

Research Fellows and Research Projects

Department of Science and Technology (DST) – National Research Foundation (NRF) Centre in
Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS)

RESEARCH FOCUS AREA: IKS & CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Image of researcher in action



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Country of Research: CAMEROON

Research Topic: African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Contemporary Conflict
Transformation: A Case Study of the *Bakweri* People of the South West Region of Cameroon.

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Research Supervisor: Prof Hassan Kaya

Research Background/Summary

This research is an empirical study of the efficacy of the *Bakweri* chieftaincy of the South West Region of Cameroon in the transformation of conflicts for sustainable community livelihood. The *Bakweri* people have a rich culture and an abundance of indigenous structures used to mitigate conflicts. Some of these indigenous mechanisms include traditional leaders, spiritual

healers and secret societies such as the *Malay*. However, the majority of these structures have been overshadowed by modern state structures in the contemporary era of globalization. That notwithstanding, the chieftaincy among the *Bakweri* people in particular and Cameroon in general, has thrived as the most resilient indigenous institution even in contemporary times. However, this indigenous institution has not been thoroughly investigated to inform policy and consequently, it has been undermined in the search for sustainable solutions to contemporary conflicts. In spite of this, African indigenous knowledge systems cannot merely be romanticized as they face numerous challenges regarding their relevance in the contemporary age of human rights and gender equality. It is partly for these reasons that some of these indigenous institutions and customs have withered away. That notwithstanding, the *Bakweri* chieftaincy offers a rich platform for sustainable transformation of contemporary community conflicts.

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