

Assessment of the Existing Natural Resource Conflict Management Institutions in the North East Arid Zone Of Nigeria

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Abstract: Resource use conflict involving pastoralists is on increase and failure to take it into account is likely to undermine pastoralists' livelihoods. The purposes of the study are to examine existing channels of conflicts management in the North East Arid Zone of Nigeria and analysed their strength and weakness. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in addressing the objectives of the study. Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with traditional rulers, officials of pastoralists and farmers organizations, security agents and officials of Ministry of Animals and fisheries. Twenty four Focus group discussions were conducted in eight sites or settlements with separate group of farmers, separate groups of pastoralists and a combined with both farmers and pastoralists. Though, both formal and informal conflict management mechanisms are in existence, there is no single accepted institution by farmers and pastoralists. While informal systems are often accepted by pastoralists, formal systems are accepted by farmers. The study recommends the need for shifting paradigm from conflict resolution to conflict prevention strategy, building and developing the capacity of pastoralists, giving livelihood support to conflict affected pastoralists

Keywords: Formal , informal, prevention, strategy

I. Introduction

Over the years, there has been a progressive deterioration in the symbiotic relationship and conflict between the farmers and pastoralists have become routine events in Nigeria (FACU, 1999). Though, there has always been tension along pastoralists corridors over land and grazing rights between nomads and farmers but recently the disputes flare up as migrating livestock herders in search of water and pasture for their animals would sometimes graze on farmers land and use their water points (UNDP Sudan, 2008). Analysts blamed the trend on increasing desertification further north which pushes herders southward in search for pasture (IRIN, 2002).

Unlike natural or economic crises, the impact of conflicts is systematic and deliberate, threatening all aspects of the livelihoods of individuals ; while coping strategies are the object of blockades and manipulation by the 'promoters' of conflict (Silvia, 2009). The relationship between pastoralists and government is often based on long history of misunderstanding and mistrust, pastoralists have few channels through which to challenge the negative attitude and perception against them (Oxfam, 2009). Lack of institutionalised mechanism for land and water rights usage led to widespread seasonal tensions between pastoralists and farmers (UNDP Sudan, 2008; Umar, 2009). Lawry (1990) noted that while governments have usurped the last vestiges of local control through legal reforms, they have been unable to put in place an effective alternative system for managing collective resources and for resolving user-conflicts.

In recent years, the scope and magnitude of natural resource conflict have increased and intensified and if not addressed can undermine livelihoods (Blench, 2003). This study aimed to examine the nature of natural resource conflict between pastoralist and farmers and its impact on the livelihoods of the former. Several authors have studied natural resource conflict in the study area; this study elaborated on the existing knowledge. It is expected that the results of this research will be useful in decision making process related to conflict resolution, pastoral development, poverty eradication, food security in general and particularly natural resource management.

Purpose of the Study

- i. Examine the existing channels of conflicts management in the Northeast Arid Zone of Nigeria
- ii. Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the conflict management channels;
- iii. Propose strategies of conflict management.

Study Area

The study was conducted in the North- East Arid Zone of Nigeria. The choice of the study area was informed by its high population of farmers and pastoralists (who constitute over 80% of the people) and for its relatively large number of grazing reserves. The region also serves as a route for pastoralists migrating from

neighbouring Chad and the Niger Republic towards central and south-western Nigeria in search of greener pasture at the end of the wet season. It was estimated by the Yobe State Ministry of Animals and fisheries that the study area has about 6,000,000 goats, 7,000,000 sheep and 5,000,000 cattle. North-east arid zone of Nigeria, like Sudano-Sahelian zone, has a history of rampant clashes between pastoralists and sedentary farmers. One of the recent clashes between the two groups in the region has been reported by IRIN, (2008).

North-east arid zone in Nigeria occupies limited area west of Lake Chad and covers North-eastern parts of Borno and Yobe States (Fig. 1). The study area lies between longitude 12°00' to longitude 13°28' and latitude 09°45' to latitude 12°00' 12°30' and covers the nine Local Government Areas of Northern Yobe State Namely, Bade, Nguru, Machina, Yusufari, Geidam, Yunusari, Jakusko, Karasuwa and Bursari Local Government Areas (Fig. 1). The region is aptly described as the major wetland in the semi-arid Sahel corridor, supporting some 11 million people (FAO, 2004). Animals and fisheries that the study area has about 6,000,000 goats, 7,000,000 sheep and 5,000,000 cattle.

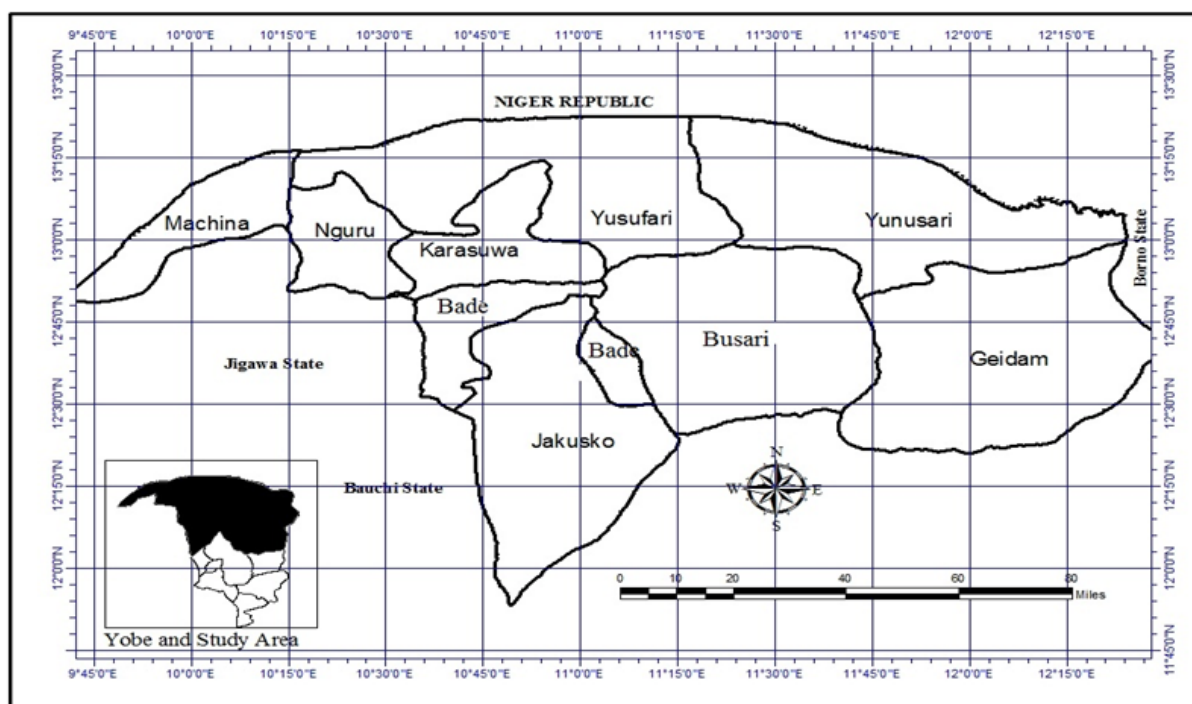


Fig. 1. Map of the study area

II. Materials and Methods

Both primary and documentary sources of data were used in addressing objectives of this study. For primary sources were Key informant interview, household survey, focus group discussion, oral histories and Geo-coded transect walk. Channels of conflict management adopted by pastoralists and farmers were examined at focus group discussion level through pair wise ranking and validated with key informant interviews. Key Informants Interview

Structured and semi structured interviews were conducted with key informants namely, the traditional rulers, officials of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, officials of farmers associations, security agents and officials of Ministry of Animals and fisheries. Twelve traditional leaders, eight officials of pastoralists Associations, eight members of farmers associations, five security agents and six officials of Ministry of Animals and Fisheries were interviewed.

The interviews with key informants enabled construction of interviews questions about the nature of access to resources, causes of conflicts and livelihoods strategies adopted as a result of conflicts.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions were conducted with a variety of individuals including adult members of selected farming and pastoral households on causes of conflicts and the youth, about participation in disputes/clashes. Focus group discussions were undertaken at water points and markets in the case of pastoralists and for farmers at their settlements. These separate and independent settings were selected to encourage participants to feel comfortable, ease access and reduce any inconveniences interviews might have caused them.

The focus group discussion followed predetermined checklists of open-ended questions which were unfolded in a reflexive manner that allow both anticipated and unanticipated themes to be explored. Interviews with both farmers and pastoralists were not recorded as respondents found the use of a tape recorder intimidating. Twenty four FGDs were conducted in eight settlements/sites. At each site FGD was conducted with separate group of farmers, separate group of pastoralists and a combined FGD with both farmers and pastoralists.

Table 1: The sites and number of focus group discussions conducted

S/N	Zone	Village/Site	No. of FGDs	Number of Participant		
				Farmers	Pastoralists	Both
1	Zone A	Balturam	3	16	14	15
		Waganga	3	18	12	15
2	Zone B	Kachallari	3	15	14	16
		Kotufa	3	14	13	12
3	Zone C	Jawa	3	16	12	18
		Dachia	3	17	14	16
4	Zone D	Boso	3	14	13	15
		Kallari	3	20	12	14
	TOTAL		24	130	104	121

Field work 2010

III. Results

Conflict resolution strategy

Conflict management practices have been in existence in the study since the first arrival of pastoralist to Western Borno around 16th century. Prior to colonial rule, pastoralists have developed local ways of avoiding conflicts with sedentary population through informing indigenous communities of their arrival and seeking permission for grazing. Data generated in this study show that both formal and informal conflict management mechanism are functional. The formal ways include police, army, courts, local and state governments while the informal ways are traditional institutions and vigilancy groups. The formal ways are backed by law and involved official procedures while the informal ways are locally developed by communities. Non- governmental organisations are also involved.

There is a desire to achieve harmonious co-existence and consequently, sustainable livelihoods by both farmers and pastoralists. Both farmers and pastoralists have the view that taking laws into their hands worsen co-existence between them. In the heart of persistent conflict in the study area, there is no single accepted institution for its resolution. Traditional institution that often resolve conflicts lacks legal backing is more accepted by pastoralists while formal systems seems to be accepted by farmers and this further frustration. Table 7 and 8 show the preferences of conflicts management institutions by farmers and pastoralists.

Table 2: Pair wise Ranking of Conflict Management Institutions by Farmers

Court	XXXX								
Police	Police	XXXX							
Army	Army	Police	XXXX						
Vigilanty Group	Vigilanty Group	Police	Vigilanty Group	XXXX					
Village Leaders	Village Leaders	Police	Army	Vigilanty Group	XXXX				
Miyetti Allah	Miyetti Allah	Police	Army	Vigilanty Group	Village Leader	XXXX			
Draja Kautal-Hore	Court	Police	Army	Vigilanty Group	Village Leader	Miyetti Allah	XXXX		
Local Govt	Local Govt	Police	Local Govt	Vigilanty Group	Local Govt	Local Govt	Local Govt	XXXX	
Negotiation	Negotiation	Police	Army	Vigilanty Group	Village Leader	Miyetti Allah	Negotiation	Local Govt	XXXX
XXXX	Court	Police	Army	Vigilanty Group	Village Leader	Miyetti Allah	Daraja Kautal Hore	Local Govt	Negotiation
Total Scores	01	08	05	07	04	03	Nil	06	02
Ranking	8th	1st	4rd	2nd	5th	6th	9th	3rd	7th

Field work 2011

Traditional Leaders

In the study area there is a hierarchy of traditional leaders ranging from village leader (Jauro/ Bulama), village head (Lawani), District head (Hakimi/ Ajiya) and Emir (Sarkin Yanka) that play significant role in

managing conflicts. Their involvement in resolving dispute depends on its intensity. The higher the seriousness of disputes the more the senior leader is involved. Despite its limited constitutional backing, traditional institutions remain the only body that takes preventive measures in conflict between farmers and pastoralists. They appoint representative of farmers and pastoralists to agree upon grounding roles that will ensure harmonious co-existence. Interview conducted with pastoralists show that during the earliest period of visiting the area, delegates were sent to them by traditional authorities to inform them on the existing grazing rules and advise them on seeking redress whenever they have disagreement with sedentary community.

Table 3: Pair wise Ranking of Conflict Management Institutions by Pastoralists

Court	XXXX								
Police	Court	XXXX							
Army	Court		XXXX						
Vigilanty Group	Court			XXXX					
Village Leaders	Court	Village Leader	Village Leader	Village Leader	XXXX				
Miyetti Allah	Miyetti Allah	Miyetti Allah	Miyetti Allah	Miyetti Allah	Miyetti Allah	XXXX			
Daraja Kautal-Hore	Daraja Kautal-Hore	Dara Kautal-Hore	Daraja Kautal-Hore	Daraja Kautal-Hore	Daraja Kautal-Hore	Daraja kautal Hore	XXXX		
Local Govt	Court	Local Govt	Local Govt	Local Govt	Village Leader	Miyetti Allah	Daraja Kautal Hore	XXXX	
Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation	XXXX
XXXX	Court	Police	Army	Vigilanty Group	Village Leader	Miyetti Allah	Daraja Kautal Hore	Local Govt	Negotiation
Total Scores	05	0	0	0	04	06	07	03	08
Ranking	4th	7th	7th	7th	5th	3rd	2nd	6th	1st

Field work 2011

The first committee on conflict between farmers and pastoralist was established by a traditional ruler (HRH, the late Emir of Damaturu) in 1996 to manage the then frequent conflicts under his area of jurisdiction. It is the success of this committee that attracted Yobe State Government to transform it to Standing Committee on Preventive of Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen.

Data presented in table 2 and 3 show difference in preference of traditional leaders for justice between farmers and pastoralists. Pastoralists give more preference to traditional institutions than farmers. Pastoralists prefer village leaders than police, army, vigilancy groups and local government committee. The choice of traditional institutions by pastoralist was based on the reason that most traditional authorities have court like procedure: with witness, site inspection and independent assessment of cost for compensation. Similarly traditional institution do not arrest or intimidate pastoralists and do not enforce payment for bail or repayments of large sum as summon fees (*kudin sammachi*). Despite serious accusation by pastoralists on traditional institutions for their role in conversion of grazing land to farms and blockage of stock routes, they are optimistic that traditional authorities are fair in their judgement and do exploit less.

On other hand, farmers only go to traditional leaders when only the options of negotiation, courts or pastoral associations are left. Traditional institutions are less preferred because cases taken to traditional them were won by pastoralists who have money to give as bribe. They accuse the traditional rulers of taking bribe from pastoralists to give judgement in their favour. Another accusation is the involvement with high composition of radical pastoralists association Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria by traditional rulers in making decision regarding farmers- pastoralist's conflicts. Farmer sees the decision as giving undeserved right to allochtones.

Farmer accuses the traditional rulers of hidden local pastoralists that support migrating nomads in destroying their farms. They believed that traditional rulers are aware of those behind the migrating nomads, but not willing to bring them to book. Key informant interview attributed the accusation on traditional institution to their effort of taking the interest of all groups (whether allochtones or autochthones) into account as they remain fathers to sections of the community.

Courts

In the study area, Sharia Area courts are more concern with cases related to conflicts between farmers and pastoralists than magistrate courts. Courts can only be found at districts or local government headquarters. As such they seem to future very rarely. Data presented in table 2 and 3 show more preference of courts by

pastoralists than farmers. However, focus group discussion with those involved in pair wise ranking and validated by key informant interview reveals that even amongst the pastoral group, local and agro- pastoralist are those prefer court judgements.

The preference of court by pastoralists was based on the reason that courts ensure that cost of compensation should not be higher in value than the damaged crops or farm residues. Even when the presiding judge could have on time for site inspection, delegates among his trustees visit the damage farms for assessment. More so, if the accused pastoralist pleaded, compensations are paid instrumentally. Migrating pastoralists attributed their low preference to large sum of money deliberately paid by farmers as summon fee. They accused farmers of paying summon fee that worse more than the damaged crops or farm residue. Under law case filling fee paid by a complainant to file his case must be repaid by accused person when found guilty. While the legal sum expected to be paid as case filling fee range from N50- N200 depending on intensity of an offence, interview with pastoralist show farmers now paid N20,000 to N50,000.

On other hand, farmers goes to court when only option of radical pastoral association (Daraja Kautal Hore) is left. They prefer taking their case to Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association than to the courts. The poor preference of courts by farmers was based on the delay in judgement by courts. Farmers blamed courts of keeping their cases to next season. They also accused judges of collecting bribe from pastoralists to underestimate compensations.

Military

In Nigeria, military have no official role in managing conflicts at local levels unless when the intensity of such conflict has reached a certain level to threat national security. However, data generated from this study reveals the involvement of army in managing disputes between farmers and pastoralists. Army in remote areas enforce payment of compensation and fine on accused person. Data presented in table 2 and 3 shows the preference of army by farmers than pastoralists. Farmers report cases to army stationed to curtail the menace of banditry than courts and village leaders. Farmers believed that only army can stop the well- armed pastoralists from destroying their crops and enforced immediate payment of compensation to their damage crops. In such cases migrating pastoralists give animals for compensation.

On other hand, pastoralists never prefer taken cases to army. They said to be victims of operation flush policy. During the focus group discussion, pastoralists narrated how operation flush that aimed at checking the menace of banditry was negatively used against them. They accused the local government authorities of instructing army to kill them and confesticate their animals when ever minor disagreement occurs between them and sedentary community.

Certainly, both parties agree that use of army had never been a long term solution but only further aggression. Key informant interview show that use of army in conflicts between farmers and pastoralists is not formal. Government had also received reports on illegal use of army in remote areas to settle dispute. The Yobe State Government only recommended the use of army during 1996 crises in Jakusko local government when killing reached unbearable level. In combined focus group, both parties agree that used of army in 1996 is partially responsible the later crises in the area as pastoralists hold on grievances for killing of their household members by army. They accused the then Chief of Army Staff that happen to be from other party of taking side.

Police

Data presented in tables 2 and 3 shows the preference of police by farmers than any other option of conflicts resolution. When disagreement occurs farmers call police to arrest the pastoralist. They even confess of making payments to ensure that pastoralist is lock up in police cell even no compensation for damage will be paid. Indeed it is more of ensuring punishment to the accused person than getting compensation of damage crops or residue. On other hand, no pastoralist is taking case to police. They accused police of exploitation through payment of large sum (at times two to three cows) as bailing fee in addition to the payment of compensation to the farmer. They also accused police of incarceration.

Box 1 Extortion of pastoralists by police

Police can even arrest a pastoralist without a complaint from farmer because of our ignorance of law and because we can easily raise money to get our relatives out of police custody.

Source : Interview with Pastoralist by Researcher 2010.

To pastoralist, police is not conflict management institution: they are extractors using law backing them as an excuse.

Non-Governmental Organisations

Data generated from this study show the presence of three non- governmental organisations that involved in managing conflicts in the study area. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association and Daraja

Kautal Hore Association directly involved in conflict management and resolution, while Wet Land Development Association only participated in survey, demarcation, beaconing and mapping international cattle routes in Hadeja- Nguru wet land. While Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association was established since 1960, Daraja Kautal Hore emerged in 1990 as a protestant party to protect the interest of pastoralists in West African sub region. Daraja Kautal Hore is dominated by migrating pastoralists that accused Miyetti Allah of being political, concerning only the interest of local and agro- pastoralist and conniving with authorities to exploit pastoralists for their ignorance of law.

Data generated in table 2 and 3 show less preference of Miyetti- Allah Cattle Breeders Association and no preference of Daraja Kautal Hore Association. The lack and poor preference of Daraja Kautal Hore Association and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association respectively by farmers is based on the belief that the associations are aware and in support of pastoralists that keep on destroying their crops. They similarly accused the associations for fighting the release of arrested pastoralists. Slight disparity in ranking between the two associations was based on the reason that farmers perceived Daraja Kautal Hore Association to be more radical than Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeder Association.

State and Local Government

The involvement of government more particularly the state government is rare. Perhaps due to the reasons most cases are resolved before reaching the upper levels. Only large scale violence with heavy loss of lives and properties get to state government. When conflicts are anticipated Police and local government may send reports to state government through Cabinet and Security Affairs, however the reports reached the Executive Governor late as they are delayed by bureaucratic process. Even when they get on time no immediate action is taken. Key informant interview with authorities in the state government reveals that state intervenes only when the crises have risen to unacceptable levels. The Yobe state government invited army in 1996 to stop killings and also prevent its further spread during Dumburi crises. Similarly in 1996 when conflict erupted at Jibilwa claiming nine lives with 60 hamlets destroyed, Jibilwa Judicial Commission of Inquiry (called by affected local communities as *Farin Ruwa*) was formed. Based on its recommendation, state government further established a State Government Standing Committee on Prevention of Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. The committee headed by commissioner of Agriculture as chairman, while a Deputy commissioner of Police at state command, Chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, Chairman Yobe State farmers Association, a representative of Ministry of Justice, and a representative of Emirates Councils as members. Amongst the modules perinid of the committee were mobilization and sensitization of farmers and pastoralists toward peace resolution of conflicts and methods of seeking redress. This committee established sub committees at each local government which further formed sub grass root committees at village level. Among the success of this committee is the proposal of an edict. However with transition from military to civilian rule in 1999, the proposed edict was not taken to state legislature for gazetting.

Local governments also established committees to control conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. Farmers often go to local government committees for complaints when police and vigilancy groups fail them. The high preference of local government by farmers than is based on the reason that local government officials are elected by sedentary communities and can tend to increase their popularity by taking the interest of their electorates. Pastoralists hardly participate in election and consequently their interest being undermined. Pastoralists accused the local government for inviting army during minor crisis.

Negotiations

Negotiation is an option where two conflicting parties agree to settle a dispute through discussions and compromise. Negotiations usually involved friends and respected elders of the society. In the study area pastoralists prefer negotiation than farmers. In the past, Fulani pastoralist whose livestock have caused damage, first call on farmer through his friend in the village for negotiation. That time negotiation was highly accepted by farmers. However, attitude of migrating pastoralists of disappearance after making damage make farmers to reject negotiations. Recently, negotiations are only made between local pastoralists and farmers.

Box 2 Negotiation among stake holders

Negotiations remain the most important channel of conflicts resolution that maintains good relationship. Dispute resolved through negotiations never left grievances or further aggression. After dispute is settled both parties remain happy and the friendship continues.

Source : Interview with key informant by Researcher 2010

IV. Conclusions

The foregoing summary of findings will lead to the unmistakable conclusion that both formal and informal conflict management mechanisms are in existence, however, the farmers and pastoralists differ in their preference. While informal systems are often preferred by pastoralists, formal systems are favoured by farmers.

However, there is no gainsaying the fact that the formal approaches to conflict resolution is more of remedial measure while the informal is more effective being preventive.

There is the need for policy makers to shift paradigm from conflict resolution to conflict prevention strategy. Conflicts could be prevented through collective understanding and acceptance of causes of conflict with inclusion of all resource users in the process. This could follow by establishment of rules over natural resource use, collective acceptance of such rules and continuous negotiation on divergent demands. Equally important is the need for enhancing understanding of the importance of survival of pastoralism as livelihood among non-pastoral groups. Traditional institutions and religious leaders that often have the knowledge of cultures and values of pastoral groups should help to achieve this target.

As there is no single accepted conflict management institution by conflicting parties due to fear of injustice, efforts should be focused on providing legal assistance to conflicting parties. Nongovernmental organisations should focus on educating parties on channels of challenging injustice and exploitation of courts, police, army, vigilantee groups, traditional leaders and even the pastoral and farmers associations. Nongovernmental organisation should be providing free legal service to victims of injustice.

There is need for measures to overcome widespread marginalisation of pastoralists in policy making and implementations. To achieve this concern organisations should helped to build and develop capacity of pastoral groups through which they can represent themselves and their values and come to understand, articulate and have voice concerning their rights. This will increase the few channels that pastoralists have in challenging negative attitudes against them and would undoubtedly reduce the limitation they faced due to lack of influence of those responsible to their needs and concern.

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