



ASSESSMENT OF FARMERS' INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNAL CRISIS: A CASE STUDY OF THE TIV/JUKUN CRISIS IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA.

Onugu, Charles U.; *Ige, Segun E.

Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
*Corresponding Author: igeseguna@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study investigated the involvement of farmers in the Tiv/Jukun communal crisis in Taraba State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted; two local government areas were selected, from the local government selected, six council wards affected by the communal crises were selected purposively. A total of 150 respondents were used for the purpose of this study. Primary data were collected through administration of structured questionnaire; data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings on socio-economic characteristics shows majority (84%) were male, average age of 39 years, majority (65%) are married with a mean family size of 4; majority (76%) had at least secondary school education and an average farming experience of 14 years. Religious and ethnic conflicts are the nature of conflict experienced and majority (58%) are of the opinion that crisis occurs at least once annually and at irregular cropping periods. 47% of the respondents were involved in the crisis. However, positioning of security personnel, devices and equipments at strategic locations for purpose of security, continually organize inter-religious groups and public enlightenment programmes to encourage peaceful co-existence among the communities by the government as well as imploring the aid of the LGAs, Ministry of youth and NGOs were recommended.*

Keywords: Jukun, Tiv, communal crisis, nature, regularity, farmers' involvement

INTRODUCTION

Douglas (2014) noted that the term ‘conflict’ is a concept tantamount with human behaviour, as long as man cannot exist in isolation, then in the course of relating with other members of the public there will be disagreements and confusion. More so, such disagreement or misunderstanding occurs in form of agitation. In Africa, conflict on sub national level between communities or local militias is a wide spread problem. In fact, the continent experienced 386 communal conflicts between the period 1989 and 2014, with an estimate of 131, 563 people that lost their lives within same period. The countries affected include Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda, with Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo being the most affected (Torbjornsson, 2016, Elfversson, 2013).

In the Nigeria case, it is not far from the global perception on the socio-political and cultural conflict challenges experienced in other parts of the world. Even though, some conflicts are less frequent but their consequences are acute with high devastating impact. In Nigeria context, commonest of the conflict is political rivalry that has caused more destruction of lives and properties. Particularly, 1979 Western-political hoodlum, General Babangida brutalism of political annulment in June 12, 1993 and 2011 post-election violence in northern Nigeria have witnessed loss of lives and properties (Alemika, 2011). No region has been spared the vicious scourge of conflict though their prevalence and intensity have not been the same in occurrences across the length and breadth of the nation. The present situation is further intensified by elements of globalisation, natural disasters, proliferation of weapons and light arms, corruption, executive lawlessness and leadership ineptitude (Chinwokwu, 2012).

According to Gambo and Omirin (2012), both communal and ethnic conflicts have bedevilled the Nigerian society since 1980s, particularly the nineteen (19) states of the northern Nigeria. In fact, almost all northern states have witnessed one form of disputes or another in recent time. Even though, Tiv/Jukun is historical in nature (Okereke, 2013). In particular, Tiv/Jukun conflict is amid frequent socio-ethnic violence that devours economic and political stability in Nigerians’ peaceful co-existence in recent time for national development (Egbefo & Salihu, 2014; Alimba, 2014). In fact, this is one of the prolonged inter-ethnic conflicts that has repeatedly risen since 1959 to date. Likewise, Zangon-Kataf; Aguleri-Umuleri; Mango-Bokkos and the Ife-Modakeke conflicts were few of the common feuds in the Nigeria communities. Anthony (2014) stated that up to date the struggles and efforts made by past and present government and the entire stakeholders to provide a lasting solution to the adamant clashes and conflicts among Tivs - Jukuns communities seems to have produced few positive resolutions.

Today, Nigeria has more than two hundred and fifty (250) major ethnic groups which belong to different socio-cultural values. Dahida (2015) and Sampson (2012) stressed that the existence of divided interest ethnic groups have propagated communities/societal intolerance that have created more violence and bloodshed with more devastating loss of lives and properties using the ethnic local paramilitaries as the perpetrators of ethnic conflicts’ dogmatic plan.

This conflict in Taraba State that has been happening for years is mainly between the Tivs and Jukuns, with the Jukuns being the major tribe in Taraba State while the Tiv the major tribes in Benue state. There are also Tiv minorities in Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau States and few Jukun minorities in Benue State. The conflict in Taraba state between the Tivs and the Jukuns is about struggle over land, control over economic resources and political or

administrative position. Political clashes have been especially strong around the influence of Wukari long existence as the traditional Jukun centre.

Several studies have analysed the impact of conflict on the broader economy, at both the macro and micro levels. Macro-level studies emphasize the impact of conflict on growth, Adamu (2002) emphasized on the issues in Tiv/Jukun conflict and dwelt most of his attention on land, history and political matters of the conflicts. Best (2003), dwelt on the motives and effects of the Tiv/Jukun conflicts in Wukari local government area and Isa (2010), concentrated his study on class formation and how the state can resolve conflicts emanating as a result of these formations with special interest on the Chamba/Kuteb conflicts in Takum Local Government Area.

Most of these studies have been in several years past and its findings may have been taken over by current realities. There is therefore need to update facts and provide plausible solutions in addressing this age-long conflict. In line with this, the researchers seek to describe the farmers' socio-economic characteristics, the nature and also the regularity of crisis in the study area. Importantly, this study explores whether a relationship exists between farmers' socio economic characteristics and their involvement in the crisis.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Taraba State, Nigeria. The State has a land area of about 54,473 km², and a population of about 2,294,800 based on the National Population Census (2006). It is situated between latitude 7°00'N and 10°30'E and longitude 2° 30'E and 6°25' of the equator, bordered on the north by Bauchi and Gombe States, on the east by Adamawa State, south by Cameroon and on the west by Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau States. The state has sixteen (16) Local Government Areas (LGAs) with administrative capital in Jalingo (NPC 2006, Wikipedia).

The state's population is engaged in farming as the state is blessed with fertile land. Crops cultivated includes; sorghum, maize, cassava, yam, rice, groundnuts, cowpea among others. They also engage river fishing, livestock and poultry farming. It is inhabited mainly by the Jukun and Mambilla peoples (Britannica 2021). Other ethnic groups are Tiv, Hausa Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba, Kuteb, etc. The population of the study comprised all the rural farmers in the area. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. In the first stage, two Local Government Areas (Wukari and Donga) because of their experience of the recent conflicts were purposively selected. In the second stage, Six (6) council wards because of intensity of communal conflicts in the area were selected from the LGAs. Four council wards was randomly selected from Wukari LGA, they include: Kente, Chonku, Rafin-kada and Tsokundi; whereas in Donga Local Government Area, two council wards Akate and Tor-Damisa were purposively sampled because of their direct involvement in the crisis in question. The final stage involved selection of 30 households each from Kente and Rafin-kada wards, and purposive selection of 25 households each in Chonku, Tsokundi and 20 each from Akate and Tor-Damisa council wards that were directly affected by the conflicts in the study area giving a total of 150 households. Each of the household was represented by the household heads which are mainly farmers. A closed ended structured questionnaire was used for the purpose of this study. The data gathered was analysed through descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages) with the aid of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 20).

Table 1 Sample Frame

S/n	Local Government Areas	Wards	Sample Size
1	Wukari	Kente	30
2		Rafin-Kada	30
3		Tsokundi	25
4		Chonku	25
5	Donga	Akate	20
6		Tor-Damisa	20
TOTAL	2	6	150

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in Table 2 showed that the Jukuns made up majority (52%) of the sampled population. This dominant tribe accounts for over 90% of the population in Wukari Local Government Area and 60% of the population in Donga Local Government Area (Taraba Diary 2008).

The table shows that majority (84%) of the respondents were males in the study area, implying that most of the farming activities and a better part of these conflicts are engaged by male farmers in the study area. It also indicates that more male-headed households engaged in farming than female-headed households in the study area. The finding agrees with that of Timothy (2017) that males are recognized as family heads and are often those engaged in the battle fields and they stand a better chance to respond to issues that borders on conflicts and other general social affairs.

The result shows that majority of the farmers (84%) were middle age farmers (21-50 years) with mean age of 39 years. The implication being that large proportion of the farmers are young adults and can adequately be regarded as active, agile and physically disposed to farming activities and may have deeper knowledge of the conflicts as they are more involved in the battled field. This agrees with the finding of Busari, Oladipo, Daudu & Selesi (2020) which indicated that farmers between 24-55 years were at the active economic age and were also old enough to understand the conflict between share and Tsaragi concerning the causes, implication and effects on agricultural production within the two communities.

Majority (65%) of the respondents are married with mean household size of 4, this agrees with Mahabub and Jaim (2011) which indicated average family size of the farmers' household to be between the ranges of 4 to 5 persons. This implies farmers have relatively large household size which may give them an edge in engaging and understanding what comes with crisis and how it affects the study area.

Majority (76%) of the farmers were literate, and with a mean farming experience of 14 years in the study area. This implies that the farmers have been in the study area for quite a number of years and as such experienced the communal crisis in the study area therefore, can give detailed accounts of it over the years in the study area. This agrees with Busari et al (2020) which found 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.

Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean Score
Tribe			
Jukun	78	52.0	
Tiv	40	26.7	
Others	32	21.3	
	150	100.0	
Gender			
Male	126	84.0	
Female	24	16.0	
	150	100.0	
Age			
21-30	33	22.0	
31-40	57	38.0	
41-50	39	26.0	
51-60	15	10.0	
Above 60	6	4.0	
	150	100.0	39
Marital Status			
Married	97	64.7	
Single	39	26.0	
Divorced/separated	14	9.3	
	150	100.0	
Household Size			
1 – 3	69	46.0	
4 – 6	45	30.0	
7 – 9	30	20.0	
10 Above	6	4.0	
	150	100.0	4
Educational Level			
No Formal Education	6	4.0	
Primary Education	21	14.0	
Attempted Sec. School	9	6.0	
Completed Sec. School	48	32.0	
Tertiary Education	66	44.0	
	150	100.0	
Farming Experience			
1 – 10 years	80	53.3	
11 – 20 years	34	22.7	
21 – 30 years	13	8.7	
31 years Above	23	15.3	
	150	100.0	14

Source: Field Survey 2021

Nature of the Conflict

The result in table 3 shows that religious and ethnic crisis were experienced more with about 41%, only ethnic/tribal conflict at about 31%, religious, ethnic and political 16%, whereas those that experienced only religious and political at about 7% and 4% respectively. This finding agrees with that of Adeline and Okechukwu (2015) that is opined that no state is void of clash of interest which could take political, religious or economical and so on.

Table 3: Nature of the Conflict experienced

Type of conflict	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Religious	10	6.7
Political	7	4.7
Ethnic/Tribal	47	31.3
Religious and Ethnic	62	41.3
Religious, Political and Ethnic	24	16.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Regularity and Period of the Conflict

Table 4 shows that about 39% of the respondents are of the opinion that the conflict occurs yearly, about 27% says it occurs every decade, about 15% says it happens at irregular intervals, about 13% are of the opinion it occurs every six monthly and 6% says it occurs quarterly. The table also shows that 58% of the respondents said the conflict occurs at irregular cropping season, about 21% during the cropping season, about 13% after the cropping season and 6.7% were of the opinion it occurs before the cropping season. This means that majority (58%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the conflict occurs at least once annually and at irregular cropping period.

Table 4: Regularity of the Conflict experienced

Time Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quarterly	9	6.0
Half a Year	20	13.3
Yearly	58	38.7
Every Decade	40	26.7
Irregularly	23	15.3
Cropping Period		
Before cropping season	10	6.7
During the season	33	22.0
After the cropping season	20	13.3
Irregularly	87	58.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Farmers Involvement the Conflict

The result in table 5 shows that about 43% of the respondents were not directly involved in the crisis, about 31% were passively involved, while 16% were actively involved and 10% were uncertain about their involvement in the entire process. This means that majority (about 47%) of the respondents were involved in any form of the crisis whereas 43% had no involvement whatsoever with the conflict as a whole. This agrees with Kamilu, Fapojuwo and Ayanda (2012) that reported 70% of the respondents were actively involved in the crisis in Taraba State.

Table 5: Farmers' involvement in the Conflict

Farmers Involvement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Actively Involved	24	16.0
Passively Involved	47	31.3
Not Involved	64	42.7
Uncertain	15	10.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of the nature, regularity and involvement of farmers in the Tiv-Jukun communal crisis revealed that young and vibrant males were more involved in the whole process, with most of them married and have relatively large family size. Majority were literate and have also practiced farming in the area for an average of 14 years.

Further analysis showed that majority experienced religious and ethnic conflicts at least once annually and at irregular cropping season and majority of the households are involved in the conflict.

The government, religious bodies and non-governmental organizations should on sustainable basis establish institutional response for advocating peaceful coexistence between the communities involved with the establishment of 'town-hall' meetings for pre-emptive and mitigating measures through the Ministry of Youth and Local Government authorities sustainably engaging the ethnic groups on their own and jointly.

The government on perpetual basis deploy an unbiased and fairly oriented security personnel and devices (drones, e.t.c) at strategic locations in the communities to foster peace as well as monitoring and assessment purposes.

REFERENCES

1. Adamu, D. (2002). *Issues in Tiv-Jukun conflicts*. Target Publicity, Jos. P. 13-23
2. Adeline, I.A. & Okechukwu, I. (2015). "Ethno-Religious Identifies in Nigeria; Implications for Governance in Nigeria" in *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, Vol.9, No.5. November.
3. Alemika, E. (2011). *Post-Election Violence in Nigeria: Emerging Trend and Lessons*. CLEEN Foundation
4. Alimba, N. Chinyere (2014). *Probing the Dynamic of Communal Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia Vol. 8 (1), Serial No. 32, January, 2014:177-204. Copyright© IAARR 2014: www.afrevjo.net; Indexed African Journals Online: www.ajol.info
5. Best, S.G. (2003). "Communal Conflicts and the Possibilities of Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria": A Case Study of the Tiv-Jukun Conflict in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. Unpublished.
6. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Taraba". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 3 Aug. 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taraba>. Accessed 3 November 2021
7. Busari I., Oladipo F., Daudu A. & Selesi, O. (2020). Farmers' Perception on the influence of Inter-communal Conflicts on Agricultural Production in Shaare/Tsaragi Communities, Kwara State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural and Marine Sciences [JAMS]*. 25. 39. 10.24200/jams.vol25iss2pp39-45.

8. Chinwokwu, E. C. (2012). Crime and Criminal Investigation in Nigeria: A Study of Police Criminal Investigation in Enugu State. *African Journal of Law and Criminology*, 2(1):45-55.
9. Dahida, D. P. (2015). The Paradox of Managing Ethnic Militias and Its Implications on Socio-Economic Development. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, 5(2).
10. David, O. (2012). State, Ethno-Religious Divide and Conflicts in Tafaa-Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi State. *Nigeria's Convulsive Federalism: Perspectives on Flash Points of Conflicts in Northern Nigeria*, 176-190
11. Douglas, J. N. H. (2014). Conflict between States. *Progress in Political Geography (Routledge Revivals)*, 77
12. Egbefo, D. O. & Salihu, H. A. (2014). Internal Security Crisis in Nigeria: Causes, Types, Effects and Solutions. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(4), 176-195
13. Elverson, E. (2013). *Putting out Fires (or adding Fuel?)*, Understanding Government intervention in Local Communal Conflict. A paper presented at the CRS/ENCoRe Conference. Essex, U.K
14. Gambo, Y. L. & Omirin, M. M. (2012). Ethno Religious Conflict and Settlement Pattern in Northern Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 129
15. Henry, A. (2009). "Ethnicity, Capital Formation and Conflict". *Social Capital Initiative Working Paper 12*, World Bank, Washington D.C.
16. Isa, M. K. (2010). The State and Management of Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria: A Study of Jukun/Chamba and Kuteb Communal Conflicts of Takum and Ussa Local Government. A Published Ph.D Dissertation. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
17. Kamilu, Bolarinwa; Fapojuwo, Oluwakemi & Ayanda, Ibrahim (2012) Sustainable Conflict Resolutions among Farmers in Taraba State, Nigeria
18. Mahabub, H. and Jaim, W. M. H. (2011). Empowering Women to Become Farmer Entrepreneur Case study of a NGO Supported Program in Bangladesh. Paper presented at the IFAD conference on New Directions for Smallholder Agriculture 24-25 January, 2011.
19. National Population Commission, NPC (2006) <http://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/> retrieved March 2021
20. Okereke, C. N. E (2013). Anatomy of Conflicts in Northern Nigeria. *State Fragility, State Formation, and Human Security in Nigeria*, 147
21. Sampson, I. T. (2012). Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 12(1), 103-134
22. Taraba State Government Diary (2008): Taraba State Official Diary, Government Printer Jalingo, Nigeria pp 25 – 29.
23. Timothy, A. L (2017) Elite and Communal Conflicts in Taraba State: A Perception Study Of People In Wukari and Takum Local Government Areas. A Published Ph.D Dissertation. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
24. Torbjornsson, D. (2016). *Managing Communal Conflict in Africa: Assessing the Role of UN in Communal Conflict Management*. Retrieved from www.foi.se on 20th November 2021.
25. Taraba State Government Diary (2008): Taraba State Official Diary, Government Printer Jalingo, Nigeria pp 25 – 29.