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RESEARCH PAPER

Farmers' Perceptions on the Influence of Inter-Communal Conflicts on the Agricultural Land in Share/Tsaragi Communities, Kwara State, Nigeria

تصورات المزارعين عن تأثير النزاعات الطائفية على الأراضي الزراعية في مجتمعات شير/ تساراجي ، ولاية كوارا ، نيجيريا

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ABSTRACT. Inter-communal conflicts have plagued rural communities which produce the bulk of agricultural produce in Nigeria. One such conflict is Share/Tsaragi inter-communal conflict. The objective of the study was to assess perceptions of farmers on the influence of inter-communal conflicts on the agricultural production in Share and Tsaragi communities in Edu and Ifelodun Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kwara State, Nigeria. A three-stage random sampling procedure was used to select 120 respondents for the study. Data were collected using an interview schedule technique. A Likert-type five-point continuum scale was used to rank farmers' perceptions with five (5) as the most and one (1) as the worst check. The results showed that 68% of the respondents were above forty (40) years of age and 70% have resided in the communities for more than ten (10) years. Respondents perceived that conflict of resource which bordered on the boundary issue, claim of ownership of fertile land at Fejewe area, conversion of leased land to personal property among others are causes of the conflicts within the two communities. The results equally revealed the perceptions of respondents on the effects of conflicts in the area to include scarcity of arable land, displacement of farmers, destruction of lands and crops, scarcity of food and destruction of stored produce among others. The study showed the relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics and perception. This study concludes that there should be a clear delineation of the boundary within the two communities, the lift of the ban on some arable lands seized by the government and the promotion of other secondary occupations to relieve pressure on the land.

KEYWORDS: Conflict; Farmers; Perception; Kwara State; Share; Tsaragi.

المستخلص:ابتليت المجتمعات الريفية التي تنتج معظم المنتجات الزراعية في نيجيريا بالصراعات الطائفية. أحد هذه الصراعات هو الصراع بين طائفتي Share/Tsaragi . حيث تم تقييم تصورات المزارعين حول تأثير النزاعات بين الطوائف على الإنتاج الزراعي في مجتمعات Share و Tsaragi في مناطق الحكم المحلي Edu و Ifelodun في Kwara . أخذت العينات بطريقة عشوائية من ثلاث مراحل لاختيار ١٢٠ شخصا للدراسة. تم جمع البيانات من خلال مقابلتهم . تم استخدام مقياس ليكرت من خمس نقاط لترتيب تصورات المزارعين مع خمسة (٥) كأعلى استجابة و (١) كأقل استجابة. أوضحت النتائج أن ٦٨٪ من المجيبين هم فوق ٤٠ سنة وأن ٧٠٪ يقيمون في المجتمعات المحلية لأكثر من ١٠ سنوات. أدرك المجيبون أن تضارب الموارد الذي يحد من قضية الحدود ، والمطالبة بملكية الأراضي الخصبة في منطقة Fejewe ، وتحويل الأراضي المستأجرة إلى ممتلكات شخصية من بين أمور أخرى هي أسباب النزاعات داخل المجتمعين. وكشفت النتائج بالتساوي تصورات المجيبين حول آثار النزاعات في المنطقة لتشمل ندرة الأراضي الصالحة للزراعة ، وتشريد المزارعين ، وتدمير الأراضي والمحاصيل ، وندرة الغذاء وتدمير المنتجات المخزنة وغيرها. أظهرت الدراسة العلاقة بين الخصائص الاجتماعية والاقتصادية المختارة والتصورات .وتخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أنه يجب أن يكون هناك ترسيم واضح للحدود داخل الطائفتين ، ورفع الحظر المفروض على بعض الأراضي الصالحة للزراعة التي استولت عليها الحكومة وتعزيز المهن الثانوية الأخرى لتخفيف الضغط على الأرض.

لكلمات المفتاحية: الصراع، المزارعون، تصور، ولاية كوارا، Share, Tsaragi

Introduction

The study of peace and conflict has become a global imperative due to the mere fact that the two relate to the condition that defines and shape human existence and wellbeing in the present world (Best, 2004). According to Donohue et al. (1992), conflict is a situation in which people in social interaction express differences in the process of achieving their goals and need. It is inherent in all kinds of social, economic and political settings that are characterized by ethnic, religious, cultural and other forms of pluralism.

The west Africa sub-region, particularly Nigeria, has experienced significant upsurge of inter-communal conflicts which are characterized by: (i) the inter-dependence and inter-communal relations between two or more communities, (ii) the proximities of each community to the other bringing them to share a common boundary, (iii) the presence of scarce resources that each of the communities have claim of ownership and (iv) the prioritization of win-lose perspective in which the goal of each party is to secure a winner takes all advantage (Olabode and Ajibade, 2004). Oboh and Hyande (2006) described the communal conflict as involving two or

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Table 1. Socio-economic characteristic of respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentages
Age		
24-39	38	31.7
40-55	42	35.0
56-71	34	28.3
>72	6	5.0
Gender		
Male	84	70.0
Female	36	30.0
Year of residence in the Area		
< 3	13	18.8
4-9	23	19.2
10-15	25	20.8
16-21	38	31.7
>21	21	17.5
Educational Attainment		
No formal education	18	15.0
Adult education	12	10.0
Primary education	31	25.8
Secondary education	35	29.2
Tertiary education	24	20.0
Farming system		
Crop farming	93	77.5
Animal husbandry	11	9.2
Mixed farming	16	13.3
Religion		
Christianity	37	30.8
Islam	78	65.0
Others	5	4.2

Source: field survey, 2018

more communities engaging themselves in disagreement or act of violence over issues such as claims for land ownership, religious and political differences leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties. Communal violence (sometimes inter-communal violence) is a situation where violence is perpetrated across ethnic lines, and victims are chosen based upon ethnic group membership (Horowitz, 2000).

Inter-communal conflicts have plagued rural communities which produce the bulk of agricultural produce in Nigeria. One of such conflicts is Share/Tsaragi inter-communal conflicts. The inter-communal existence of Yoruba of Share and Nupe of Tsaragi in Kwara State, Nigeria, was dated back when rampaging war brought them together at their present location (Alao, 2012; Gazette of Ilorin, 1921). The communities had been living together peacefully until when resources were becoming scarce to satisfy the need of the two communities and when the Ifelodun Local Government Area (LGA) was created in 1976. The two communities started to identify their cultural differences and began exercising authority and control over farmland and water resources. More so, the boundary between the two communities was not well defined during the reorganization exercise which ceded nine villages to Tsaragi (Memorandum submitted to Tsaragi, Ref: TSEADA/TSG/02/vol1/5, 2010). The earlier friction occurred in 1948 among women as a result of the denial of access to water sources and claiming of ownership by the two communities. Also, when Ifelodun LGA was created in 1976, owing to the preponderance of Yoruba in the LGA, the Nupes (Tsaragi) started agitating to be merged to Nupe dominated LGA.

In the year 2000, these resilient communities clashed over farmland in the surrounding area of Fejewe, which claimed many lives and property worth millions of naira. Again in 2008, another violent clash occurred over ethnic identity and non-implementation of the recommendation of inquiry committee (Alao, 2012; Abdulwahab, 2008). In December 2015, another violent clash occurred between the two communities which claimed many lives and many properties destroyed. This news was reported by major Newspapers in Nigeria (see the Nigeria Vanguard 20/12/2015 and January 10 2016; The Nation 19 & 20/12/2015 and 2nd February 2016). The impacts of all these clashes were the destruction of lives and properties worth millions of naira, displacement of indigenes of both communities and destruction of farmland and farm produce.

Many research works have been carried out on inter-communal conflicts in Nigeria (Akinteye et al., 1999; Albert, 1999; Best et al., 1999; Olabode & Ajibade, 2004; Alao et al., 2012). These research works laid emphasis on historical antecedent to the conflict, its progression into crisis and possibilities of conflict resolution. However, not much focus was given to the influence of the conflict on agricultural production. The new dimension on-farm-related conflicts has been recognised to be a threat to national peace and stability as well as food security in Nigeria. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the identification and analysis of the influence of these inter-communal conflicts on agricultural production in the study area. As a result of the preceding, this study was designed to assess perceptions of farmers on the influence of inter-communal conflicts on agricultural production in Share and Tsaragi communities of Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers in the study area, identify the causes of inter-communal conflicts in the study area, and examine the effects of these conflicts on food production in the study area. In this

Table 2. Perceived causes of Share/Tsaragi Inter-communal conflicts

Variables	Mean	SD	Rank
Perceptions of farmers agreeing			
Boundary issue	4.70	1.68	1
Claim of ownership of fertile farmland at Fejewe	4.32	1.61	2
Conversion of leased land to personal property	4.19	1.58	3
Competition for land for arable crop production	4.16	1.56	4
Poverty and Unemployment	4.14	1.57	5
Incompatible values	3.58	1.46	6
Perceptions of farmers undecided			
Poor governance	3.23	1.39	7
Support from external interest	3.08	1.36	8
Lack of equal opportunity	2.78	1.29	9
Poor social interaction	2.78	1.25	10
Government involvement	2.68	1.26	11
Competition on land for grazing	2.57	1.24	12
Perceptions of farmers disagreeing			
Language barrier	2.45	1.21	13
Non-implementation of committee of inquiry recommendation	2.32	1.18	14

Source: field survey, 2018

study, it was hypothesized that: (i) There is no significant relationship between the frequency of inter-communal conflicts and socio-economic characteristics of the farmers in the study area, and (ii) There is no significant relationship between the inter-communal conflicts and availability of land for agricultural production.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

This study was carried out in Kwara State, Nigeria. The State has a land area of about 32,500 km square, and a population of about 2,371,089 based on the National Population Census (2006). It is situated between latitude 7°45'N and 9° 30'N and longitude 2° 30'E and 6° 25' of the equator. The state has sixteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) with administrative capital in Ilorin. Share and Tsaragi are located in Ifelodun and Edu local government Areas of Kwara State respectively. The two communities are located on latitude 4° and 8° N and longitude 8° and 9° east of the equator.

The area is characterized by wet and dry seasons with rainfall ranging between 1000 mm and 1500 mm, and average temperature varies between 30°C and 35°C, while relative humidity ranged from 35% to 60%. The primary source of livelihood of both communities is farming with emphasis on cultivation of crops such as rice (Oryza sativa), cassava (Manihot esculenta), yam (Dioscorea alata), maize (Zea mays), guinea corn (Sorghum vulgare cv. durra), groundnut (Arachis hypogaea), cowpea (Vigna unguiculata) okra (Abelmoschus esculentus) and various kind of leafy vegetables (KWADP, 2015).

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The population of this study consists of all farmers in Share and Tsaragi communities of Kwara state. Three-stage random sampling procedures were used to obtain one hundred and twenty (120), respondents. In the first stage, two Local Government Areas that experienced conflicts were purposively selected. In the second stage, one community that is involved in the inter-communal clash was selected from each LGA. Then sixty (60) farmers were purposively selected from each community to give a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents. Data were collected with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire using interview schedule technique to elicit information from the respondents on socio-economic characteristics such as age, marital status, years of residence in the community, educational level, perceived causes of the conflicts and perceived effect of the conflicts on agricultural production. Perceived causes and effects were measured on a five-point likert-type response scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 3. Perceived effects of inter-communal conflicts on agricultural production

Variables	Mean	SD	Rank
Perceptions of farmers agreeing			
Scarcity of arable land	4.32	1.60	1
Displacement of farmers	3.97	1.54	2
Destruction of farm crops	3.71	1.49	3
Scarcity of food	3.70	1.48	4
Destruction of stored produce	3.66	1.47	5
Perceptions of farmers undecided			
Problems of transporting farm produce	3.38	1.42	6
Scarcity of hired labour	3.08	1.36	7
Problems of accessing farm inputs	3.07	1.35	8
Decline in animal annual yield	2.93	1.32	9

Source: field survey, 2018

Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis such as percentage, frequency counts, while Pearson correlation analytical tool was used to test the hypotheses set up for the study. Farmers' perception on the influence of conflict on agricultural production in the study area were evaluated by asking the respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement with each indicator using 5-point Likert-type continuum of the scale of SA, AG, UD, D, SD with a weight loading of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for the statements. For each variable a weighted mean was obtained as follows:

$$WM=\{(fSA*5) + (fAG*4) + (fUD*3) + (fD*2) + (fSD*1)\}/n$$

where WM is weighted mean, F is frequency, values 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 is attached weights, n is total number of statements. This study adopted Joshua et al. (2014) perception analysis, the means of all indicators were categorized as follows: 4.50-5.00 = SA, 3.50- 4.49 = AG, 2.50-3.49 = UD, 1.50-2.40 = D, 1.00-1.49 = SD

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristic of respondents

The socio-economic characteristic of respondents (Table 1) shows that 66.7% is between 24-55 years old while the average age was 46.6 years. This indicated that they were at the active economic age and that the respondents were old enough to understand the conflict between share and Tsaragi concerning the causes, implication and effects on agricultural production within the two communities. The majority of the respondents (i.e. 70%) were male. This suggests that the male was predominant farmers in the study area. The result equally shows that the majority (i.e. 70%) of the respondents have been residing in the area for more than ten (10) years. In terms of educational attainment, 84% of respondents have one form of education ranging from adult to tertiary education. The higher level of education has been known to widen one's exposure. Therefore, it may be affirmed that the majority of the respondents had adequate exposure to the inter-communal conflicts between the two communities. They are equally small-scale farmers as 53% of them had farm size between 1-10 acres as 76% engaged in crop farming. This indicates that crop farming is the predominant occupation of the two communities.

Perceived Causes of Share/Tsaragi Inter-communal Conflicts

Fourteen indicators/variables (as shown in Table 2) on the various causes of conflicts between share and Tsaragi were evaluated after farmers' responses. Their perceptions were calculated by obtaining a weighted mean of the response and later ranked accordingly. The overall result showed the number of variables agreed upon by the respondents as the causes of conflicts was 43%, disagreed on 43% and undecided on 14% (Figure 1). Findings shows that respondents perceived the conflict between the two communities to be over resource use which bordered on boundary issue which was ranked highest, followed by claim of ownership of fertile farmland at Fejewe, conversion of leased land to personal property (contested ownership), competition for arable land for crop production, poverty and unemployment, and incompatible values in that order (see Table 2). This indicates that land which is a major factor of production in agriculture especially crop production was at the center of the conflicts between the two communities. This confirms the earlier results by Ani et al. (2015) and which showed that conflicts were caused as a result of boundary issues and contested ownership.

However, respondents were undecided on six vari-

Table 4. Correlation between respondents socio-economic characteristic and inter-communal conflict.

Variable	r-value	p-value
Educational level	-0.847**	0.000
Secondary occupation	-0.871**	0.004
Year of residence in the area	-0.274**	0.006
Ave. Monthly income	0.131	0.153

(**) Significant at 5% level

ables (see Table 2), which include poor governance, support from outside interest, lack of equal opportunity, weak social interaction, government non-interference and competition on land for grazing. These were ranked 7th-12th in the table. This indicates that respondents perceived that there is no strong reason to link these variables and conflicts in the study area. According to them, no external influence/ interest on their land and people had intermarried between the two communities which made them interact freely when there were no issues. Only two of the variables were out-rightly disagreed with by the respondents (i.e. 14%). These are the language barrier and non-implementation of committee recommendations. This shows that language was not a problem among the people of the study area as the majority of them can speak Yoruba even among the Nupes. Moreover, the respondents may not be aware of what recommendations were submitted to the government for implementation.

Table 5. Perceived effect of Inter-communal conflict on non-availability of farmland

Variable	r-value	p-value
Perceived effect of inter-comm. Conflict		
Availability of arable farmland	0.983**	0.005

(**) Significant at 5% level

Perceived effects of Inter-communal Conflicts on Agricultural Production

Nine indicators/variables were listed on effects of the conflicts on agricultural production in the study area (Table 3). The perception of respondents was calculated as above and then ranked. The result shows that five variables were agreed upon as the effects of the conflicts representing 56% while 44% was undecided. The result reveals (Table 3) that respondents perceived scarcity of land as the most felt effect of the conflicts between the two communities partly because of an outright ban of cultivation on some of the disputable arable lands in the area by the government. Farmers were displaced during and after every clash in the area; farms and crops were destroyed which later led to the scarcity of food even as stored produce was not left out during the conflicts. This indicates that the conflicts have very adverse effects on human development and should be handled carefully to avert unnecessary famine and food insecurity in the state and particularly in the study area. Respondents were, however, undecided on problems of transporting farm produce, scarcity of hired labor, problems of accessing farm inputs, and decline in annual animal yield. This im-

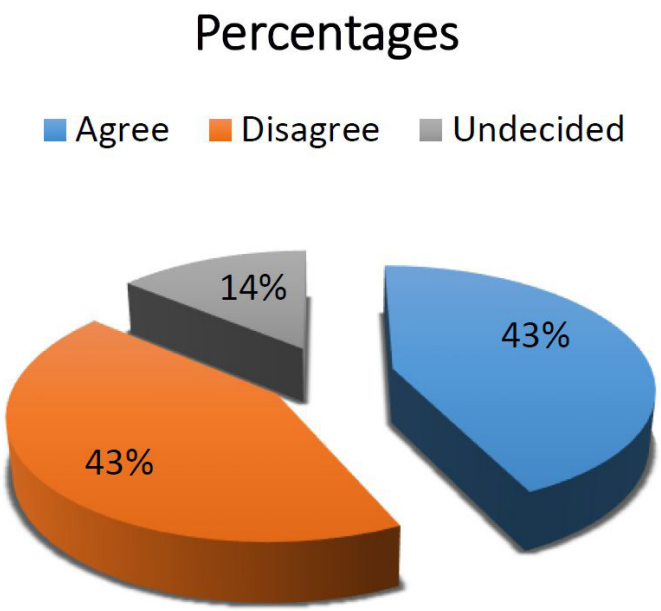

Figure 1. Categorized perceptions on the causes of conflicts between Share and Tsaragi communities

plies that though these are problems respondents could not link them to the effects of the conflicts.

Test of Hypotheses

Pearson Product Multiple Correlation was used to test the hypotheses set up for the study. The result in Table 4 shows that there was a significant but inverse relationship between educational level, secondary occupation and conflicts. It can, therefore, be deduced that farmer's education could contribute to the reduction of inter-communal conflicts in the area as this will give them exposure on how to manage conflict and diversify their source of income. This is in agreement with the observation of McCafferey (2005), who noted that peace and conflict resolution at the community level could be facilitated through increased education.

Similarly, secondary occupations with negative loading imply that if respondents were encouraged to take up other occupations in the area, there might be a gradual reduction of the conflicts between the two communities as this will reduce pressure on land and get them to engage in other non- farm activities. Year of residence equally shows a significant but inverse relationship which can be inferred that the more the respondents stayed in the area, the more they will be able to understand the dynamics of the conflicts and able to resolve or evade its consequences/effects.

Conversely, the second correlation (Table 5) shows a positive relationship between perceived effects and no availability of arable farmland. This implies that the conversion of arable farmland to the buffer zone which makes the farmland inaccessible to farmers, contributes to the frequency of conflicts in the study area. This is consistent with the findings of Dohrn (2008) as insecure land tenure impedes fair resource management which could lead to conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that the conflicts in the two local governments were as a result of inadequate farmland for agricultural purposes, which may substantially affect food security if not urgently handled. Furthermore, sustainable development goals (SDG) one, two and three which aimed at ending hunger, poverty and ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages might be a mirage. Below are the recommendations of the study: (i) The government should, as a matter of urgency, lift the ban on some of the arable farmlands seized from the farmers and share equitably between the two communities, (ii) Set up a peace committee among the two communities to resolve any issue before it gets out a hand, (iii) The head of each community or his representative, should be part of the committee, (iv) members of the communities should be encouraged to engage in off-farm activities to lessen competition for agricultural land and thereby reduce the deleterious effects of conflict, (v) Proper boundary delineation should be carried out to douse future tension.

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