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ARABLE CROPS' FARMERS COPING STRATEGIES TO CIVIL DISTURBANCES IN BAUCHI SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT.

By

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**Abstract**

*Efforts made by Government and individuals to improve agriculture in Nigeria have been hampered by civil unrest in the country. In view of the above the study was carried out to assess the effects of civil unrest on crop production in Bauchi south senatorial district and the coping strategies employed by the farmers. The target population included all crop farmers who had been affected by incessant crises in the zone. A multistage sampling technique was adopted to elicit information from 84 respondents in the 3 selected Local Government Areas of Bauchi State. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collated. The findings show that the major causes of conflict in the area were social injustice (81%), religious intolerance (70%), breach of agreement (69%) and poverty (58%). Migration of farmers from conflict areas ( $M = 2.57$ ), loss of lives ( $M = 2.46$ ) and inadequate food ( $M = 2.45$ ) were perceived by the respondents as the major effects of conflict. Praying for peace ( $M = 2.79$ ), cultivation of crops near ones village ( $M = 2.54$ ) and diversification of crops ( $M = 2.43$ ) were employed by farmers as coping strategies. Therefore, government should come to the aid of those that were affected through the disbursement of micro-credit loans to farmers and other rural dwellers who lost all their farm produce to the conflict and to artisans such as vulcanizers, motor mechanics, orphans and widows so that they can be able to take care of themselves and their families to alleviate their suffering. Similarly, there is need to enhance peace and harmony in the country so as to create conducive environment for agriculture and other economic ventures.*

**Key words,** conflict, crop, farmers, coping strategies.

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**Introduction**

Civil disturbances pose fundamental threats to crop production especially crop yield due to displacement and relocation of farmers from their farms. The economic and social dislocations caused by internal conflicts have impacted negatively on crop production. Such disturbances often lead to loss of lives especially farm families, destruction and loss of farm lands as well as houses. These conflicts have usually resulted in waste of precious time and energy needed for growing food and reduction in farm size and crop output in the affected areas. They have also increased the pressure on food supply in the neighboring villages where most of the displaced refugees are relocated (Alubo, 2006).

Ibenwa and Ayogu (2010) listed some of the factors that are responsible for civil disturbances in Nigeria as follows: poverty, social injustice, youth unemployment, corruption, domination, boundary and land disputes, inadequate punishment for offenders/culprits, practice of jihadist Islam, imposition of sharia on people and religious intolerance. Similarly, Hoomlong (2010) reveals the following effects of civil disturbances to include, loss of lives and injuries sustained from violent conflict, the problems derivable from death such as widowhood, widower hood, orphanage and the trauma of living in a town that has lost hundreds of

able-bodied person. Furthermore, destruction of properties ranging from residential houses, business premises, farm produce etc., destruction of mutual trust and intensification of suspicion along ethnic and religious identity fault lines and the reputation of the zone as a conflict zone were also revealed. Other effects of civil disturbances include internal displacement of populations in the conflict flashpoints and beyond, violation of the human rights especially women, children, the aged and the disabled, loss of business opportunities and destruction of major industries in the flashpoint, such as the relocation of some business activities from the area to new locations, health problems resulting from starvation, increase in criminal activities such as cattle rustling, atrocities committed such as rape and gang rape, abduction of women and children, forced marriage and sex slavery, brutal slaughter methods adopted by ethnic and religious militias etc., loss of faith in government as an effective conflict preventer during the most desperate moments of the conflict, leading to the adoption of self-help methods by the strong groups. There are social effects of the conflict such as teenage pregnancy, increase in prostitution, the misbehavior and uncontrollable conduct of youth etc.

The major effect of civil unrest on agriculture according to Obioha (2005), is decreased agricultural

production. The clashes between various ethnic groups, occupational and resident groups usually result in the destruction of farmlands and consequent destruction of crops. In some cases this is followed by retaliation actions by cultivators including killing of livestock owned by the herdsmen. All these hamper the overall production of food crops and animals. This implies increased hunger, diseases and malnutrition.

Citizens both those who are involved directly or indirectly in civil disturbance may have their lives significantly disrupted. Their ability to work, enjoy recreation and in some cases, obtain necessities may be jeopardized. Destruction of infrastructure may occur during very severe events. Public utilities such as water, fuel and electricity may be temporarily unavailable, public infrastructure for communication, as well as livestock, crops and houses may be destroyed (Baker, 1991).

Incessant resource-based conflicts more especially on farm land and grazing areas between farmers and herdsmen continue to undermine the impact of agriculture extension service delivery in Nigeria. Adisa (2010) identified some coping strategies towards conflict among farmers and herdsmen in North-central Nigeria as follows: increase farm/herd size, relocate farm/herds, borrow money, multiple farm plots/ herd splitting, increase labour input, bought food crops/cattle feed, early harvesting/stock disposal, supplementary occupation(s), stayed late on farm/herd at night, use charms, appeasement, prayed for peace, pretense, vengeance, use drugs/alcohol, help from union/associations, help from relations/friends, help from local leaders, sought litigation and help from government among others.

The Southern Senatorial District of Bauchi State and the three Local Government Areas (LGAs) (Bogoro, Dass and Tafawa Balewa) in particular had for a considerable period of time been experiencing civil disturbances widely believed to have been spawned by competition for land, creation of chiefdoms and marginalization among other factors. But the major cause of the conflict is land as a result of degradation and population pressure which leads to inadequate farm land and grazing areas (Chime, 2011).

In view of the above, this study was designed to assess coping strategies employed by crop farmers under civil disturbances in Bauchi State senatorial district. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Ascertain respondents' perception of the causes of civil disturbances,
- ii. determine the effects of civil disturbances on crop production, and

- iii. assess how farmers cope with civil disturbances

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out in Bauchi South Senatorial District. It comprises of seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) namely Alkaleri, Bogoro, Bauchi, Dass, Kirfi, Toro and Tafawa Balewa. Like the rest of Bauchi State, the southern zone is coloured by ethnic diversity. The residents are mainly, Za'ar (Sayawa) and Jarawa with pockets of Fulani, Kanuri, Ngas and Boyawa who are farmers except for a few Igbo traders in the LGA headquarters. Reasons for this occupation span from the speculation that they migrated from the east to their present location in search of security and farmland. Little wonder, they were and are still known for both farming and hunting activities (Dyikuk, 2012). The zone has a population of 2,497,782 and a land area of 33,161km<sup>2</sup> (NPC, 2006).

### **Sampling techniques**

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. First, three LGAs out of the seven LGAs were purposively selected based on their involvement in the crises recorded in the area. Accordingly, the three Local Government Areas namely Bogoro, Dass and Tafawa Balewa were chosen. There are a total of 42 electoral wards in these LGAs. In stage two, seven villages were randomly selected from the wards. Finally, a total of 84 respondents were sampled in proportion to the population size of the villages and a structured interview schedule was used to collect data from the respondents.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, mean and percentage were used to analyze the data collected. Objective 1 was analyzed using frequency and percentage. Objective 2 and 3 were analyzed using mean scores.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 indicates that social injustice (81%), marginalization (79.8), breach of agreement (69%), equal power sharing (67.9%), religious intolerance (67.9), inadequate punishment for offenders/culprits of precious conflict (64.3%), non-creation of Sayawa chiefdom (59.5%), illiteracy (58.3%), poverty (58.3) and non-implementation of government white paper on previous conflict (56%) were perceived as the major causes of conflict in the area. Similarly, inadequate land for crop production (40.5%), large number of unemployed youth (26.2%), boundary and land dispute (13.1%), taking of drugs and/or alcohol (4.8%), tribal differences (3.6%), inadequate social

amenities (2.4%), inadequate grazing land (1.2%), stealing of livestock and crop produce (1.2%), damage to crops (1.2%) and cultural differences (1.2%) were considered by the respondents as not serious. The result confirmed the findings of some earlier studies by Ibenwa Ayogu (2010) on the factors responsible for inter-communal crises in Nigeria that poverty, land dispute, social injustice, and religions intolerance among others are the causes of conflict in Nigeria.

The result on the effect of conflict on crop production is shown in Table 2. Almost all the variables except two, increase in criminal activities and stealing of crop produce and livestock (M=1.92) and poisoning of water and crops (M=1.83) were perceived as effects of crises on crop production in the study area. These variables include migration of farmers' hence reducing farmers population (M=2.57), loss of lives and injuries sustained from violent conflict which affect farm labour (M=2.46), inadequate food for the family (M=2.45). Also increase in poverty (M=2.45), fear of being attacked which hinders the activities of agricultural extension service delivery (M=2.44), destruction of property ranging from residential and farm houses, market premises, farm inputs and crop produce (M=2.35), inaccessible roads to the farm due to fear of being attack by the enemies (M=2.35), scarcity of food items (M=2.28), lack of proper care of crops in the field (tillage) (M=2.22), interrupted dependent education (M=2.21), reduction in farm output (M=2.20), unable to repay loan for agricultural production (M=2.20), change in pattern of crops cultivated (M=2.18), outbreak of diseases (M=2.17), reduction in the production of some crop varieties like maize, millet, sorghum for easy visibility (M=2.16), inadequate planting materials (M=2.14), distortion in prices of agricultural goods (M=2.13), late planting (M=2.12), premature harvest and abandonment of crops in the field (M=2.04), occupational mobility (M=2.01). However, increase in criminal activities and stealing of crop produce and livestock (M=1.92) and poisoning of water and crops (M=1.83) were considered as not serious effect. This implies that the crises have caused a lot of damage to the farmers and their agricultural products which need to be addressed. The result is in agreement with Obioha (2005) who opines that in northeastern Nigeria, various violent conflicts over land resources have led to decrease in agricultural production. The clashes between various ethnic groups, occupational and resident groups usually result in destruction of crops. In some cases this is followed by retaliative actions by farmers including killing of livestock owned by the herdsmen. All these hamper the overall production of food crops and animals, and by implication increased hunger, diseases and

malnutrition.

Table 3 shows that among the coping strategies employed by the farmers in conflict situation only buying and selling crop produce (M=1.95), staying late on the farm for fear of being attack at home (M=1.82), use of charms on cultivated crops (M=1.73), seek for help from government for resettlement (internal displaced persons), raising of only livestock (M = 1.71), dispose crop produce immediately after harvest (M=1.65), abandoning of cultivated crops (M=1.84) and growing of only late maturing crops were not employed as coping strategies by the respondents. This implies that no matter the nature or level of conflict, they cannot abandon farming. This is because farming is the major employer of labour in Nigeria. Other coping strategies that were considered serious were diversification of farm (M=2.43), relocation of the farm for crop production (M= 2.37), borrowing of money (M=2.15), multiple small farm plots (M=2.27), reduction of farm labour (M=2.37), alternative occupations such as petty trading (M=2.30), buying and storing of food items (M =2.16), early harvesting of crops (M=2.15), cultivation of crops near the village for fear of being attack on the farm (M=2.54), praying for peace (M=2.79), seek for help from relations to sustain the family (M=2.20), seek for help from social network groups to purchase farm inputs like fertilizers and planting materials (M=2.00), sought litigation (M=2.22), store much crops to sustain the' family (M=2.18), migration from conflict areas (M = 2.32), growing only leguminous crops like beans, groundnut etc. for security reasons (M=2.40), grow early maturity crops (M=2.29) and reduce farm size (M=2.38). The implication of this is that farmers are forced to migrate, harvest crops prematurely as well as reduce farm size as a way of coping with the crisis might have a detrimental effect on crop production more especially on farm labour and output.

Based on the findings in the study the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should come to the aid of those that were affected through the disbursement of micro-credit loans to farmers and other rural dwellers who lost all their farm produce to the conflict and to artisans such as vulcanizes, motor mechanics, orphan and widows so that they can take care of themselves and their families to alleviate their suffering.
- ii. Opportunities should be created to employ idle youth who are available tools for use in times of conflict, such as the opening of farm centers assisted by agricultural extension agents where they can be engaged on a prescribed fee, that will keep them busy and they will also have something

- to take care of their basic needs.
- iii. Government and NGOs through the agricultural extension agents should organize workshops to enlighten people about the effects of conflicts. This implies that a round table/dialogue forum should be encouraged among the various ethnic groups to sensitize them on the negative effect of conflict. This will help reduce conflicts in the society.
- iv. Planning materials and other farm inputs ought to be given to farmers through agricultural extension agents in order for them go back to farming, which is the main occupation.

**Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to their Perception of the Causes of Conflict**

Causes	Percentage	Rank
Poverty	58.3	8
Non implementation of government white paper on previous conflict	56	10
Large numbers of unemployed youth	26.2	12
Marginalization	79.8	2
Boundary and land dispute	13.1	13
Inadequate punishment for offenders/culprits of previous conflict	64.3	6
Inadequate grazing land	1.2	17
Inadequate land for crop production	40.5	11
Illiteracy	58.3	8
Power sharing among the different ethnic groups in the area	67.9	3
Non creation of Sayawa chiefdom	59.5	7
Inadequate social amenities	2.4	16
Stealing of livestock and crop produce	1.2	17
Taking of drugs and/or alcohol	4.8	14
Breach of agreement	69.0	5
Damage to crops	1.2	17
Social injustice	81.0	1
Cultural differences	1.2	17
Tribal differences	3.6	15
Religious intolerance	67.9	3

Source: Field survey, 2012. Multiple response hence percentage total = 100.

**Table 2: Mean Distribution of Effect of Civil Distribution on Crop Production**

Effects	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inadequate food for the family	2.45*	0.630
Increase poverty	2.45*	0.590
Loss of lives and injuries sustained from violent conflict which affect farm labour	2.46*	0.548
Migration of farmers hence reducing farmers population	2.57*	0.588
Reduction in the production of some crop species such as maize, millet and sorghum for easy visibility	2.16*	0.657
Destruction of property ranging from residential and farm houses, market premises, farm inputs and crop produce	2.35*	0.553
Fear of being attacked which hinders the activities of agricultural extension service delivery	2.44*	0.499
Increase in criminal activities and stealing of crop produce and livestock	1.92	0.742
Distortion in price of agricultural goods	2.13*	0.643
Reduction in farm output	2.20*	0.597
Occupational mobility	2.01*	0.721
Interrupted dependent education	2.21*	0.632
Scarcity of food items	2.28*	0.528
Unable to repay loan for agricultural production	2.20*	3.581
Late planting	2.21*	0.753
Abandonment of crops in the field	2.04*	-.215
Poisoning of water and crops	2.04*	0.089
Inadequate planting materials	1.83	0.627
Lack of proper care of crops in the field (tillage)	2.22	0.592
Outbreak of diseases	2.17*	0.755
Inaccessible roads to the farm due to fear of being attack by the enemies	2.35*	0.614
Change in pattern of crops cultivated	2.18*	0.650

Source: Field survey, 2012

**Table 3: Mean Distribution of Respondents Coping Strategies**

Coping strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation
Diversification of farm	2.43*	0.570
Relocation farm for crop production	2.37*	0.603
Borrowing of money	2.15*	0.833
Multiple small farm plots	2.27*	0.646
Reduction in farms labour	2.37*	0.599
Alternative occupations such as petty trading	2.30*	0.579
Buying and selling of crop produce	1.95	0.789
Buying and storing of food items	2.16*	0.711
Early harvesting of crops	2.15*	0.722
Staying late on the farm for fear of being attack at home	1.82	0.783
Cultivation of crops near the village for fear of being attack on the farm	2.54*	0.549
Use of charms on cultivated crops	1.73	0.828
Praying for peace	2.79*	0.469
Seek for help from relations to sustain the family	2.20*	0.744
Seek for help from social network groups to purchases farm inputs like fertilizers and planting materials	2.00*	0.855
Seek for help from government for resettlement (internal displace person)	1.94	0.905
Sought litigation	2.22*	0.570
Storing more crops to sustain the family	2.18*	0.608
Migrate from conflict areas	2.32*	0.668
Growing only leguminous crops like beans, groundnut etc, for security reasons	2.40*	0.643
Raising of only livestock	1.71	0.731
Dispose crop produce immediately after harvest	1.65*	0.748
Growing of only maturing crops	2.29*	0.618
Reduction in farm size	2.38*	0.559
Abandoning of cultivated crops on the farm	1.84	0.818
Growing of only late maturity crops like mango, cashew etc	1.61	0.797

Source: field work, 2012

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