

MEDIATION AS AN INTEGRATIVE STRATEGY FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT BETWEEN PASTORAL NOMADS AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined mediation approach that would assist in curbing conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities in Enugu State. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for this investigation with a population of 36,286 resident indigenes and pastoral nomads in four Local Government Areas of Enugu State. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed. 1,814 adult residents representing 5% of the total population served as sample size for this investigation. The instrument used for collection of data involved a questionnaire that yielded a coefficient reliability index of 0.77. Data were analysed using mean and z-test statistics. The result of the data analyses revealed that mediation is used to curb conflicts between pastoral nomads and host communities through third party intervention in disputes; that the tools for mediation come in the form of individuals, groups, organisations. Their major role or duty is to assist conflicting parties in managing or settling their differences. Based on the findings, it was recommended that mediation between the host communities and pastoral nomads should be a constant affair to reduce conflict and that the mediation experts be appointed as Commissions of Inquiry. This is so because they serve as mediators, facilitators and have the psychology for dealing with the adults during dialogue and mediation.

Keywords: *Mediation, Integrative Strategy, Conflict, Pastoral Nomads and Host Communities*

Introduction

Pastoral nomads and host communities' conflict in Nigeria has become a major problem that destabilises the socio-economic life of the people and also resulted to the destruction of lives and properties. Oli, Ibekwe, and Nwankwo, (2018); Umoru, (2017); Bello, (2016), Amadi, (2016); and

Okali, 2016) reported that Enugu State of Nigeria in the year 2016 recorded the highest rate of killings as a result of herdsmen's attacks in some communities. Lives and properties valued several millions of naira were also destroyed. The pastoral nomads of the 20th century started migrating from the

Northern part of Africa into West Africa in search of greener pasture for grazing their animals. As a result of this migration, their cultural aspect of life is being brought into Northern Nigeria and they continued the migration towards the grassland of middle belt and South Eastern States of Nigeria. In supporting this view, Ikezue and Ezeah (2017) posited that conflict occurring between pastoral nomads and host communities has existed for a very long time and has now assumed dangerous dimensions tending towards criminality.

The migratory pattern of pastoral nomads whose belief is that Allah has given them vast grassland to graze their cattle everywhere is in contrast to the culture of their host communities who has some reserved portion of land that is kept sacred for their gods (evil forest); which is inaccessible to indigenes and even strangers except the juju priest who is allowed to go in there to make some sacrifices. This incursion of the pastoral nomads on the cultural life of their host communities has affected them socially, economically, politically and religiously. Pastoral nomads are always on the move while host communities in Enugu State practice subsistence farming using manual labour with little or no profit (Ezeaku and Jayeoba, 2012). Therefore, the consequences of this incursion usually generate tension that usually results into maiming and killing among the host communities and the pastoral nomads.

Nomads are group of people who engage in the livestock rearing for economic benefits. It is a form of occupation that is marked by animal husbandry without a defined estate, farm or ranches but rely heavily on the gift of nature by following the seasonal growth of animals feed in the wild. Consequently, they migrate from one

geographical location whose topography differ from grassland to the shrub lands within the various geographical zones in Nigeria. This practice maybe seen to be primitive in nature considering the modern agrarian systems which are carried out in large farms covering various hectares of land as is noticeable in Obudu Cattle ranch of Cross Rivers State, Plateau ranch in Plateau State, Yankari Games Reserve in Bauchi and so on.

Nomads as a custom and culture among the Fulani and Hausa are highly cherished way of life which is passed from one generation to another (Adeoye, 2017). In the course of migration from arid zone to savannah zones or grasslands, they come in contact with land owned by farmers. This intrusion into the farm lands has given rise to conflicts and wanton destruction of farm product, crops, farm implements, farm houses and lives which seem to be the major source of hostility between them and the host communities.

Effects of Conflict between Pastoral Nomads and Host Communities on the Environment and Livelihood of the people in Enugu State

The consequences of the conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities on the environment and livelihood of the inhabitants in question from this study area are enormous. These effects can be felt from different angles ranging from economic, political, educational, social, environmental, health wise amongst others. There are reports in some communities that traditional leaders and prominent men have fallen victims of the attacks (Njoku, Akutu, Tanba, and Olisa, 2016). According to Nwosu, (2017), lots of people have been displaced of their places of origin because of the incessant attacks and are made to live in the

Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps. In Wantu (2016a) there were reports which showed that children no longer go to school due to vandalisation of school buildings and facilities by pastoral nomads. Ofuoku and Isife (2009) recorded some socio-economic effects which included:

- (i) reduction in output and earnings of crop farmers and herders,
- (ii) erosion (land degradation) resulting from zero grazing, and forceful migration of farmers, among others.
- (iii) killing of people and animals, destruction of properties which has resulted to health related problems, environmental pollution, desertification, poverty and so on.

Concept of Mediation as an approach for curbing conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities

Mediation, according to Amodu (2012), implies the involvement of third party in reaching agreement between two parties. It is a vital tool for resolving conflict. Shmueli and Kaufman (2006) asserted that mediation is potentially powerful instrument for the management and resolution of environmental conflicts. Mediation is a type of third party intervention in disputes which can come in form of individuals, groups, organisations called, appointed or volunteering. Ekwelum (2014) affirmed that mediation is an adult education strategy used for conflict resolution. The United States Department of Health in Madu and Ekwelum (2014) asserted that mediators are trained in communication and problem solving skills which they use to help parties make decisions on how to resolve their conflicts. Their major role is to assist conflicting parties in managing their differences. The mediator acts as a neutral third party and facilitates rather than directs the process; makes use of different techniques to open, or

A lot of killings by the host communities and reprisal killing by the nomads took place during the conflicts (Yakubu, 2018:4), (Wantu, 2016b) and herds of cattle of the nomads also were destroyed. People sustained various degrees of injuries, became widows, and herds of cattle destroyed. All these have drastically reduced agricultural labour force in the areas. In the process, there are reported cases of proliferation of small arms and ammunitions since the host farming communities and the herdsmen saw each other as archenemies. This is inimical to the spirit of integration of Nigerian tribes or ethnic groups and peaceful co-existence.

improve dialogue between disputants. Qui and Glen (2007) affirmed that the role of mediators is that of watchful third parties and many times help with conflict resolution.

Features of Mediation in Conflict Management

Shmueli and Kaufman (2006) identified the following as some features of mediation:

- i. It can accommodate several parties;
- ii. Its flexible process design can extend over time as needed;
- iii. The voluntary aspects increase some parties' level of comfort and their commitment to implement joint decision;
- iv. It improves the relationship among parties who will, in all likelihood, have to meet again and negotiate over the same or other issues and
- v. Participation in mediation serves to educate parties to process the issues, and with lasting effect beyond the current dispute.

Hanacho and Okanezi (2018) identified seven steps for conflict mediation, namely:

- i. Identification of the problem or causes of the conflict;
- ii. Analysis of the conflict (team leaders information);
- iii. Searching for options;
- iv. Setting the options;
- v. Team planning;
- vi. Mutual execution of plans; and
- vii. Evaluation of actions.

Mediation is initiated in different ways which include a party with previous experience proposing it, an agency offering to sponsor it, or a party to play that role. These parties have to agree on the choice of mediator or mediation team. To this end, this study in an attempt to curb the incessant conflict between the host communities and herdsmen in Enugu State, is examining how mediation can be used to address this menace.

Statement of the Problem

The trend of pastoral nomads and host communities attacks against each other is becoming a major source of concern to the government and the people of Enugu State, due to the security implications of breakdown of law and order in the society. It was based on the concern and over unbridled attacks that alarm is being raised by governments and people for concerted efforts to be made. No effective methods and channels of mediation between pastoral nomads and host communities on one hand, and the government on the other, on the platform of sincere governance. The modality for solving the pastoral nomads and host communities backlash has serious implication for the security architecture of the government. So far, the pastoral nomads have beaten the present security apparatus,

thus, necessitating adoption of a new strategy. The question now is: Will mediation strategy serve as effective tool to ameliorate the tension that has arising among the pastoral nomads and their host communities in Enugu State?

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out how mediation strategy can be used to curb conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities in the study area.

Research Question

- i. How can mediation strategy be used to curb conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities in the study area?

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is formulated for this study and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean response of pastoral nomads and host communities on impact of mediation for conflict resolution in Enugu State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 36,286 adults residents found in the selected communities studied. The adults comprised indigenes and the herders' residents in the communities. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used for this study. In the first stage, 4 (four) Local Government Areas, Uzo-Uwani, Nkanu West, Aninri and Udi were purposively selected for the study. In the second stage, 1 (one) community was selected from each of the LGAs using purposive sampling technique. The reason for this is because the selected communities are the ones that have experienced herders-host community crisis. In the third stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to select 5% of the population. Thus, 1,814

residents serve as the respondents in the study. In the fourth stage, random sampling technique was used to select the respondents that participated in the study. In doing this, efforts were made to include all the Igwes (traditional rulers of the Ibos) and members of their cabinet on the part of the indigenes, and the identified leaders of the nomads were included in the sample. A self-developed research instrument tagged “Questionnaire for Curbing Conflict between Pastoral Nomads and Host Communities” (QCCPNHC) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was designed based on modified four-point Likert rating scale as follows: SA - Strongly Agree (4 points), A - Agree (3 points), Disagree - (2 points), SD - Strongly Disagree (1 point). The instrument was exposed to face and content validity and reliability test. A test-retest reliability index of 0.77 was obtained before the instrument was administered to the 1,814 respondents.

Data was administered to the respondents with the help of two research assistants locally recruited and trained to explain in local dialects (where necessary) some items of the questionnaire to the subjects. However, out of 1,814 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 1,755 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. This represents 97% of the sampled population and was used for data analysis. Statistical tools used to analyse the research question and hypothesis were based on response frequencies (F), Mean (\bar{x}) and Grand mean ($\bar{\bar{x}}$) and Z-test statistics. Since the items were rated on a four point scale (modified Likert-type), the criterion mean of 2.5 was used in taking decisions. Thus, items that received a mean equal to or greater than 2.5 were considered to be positive, while items that scored below 2.5 were considered negative.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: How can mediation strategy be used to curb conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities?

Table 1: Mean Scores of Responses Showing Environmental Mediation Strategy useful for Curbing Conflict between Pastoral Nomads and Host Communities.

S / N	Statements	Pastoral Nomads Response (N = 588)					Host Communities Response (N = 1167)					\bar{x}	ST D	$\bar{x}\bar{x}/2$	Remarks		
		SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	STD	SA	A	D	SD						
6.	Mediation can be used to curbing conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities through third party intervention	370 (1480)	122 (366)	64 (128)	32 (32)	3.41	0.89	837 (3348)	244 (732)	45 (90)	41 (41)	3.6 1	0.7 3	3.5 1	Agree		
7.	Elders are respected as trustworthy mediators	93 (372)	166 (498)	86 (172)	243 (243)	2.19	1.14	619 (2476)	444 (1332)	78 (156)	26 (26)	3.4 2	0.7 2	2.8 1	Agree		
8.	Media is best serve as a watchful third party and bears a special responsibility in times of crisis.	339 (1356)	116 (348)	96 (192)	37 (37)	3.29	0.95	152 (608)	441 (1323)	39 (78)	535 (535)	2.1 8	1.1 5	2.7 4	Agree		
9.	Mediation can begin with need assessment of the parties involved in conflict	410 (1640)	126 (378)	24 (48)	28 (28)	3.56	0.78	698 (2792)	411 (1233)	39 (78)	19 (19)	3.5 3	0.6 4	3.5 5	Agree		
10.	Mediator can evaluates the conflict situation and identify parties that should be at the table and gauges the fit between the situation	361 (144)	162 (486)	51 (102)	14 (14)	3.48	0.75	679 (2716)	410 (1230)	40 (80)	38 (38)	3.4 8	0.7 2	3.4 8	Agree		
		Grand mean					3.1	0.90	Grand mean					3.2	0.7	3.2	Agree

Table 1 revealed that respondents agreed that mediation as a strategy can be used to curbing conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities through third party intervention with mean 3.51; the pastoral nomads disagree that elders are respected as trustworthy mediators as their mean score of 2.19 illustrated, whereas the host communities agreed to statement with mean 2.81; on the contrary, pastoral nomads agreed that media is best serve as a watchful third party and bears a special responsibility in times of crisis with mean 3.29 while the

host communities also agreed with a mean of 2.74. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that mediation can begin with need assessment of the parties involved in conflict with mean 3.55; and mediator can evaluate the conflict situation and identify parties that should be at the table and gauge the fit between the situations with mean 3.48. Therefore, the 3.22 grand mean indicates that mediation can be used to curb conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities in Enugu State.

Test of Hypothesis (H₀₁)

The H₀₁ posits that there is no significant difference between the responses of pastoral nomads and host communities on impacts of mediation for conflict resolution in Enugu State.

Table 2: z-test analysis on difference between the responses of pastoral nomads and host communities on impacts of mediation for conflict resolution

GROUPS		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	Z-cal	Zcrit	Level of Sig.	Decision
MEDIATION	PASTORAL NOMADS	588	3.19	0.55	1753	-2.520	±1.96	0.05	H05 Accepted
	HOST COMMUNITIES	1167	3.24	0.42			0		

Result in Table 2 reveals that the mean score of pastoral nomads and host communities are 3.19 and 3.24. And that the standard deviations of their scores are 0.55 and 0.42 respectively. However, when this mean difference was subjected to an independent z-test statistics, it was observed that the calculated z-value is greater than z-critical at

0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the responses of pastoral nomads and host communities on impacts of mediation for conflict resolution.

Discussions

Findings revealed that the respondents agreed that mediation is used to curb

conflicts between pastoral nomads and host communities through third party intervention. Amodu (2012) disclosed that third party intervention in disputes come in form of individuals, groups, or organizations called appointed, or volunteering whose major role or duty is to assist conflicting parties in managing or settling differences. It was also revealed that elders are respected as trustworthy mediators who are so critical in the African societies and whose roles depend on traditions, circumstances and personalities including pressurizing, making recommendations, giving assessments, conveying suggestions on behalf of the parties, emphasising relevant norms and rules, envisaging the situation if agreement is not reached, or repeating of the agreement already attained. This has been corroborated by Olaoba and Bright-Brock in Ajayi and Buhari (2014). Besides, Shmueli and Kaufman (2006) observed that a number of familiar roles amount to third-party intervention which included among others: village elders, rabbis, parents, matchmakers, layers, arbitrators, mediators, policemen, consultants, managers, judges, the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Court at the Hague all exercise some form of intervention in conflict. However, this might have made the pastoral nomads to disagree with the statement with a mean score of 2.19 which is in contrast to the responses gotten from the host communities with a mean score of 2.81. The respondents also agreed that the media is best served as a watchful third party and bears a special responsibility in times of crisis. This tallied with the opinion of Shmueli, and Kaufman, (2006) that the media sometimes act as a mediator in conflict resolution, using SARS (Severe

Acute Respiratory Syndrome) crisis management in Singapore as an example. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that mediation begins with need assessment of the parties involved in conflict; and mediators evaluate the conflict situation and identify parties that should be at the table and gauge the fit between the situations. Result of the finding is in the same direction with the opinion of Shmueli and Kaufman, (2006). Therefore, the 3.22 grand mean indicates that mediation is used to curb conflict between pastoral nomads and host communities in Enugu State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that mediation serves as a veritable tool for resolving conflicts between host communities and pastoral nomads in Enugu State of Nigeria. It encourages peaceful co-existence between pastoral nomads and their host communities. Thus, the need for proper mediation strategy for curbing different conflicts between pastoral nomads and host communities in all parts of Nigeria for national development cannot be understated.

Recommendations

The study, therefore, recommended that:

1. There is the need to involve or employ the services of professionals in the field of conflict and crisis management to serve as the Head to the Commissions of Inquiry as mediators and facilitators because they have the psychology for dealing with the conflicts and crisis when it comes to dialogue and mediation.
2. The already established Commissions of Inquiry should be exposed to constant training on the techniques and new dimensions of handling/mediating procedures between the pastoral nomads and their host in resolving conflict.

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