

Fulani Herdsmen's Pastoral Activities, Conflict and Conflict Management Strategies in Ibarapa East Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Target audience: Crop farmers, Nomads, MDAs (Ministries, Departments and Agencies on agriculture), law enforcement agents, community leaders.

Abstract

Pastoral activities of the Fulani nomads in Ibarapa East Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo state Nigeria had come with some challenges over the years of interacting with their host community. This study was aimed at determining the effects of nomadic farming in the study area attendant conflicts and conflict management strategies adopted by the various stake holders. A total of 140 questionnaires and interview schedules were administered in the study area 100 for crop farmers as they were most affected by pastoral activities of the Fulani nomads 20 for nomads and 10 each for community leaders and law enforcement agents. A multi stage sampling method was adopted for crop farmers. In stage 1 the study area was divided into 2 quarters; stage 2 had each quarter divided into 5 units while 10 questionnaires were purposively administered to crop farmers in stage 3. Also random sampling of the nomads was conducted in which 20 interview schedules were administered. The data was processed and subjected to descriptive analysis using frequency count and simple percentage. The results obtained showed that the majority (62 and 100 %) of crop farmers and nomads respectively were male (54 and 65) % of crop farmers and nomads respectively were within age bracket of 20 – 39 years while (62 and 75) % of crop farmers and nomads respectively had less than 20 years of farming experience. Also the results showed that problems encountered by the crop farmers were crop destruction (22.89 %) and sexual harassment (20.65 %) while cattle theft (69.57 %) and language barrier (30.43 %) were those of the nomads. Conflicts were resolved by payment of compensation by offending nomads (50.00 %) while crop farmers reported to concerned authorities (63.33 %) and mediation by community leaders and law enforcement. Concerning conflict prevention majority of the crop farmers (40.85%) suggested provision of grazing reserves by government while the nomads (53.12%) suggested fencing of crop farms by farmers. Value orientation on peaceful coexistence of the crop farmers and Fulani pastoralists was recommended.

Key words: nomadic, crop farming, conflicts, conflict management

Description of Problem

In a social set up, such as is available in Ibarapa – East LGA of Oyo state, Nigeria, there is always the existence of different socio – ethnic groups of which interrelationship have positive and negative impacts, as the case may be, on their immediate society. Amongst the diverse ethnic groups in Ibarapa are the Fulanis, who basically engaged in one form of pastoralism or the other. However, there had been some issues of concern in their activities also which generate conflicts. These conflicts can be said to be caused and aggravated by an increasing competition for common resources such as land and water points as a result of population growth as observed in other similar environments (5).

Livestock management practice in Sub Sahara Africa is fodder-based and cattle movement is dictated by the availability of fodder and water (3). This factor constantly brings crop farmers and nomads on conflict path in most times. All over the world, there had been history of clashes between pastoralists and crop farmers. For example, in the Middle East, there were reports of clashes between nomadic Bedouin and the Fellahin (peasant farmers) in Arab societies (8). In the western countries there had been clashes between cattlemen and homesteaders over grazing land in the Johnson County Range War of 1892 in the Great Plains of Wyoming, USA, (sedentary farmers) (2). Bloody rivalries have been reported in many other countries including Nigeria (1, 4).

Conflicts in Africa had existed from time immemorial. For instance, it was pointed out that since 1600 AD, “white

warriors”, herders from the Northern Sahel, continuously raided the black agricultural villages in south (for the sake of grazing land) (6). The Fulani herdsmen had co – existed with the people of Ibarapa region of Oyo state for ages. There had even been inter – tribal marriages in some cases. However, as with other societies where people dwell together, there were pockets of conflicts here and there. In a study of Ogo – Oluwa LGA, the author pointed out that major sources of conflicts between the nomads and crop farmers were crop destruction by animals and sexual harassment while cattle theft and language barrier were conflict sources faced by the nomads from their host communities.

Conflict resolution strategy adopted in any situation is important as it will determine whether the conflict will subside or aggravate. Strategies adopted by crop farmers and nomads in Ogo – Oluwa LGA included formal reports to concerned authorities and payments of compensation by the offending party (7).

The objective of this study was to determine the following in the study area:

- socio – economic contributions of nomadic activities
- causes of conflicts between crop farmers and pastoralists
- conflict resolution and preventive strategies adopted by various stake holders.

Materials and Method

The study was carried out in Ibarapa - East Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo state. The area is situated within the derived savanna belt of Nigeria and the

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people are traditionally crop farmers. A total of 140 interview schedules were administered in the study area, 100 for crop farmers, 20 for nomads and 10 each for community leaders and law enforcement agents. Crop farmers were selected for the study because they had frequent interactions with the nomads on farm while community leaders and law enforcement agents were purposively selected because they were involved in the management of conflicts between the two primary groups. A multi stage sampling method was adopted. In stage 1, the study area was divided into 2 quarters (Eruwa and Lanlate and their environment respectively); stage 2 had each quarter divided into 5 units while 10 questionnaires were purposively administered to crop farmers in stage 3. Also, random sampling of the nomads was conducted in which 20 interview schedules were administered. Data collection covered vital aspects of the respondents and include the following: bio data (sex, age, education), farm characteristics (farming experience,

type of farming, size of farm, size of herd), socio – economic impacts of respondents activities in the study area (positive impact of your neighbour's activities, problems with neighbour's activities, any formal report of problem, authorities reported to, and problem resolution. The data was processed and subjected to descriptive analysis using frequency count and simple percentage.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the bio data of crop farmers and nomads. Results (crop farmers and nomads respectively) from the table show that majority of the respondents were male (71 and 100) %, within the age bracket 20 – 39 years old (42 and 50) %. This showed that the respondents were in their active age. With regard to restiveness, youth are also known to be more restive than older population. However, majority of the crop farmers had secondary education (54%) while that of nomads had no education (65%). Education had been pointed out to influence many aspects of life including man's approach to conflicts.

Table 1: Bio data of respondents

Factor	Crop farmers		Nomadic farmers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sex:				
Male	71	71	20	100
Female	29	29	00	00
Age:				
< 20	00	00	07	35
20 – 39	42	42	10	50
40 – 59	48	50	03	15
60 and above	10	08	00	00
Education:				
None	06	06	13	65
Primary	33	33	07	35
Secondary	54	54	00	00
Tertiary	07	07	00	00

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Table 2 shows the farm characteristics of the respondents. From the table, majority (57%) of the crop farmers had 20 – 39 years of farming experience, planted cash and food crops (49%) and engaged in commercial farming (70%) with 10 – 20 ha of land cultivated (76%). The study showed that the farmers were medium scale operators who depended

on their fields for livelihood. However, majority (65%), of the nomads were less than 20 years of age raised cattle and small ruminants (80%) and engaged in nomadism (55%). Age in most cases has been associated with maturity as a result of experience gathered over the years. This, in a way, influences decision making.

Table 2: Farm characteristics

Factor	Crop farmers		Nomadic farmers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Farming Experience (years):				
< 20	27	27	07	65
20 – 39	57	57	13	35
40 – 59	16	16	00	00
Type of farming:				
Cash crop	13	13	NA	NA
Food crops	38	38	NA	NA
Cash and food crops	49	49	NA	NA
Cattle	NA	NA	04	20
Cattle and Small ruminants	NA	NA	16	80
System of farming:				
Subsistence	30	30	NA	NA
Commercial	70	70	NA	NA
Transhumance	NA	NA	02	10
Sedentary	NA	NA	07	35
Nomadism	NA	NA	11	55
Size of farm (ha):				
< 10	22	22	NA	NA
10 – 29	76	76	NA	NA
30 – 49	02	02	NA	NA
Size of herd (heads of cattle):				
< 500	NA	NA	18	90
500 – 1000	NA	NA	02	10

Note: NA = Not Applicable

Table 3 shows the socio – economic impact of nomadic herdsmen and crop farmers' activities in the survey area. From the table, majority of the crop farmers used animal manure to fertilize their farms and indicated crop destruction as the major problem with the nomads (95%). However, all the

nomads indicated supply of food as the main benefit of the crop farmers to their nomadic community. Also, the nomads (80%) pointed out cattle theft as the major problem they had with their neighbours. These submissions were similar to the ones in Ogo – Oluwa LGA of Oyo state, Nigeria (7).

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Table 3: Socio – economic impact of activities

Factor	Crop farmers		Nomadic farmers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Positive impact of your neighbour’s activities:				
Manure from animals	75	50.00	NA	NA
Animal labour for farming	45	30.00	NA	NA
Supply of food (crops and animal products)	30	20.00	20	100
Problems with neighbour’s activities:				
Crop destruction by animals	95	28.79	NA	NA
Water source pollution	80	24.24	NA	NA
Sexual harassment	70	21.21	NA	NA
Overgrazing of fallow lands	45	13.64	NA	NA
Land encroachment	40	12.12	NA	NA
Cattle theft	NA	NA	16	80
Language barrier	NA	NA	09	45

Note: NA = Not Applicable

Table 4 shows crop farmers – nomadic farmers' conflict management strategies. From the table, majority of the respondents indicated that frequent conflicts occur between crop farmers (45%) and nomads (50%) respectively. Concerning the effects of the conflicts, majority of the crop farmers (54.65%) indicated poor harvest while the nomads (70.83%) indicated destruction of properties as the major effects. The conflict resolution methods adopted by the two groups vary as majority of the crop farmers (42.11%) preferred to report to law enforcement agents while the nomads (66.67%) preferred payment of compensation. This showed that the two parties involved in the conflicts believed in the rule of law and peaceful co – existence by avoiding options that may further aggravate the crisis. Concerning conflict prevention, majority of the crop farmers (40.85%) suggested provision of grazing reserves

by government while the nomads (53.12%) suggested fencing of crop farms by farmers. Table 5 shows community leaders – law enforcement agents' conflict management strategies. The table reveals that majority of the community leaders (60%) and law enforcement agents (47.06%) considered the conflict a frequent occurrence. The table also shows that majority of the respondents (community leaders and law enforcement agents respectively) considered the destruction of properties as the major effect of such conflicts (44.12 and 68.18) %, mediation as conflict resolution strategy employed in the study area and provision of grazing reserves by government (60.00, 60.00)% as a way of preventing such conflicts. Since the purpose of conflict resolution is peaceful co – existence, mediation as a resolution strategy is cheaper and friendlier than options like litigation.

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Table 4: Crop farmers – nomads conflict management

Factor	Crop farmers	Frequency %	Nomadic farmers	Frequency %
Frequency of conflict:				
Frequently	45	45.00	10	50.00
Occasionally	31	31.00	08	40.00
Rarely	14	14.00	02	10.00
Effects of conflict:				
Poor harvest	94	54.65	00	00
Destruction of properties	33	19.18	17	70.83
Discouragement to farm	25	14.53	00	00
Maiming	12	06.97	06	25.00
Murder	08	04.65	01	04.17
Resolution of conflict:				
Report to law enforcement agents	88	42.11	00	00
Report to community leaders	65	31.10	09	33.33
Payment of compensation	56	26.79	18	66.67
Suggestion on conflict prevention:				
Provision of grazing reserves by government	96	40.85	15	46.88
Increased extension services	77	32.77	00	00
Collaboration between crop farmers and nomads	62	26.38	00	00
Fencing of crop farms	00	00	17	53.12

Table 5: Community leaders– law enforcement agents conflict management

Factor	Community leaders		Law enforcement agents	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Frequency of conflict:				
Frequently	12	60.00	08	47.06
Occasionally	08	40.00	06	35.29
Rarely	00	00.00	03	17.65
Effect of conflict:				
Destruction of properties	15	44.12	15	68.18
High food cost	11	32.35	07	31.81
Feeling of insecurity	08	23.53	00	00
Resolution of conflict:				
Mediation	16	69.57	09	56.25
Payment of compensation	07	30.43	07	43.75
Suggestion on conflict prevention:				
Provision of grazing reserves by government	18	60.00	09	60.00
Enactment of laws guiding the activities of crop farmers and nomads	12	40.00	06	40.00

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Conclusion

The study showed that majority of the crop farmers used animal manure on their farms while nomads were able to buy food from crop farmers. The study also revealed occurrence of frequent conflicts in the study area between crop farmers and nomads and that crop destruction was the major grouse the crop farmers had with nomads while cattle theft was that of the nomads against crop farmers. The effects of such conflicts included poor harvest and destruction of properties. Reporting to law enforcement agents and payment of compensation were strategies employed by crop farmers and nomads in resolving the conflicts while the community leaders and law enforcement agents adopted mediation. On conflict prevention, provision of grazing reserves for nomads was seen as a solution.

Applications

From the outcome of the study, the following recommendations can be applied by concerned authorities in resolving the age – long conflicts between crop farmers and nomads in the study area in particular and other regions of the world that may be faced with similar crisis:

- Establishment of grazing reserves for the nomads by concerned authorities
- Value reorientation on peaceful coexistence that can lead to behavioural change in the crop farmers and nomads by concerned authorities.

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