaningless ritual rather than a conscious act. The Ogoni indigenous values have been affected so badly that little or no value is being added to their marriage system, language, customs, occupations and human attitude, communal living, religious practices and legal system etc. This has caused a major setback to the Ogoni socio-cultural development and family integration.

The importance of *yira-yii*, either in the form of allegiance or promise, has been neglected; promises and oath of office are broken at will; innocent and less privileged people are oppressed with impunity; justice is delayed and even denied and due process of selection/election into positions of authority are no longer followed; hence, the high level of political instability as witnessed today. Worse still is the fact that politicians now control the traditional stools, even the priests/priestesses and other oath administrators are now biased because of monetary interest (greed) and corruption which is evidenced in almost every spheres of life, all in the name of modernization.

In spite of all odds, the Ogoni indigenous *yira-yii* cannot be sent into obsolescence as it serves as the only efficient means of maintaining peaceful co-existence and social stability.

## Conclusion

Our discussion so far has been on *yira-yii* as an institution of fundamental importance to the people. It helps to abolish problems of suspicion, lack of confidence and mistrust. It enhances the maintenance of peaceful co-existence and societal integration, harmonious interaction and mutual strengthening.

The persistent increase and the alarming rate of criminal activities in this modern age is a sharp contrast to the olden days when traditional methods and measures were used in controlling crime. Arguably, the sophistication of weapons used by the security agents in the modern age has not significantly reduced crime. Hence, there is a need to revive the institution of *yira-yii* (oath-taking), which will also serve as a way of preserving the people's identity, religion, and socio-cultural values.

## References:

- Ajayi, A.T., & Buhari, L.O. (2014). Methods of conflict resolution in African traditional society. *An international multi-national journal of Ethiopia*, 8(2), 138-157.
- Deezia, B.S. (2016). Westernizations: The Opening of the Pandora's Box on African Cultural Value System. In W. O. Wotogbe-Weneka, G. I. K. Tasje and J. O. Obineche (Eds.), *Religion in historical perspective: Essay in honour of Professor E. S. Akana*. Port Harcourt: Chadik Printing Press.
- Ezenwoke, F.A. & Osagie, J.I. (2014). Conflict and conflict resolution in pre-colonial Igbo society of Nigeria. *Journal of studies of social science*, 9(1), 135-158.
- Nabofa, M.T. (1994). *Symbolism in African traditional religion*. Ibadan: Perback Publisher.



*Merriam Webster's online dictionary* (11<sup>th</sup> ed). (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

Ogunleye, A.R. (2008). *Covenant making in Yoruba traditional religion: A panacea for moral decadence in Nigeria*. Ph.D Thesis. Department of religious and cultural management, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State.

Onigu-Otite, & Albert, I.O. (Eds) (2001). *Community conflicts in Nigeria: Management, resolution and transformation*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.