ASSESSMENT OF CAUSES OF CONFLICT, PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION MECHANISMS BETWEEN CROP FARMERS AND NOMADIC PASTORALIST IN SHELLENG LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT:
This study assessed causes of conflict, prevention and resolution mechanism between crop farmers and nomadic pastoralist in Shelleng Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. A total of eighty respondents (61 crop farmers and 19 pastoralists) were randomly selected from two of the six districts existing in the study area. Primary data were used for the study which was obtained through structured questionnaires administered to the respondents. The result revealed that majority (90%) of the respondents were of the opinion that encroachment of water points through conversion to other purposes such as irrigation was a major cause of conflict. Some of the respondents who also accounted for 85% were of the view that inadequate grazing reserve was also part of the problem causing conflicts between pastoralists and crop famers. Large proportion (85%) of the respondents preferred resolving conflict by the village heads possibly due to proximity people. Similarly another 85% of the respondents suggested that the best way of preventing conflict is through the provision of adequate points while 70.0% revealed that provision of grazing land for pasture development and management will help in preventing conflict. It is therefore recommended that; stakeholders should intensify effort towards the establishment of cattle routes, grazing reserve, water points and periodic interaction among crop farmers /pastoralists for sustainable partnership and co-existence.

Key words: Assessment, Causes, Crop farmers, Prevention, Resolution, Mechanisms

INTRODUCTION
Conflict is defined as a state of disagreement or disharmony between persons or ideas (American Heritage Dictionary, 2011). Conflicts occur in all aspects of live, for example an emotional or mental disturbance resulting from the opposition or simultaneous functioning of mutually exclusive impulses, desires, or tendencies is also considered to be conflict. Conflicts occur between crop farmers and pastoralists, but farmers/pastoralists differences are not only seen as resources conflicts but sometimes represent as ethnics conflicts involving the key groups. Since herder and farmer groups have different values, customs, physical and cultural characteristics (Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). The feeling of belonging that is among the members of the groups is focused around their economic interest, protection of values, cultures and power. The Fulani nomadic cattle herders being the minority in host communities have a unique culture and strong sense of solidarity. They are often isolated from farming population, and in such cases conflict between farming population of the host community is regarded as having an ethnic colour. Implicitly in the context of this study, conflict between pastoralist and crop farmers in Nigeria especially Adamawa state usually lead to huge losses in terms of human, material and agricultural resource. Hence an understanding of cause and effects of conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers in host communities is an important prerequisite for the realization of the goal of Agricultural development policies, to which research experts and extension agents are professionally committed.
In the past, cattle rearing were restricted mainly in the savannah belt and rain forest areas where crop production was carried out mainly by the small scale farmers (Adebayo, 1997). He further stated that since 1950s there has been growth of human population as well as livestock production in the country resulting in increased pressure on natural resources. Homer-Dixon (1994) considers conflict between multiple resource users as an inevitable outcome of competition for scarce natural resource to achieve security of livelihoods. He argues that environmental change, population growth and unequal social distribution are the three main resources of scarcity which lead to violent conflict. According to Blench (2003), in West Africa, the introduction of trypanocides and other veterinary drugs helped in increasing herds’ sizes to a significant level that compelled herders to continuously seek for more pasture all year round and outside their ecological range. At the same time, improved human health and general wellbeing has also increased the overall population and thereby exerted much pressure on the available arable land. This problem is compounded by the expansion of the riverine areas and development of Fadama lands for continuous Fadama farming since the 1980s which promoted farmers and herders competition for access to river banks with consequent increase in the level and intensity of conflict. Similarly, increasing availability of modern weapons has also increased the intensity of conflicts. In Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Zone IV of Adamawa State, Nigeria, over the years there has been occurrence of crop farmers/pastoralists conflicts over crops and animal feeds. The effects of this on the socio-economic development of the area, has been tremendously alarming. This is in view of the fact that, sometimes conflicts leads to loss of life and property on both sides (Gyuse, et-al, 2006). The bitterness and ill feeling that resulted from the conflict have serious negative implication on integration, understanding and cooperation which are vital for the progress and development of the area and Adamawa State in general. There is food insecurity due to low productivity arising from violent conflicts and unrest. Some survivors have permanently lost all they laboured for in their lives. As a result one can argue that the aggregate of such instance have negative impact on the agricultural activity which is the main economic activity of area, and by an extension the rest of the state.

METHODOLOGY
The Study Area
The research was conducted in Shelleng Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The area is located at the southern part of the state and lies between latitude 9.20°- 10.50°N of the equator and longitude 8.10° and 12.00° E of the Greenwich Meridian as reported by the Adamawa State Ministry of Agriculture (ASMOA, 2009). The study area has a tropical climate that is distinctly divided into dry and wet season. The wet season normally commences from April and ends in October. The hottest period occurs between February and March with temperature ranging between 27°C and 44°C. The annual rainfall also ranges from 762 to 101 mm (ASMOA, 2009). The study area has land mass of 2,150 km² from its six local district and with a population of 149,069 persons (NPC, 2006) and an estimated population of 185,921 persons as at 2014 applying a projected growth rate of 2.8% as provided by the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006). The vegetation of the area is the Sudan type characterized by both short and tall grasses that ranges from 1.5 to 3 meters high and with sparsely populated short trees comprising of Acacia, Clump palm, Locust bean, Mahogany, Silk cotton, Baobab tree etc. Some of these trees were about 9 to 24 meters long (ASMOA, 2009). The major source of livelihood of the people in the area is agriculture. The crops produced in the area include; maize, rice, millet, sweet potatoes, cassava, and pea nut among others. Animals reared are; cattle, sheep, goat, pig etc. (ASMOA, 2009).

Sources of Data
Primary data were used for the research and was collected from the field survey using structured questionnaires that were administered to the respondents.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size
Shelleng Local Government Area (LGA) was purposively selected being the LGA with high incidences of conflicts between crop farmers and pastoralists. Two out of the six districts in the LGA were also purposively selected based on the intensity and frequency of the occurrence of conflict. From each of the two districts, five (5) villages were randomly selected giving a total of ten (10) villages. The list of the crop farmers were obtained from the Adamawa Agricultural Development
Programme (AADP) while that of nomadic pastoralists from Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in the LGA. From the two lists, it was revealed that there were 733 registered crop farmers and 237 registered pastoralists. In the last stage of sampling, respondents were selected based on the proportion of farmers and pastoralist from each village resulting to a total number of eighty respondents selected for the study (61 crop farmers and 19 pastoralists).

**Analytical Tools**

Frequency and percentages were used in the analyzing the causes and resolution mechanisms of conflicts in the study area.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Causes of Conflict between Pastoralists and Crop Farmers**

Conflicts doesn’t just occur without a cause but its level may vary from location to location, type, number of people involved, reason for it among others. Crop farmers and pastoralist are farmers that are mutually related in terms of their culture, tradition, etc. Some of them combine both farming and herding but yet and in some cases they tend to have differences in their views, opinion and understanding in the common use of the existing resources in and around their communities.

Table 1 revealed that encroachment of cattle routes was a possible cause of conflict. Majority (90%) of the respondents admitted that there were cattle routes in their area with clear demarcation and indication of cattle zones. Therefore, distortion of the livestock routes as a result of increase in human activities, arising from increased in population can be one of the reason for the continuous occurrence of this type of conflict in the area. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Raynout (1999) who asserted that in most states, stock routes have been blocked by farmers’ crops, individual building and government development projects and is the major source of conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers.

The Table 1 also revealed that the encroachment of grazing reserves is another cause of conflict in the area. Majority (65%) of the respondents were having the opinion that encroachment of areas demarcated as grazing areas is among the reason of conflict. The remaining 35% of the respondents expressed contrary views that there were no grazing reserves in their area. These differences in the views of the two groups might be the source of the continuous conflict in the area. The problem is compounded by deforestation, land degradation, erosion, desertification etc. These problems have limited the areas of operations of farmers and pastoralists, hence the result is heightened competition which sometimes results to conflict (Blench, 1999).

Watering points for both human and animal consumption has also been found to be one of the major sources of conflict in the area. The Table 1 further revealed that 72.9% of the respondents admitted that there were stock water points in their area. Based on the analysis conducted there was indication of livestock watering point in the study area as reported by the majority of the respondents lack of adequate water has been one of the major problem causing conflicts between pastoralists and crop farmers, since most of the route leading to the cattle water point has been blocked by crops and plantations. Sometimes, these water points are used for irrigation purposes arising from increased activities in Fadama areas. Inadequate grazing reserves were identified to be one of the causes of conflicts as reported by 85.0 % of the respondents. About 76% of the respondents reported that grazing of crops and crops residue contributed greatly to conflict in the area. In most cases this is done without the consent of the crop farmers.

**Table 1: Causes of Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Water Points</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate grazing reserve</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encroachment of grazing reserves</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encroachment of stock route</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing of crops and crops residue</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate pasture</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2014

*Multiple Responses*
Strategy of Conflict Prevention in the Study Area

The result of conflict resolution was also presented in Table 2. Majority (80.0%) of the respondents reported that enough clearly demarcating farms and grazing areas be made to prevent conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers in the study area. This can be done by clearly demarcating the areas by sign post or billboard. 90.0% are of the opinion that there should be provision of stock route. About 60.0% suggested that pastoralists should be settled in a permanent place (land). According to Tonah (2006), pastoralists need to be settled in a particular place so that their children would receive proper education and regular health service which may serve as best way of reducing crop farmers/herders conflict. Provision of water through availability of livestock drinking points can also be a way to avoid conflict over water.

Conflict Resolution

Minor conflicts are settled through traditional arbitrations by ward/village heads, district heads and emirs. Eighty five percent (85%) of the respondents revealed that ward heads settle disputes. The village or district will investigate the cause of dispute and settle the parties involved. This is done by telling the parties to be accommodative to each other, payment of damage where crops or livestock are involved or sanction.

Results on Table 2 also revealed that 70% of respondents reported conflict resolution committee set up by state Government settle disputes. These comprise representatives from the relevant department of local government, state security services, the police, farmers and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association with similar committees formed at the districts and wards levels. Fifty (50%) percent of respondents reported that conflicts are resolved in courts while 40% said in police station by the police.

Table 2: Method of Conflict Resolution and Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>*Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Prevention Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demarcating of farm/grazing areas</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of stock route</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settled pastoralists</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer/herder conflict resolution committee</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage establishment of improved pasture</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision Livestock water points</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village /District heads</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution committee</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2014
*Multiple responses

CONCLUSION

The study examined the causes of conflict between crop farmers and nomadic pastoralists as well as prevention and resolution mechanism in Shelleng Local Government Area. The major causes of conflict were identified. This include blockage of cattle routes, watering points and grazing areas. Method of resolving conflicts by village heads is the most preferred by the respondents.

The study recommended the establishment of grazing land for pasture development and management and grazing reserves by the Government. Livestock water drinking points also to be established by the Government. Cattle routes to be re-establishment by the Government since most of the existing routes were blocked through human development. There is need for crop farmers and pastoralists associations to form a common union so as to be meeting from time to time to find a way of preventing future occurrence of conflicts.
REFERENCES