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## STRATEGIES UTILIZED BY AGROFORESTRY WORKER IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN PASTORALIST AND RURAL FARMERS IN OVIA-NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE

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### ABSTRACT

Emergency of conflict over natural resources occur regularly between pastoralist and farmers across the globe and threaten the peaceful existence of individual. This study assessed role of agroforestry worker in conflict resolution between pastoralist and rural farmers in Ovia North Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. All the agroforestry workers under the employment of the Edo State Forestry Commission (ESFC) formed the population of the study. Multistage sampling technique was employed to select sixty (60) respondents for the study out of entire population of agroforestry workers. Data were collected through validated structured questionnaire and interview schedule. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (that is, correlation). Result shows that indiscriminate bush burning was with the mean value 2.49, physical assault and fighting was another cause of conflict with the mean value of 2.46 and Intrusion of water point by cattle of pastoralists was with the mean value of 2.46 were among the perceived causes of conflicts in the study area. Finding revealed that majority (75.0%) of agroforestry workers had favourable attitude towards co-existence between the rural farmers and pastoralists. Correlation result shows that there is a positive relationship between the agro-forestry workers attitude towards co-existing ( $r = 0.762$ ) and role of conflict management adopted for improved relationship among farmers and pastoralists in the study area. It was concluded that holistic approach strategically linking governance, conflict prevention and peaceful co-existence need to be address for nation development.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Agro-pastoralist; Co-existence; Conflict; Peaceful

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### Introduction

The emerging threat to world peace today is evidenced in the increase in conflicts and violence around the world both in the advanced countries and the developing countries, more especially in the Middle-East (Iraq, Iran, Israel, Palestine and Turkey) and in Africa (Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Uganda, Niger, Algeria and a host of others) (Maiangwa, 2017). Violent conflict is common, and peace is

something everyone is yearning for, the failure of democratic systems and its institutions to contain the rising spate of violence and conflicts despite its acclaimed internal conflict resolution mechanism as put forward by its proponents (Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Alexis de Tocqueville and Schumpeter), put the system under question (Rosato, 2003).

The world of conflict resolution is constantly changing. The surprising Arab Spring of 2011



initially seemed promising but unleashed an unforeseen series of events affecting the Middle East, adjacent regions and major power relations (Wallenstein, 2018). Conflict is a term derived from Latin word “*confligere*” which means clash; to engage in fight, clash, wrestle etc over things. As noted by Onifade *et al.*, (2015), conflict is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals. Onifade, *et al* (2015), asserted that conflict is the result of perceived, irreconcilable differences between two parties. The parties involved in the fight may be individual or groups within a community or communities in the locality or state. The latest occurrences of intense herders-farmers conflicts and the associated problem of cattle-rustling and other forms of criminality driven by informal networks (Kwaja, 2014) signify the economically-induced nature of conflicts in the zone.

That conflict is a normal natural aspect of life which can be expected to occur in all relationships at all levels of interaction. The positive creative function of conflict is so enhanced that conflict is responded to in a constructive manner (Paffenholz, 2014). The occurrence of different types of conflicts (political, religion, environmental, ethnic, resource, etc.) is not an alien phenomenon to Nigeria and the West Africa region at large (Blench 2010; Okeke, 2014). There have been an increasing number of conflicts in Nigeria in recent times which is linked to the farmer-herder conflict (Olayoku, 2014; Okeke, 2014; Olaniyan *et al.*, 2015;). It is worthy to note that in the past, agricultural farmers and the pastoralist groups had a cordial and stable relationship that enables the people to work side by side for decades. All human especially farmers and agro-pastoralists’ activities are

directly or indirectly dependent on land at varying thresholds. Land connotes different meanings to the various user groups. According to Adisa, (2012), out of all user groups, agricultural production perhaps exhibits the highest form of sophistication in its use of land. Access to natural resources is essential for livelihood production and well-being determinant in rural areas.

Agroforestry is the intentional mixing of trees and shrubs into crop and animal production systems to create environmental, economic, and social benefits (USDA, 2011). The foundation of agroforestry is putting trees to work in conservation and production systems for farms, forests, ranches, and communities. Agroforestry begins with placing the right plant, in the right place, for the right purpose (USDA, 2011). Rural farmer-pastoralist conflicts are major causes of the stagnated development experienced in rural, peri-urban, and sub-urban areas across Nigeria and Africa and the developing world, as these conflicts often lead to the loss of crops, livestock, and even human lives, precipitating untold misery and excruciating poverty. In Nigeria where this study was undertaken, the situation is simply pathetic as farmer-pastoralist conflicts occur regularly, especially during the dry season when herders move livestock (especially cattle, sheep and horses) from hills to the valleys (transhumance), in search of pasture, destroying farmers’ crops in the process. Agroforestry was found to provide many socio-economic and ecosystem benefits to both rural farmers and pastoralist like food, fuelwood, fodder, building materials and shade which make farmers and agro-pastoralist less interdependent.

Conflicts are mainly attributable to resource control and divergent value systems in the country. The movement of pastoralist from one area of the country to another is usually caused



by the increasing demand for fresh grazing grounds especially during draught period, when the pastoralists move southwards because of the availability of pasture. In most cases, the pastoralists do encounter problems with the local people because farmers' crops were being destroyed by their cattle (Olaleye *et al*, 2010). It is against this background that this study aims at examining the role of agroforestry workers in conflict resolution between pastoralist and rural farmers; also to determine the attitude of agro-pastoralist and rural farmers toward peace co-existence in agrarian communities in Ovia North Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, Nigeria.

The general objective of the study is to assess the strategies utilized by agroforestry worker in conflict resolution between pastoralist and rural farmers in Ovia North Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.

## Methodology

### Study Area

The study was carried out in Ovia Northeast LGA of Edo State, Nigeria. The LGA lies between latitudes 5°40' and 7°40' North and longitudes 5°00' and 6°30' East. The main river, the Ovia River, flows through all of the communities in the LGA. It has its headquarters in Okada. It has an area of 2301km square and the population of 203,500 at the 2016 census and a land mass of 2, 357, 225 square kilometers, with an annual maximum temperature of 30 and minimum of 22°C. The annual average rainfall is 1700mm and a relative humidity of 80 – 120%.

### Sampling Procedure, Sample Size and Data Collection

A multistage sampling procedure was adopted to select six (60) respondents that is, agroforestry workers. First, a purposive selection of ten (10) communities noted for

presence of pastoralist and farmers' conflict was done, secondly, 10% out of 60 agroforestry workers (that is, 6 workers) was random selected from each of the communities and this gave a total size of sixty (60) respondents used for the study. Relevant demographic factor data were collected from the respondents using questionnaire and the interview schedule. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean and standard deviation was used to describe the specific objective of the study while, Correlation (i.e PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

### Measurement of variables

Perceived causes of conflicts were measured using three point rating scale of Always, Occasionally and Never, while 3 was assigned for Always 2 was assigned to Occasionally and 1 was assigned for Never. Frequency of conflicts among agro-pastoralists and rural farmers were measured using five point Likert scale of Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, disagree and strongly agreed and was assigned 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively; Agro-forestry workers attitudes towards co-existing were measured using five point Likert scale of Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, disagree and strongly agreed and was assigned 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively;

## Result and Discussion

### Socio- economic characteristics of the respondents

Result in Table 1 reveals that majority (83.3%) of the respondent were between the age range of 35 – 44years with the mean value of 42.42 and a standard deviation of  $\pm 9.461$  in the study area. This implies that majority of the respondents were young, agile and committed individual in the study area. Majority (80.0%) of the respondents were male and 90.0% were married with all (100.0%) of the respondents



had tertiary education in the area sampled. Result shows that majority (75.0%) of the respondents had between 15 – 25years of working experience as agro-forestry workers with the mean value 19 years and standard deviation of  $\pm 10.21$  in the study area. This implies that the respondents had more years and knowledgeable on the issue of conflict among rural farmers and pastoralist in that area.

Majority (70.0%) of the respondents had between 5 – 8 members in the household with the mean value of 6 members and a standard deviation of  $\pm 3.312$ . This implies moderate or average household size in the study area. All (100.0%) of the respondents sample d for this study were aware of the issues of conflict in the area sampled.

**Table 1: Socio- economic characteristics of the respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
35 – 44	50	83.3
Mean age (42.42/ 9.461)		
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	48	80.0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	54	90.0
<b>Educational level</b>		
Tertiary education	60	100.0
<b>Years of working experience</b>		
15- 25	45	75.0
Mean years of working experience (18.65/10.21)		
<b>Household size</b>		
5 – 8	42	70.0
Mean household size (6.414 $\pm$ 3.312)		
<b>Aware of conflict</b>		
Yes	60	100.0

**Perceived causes of conflicts in the study area**

The results of causes of conflicts among rural farmers and agro-pastoralist in Table 2 revealed that indiscriminate bush burning was with the mean value 2.49 among other major cases of causes of conflict in the study area. Physical assault and fighting is another causes of conflict was with the mean value of 2.47. Intrusion of water point by cattle of pastoralists was with the mean value of 2.46, while displacement of arable farm land through cattle grazing was with the mean value of 2.36 and damage of agricultural crops/arable land by

cattle and cultivation across the cattle route was with the mean value of 2.31 respectively. Furthermore, differences in land use objective were with the mean value of 2.29.

The result is corroborated with Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008) that most predominant causes of conflict between the crop farmers and pastoralists are damaging of crops, indiscriminate bush burning, physical assault, cultivation across the cattle route and intrusion of water points. The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity, food, and well-being crisis particularly in rural communities where most of



the conflicts are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide (Adisa, 2012; Nyong and Fiki, 2005). The difference in perception of farmers and nomads with respect to frequency of causes of conflicts is attributed to the fact that in a conflict situation, there is bound to be an exaggeration of facts and denial of faults by the parties involved. This finding agrees with

that of Tonah (2006) which stated that the most frequent cause of conflict between farmers and pastoralists is the destruction of crops by cattle. This is also supported by Olaleye *et al* (2010) who opined that crop damage and competition for land and water were the predominant factors causing farmer-herder conflict in the study area.

**Table 2: Perceived causes of conflicts in the study areas**

Rural farmers causes of conflicts	Mean	Std. dev
Indiscriminate bush burning	2.49	0.75
Physical assault and fighting	2.47	0.87
Displacement of arable farm land through cattle grazing	2.36	0.89
Damage of agricultural crops and arable land by cattle	2.31	1.63
Differences in land use objective	2.29	0.75
Theft of farm produce, cow and aggression by farmers and pastoralists	1.84	0.83
Community Leaders undue charges	1.24	1.28
Raping and molestation	1.12	0.91
Murdering and kidnapping	1.14	0.89
Cultivation across the cattle route	2.31	1.58
Intrusion of water point by cattle of pastoralists	2.46	1.54
Displacement of pastoralists from their kraal and grazing land	1.23	1.14

**Perceived frequent of cases of conflicts between rural farmers and agro-pastoralists**

The results in Table 3 highlighted that majority of the respondents shows that rural farmer and agro-pastoralist reveals that indiscriminate bush burning during dry season was with the mean value of 4.79 and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> among frequent cases of conflict, also, intrusion of water point by cattle of pastoralists was with the mean value of 4.75 and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> as major frequent cases of conflict, physical assault and fighting by rural farmers was with the mean value of 4.62 and ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and damage of agricultural crops and arable land by cattle was with the mean value of 4.58 and ranked 4<sup>th</sup> as another major frequent cases of conflict between rural farmers and agro-pastoralist in the sampled area.

Furthermore, result revealed that there are case of frequent displacement of rural farmers from cultivable arable farmland with the mean value of 4.49 and this was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among the reported perceived frequent cases of conflict. Finding also shows that Community leaders' undue charges was with the mean value of 4.37 and ranked 6<sup>th</sup> as revealed by the respondents sampled. This implies that a strong competition for land and water source between agro-pastoralists and rural farmers and it should be seen that the same water point serve different purpose for the actors in the area sampled: farmers utilized the water source for nursery preparation, drinking and for household benefits, but the advent of the pastoralists has constraint the farmers to backyard nursery practices, while agro-pastoralist fail to maintain the water source for both actors utilization in the study area. Differences in land use



objective was with the mean value of 4.33 and ranked 7<sup>th</sup> as another major frequent cases of conflict in the study area. This is an indication

that various cases of conflicts occur between the rural farmers and pastoralists as indicated by the respondents in the study area.

**Table 3: Perceived frequent of cases of conflicts between rural farmers and agro-pastoralists.**

Perceived frequent of cases of conflicts	Mean	Std. dev	Rank
Indiscriminate bush burning	4.79	0.77	1 <sup>st</sup>
Intrusion of water point by cattle of pastoralists	4.75	0.91	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Physical assault and fighting	4.62	0.79	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Damage of agricultural crops and arable land by cattle	4.58	0.84	4 <sup>th</sup>
Displacement of arable farm land through cattle grazing	4.49	0.94	5 <sup>th</sup>
Community Leaders undue charges	4.37	0.88	6 <sup>th</sup>
Differences in land use objective	4.33	0.94	7 <sup>th</sup>
Theft of farm produce, cow and aggression by farmers and pastoralists	4.29	0.76	8 <sup>th</sup>
Raping and molestation	4.28	0.86	9 <sup>th</sup>
Murdering and kidnapping	4.02	0.69	10 <sup>th</sup>
Cultivation across the cattle route	3.93	0.98	11 <sup>th</sup>
Displacement of pastoralists from their kraal and grazing land	3.43	0.95	12 <sup>th</sup>

**Agroforestry' attitude towards co-existing**

The result in Table 4 shows that the agroforestry attitude toward co-existing among the rural farmers and agro-pastoralist with each other in study area. Finding reveals that listening to one another with clear mind was with the mean value of 4.32 and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> on the attitude towards co-existing, while bringing peaceful co-existing among one another within the community was with the mean value of 3.41 and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> on the attitude towards co-existing. Would be willing to have them as a personal friends was with the mean value of 3.29 and ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> on the agroforestry attitude towards peaceful co-existence, furthermore, would be willing to see marriage occurring with the two parties was with the mean value of 3.26 and ranked 4<sup>th</sup> on the agroforestry attitude

towards co-existence among the actors in the study area.

Based on the agroforestry worker attitude towards peaceful co-existence finding also reveals that comfortable with having themselves as a visitor within community was with the mean value of 3.25 and ranked 5<sup>th</sup> on the agroforestry attitude towards peaceful co-existence in the study area. The respondents sampled had a favourable attitude towards co-existence that will foster good relationship and peace among the pastoralist and the rural farmers. This was reveals in Table 5 as majority (75.0%) of the respondents reveals that there is a favourable attitude towards co-existence between the pastoralists and the rural farmers in the study area.

**Table 4: Agroforestry attitude towards co-existing in the study area**

Rural farmers attitude towards co-existing	Mean	Std. dev	Rank
Desire and willing to see rural farmer and pastoralist to live in peace.	3.23	0.97	6 <sup>th</sup>
Would you be willing to see marriage occurring with the two parties	3.26	0.85	4 <sup>th</sup>
Would you be willing to have them as a personal friends	3.29	0.91	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Comfortable with having themselves as a visitor within community	3.25	0.95	5 <sup>th</sup>



Comfortable with having themselves living close to one another	2.26	0.90	8 <sup>th</sup>
Listening to one another with clear mind	4.32	1.19	1 <sup>st</sup>
Collaboration towards physical and economical development of their community	3.20	1.43	7 <sup>th</sup>
Bringing peaceful co-existing among one another within the community	3.41	1.04	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Source: Field survey, 2021

**Table 5: Categorization of Agroforestry attitude towards co-existence in the study area**

Categorization	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Decision
8 – 24	10	25.0	Unfavourable
25 – 40	30	75.0	Favourable
Total	40	100.0	

**Conflict management adopted by agroforestry for improved relationship among farmers and pastoralists in the study area**

Result in Table 6 shows that majority (91.6%) of the agroforestry workers indicated that intervention by law enforcement agencies was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> among the role played by the agroforestry in improving the relationship among the rural farmers and pastoralist. Majority (90.0%) of the agroforestry workers indicated that educating the local farmers and agropastoralist in person and collective was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> among the role played by the agroforestry in improving the relationship among the rural farmers and pastoralist.

Also, majority (83.3%) of the respondents indicated that local community leaders

intervention ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> among the role of agroforestry in improving relationship between farmers and pastoralist, while 80.0% of the respondents indicated that payment of compensation to victims involves ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among the role of agroforestry in improving relationship between farmers and pastoralist in the study area. Majority (75.0%) of the respondents indicated that dialogue between parties involved in the conflicts are ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among the role of agroforestry workers in improving relationship between farmers and pastoralist in the study area. Various strategies utilized by the respondents reveals that if properly utilized and respected by the rural farmers and pastoralist will limit and allow peaceful co-existence in various communities in the study area.

**Table 6: Conflict management strategies adopted by agroforestry for improved relationship among farmers and pastoralists**

Role of conflict management adopted by agroforestry	Yes (%)	No (%)
Involvement by traditional and community leader	35(58.3)	25(41.7)
Payment of compensation to victims involves	48(80.0)	12(20.0)
Police and Court verdicts	30(50.0)	30(50.0)
Dialogue between parties involved in the conflicts	45(75.0)	15(25.0)
Local community leaders intervention	50(83.3)	10(16.7)
Herders members intervention	40(66.7)	20(33.3)
Educating the local farmers and agropastoralist in person and	54(90.0)	6(10.0)



collective

Intervention by law enforcement agents

55(91.6)

5(8.4)

### Hypotheses of the study area

**H<sub>0</sub><sup>1</sup>:** There is no significant relationship between the agro-forestry workers attitude towards co-existing and role of conflict management adopted for improved relationship among farmers and pastoralists in the study area.

The result of hypothesis which was stated in null was significant; therefore, the hypothesis which was stated in null form was rejected hence alternative hypothesis was hereby

accepted ( $r = 0.762$ ), at 0.01 significant level. The result in Table 7 implies that there is a positive relationship between the agro-forestry workers attitude towards co-existing and role of conflict management adopted for improved relationship among farmers and pastoralists in the study area. This implies that conflict resolution strategies must address local issues, root causes of conflicts and hostilities; build local capacity for change and enhance good governance in the communities.

**Table7: There is no significant relationship between the causes of agro-pastoralists' conflicts and farmer's perceived frequent of occurrence of such conflicts.**

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Agroforestry workers attitude and role of conflict management adopted	0.762	0.013	S

**\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01level (2-tailed)**

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Some of the perceived causes of conflicts were highlighted and need to be tackled or eradicated in order to provide lasting solution and prevent reoccurrence of it in the area sampled and in other area as well. It is also noted that there is need to work out means and strategies to minimize the perceived frequent cases of conflict among the rural farmers and pastoralists which causes fight and resentment in the land. The attitude towards co-existence is favourable as it will go a long way in cementing a good relationship between the rural farmers and agro-pastoralist in the sampled area. Agroforestry workers must ensure peace in areas of human and social concepts as it is related to preservation of life.

However, from the findings in this study, there is the need to call for alternative conflict resolution strategies as an antidote to democratic flaws or a blend of approaches and

strategies to end conflict in the among rural and pastoralist. Training in collective action processes and tools should be provided to settle Fulani agro-pastoralists, farmers and migrant farmers' leadership institutions in various pastoral communities. Government should look at the root cause of conflict or crises among the two parties critically and address it permanently rather than suppressing it, which often tends to re-occur again. In trying to resolve the varied violent conflict in Nigeria, there is the need for good governance, provision of basic infrastructural needs, and employment for the teeming youth. Peace building initiatives and diplomatic support to Nigeria should have the capacity for the full integration of and engagement with the primary and secondary stakeholders at all levels of society, strategies must address local root causes of conflict, hostilities and encourage local capacity for change that will sustain peace, efforts must be made to take a holistic





approach strategically linking governance, conflict prevention and peace building and to address development deficits resulting from marginalization, mismanagement of public resources, social exclusion and weak sense of national identity.

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