ASSESSMENT OF REMOTE AND IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF PERENNIAL LAND DISPUTES AMONG YEMIGI/GBASAKUN AND TUKUNZHI COMMUNITIES, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

MOHAMMED, AMINU (PhD)
Department of Social Studies, Niger State College of Education, Minna-Nigeria

&

SALIHU, JAMILU JA’AFAR
Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria

Corresponding author:
Idealreader77@gmail.com
+2348039317264

Abstract
This study is aimed at assessing the Remote and Immediate Causes of Perennial Land Disputes among Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi Communities, Niger State, Nigeria. The case study approach was used in this study in order to examine the remote and immediate causes of land conflicts among communities in Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. The design of the study is descriptive survey. The study purposively selected 120 respondents because of the inaccurate database for the communities in question as 2006 census figures cannot be relied upon. Simple random sampling was adopted in the selection of respondents. The instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire and structured interviews. The interviewees were purposively selected from community leaders, traditional leaders, elites and youth groups. Percentage, frequency counts, means and standard deviations were used in answering the question posed while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha. In the light of the foregoing, the study found that significant relationship exist between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. The study among others recommended adequate measures to be adopted in the allocation of resources to communities, especially land in order to reduce injustice and promote equity and transparency by the Niger State Government among others.

Keywords: Assessment, Perennial Land Disputes, Causes, Conflict Resolution, Niger State.

Introduction
Land is an essential natural resource that enhances and sustains all living. Because of its nature, the supply of land is universally accepted as fixed. In this regard, Magel (2001) asserts
that land as a socio-economic asset and an important factor of production facilitates the production of goods and services and hosts almost all activities that take place on earth (Magel, 2001). The quantity of land will always remain the same and cannot be altered. In this regard, no amount of change in demand can change the supply of land. In the past, the greatness of empires and kingdoms were determined by the areas they conquer and annexed. Even among the wild animals, the territory they control determined their influence. The relief features of land in a particular place determine to a great extent what must exist on it and the expected benefits to be derived out of it. In Nigeria for instance, the northern part of the country which is largely landlocked is found to grow varieties of agricultural produce especially grains, tubers, vegetables among others. The northern part of the country is blessed with vast and fertile agricultural land compared to the southern part of the country. Population explosion and increased in economic activities has increased the demand and struggles to acquire land among people and communities. It is in the light of the foregoing that land disputes is practically unavoidable as virtually all human activities and wealth resides on it. In the light of this, land conflicts/disputes are a permanent reality in every society. This is true even among developed and developing countries around the world. The Israeli-Palestine, India-Pakistan over Kashmir, Nigeria-Cameroun over Bakassi Peninsula is often combined with strong economic, spatial, cultural and emotional values. In the Nigerian context, the Niger-Delta crises, the Tiv/Jukun land conflict are dimensions of land disputes/conflict in Nigeria.

Land disputes/conflicts opines Robert (2012) are relates to the struggle for possession of natural resources and the disputes can also be driven by culture, religion and ethnic nationalism. It is sometimes link to vague and unclear language in a treaty that set up the original boundary. Various writings abound on the remote and immediate causes of land disputes in Nigeria and other African countries. Analysis of these writings indicated that these crises have different colourations. Some of these reasons are classified as political, social, economic, cultural and even religious. Some researchers like Abbass, 2012; Odoh and Chigozie, 2012 and Okolie et al, 2014 have attributed the causes of most land conflict to global climate change, desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands among other reasons for land conflicts in Nigeria. In addition, Umar, 2002; Abbass, 2012; Audu, 2014; de Haan (2002) have linked some of the causes of land conflict among communities in Nigeria to include blockage of waterholes by farmers and fishermen, crop damage by pastoralist livestock and reprisal attacks on pastoralist by sedentary farmers when ethnic or religious disputes occur in other places.

Other causes advanced include changing resource access rights, inadequacy of grazing resources, poor management of the existing grazing reserves and decline in internal discipline and social cohesion (Ingawa, Ega, & Erhabor, 1999; Akujobi, Ebitari & Amuzie, 2016). Also, Iro (2010) indicates that the revolutionization of agriculture using mechanized farming where modern techniques, gadgets and facilities are being utilized leading to more and more grazing lands being farmed extensively to the detriment of grazing lands, animals can easily change direction into farmlands and destroy crops. This will lead to physical and violent confrontations. Nformi et al., (2014) indicated that farmers’ encroachment on cattle routes is the real cause of farmer-herder conflict. Conflict interests among communities asserts Abegunde, (2010) is meant to secure territories, conserve socio-economic resources and carry
out physical development activities and practice customs and traditions on land. This has given birth to untold crises over the ages among countries, communities, villages and clans. Land conflicts that have affected millions of people and resulted in lost opportunities in terms of social disorder, economic depression and destruction of housing and basic infrastructure in the physical development of clans, villages, communities, towns and nation across the globe (Gizewski and Homer-Dixon, 1995; Justino, 2004). Conflicts opined Angaye (2003) refer to disputes, disagreements, quarrels, struggles, fights and wars between individuals, groups or countries. These conflicts can be violent and non-violent. Some land conflicts are never known or publicized because they are conducted in a civilised way through court litigations and other legal and acceptable ways of resolving conflicts. The most disturbing of them is the violent aspects where lives are lost and properties worth millions of naira destroyed or vandalized. These conflicts may be short or long in terms of duration, but the direct or indirect impact on the individuals, clans, villages, communities or nations involved and their environment may be far-reaching and devastating. In this regard, Shah (2003) and Salim (2004) observed that such land conflicts may be helpful to the parties involved but in most African countries (Nigeria inclusive) experiences have indicated that their adverse effects is greater than their goodness.

Violent land conflicts have devastating effects on the lives and properties of warring factions. Some of these effects can be psycho-social; whereby the peace and mutual trust enjoyed by the warring factions’ overtime is being lost and as a result distrust and suspicion will be ensued. The impact can also be economic; where business transactions between communities are largely reduced and properties are destroyed or vandalized. This is further buttressed by Addison, (2001) and Abegunde, (2010) where they cited loss of farmlands, waste of natural and mineral resources, environmental degradation, destruction of landed properties and historical and cultural monuments/artifacts, scarcity of land for socio-economic use among others as the negative consequences of land conflicts. It is widely believed in the academic circle that land conflict is predominant in African communities. This is supported by Oyerinde, (2005); Ayo, (2002) and Asiyanbola, (2008). They believe that violent land disputes are dominant in African societies and communities. In Nigeria for example, the issues of communal conflicts which are instigated as a result of lands is recurring decimal year in year out. As widely believed by most African societies, land is seen as the path to heaven for the departed relatives, the abode of ancestral and a devouring god to the defaulters and abusers of it (Ayo, 2002). Tuladhar (2004) has followed this line of argument where he posited that land is a hereditary property and is being passed on by the past generation, to the current generation for the generation yet unborn. In this regard land is a family affair in many African societies. This may be the reason why some African societies like the Igbos of south-eastern Nigeria do not allow women to inherit lands as they are expected to be married out.

Conflict is a part of human existence that should be avoided. It is said to be a permanent reality than peace. Because in as much as human being coexist, there is bound to be conflicting interest in politics, culture, values and so on. It has been known to bring about all manner of outcomes that have a severe adverse effect on food production, peaceful co-existence, and economic development. Man is a social being and as such he will always live and interacts with other humans in diverse environments; physical, social, economic, religious and political and so on). He therefore has to survive at the mercy of others and continuously live in the
process of dependence and interdependence which often leads to conflicts of interest. Lyan (2001) defined communal conflict as any disagreement or dispute between two or more communities which is capable of degenerating into riots or wars. This disturbs the peace, economic life, tranquility and progress of people or communities concerned, which eventually lead to loss of lives and property.

Land and its resources are very important to mankind as they provide a wide range of man’s needs. These needs, influences man to put land to maximum use. These uses Abegunde (2011) categorized them as economic, political and cultural. In recent times, due to increasing pressures on land as a result of migratory nomads and decreasing access to land, there has been an increase in land use disputes and such has led to an increase in communal conflicts that have arisen from such disputes. This study is an attempt to assess the Remote and Immediate Causes of Perennial Land Disputes among Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi Villages, Wushishi Local Government, Niger State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study
The primary objective of this study is to examine the Remote and Immediate Causes of Perennial Land Disputes among Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities, Wushishi Local Government, Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Question
The study answered the following research question:

i. What are the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypothesis
The study tested the following null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha:

i. There is significant relationship between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria;

Methodology
The case study approach was used in this study in order to examine the remote and immediate causes of land conflicts among communities in Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi of Wushishii Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. According Bryman (2008), case studies deal with the facts and exact nature of the case/phenomenon in question. The design of the study is descriptive survey. The study purposively selected 120 respondents because of the inaccurate database for the communities in question as 2006 census figures cannot be relied upon. Simple random sampling was adopted in the selection of respondents. The instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire and structured interviews. The interviewees were purposively selected from community leaders, traditional leaders, elites and youth groups. This is based on the fact that they have
first-hand information on the remote and immediate causes of conflicts in the understudied communities. Percentage, frequency counts, means and standard deviations were used in answering the question posed while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha.

Results

Research Question One:
What are the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on the Remote and Immediate Causes of Perennial Land Disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi Communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Disagreed</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High rate of unresolved grievances over land access and land use</td>
<td>178 (89.90%)</td>
<td>20 (10.10%)</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Failure of the state to provide basic security</td>
<td>188 (94.95%)</td>
<td>10 (5.05%)</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High rate of discrimination and injustice</td>
<td>192 (96.97%)</td>
<td>6 (3.03%)</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor governance/politicization of conflicts</td>
<td>167 (84.34%)</td>
<td>31 (15.66%)</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Legislative loopholes</td>
<td>173 (87.37%)</td>
<td>25 (12.63%)</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>190 (95.96%)</td>
<td>8 (4.04%)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Inaccurate surveying</td>
<td>162 (81.82%)</td>
<td>36 (18.18%)</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Traditional land law without written records or clearly defined plot and village boundaries</td>
<td>192 (96.97%)</td>
<td>6 (3.03%)</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fraud by governmental administration and/or individuals</td>
<td>188 (94.95%)</td>
<td>10 (5.05%)</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Poverty and poverty-related marginalization/exclusion</td>
<td>177 (89.39%)</td>
<td>21 (10.61%)</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Evolution and increase in demand and prices of land markets</td>
<td>190 (95.96%)</td>
<td>8 (4.04%)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aggregate Mean= 4.42

Table 1 shows the opinions of respondents on the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi villages of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. The aggregate mean on all the eleven items was 4.42 which is positive; signifying that the respondents strongly affirmed all the items listed as
the remote and immediate causes of land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi villages of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

On the individual items as presented and ranked in Table 1, it shows that items 3, 8 and 11 were most favoured as they had the highest means. Item 3 on the table which has the highest mean of 4.76 states that “High rate of discrimination and injustice” is one of the top most causes of the lingering land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi villages of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Other causes of land disputes that were highly favoured by the respondents are; Traditional land law without written records or clearly defined plot and village boundaries (M: 4.76); Climate change (M: 4.71); Evolution and increase in demand and prices of land markets (M: 4.71) among others.

Null Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

There is significant relationship between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria;

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistics Relationship between the Remote and Immediate Causes of Perennial Land Disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi Communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Correlation r</th>
<th>r crit</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remote/immediate causes</td>
<td>21.817</td>
<td>2.3738</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>0.718**</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perennial land disputes</td>
<td>28.109</td>
<td>2.2319</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Critical r -0.062, p =0.001

Outcome of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics in Table 2 revealed that significant impact/relationship exist between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Reasons being that the calculated p value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The computed R correlation value of 0.718 is higher than the critical r value of 0.062 at df 118. Therefore the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Findings

In the light of the foregoing, the study found that:

i. Significant impact/relationship exist between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi villages of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria;
Discussion
The respondents affirmed that significant impact/relationship exist between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with the finding made by Yamano and Deininger (2005) which indicated that a major remote cause of the land use disputes was land sales. Abegunde (2011) also found out that land use related issues did serve as a cause of communal conflict. The finding is also in consonance with Adisa’s (2012) finding which revealed the occurrence of communal conflict which resulted from unresolved land-related issues between two different sets of people.

Conclusion
In the light of the foregoing, it is concluded that significant impact/relationship exist between the remote and immediate causes of perennial land disputes between Yemigi/Gbasakun and Tukunzhi communities of Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria;

Recommendations
The following recommendations are proffered in the line with the findings made:

i. There is the need for adequate measures to be adopted in the allocation of resources to communities, especially land in order to reduce injustice and promote equitability and transparency;

ii. Establishing responsible land governance to provide for a human rights based overall framework by the Niger State Government;

iii. Regulating property rights to ensure sustainable land use by the Niger State Government;

iv. There is also a need for securing property rights to achieve tenure security by the Niger State government;

v. There is the need for raising awareness on land conflict causes and developing strategies for their prevention among people in the conflict areas and Niger State at large.

References


https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318959927_ARABLE_LANDRESOURCE_CONFLICT_IN_NIGERIA


