



PERCEIVED EFFECT OF CONFLICT ON LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES OF RURAL DWELLERS IN YEWA AREA OF OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is inevitable. It characterises the dynamics of human interaction and as such, seen as a universal phenomenon that occurs between individuals, groups within the social system which could emerge to overall livelihood failures. Hence, this study determined the effect of conflict on rural livelihood activities in Yewa area of Ogun-state. One hundred and fifty respondents were randomly selected and interviewed for the study. Both descriptive (Personal characteristics, Causes of conflict, Adaptation strategy, Pre and post conflict livelihood activities and perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities) and inferential statistics (Chi-square, PPMC and T-test) were used to summarize and analyse data collected. Results revealed that majority (72.7%) of the respondents were married with mean age of 33 years, indigenes (84.7%), had formal education (68.0%), had farming (52.0%) as their primary income generating activity.. Creation of local government area was ranked 1st as causes of conflict. The livelihood activity of the respondents in the pre and post conflict was mostly crop production. Majority (64.0%) had high perceived effect of conflict on the livelihood activities while migration (90.7%) was the main post-conflict adaptation strategy. Significant relationship existed between educational attainment ($\chi^2= 49.267$, $p=0.000$), main occupation ($\chi^2= 325.630$, $p=0.001$), and perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities of respondents. Also, there was a significant correlation between age ($r= 0.927$, $p=0.000$), and perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities. Furthermore, significant difference existed between the rural dwellers pre and post conflicts perceived effect on livelihood activities ($t= 2.238$, $p=0.027$). It is concluded that conflict had effect on farmers livelihood activities since migration displaced them from their residents which could have affected the activities they were engaged in before conflict period. It is therefore recommended that creative, participatory and sustainable approaches should be employed in resolving emerging conflict towards earning better livelihood through diversification.

Keywords: Livelihood activities, Conflict, Rural dwellers

INTRODUCTION

The interdependency of man's nature within the social systems brings about interaction among themselves. Whereas, these interactions between the interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and who expect interference from the other party if they attempt to achieve their goals is conflict (Draman, 2003). Conflict characterises the dynamics of human interaction and as such is seen as a universal phenomenon which occurs between individuals, groups and nations. Conflict can therefore be defined as a struggle between individuals over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of conflicting parties assert their values or claims over others. It happens when there is a sharp disagreement and clash, for instance, between divergent ideas, interest or people and culture. It is a visible sign of human energy and often the result of competitive striving for the same goal, rights and resources. Conflict may be violent or non violent and also have negative dimensions, however it has been recognized that sometimes conflict has positive dimensions and it is an essential part of the process of social change (Good hand, 2001). It is important to know that the situation of conflict poses major threat to livelihood activities. However, livelihood failures contribute to the emergence of conflict by weakening the social fabric of the society, making people resort to violence to obtain necessary resources and also

increase individuals' vulnerability to those with an interest in promoting conflict for political or economic gain (DFID, 2005). Bolarinwa (2007) reported that communal conflicts in Nigeria since the 1980s have become more frequent, wider and more violently destructive of life and property. Since the concept of livelihood focuses not only on how individual, household or groups make their living. But, also revealing the activities people undertake to meet their basic needs for income generation with privileged circumstance of political participation, good governance, housing and reproductive choice. Conflict situations can therefore threaten livelihood resulting in loss of human and material resources. Conflicts in Nigeria may be due to internal boundaries, rival interests of nomads and sedentary farmer, agitations for improved prices for agricultural commodities and improved standard of living by group of peasant farmers in some conflicted areas. Yewa area have recorded conflicts such as communal, political, agro-pastoral and boundary conflicts. It is in this view that a creative problem solving strategy borne out of studying the effects of conflict on the livelihood activities of rural dwellers in the Yewa community of Ogun State by achieving the following research objectives which are to: identify the personal characteristics of respondents, ascertain causes of conflict, identify livelihood activity of respondents before and after the conflicts, identify adaptation strategies they deploy



for the conflicts, determine perceived effects of conflict on livelihood activities of respondents, examine the test relationship between the rural dwellers' personal characteristics and perceived effect on livelihood activities in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Yewa area of Ogun State which comprises of Yewa North, Yewa South and Imeko/Afon Local Government Area (LGAs). However, Yewa North and Imeko/Afon L.G.As were focused because they have experienced different forms of conflict in the past and constitute communities that serve as stock route for the pastoralists to convey their cattle to and from Republic of Benin.

The population of the study consisted of all rural dwellers in Yewa North and Imeko/Afon Local Government areas of Ogun State. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents for the study. The stages are as follows;

First stage: Purposive sampling was used to select Yewa North and Imeko/Afon Local Government areas out of the three local government areas constituting the Yewa Area of Ogun State based on the incessant occurrence of conflict in the past.

Second stage: Six communities were purposively selected from the two selected L.G.A. Four communities were selected from Imeko/Afon L.G.A (Imeko Afon, Ilara, Iwoye, Owode) and 2 communities in Yewa North (Ayetoro, Obada). This is because of record of conflict documented in the areas selected.

Third stage: Simple random sampling was used to select 25 respondents from each of six selected communities to give a total sample size of 150 respondents.

Quantitative (Interview schedule) was used in collecting the data for this study. Also, the variables were measured as follows:

Personal characteristics was measured by age; Marital status; Educational qualification; Religion; Household size; Occupation; Other income source and conflict awareness. Causes of conflict was measured by asking the respondent to state the causes of the conflicts from the list of statements provided using 5-point Likert scale of Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Pre and post conflict livelihood activities were measured by asking the respondents to tick from level of involvement list of on-farm and non-farm activities provided. Adaptation strategy was measured by asking the respondents to tick from the list provided.

Perceived effect of conflict was measured by asking the respondents to state the impact of conflict on their communal livelihood activities using perceptual statement. Perceptual items

was provided having response options of 5-point Likert scale of Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The minimum score was 20 while the maximum score was 100. The scores were calculated to generate perceived effect of conflict index while the mean score was generated to categorise respondents into high and low Perceived effect of conflict. Respondents with mean score and above were categorized as having high Perceived effect of conflict while, those with scores below the mean were categorized as having low Perceived effect of conflict.

Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages and means were used to describe the data collected, while inferential statistical tools were used to test hypotheses, using Chi-square, Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC) and T-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' personal characteristics

Results from Table 1 reveal that most (42.7%) of the respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35 years while a few (2.0%) of the respondents were between the ages of 56 and 65 years.. The mean age of the respondents was 32.5 years. This implies that the respondents are still within the active age range and they could engage in various livelihood activities. This corroborated the findings of Akinbile (2007) that population constitutes the active workforce. Table 1 also reveals that majority (73.3%) of the respondents were married, 26.0% of them were single, while few (0.6%) were widowed. This implies that most of the respondents are married and need to be more involved in livelihood activities so as to cater for the households' needs. This is in conformity with the opinion of Akinbile (2007) that marriage confers responsibility especially the immediate responsibility of the family members.

Table 1 also depicts that almost all the respondents practiced both Islam (49.3%) and Christianity (48.7%) only few (2.0%) being traditional worshippers. This implies that both Islam and Christianity are predominant in the study area. Also, Table 1 shows that majority (52.0%) were farmers, 28.3% engaged in trading, 9.3% were civil servants, 4.0% were artisans and pastoralists respectively while a few (1.3%) engaged in fishing activities as their main occupation. Furthermore, 32.0% had no formal education, 28.7% had primary education, 23.3% had post primary education, while few (4.0%) of the respondents underwent adult literacy class. But, only 12.0% of the respondents had tertiary education. This implies that more than half of the respondents were literate that is, they were able to read and write.

Almost all (95.3%) the respondents were aware of the emergence of the conflict in the study area but 42.6% of them indicated that it was a



political type of conflict, 28.7% said it was resource control type of conflict, 26.0% said it was a communal type of conflict while a few (2.7%) of the respondents said it was agro-pastoralist type of conflict.

Table 1 further reveals that majority (88.6%) said conflict occurred less than 3 times, 8.7% said conflict occurred 4-6 times while a few (2.7%) said it occurred 7-9 times over the period of conflict in the study area.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by their personal characteristics

Items	Frequency	%
Age		
16-25	41	27.3
26-35	64	42.7
36-45	28	18.7
46-55	11	7.3
56-65	3	2.0
66-75	3	2.0
Marital status		
Married	110	73.3
Single	39	26.0
Widowed	1	0.66
Religion		
Christianity	73	48.7
Islam	74	49.3
Traditional	3	2.0
Educational attainment		
No formal Education	48	32.0
Adult literacy	6	4.0
Primary Education	43	28.7
Post primary	35	23.3
Tertiary	18	12.0
Occupation		
Farming	78	52.0
Pastoralist	6	4.0
Artisan	6	4.0
Civil servant	14	9.3
Trading	44	28.3
Fishing	2	1.3
Conflict awareness		
Yes	143	95.3
No	7	4.7
Conflict type		
Communal	39	26.0
Agro-pastoralist	4	2.7
Political	64	42.6
Resource control	43	28.7
Conflict occurrence		
Less than 3 times	133	88.6
4-6 times	13	8.7
7-9 times	4	2.7

Results from Table 2 reveal that majority strongly agreed that creation of LGA was the main cause of conflict, while they merely agreed territorial dispute as one of the causes as well. Religion conflict was the least causes that the

respondent strongly agreed with. This findings corroborate Asaju (2000) that the major cause of conflict were creation of local government areas, disregards for cultural symbols and if not well managed could brings conflict.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents by causes of conflict (N= 150)**

Causes	SD	A	U	D	SD
Cultural values	73.3	18.7	3.3	2.0	2.7
Desire for autonomy	72.7	20.7	3.3	3.3	0.0
Territorial dispute	68.7	27.3	0.0	3.3	0.7
Creation of LGA	80.7	18.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Scarcity of resources	72.7	19.3	6.0	1.3	0.7
Damage to property	74.7	20.0	4.0	0.7	0.7
Others; Religion	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Respondents' level of involvement in livelihood activities during pre and post conflict era

Results from Table 3 show that majority of the respondents' highly engaged in cultivating maize (72.0%) and cassava (69.3%) from the list of crop production in the pre-conflict and during post conflict (68.7%) respectively. The result further depicts that respondents had low involvement in animal production. Although, some of the respondents that get involved in animal production, venture into cattle rearing (16.0%) during pre-conflict while there was a shift to goat rearing (16.0%) during post conflict era. This could be as a result of the study area being a stock route for the pastoralist. That is, they convey their cattle through the community and this could also serve as an eye

opener for some of the rural dwellers that involved in cattle rearing in the pre-conflict era. But, eventually had a shift to goat production after the conflict probably because the pastoralist had changed their direction due to conflict situation of the study area. While majority highly engaged in trading activities (66.0%) during pre-conflict, only 34.7% engaged in trading during post conflict. Although, there was a slight shift of activities during pre and post conflict generally but, the rate at which people engaged in trading activities in post conflict was low compared to pre-conflict situation. This implies that the conflict had a negative influence on economic activities (non-farm) of the rural dwellers in the study areas.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' by level of involvement in livelihood activities in the pre and post conflict (N=150)

Activity	Level of involvement					
	High	Pre-conflict Moderate	Low	High	Post-conflict Moderate	Low
Crop production						
Cassava	69.3	10.7	20.0	68.7	12.7	18.7
Yam	34.0	2.7	63.3	31.3	4.7	64.0
Maize	72.0	10.0	18.0	68.7	11.3	20.0
Millet	7.3	2.0	90.7	5.3	4.7	90.0
Sorghum	8.0	32.0	90.7	12.7	2.7	84.7
Pepper	38.7	42.7	58.7	36.0	4.7	59.3
Water melon	6.7	42.7	90.7	4.7	5.3	90.0
Animal production						
Goat	15.3	1.3	83.3	16.0	4.0	80.0
Sheep	13.3	0.7	86.0	12.0	3.7	84.7
Cattle	16.0	0.7	83.3	13.3	3.7	83.3
Chicken	14.7	6.7	78.7	12.0	9.3	78.7
Economic activities						
Trading	66.0	2.0	38.0	34.7	4.7	60.7
Labour Exchange	34.7	21.3	44.0	32.7	24.0	43.3
Non-farm/self employed	23.3	1.7	75.3	20.7	3.7	76.0

Adaptation strategies to conflict occurrence

Results from Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents choose migration (90.7%) as an option of adaptation strategy to conflict occurrence in the study area, Followed by child Labour (78.0%) and negotiation (76.7%), while the least in the distribution was death (1.3%). The respondents that chose multiple jobs (51.3%),

Increased Commercial sex (54.7%), Increased labour work (56.0%) were slightly more than half of the respondents respectively. This implies that the most adaptation strategies for them to survive the conflict was through migrating from the conflict area to other places for them to sustain their living. This conforms with (DFID, 2005) that areas emerging from conflict often have some of the post

conflict adaptation strategies to adjust themselves to and ensure survival., The least in the distribution could be due to the fact that those who eventually died could not stand to respond to the questionnaire

and those who picked it might be because they had relations that happen to be victims of the emerging conflict.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents' by adaptation strategies to conflict occurrence

Strategies	Yes	No
	F (%)	F (%)
Migration	136 (90.7)	14 (9.3)
Child labour	117 (78.0)	33 (22.0)
Increased labour	84 (56.0)	65 (44.0)
Increased commercial sex work	82 (54.7)	68 (45.3)
Negotiation	115 (76.7)	35 (23.3)
Increased resilience	63 (42.0)	87 (58.0)
Looting/ stealing	89 (59.3)	61 (40.7)
Child trafficking	31 (20.7)	119 (79.3)
Women trafficking	31 (20.7)	119 (79.3)
Thrifting	69 (46.0)	81 (54.0)
Armed Robbery	69 (46.0)	81 (54.0)
Thuggery	28 (18.7)	122 (81.3)
Multiple jobs	77 (51.3)	73 (48.7)
Social organisations e.g. Cooperatives	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)
Proper understanding	3 (2.0)	147 (98.0)

Perceived effects of conflicts on respondents' livelihood activities

Results from Table5 reveals that majority of the respondents' strongly agreed that conflicts could lead to; destruction of infrastructures (87.3%), loss of employment (82.7%), destruction of assets (82.7%), disruption of agricultural activities (84.7%) in the distribution. This implies that conflict has an adverse effect on individual wellbeing. Since, necessities to secure a living were the ones mainly affected. But, respondents strongly

agreed conflict could speed up rate of development, which happens to be the least (14.7%) in the distribution since it's a discriminating statement. This is so because majority (36.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed the statement. As evident from Table 5b, majority (64.0%) of the respondents perceived the effect of conflict on livelihood activities as high. This corroborates DFID (2005) that the consequences of conflict on livelihood can be alarmingly high since it is a form of sudden shock on their livelihood activities.

Table 5a: Distribution of respondents' by perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities (N=150)

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Conflict could lead to the disruption of agricultural activities	84.7	11.3	1.3	2.0	0.7
Conflict can result to loss of employment	82.7)	16.7	0.7	0.0	0.0
Conflict can cause destruction of assets	82.7)	16.0	0.7	0.7	0.0
Destruction of infrastructures can be a consequence of conflict	87.3)	8.7	3.3	0.7	0.0
Sexual violence against women and girls can result from conflict	83.3	11.3	1.3	2.7	1.3
Conflict may help you to become resilient	76.7	13.3	6.7	3.3	0.0
Families may be displaced because of conflict	81.3	13.3	2.0	2.7	0.7
Loss of a family member can result from conflict	80.0	10.7	2.0	6.0	1.3
Conflicts can bring about development of community	52.7	11.3	7.3	12.7	16.0
Conflict can bring about increased income	40.7	9.3	25.3	16.0	8.7
Conflict can cause loss of your income	48.0	38.7	7.3	4.3	1.3
Conflict causes distrust	54.7	36.7	3.3	5.3	0.0
Conflict can lead to killings	66.7	29.3	3.3	0.0	0.7
Conflict can reduce violence	48.7	24.0	6.0	14.0	7.3
Conflict can bring about broken homes	50.0	32.0	4.7	4.0	9.3
Conflict can cause health problems	60.7	32.	4.0	2.7	0.7
Conflict can bring about change in occupation	44.0	34.7	16.0	4.7	0.7
Conflict can foster better relationship amongst people	20.0	26.7	12.0	15.3	26.0
Conflict can cause alienation	28.0	35.5	14.0	20.7	2.0
Conflict bring about good decision making	36.7	36.7	16.0	6.0	4.7
Conflict causes poverty	41.3	43.3	4.0	9.3	2.0
Conflicts resolve disagreement	20.7	34.7	10.7	32.0	2.0



Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Conflict satisfies all warring parties demand	34.7	19.	26.0	18.0	2.0
Conflict may be retrogressing	(39.3	35.3	16.0	7.3	2.0
Conflict can speed up rate of development	14.7	9.3	6.7	32.7	36.7

Table 5b: Respondents' level of perceived effect of conflict on livelihood

Mean distribution	Frequency	%
(<9)	54	36.0
(9-16)	96	64.0

Results from Table 6 reveals that there were significant relationships between marital status ($\chi^2=119.640$, $p=0.000$), religion ($\chi^2=15.360$, $p=0.000$), educational attainment ($\chi^2=41.267$, $p=0.000$), occupation ($\chi^2=354.589$, $p=0.000$), conflict awareness ($\chi^2=261.709$, $p=0.000$) and perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities of the respondents. This implies that the marital status, religion, occupation, educational attainment and conflict had an association with the perceived effect of conflict with respect to their level of

involvement in their livelihood activities. Since, educational attainment influence knowledge and experience which translates to reasoning of how effective conflict can contribute to their livelihood activities. This could help them to deploy strategies in strengthening their livelihood activities during the conflict situation as a result of family sustenance. Also conflict awareness could help them in preparing and get way forward in addressing forthcoming shocks and stresses that conflicts would cause on their livelihood activities.

Table 6: Chi-square analysis of personal characteristics of respondents and perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Decision
Marital status	119.640	2	0.000	S
Religion	15.360	1	0.000	S
Educational attainment	41.267	4	0.000	S
Occupation	354.589	9	0.000	S
Conflict awareness	261.709	2	0.003	S

Results of analysis from Table 7 shows that there existed a significant correlation between age ($r=0.927$, $p=0.000$), other income generating activity ($r=0.762$, $p=0.000$) and respondents' perceived effect of conflict on livelihood activities. This implies that age had a direct influence on the activities engaged in, even before and after the conflict situation, because people at their young age, tend more to spread risk of livelihood activities since they are still in their active age. Also, other income generating activities involved in tend more to have a favourable influence on the income and at

the same time enlarge the scope of their livelihood activities that is, diverse livelihood portfolios in a sustainable way knowing the fact that conflicts has the negative and positive effects. That is, if an individual strategizes income based activities right especially during conflict, such individual tend to earn more income since most people live in fear of not being killed and they might likely relocated to somewhere else and not considering that there are times where conflict subdued even as at the conflict period.

Table 7: PPMC analysis of selected personal characteristics of respondents and their perceived effect of conflicts on livelihood activities

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Age	0.927	0.000	S
Other income generating activity	0.762	0.000	S

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

It was deduced from this study that majority of the respondents were in their active age, married, practiced both Islam or Christianity at almost the same level, engaged in farming activities and have the ability to read and write. Majority of

the respondents were aware of the conflict occurrence which was mainly political source of conflict. Crop production was the on-farm livelihood activities predominantly practiced among the respondents during pre and post conflict situation. Creation of LGA was the main cause of



conflict while migration was the most adaptation strategy to sustain their living. Majority perceived the effect of conflict on livelihood to be high. It is therefore, recommended that prompt action should be taken to resolve conflict amicably to prevent resurgence upon little provocation and also creative, participatory and sustainable approaches should be employed to resolve emerging conflict.

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