

## EXPLORING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES IN REBUILDING PASTORALIST LIVELIHOOD DURING AND AFTER CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

BY

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### Abstract

*The paper was on exploring community development approaches in rebuilding pastoralist livelihood during and after conflict in Nigeria. Conflict is global phenomenon; meanings of conflict and pastoralism were extensively discussed. Factors contributing conflicts amongst pastoralist and farmers were highlighted which include amongst others demography, effect of climate change, bribery and corruption. The paper went ahead to discuss on loss of livelihood as a result of conflict amongst Pastoralist and Farmers in Nigeria like reduction in the output and income, displacement of the pastoralists and farmers, loss of houses and properties, limited access to dry season, grazing and water for livestock. The paper further discussed community development approach in rebuilding pastoralist livelihood which includes strengthening local leadership, community based policing, community forums and dialogue, establishment of pastoralists and farmers cooperatives amongst others. Lastly the paper suggested that there should be a sensitization and dissemination of information, establishment of truth and reconciliatory committee, compensation to victims amongst others*

**Keywords: Community, Development, Pastoralist, Livelihood and Conflict**

### Introduction

Conflict is a global phenomenon (Abubakar & Yusuf, 2015). There is hardly any community in the world which has not been involved in one conflict or the other. This is because; human society is characterized by clashes of interests which usually lead to conflict (Abubakar & Yusuf, 2015). The violent conflict between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria has caused loss lives and properties. The conflicts have taken a new dimension in recent years as parties have access to sophisticated and dangerous arms. Conflict between pastoralist and farmers has also been a common feature of economic livelihood in West Africa (Ufouku & Isife, 2010). In the period before the 20th century, such problems were restricted to the savanna belts of West Africa. Cattle rearing where mainly prevalent in these belts: Guinea, Sudan, Sahel Savanna where crop production was carried out according to the short rainy season and small scale (Ufouku & Isife, 2010).

More than 90% of nomadic herdsmen in northern Nigeria are ethnic Fulanis and the majority of them originally migrated from the Arabic peninsula and today is not just living in Nigeria but in several countries of West Africa and Central Africa (Genyi, 2017). Nigeria's ongoing conflict between the pastoralists and farmers has a long complex and conflicting historical background. The disputes are not new only that it has taken a new dimension. Mostly the conflicts are as results of competition of access to land and other natural resources. The crisis has redefined the perception of the country as a theatre of war and conflicts. Alimba (2014) remarked that of all conflicts in Nigeria, pastoralists and farmers, communal conflict has manifested itself as the most pandemic issue next to ethno-religious conflict in the democratic era in the country.

The major problem is not just about the ubiquity of conflicts as it is already a reality of our social system (Abubakar & Yusuf, 2015). This paper argues that community development experts and adult educators have the potential to manage and resolve pastoralists and farmers conflicts in Nigeria through community-development approaches. It is against this backdrop that the paper advocated for the exploration of

community-development approaches in rebuilding pastoralists livelihood during and after conflict in Nigeria.

### **Meaning of Conflict**

Conflict is a common phenomenon in social relations. It often occurs in social organizations and assemblies of people. Conflict according to Ekpenyong cited in Abubakar and Yusuf, 2015 can be viewed as a difference in perspectives: what one sees, thinks, feels, and believes may be different from what another sees, thinks, feels, and believes. Conflict is also described as a state of incompatibility. In this sense, Darling and Fogliasso (1999) described conflict as a situation in which the concerns of two or more individuals operating within the unit appear to be incompatible. Incompatibility breeds conflict because it is a psychological state in which people cannot get along with one another in an organization. Hellriegel and Slocum (1996) posited that conflict is an opposition arising from disagreement about goals, thoughts, or emotions with or among individuals, teams, departments, or organizations. Opposition is all about blocking an individual or a group from achieving set goals, and this leads to conflict because of the instant over reaction that will be put up by the party being blocked.

### **Pastoralism**

Pastoralism is an umbrella term that covers diverse cultural practices and modes of mobility. Pastoralist in Nigeria operate within an extensive geography and move within the African countries. Is an economy that is based on raising livestock, continuously on the move and contribute 63% of the GDP (United Nation Economic Commission for Africa, 2017). Nomads have to move round with their cattles, sheep, goats and camels from one point to the other in search of water and pasture. The practice doesn't go down well with the farmers as their livelihood is threatened. In otherwords it is referred as open grazing which is an old age practice of roaming about with animals in open fields, plains an nearby bushes in search of pastures for the animals (Ashiru, 2021). It has been argued that pastoralism might not be sustainable since the land for grazing and the feed availability are very limited with the rising cases of insecurity in the country and has adverse effect in the livestock production. The Nigerian livestock depends on natural vegetation, over 90% of ruminant depends on forage resources i.e. crop residues, established pasture and natural range land

### **Factors promoting conflicts amongst Pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria**

The following are some of the factors that cause conflict between the pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria:

1. Demography: the economic growth which is as a result of oil development in the country has provided investments in the construction of roads, companies, dams and irrigation. The population growth has also resulted in building more houses, companies and other infrastructure that led to the encroachment of more farmlands and stock routes. This led to conflict between the pastoralist and farmers as their means of livelihood are threatened. Projects were sited almost everywhere as a result of the oil boom, constructions were ongoing and more and more private companies were involved in the constructions and this led to more farmers loosing arable land for farming and make them look for new lands for agriculture in the future ( International Crisis Group, 2017). Also, the growing business sector built so many buildings over the pathways that herders used to walk away their animals ( Shehu, 2018)
2. Effect of climate change: as a result of climate change the amount of rain is decreasing every year. It has been observed that the area which turned to desert or semi desert in the past sixty years is around 350.000 square kilometer in Nigeria. However, Shehu (2018) opined that desertification continues towards the southern parts of the country with the speed of 600 meters in a year. The desertification and drought are very worrisome to the people who earn their living from agriculture. Expanding the farming lands in the areas that used to be suitable for grazing means less space for herders' animals (Genyi, 2017). Water and grazing lands decreases in the northern part of the country and this made the pastoralist to migrate and as a result of the movement the animals move into the farm lands to destroy crops.
3. Bribery and corruption: has eaten deep in the fabrics of our social life as grazing reserves were either converted or allocated to individuals for their personal gains or used for construction of infrasturcture.

The grazing act which was enacted in 1964 by the federal government in order to determine certain areas that pastoralists used in grazing. The enactment of the law was the first step in curtailing or preventing the encroachment of the grazing areas. Due to bribery and corruption such lands were given to individuals who converted them to either housing, companies or farm lands. Also with the introduction of Land Use act in 1978 which gave the power of leasing or renting of land to individuals such powers get people to abuse it by allowing or granting individuals the right to own lands at the detriment of others. It has also been observed that the culture of Fulani about land ownership prevented them to be enthusiastic about buying the land that they have been naturally “owning” for all their lives (Okello, 2014)

4. Criminal tendencies: armed robbery and cattle rustling are some of the major issues that are seriously aggravating pastoralists farmers conflict in Nigeria. It has now become a daily occurrence whereby communities are been attacked and cattle rustled especially in the northern part of Nigeria and these incidences created rooms for reprisal attacks which led to the death and displacements of many people.
5. Illiteracy: It has been observed that illiteracy is seriously playing a role in the farmer and herders conflict because there are many from both sides that cannot read and write as such can't appreciate the value peace and tolerance any slight difference or misunderstanding results in killings and destruction. Illiteracy is a serious disease that fuel crisis, it often results in killings and destruction
6. Government policies: the introduction on the ban on open grazing or anti open grazing law by some states governments has really triggered a new conflict between the pastoralist and herders which resulted in the killings on both sides and creating more enmity amongst and destruction of properties. The pastoralist feels that they are Nigerians and have freedom of movement to any part of the country as enshrined in the constitution while on the other hands those governments are of the view that movement of cattles from one part of the country to the other is causing serious problems as such is no longer feasible at the material time therefore ranching should be the option.
7. Economic factors: the sustenance of the economic situation of individuals constitute a major problem in the explanation of the factors that endeavored peace and security amongst pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria. It has been observed that pastoralist account of the significant component of the economy of the country. Christopher (2018) is of the view that pastoralists own 90% the livestock population and 3% of the nation's GDP. The Nigerian population depends on the cattle for food.

### **Loss of Livelihood as a Result of Conflict amongst Pastoralist and Farmers in Nigeria**

1. Reduction in the output and income: whenever there is a conflict between pastoralists and farmers, it results to the destruction of livestock and farm produce which seriously affected the output and invariably led to the reduction or loss of the income. This sometimes led to the total loss of whatever the pastoralist or herder got in the entire life cycle. Afuoku and Isife (2009) reported that more 40 million worth of crops are usually lost due to invasion of cattle in the south south region of Nigeria. It has been observed that the conflict had led to the destruction of lives, properties, animals and crops in the ravaged states of Katsina and Zamfara making the people to be poorer. There are a lot of pastoralists that cannot go to their farm lands and could not cultivate crops. This negatively affects their output and income.

2. Displacement of the pastoralist and farmers: the conflict has seriously displaced some pastoralists and farmers and are taking refuge in the neighbouring communities or states as such they can't go back to their farmlands to cultivate their crop or the pastoralists cannot move with their cattles in search of food and water however Ofem and Inyang (2014) are of the view that pastoralist herders conflict has not only resulted in the internal displacement of the pastoralist and herders especially women but also led to the reduction in income/savings and output. The negative effects of the conflict in agriculture create a vicious circle of bigger problems, which citizens are not able to get rid off by themselves. Farmers who seek refuge in some other places usually get very poor as they do not have income to sustain themselves and their families (International Crisis Group, 2017)

3. Loss of Houses and Properties: most of these conflicts resulted in wanton destruction of lives and properties which causes untold hardships to the people affected by the crises. It is very common to see thousands of houses burnt which gave rise to humanitarian crises by extension poverty, hunger and

starvation. The crises led to constant attacks, killings, maiming, raping and at the long run turned to religious and ethnic conflicts. The ethno religious dimension is gaining ground and fueling hatred amongst the Muslims and Christians in some part of the country. It is seriously creating trust issues among the different adherents of the two religions in the country. The crises seriously affect the internally generated revenue because in most places it relies on agricultural production and if the areas are in conflicts then the rural markets cannot operate. It is stated that Nigeria is losing huge amount of money annually on the pastoralists and farmers conflicts.

4. Limited access to dry season grazing and water for livestock: as a result of the crises pastoralists can't move from one place to the other for fear of reprisal attacks as such led to the starvation of the animals which will invariably lead to the death of the livestock because of insufficient pasture and water for the animals. It has been observed that some pastoralists do not control their animals and sometimes they intentionally let them graze along the growing farms because of the limited access to the grazing lands. The conflicts have exacerbated unemployment and economic hardship, exposing the rural dwellers into untold poverty.

5. Crop damage by livestock: the conflict is seriously causing socio economic problems to the people. Crop production which is supposed to be improving constantly to be able to sustain the basic nutritional needs of the growing population is seriously affected by the crisis. Pastoralists do set their animals inside the growing farm lands to destroy the crops. Akinbile (2015) opined that herders were worst hit by the conflicts as it affects their farming and led to the reduction in farm output, loss of properties and scarcity of food.

### **Community Development Approaches in Rebuilding Pastoralist Livelihood**

Community Development approaches are to give power to the local community groups to take control in the affairs that affect their lives and ensure the participation of all the members of the community in respectives of their tribes, religion, occupation. The basic goal for community development approaches are that local communities are better placed to identify their shared needs and the necessary actions to meet them and these will ensure a sense of community ownership, and sustainability. It is an effective approach to peace building as it provides range of measures necessary to transform conflict towards sustainable, peaceful relations and outcomes

The following are some of the community development approaches in rebuilding pastoralists livelihood are:

1. Strengthening local leadership: they are important in community level conflict resolution processes however, there is the need to build the capacities of the local leadership on conflict resolution mechanism. Local leadership plays key roles in all the activities of the community as such members have high solidarity for them. Training and retraining of the leaders on the new approaches to conflict resolution can help in addressing the conflicts and ensuring peace and stability in our communities.

2. Community based policing: there is the need to bring all the people together e.g. community based organizations, farmers groups, pastoralists, security agencies, youth associations amongst others to jointly take responsibility for ensuring the protection of lives and properties in the community. It has been used in some many communities and provided the needed peace and stability.

3. Community forums and dialogue: it is very essential to provide a forum where members of the community can discuss issues that affects their lives and also forestall the break down of law and order. Members of the community can voice out their grievances and concerns, all issues of concerns can be trashed out and amicable resolutions reached.

4. Establishment of pastoralists and farmers cooperatives: cooperatives can be established so as to provide services in the health, education, infrastructure and natural resource. Many of such initiatives has been designed and implemented with the hope for ensuring social capital, sustainability and cooperation amongst many divides

5. Awareness creation and negotiations Media and Civic Education: media especially radio can be used to spread good messages on the importance of peace and reconciliation as well roles and responsibilities of a

citizens. Social media platforms are the new ways that you can reach a large audience and spread messages to the teeming youths. It can also be used to document the view and concerns of the different groups so that we can learn to tolerate each other. Theatre arts can be used in the community as outreach to teach peaceful dispute resolution and tolerance amongst members of the community.

6. Traditional Justice and Reconciliation: it is to focus on the members of the community so as to ensure justice and fair play. Members of the should be educated on the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. Traditional approach has to be inclusive and focuses on reintegrating the members of the community on the conflict. An important aspect should be a way that members of the community would feel forgiven and integral steps in healing process.

### Conclusion

Conflict between pastoralists and herders has taken a new dimension and the consequences are of various degrees. The conflict has led to the death of many pastoralists and herders as well as loss of livelihoods on both sides. Therefore there is the need for the government to evolve a new policy that would take cognizance of the peculiarities of the pastoralists in getting all the grazing reserves and providing incentives for the establishments of more reserves and intensifying on enlightenment. In other words the socio economic loss cannot be quantified and is a serious concern especially on the food security of the nation.

### Suggestions

In view of the above the following suggestions are made:

1. Sensitization and Dissemination of information: there should be a very aggressive sensitization and dissemination of new methods and improved varieties of seeds that has efficacy and yields A very high output within a very short period so as to give high output to replace on the loss or reduction as a result of the crisis. More extension workers should be deployed to places where such crises occurred to enlighten the farmers on the improved varieties of seeds.
2. Establishment of Truth and Reconciliatory committee: should be put in place so that the displaced persons will go back to their places of abode and continue with their lives as their stay away causes serious humanitarian crisis. The committee will draw membership from the two sides, community leaders, youth groups and security agents. It must give room for serious reconciliatory effort so as to ensure the return of peace. The committee should ensure all the grey areas are discussed and amicable solutions are resolved. People should be given room to voice out their grievances and issues resolved.
3. Compensation of victims: Government is advised to come in and settle the victims, so as to reduce the tension and also the gravity of the loss within the shortest possible time. It has been observed that delays in compensating victims also triggers other crises because people felt that they are not considered and have no concern by the government despite the huge loss recorded as a result of the crises. It is the work of the committee to actually find out the cost of the damages and advise on the appropriate ways to compensate the victims and proffer solutions.
4. Construction of bore holes: construction of many bore holes in the area will give room for irrigation of crops during the dry season and also serve as source water to both the people and animals. People will have access to good drinking water which will ensure healthy living and also the animals. With the construction of the bore whole people may not go far in search of water for drinking and animals use, as such some level of peace will reign in the area.

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