

Conflict Resolution Strategies and Social Cohesion of Local Communities in Kyanamira Subcounty, Kabale District

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Abstract: *The study aimed at establishing the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and social cohesions of local communities in Kabale district with reference to Kyanamira Sub County. The study was guided by objectives which were to explore the causes of conflicts in local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale district, to establish the effect of conflicts on social cohesion in local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale district and to identify interventions by local communities and government agencies to address conflicts and improve social cohesion. The study used cross-sectional research design. A sample size of 209 respondents was used. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select respondents. Data collection was done using questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. Data presentation was done using frequency tables and percentages. In the light of factors influencing occurrence of conflicts, it is concluded that delay in solving land conflicts, poor community participation in conflict resolutions, corruption and scarcity of resources are among the major causes of land conflicts. These factors influence occurrence of land conflicts; if they were tackled and dealt with as early as possible, this would significantly contribute to ending land based conflicts. With regard to efforts made to mitigate land conflicts in the study area, it was found that government and traditional institutions had been playing a major role in resolving land conflicts. Also, it was found that other actors such as CSOs and religious institutions were important in mitigating conflicts in communities. It is clear that different stakeholders, government, religious, and traditional institutions play a key role in mitigating land based conflicts in the study area. However, one may conclude that much more coordinated, reliable, sustainable, and prompt measures are needed to deal with land conflicts in the study area. Based on the findings, it was recommended that awareness creation on land related matters and conflict resolutions should be considered as a priority issue for security of land use by smallholder communities. In order to maintain peace and harmony in the society, change of the mind-set of different land user groups and farming should consider the value of each other in order to avoid land conflicts.*

Keywords; Conflict; Resolution; Strategies; Social Cohesion; Local Communities

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Conflicts can be necessary for change in human society because they establish social relationships, group identity and cohesion, as well as being bases for redress of power imbalances in human society (Haley and May, 2014). However, they can also have negative consequences if not resolved. For instance, conflicts can result into destruction of infrastructure, threaten human security and break social cohesion in local communities (Zezeza, 2013). In the last 50 years, more than half of all nations have been affected by internal conflicts which worsened in the late 1980s and early 1990s (The World Bank, 2013). The global increase in the number of ethnic conflicts in recent decades demonstrates the continuing relevance of communal identities for contemporary politics (Cocodia, 2016).

Ethnicity has played a big role in the mass exodus of Somali from their country to Kenya since 1991 (Mkutu, 2014). Such conflicts have led to a crisis in state power and governance in countries such as Ethiopia, Djibouti, Nigeria, Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The highest rate of war related deaths, 32 per 100,000 people globally are found in Africa (Mkutu, 2014). From the 1990s, inter-ethnic related conflicts took a regional character, especially in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa areas (Shah, 2014).

Conflicts in the East African region have also been provoked by predatory exploitation of economic resources between herders and farmers, fanned by the easy accessibility and acquisition of guns through porous borders (Mohamud and Rutu, 2015). Kenya has had her share of conflicts involving various ethnic groups or clans. The prevailing understanding of conflicts in Kenya is that these conflicts stream from incompatibility between the conflicting parties inspired by ethno-nationalism (Okoth and Ogot, 2016). Ethno-nationalism is a concept that refers to particular communities expressing themselves socio-economically and politically to the disadvantage of others who compete for similar opportunities. Some of the ethnically motivated conflicts involved the Sabaot and the Babukusu in Bungoma over land and cattle, more intensely from 1970s (Kakai, 2010).

Developing countries including Uganda are the most affected by violent conflicts, yet it is difficult to assess the effects of conflicts since the concerned institutions have inadequate infrastructure having little or no conflict related statistics and information (Stewart, 2016; World Bank, 2015). However, growing efforts to empirically document the impacts of conflicts show that there are more lasting effects on human capital than on physical capital; which implies that while economies may recover, the people who lose life cannot. Also, as is noted, death and destruction as human effects of conflict alter the structure and dynamics of households, their demographic profiles and traditional gender roles (World Bank, 2013). Further, men and women are affected and respond differently to conflicts (Bannon, 2015).

The existence and prevalence of such conflicts and their traumatic effects cannot be ignored. It needs to be controlled and resolved because when this mutual hostility is not resolved, the effect is disharmony and dearth of peace. According to Oputa (2013), peace advances development, growth, and progress. Peace is order, peace is brother-hood, and peace is life itself.

In rural communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale district, conflict is exacerbated by competition for access to and control over resources, domestic violence and gender relations and roles. These conflicts have been directly responsible for increased deaths, destruction of property, poverty, hunger, starvation, disease, fear, suspicion, mistrust, insecurity and general hopelessness within the warring communities. Sustainable peace cannot be realized without a proper understanding of the root causes of the conflicts in local communities, since one can only deal effectively with a conflict when the root causes are known.

The issue of conflict resolution has reached the point where effective use of relevant strategies are explored and employed. Conflict resolution strategies have been put in place to resolve conflict among rural communities in the study area such as the use of dialogue, mediation as the intervention of a third party. The objective is to help parties to a conflict within an environment of controlled communities to reach solution to their problems and collaborating and the use of laws as a means of promoting social cohesion among local communities. Despite these strategies, there is still poor social cohesion among local communities in Kyanamira Sub County. It is against this background that this study will be conducted to establish the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and social cohesion of local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale district.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A study by the United Nations Research Institute in Social Development (UNRISD) on conflicts and development stated categorically that local communities have faced serious problems in their development endeavors, or even major setbacks due to violent conflicts (Stavenhagen, 2016). This is because resources intended for development objectives have been diverted. Furthermore, conflicts have led to social and demographic displacements, human rights abuse, have greatly endangered national unity and reduced social cohesion among local communities (Taras, & Ganguly, 2015). Murder, rape, theft, property, reduced farm produce and livestock are some of the incidents experienced during conflict in local communities. These conflicts have also been directly responsible for increased deaths, destruction of property, poverty, hunger, starvation, disease, fear, suspicion, mistrust, insecurity and general hopelessness within local communities. They have been detrimental to public peace, national tranquility, law and order, human rights and rule of law which are pillars to economic and social development (Mkutu, 2014). Although there are a number of strategies to resolve conflict in local communities, the use of use local council courts, police, promotion of gender equality and equity and sensitization of communities about their rights and advocacy, there still exists conflicts in rural communities. There was therefore need to assess the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and social cohesions of local communities in Kabale district with reference to Kyanamira Sub County.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to establish the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and social cohesions of local communities in Kabale district with reference to Kyanamira Sub County.

Specific Objectives

- i. To explore the causes of conflicts in local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale district.
- ii. To establish the effect of conflicts on social cohesion in local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale district.
- iii. To identify interventions by local communities and government agencies to address conflicts and improve social cohesion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Causes of Conflict in Local communities

Concerning the factors that have been contributed to conflicts in local communities; it was well-known that people have fought since the beginning of recorded history (UN-Habitat, 2014). There is general consensus that factors such as; population growth and environmental stresses have exacerbated the perception of land as a declining resource, tightening the connection between land and violent conflict (Burnett, 2015). Therefore, in discussing factors for conflicts it is important to acknowledge that land is a very strategic socio-economic asset (USAID, 2014), particularly in poor smallholder communities where wealth and survival are measured by control of, and access to land. By considering the importance of land among smallholder communities, this section aims to discuss socio-economic factors that have been played a significant role to incidences of land conflict occurrence.

UNEP (2012) stated the concept of “resource scarcity” as situation where the supply of renewable resources such as water, forests, range lands and croplands – is not sufficient to meet the demand. In many cases, the competition over resources reshapes social tensions around landed resources and water access (Peters, 2014). Benjaminsen (2014) and El-hadary and Samat (2013) have described factors such as global climate change, large scale investment on land as well as rapid growth of population as causes leading to scarcity of resources and drivers fuelling conflicts among rural communities in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Resources such as land and water are indeed basic and needed to enable communities to sustain livelihoods especially in rural areas (Msuya, 2017).

Agricultural commercialization emphasized in many developing countries (UNEP, 2012) also contributes to endless conflicts especially when the arable land used by smallholder produces is taken and privatized to large scale producers. In that context of scramble for resources which mainly affect local community frequent conflicts among land users is inevitable (Yamano and Deininger, 2015). To justify the truth, Matee and Shem (2013) found and revealed the impacts of existing and emerging policies and laws with a bearing on pastoralism in Tanzania whereby new Livestock Policy, 2005 fails to acknowledge the genetic potential of indigenous livestock breeds and landraces, or the wisdom of extensive grazing regimes in dry land areas. Regarding that; efforts to secure land and resource tenure for pastoralists are generally very limited, and crop growers and private investors continue to appropriate large areas of pastoralist land, often with direct or indirect support from government and development agents thus contribute to marginalization to pastoral community (Shem, 2015).

Kakai (2016) examined the intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts involving the communities living around the Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia County since 1875. Prime land and its resources was the bone of contention between the Kalenjin and Abaluyia communities. With the establishment of community associated “*Jimbo*”, meaning ethnic nation, at independence, the Sabaot who had settled in Bungoma were supposed to leave Bungoma and settle in Trans-Nzoia to join their larger Kalenjin groups. But the word, “*Elgon*” is linguistically related to the Kony sub-group of the Kalenjin tending to make Babukusu appear like “strangers” in that region. This is true of Maa related names such as Laikipia, Rumuruti and Ol Moran. Kakai’s work is relevant to this study since it deals with intra-ethnic conflicts as well as inter-ethnic conflicts. Just like it is in Rumuruti Division of Laikipia County inter-ethnic conflicts, land and its resources are the source of conflicts in Trans-Nzoia (Waweru, 2015). Although Kakai’s study touched on the early years of post-independence in Kenya, the efforts made by post-independent government regimes to avoid the mistakes of using administrative entities with an ethnic tag inherited from the colonial regime, has not been given adequate attention.

Ethnic differences: Thomson (2013) described an ethnic group as “a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on their history, origin, tradition, kinship ties, cultural uniqueness and a common language”. He reiterates by explaining ethnicity as the condition of belonging to an ethnic group, the sense of ethnic identity is felt by members of an ethnic community. Ethnic differences among smallholder communities is one of the major cause of land disputes in the world and Africa in particular (Wily, 2012), whereby most of civil wars in countries such as Sudan, Congo (DRC), and previous social unrest in countries such as Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone were mainly caused by ethnicity differences with related to scramble for natural resources land in particular (UN-Habitat, 2014).

According to the neo-Malthusian conflict scenario, population pressure on natural renewable resources is more likely leading community to the conflict (Urdal, 2014). Natural population growth can result in an increase in the demand for land and consequently of land prices (Wehrmann, 2014). Addition on that, demographic change in rural areas is one of the factors contributes to rise of conflicts over resources in Sub-Saharan Africa (Green, 2013). Scramble for land played a major role in eruption of civil wars in Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and in other parts of Africa (El-Hadary and Samat, 2011). High population growth rate as well as repeated droughts, ecological stresses and climatic changes are major drivers influence conflict over land (UN, 2015). This argument supported Kahl’s (2016) idea argued that high rate of population growth has contributed to increased pressure on

land, increased demand for food, water, arable land, fuel wood, and other essential materials from the natural resource pool. Conflicts in Kenya and Rwanda are claimed to be examples of the latter (Kahl, 2012).

Long pending conflicts without solved delay to resolve conflicts on time and bias in decision-making (Yamano and Deininger, 2015) are among of the factors contributing to the communities to choose using conflicts to get their right. Issues of land rights and tenure security especially for land used by smallholder community have not been given due consideration as expected. People, especially those in a position to improve the situation, often ignore land conflicts until they cannot be controlled any longer, as tension and violence rise to a level which threatens major parts of society (Wehrmann, 2016). However, in some cases, the responsible authorities from local to national level may be reluctant to acknowledge either the existence of land grievances or their potential to escalate and become violent conflicts (UNEP, 2012). In other cases, political motives contribute to hinder provision of timely solution to land conflicts where those in position wanting to use the existing conflicts for political gain as well as fear that such attention may actually inflame tensions and contribute to more overt conflict. .

Weak conflict management mechanisms contribute to the un-ending land conflict between the farm herders and crop producers in local communities (Myenzi, 2015). According to UNEP (2012), conflict becomes problematic when societal mechanisms and institutions for managing and resolving conflict break down, giving way to violence. With regard to Tanzania land management systems; there is the challenge on efficiency of land disputes settlements organs from the village level to the district level such as Village Land Council, Ward Tribunal, and District Land and Housing Tribunal (Hakiardhi, 2014).

Mohamud and Rutu (2015) assert that conflicts in the East African region particularly Kenya and Uganda revolve around the predatory exploitation of economic resources. Inter-ethnic conflicts abound between herders and farmers. The competition for resources account for the largest percentage of conflicts in the East African region and is further fuelled by the illegal ownership of guns. This is due to the porous borders within the region. Outcomes such as insecurity, removal from public buildings and outright violence are the main reasons of exodus of the Somali nationals to refugee camps in Kenya. The situation is relevant to Rumuruti Division of Laikipia County where pastoralists and agriculturalists engage in conflicts. The research established that competition for grazing and farm land between the pastoralists and the agricultural communities remains a pertinent cause of the inter-ethnic conflicts. The authors argue that traditional pastoralist communities raid for livestock, mainly to replenish their herds depleted by severe droughts, diseases, raiding or other calamities.

Effect of Conflicts on Social Cohesions in Local Communities

Research on household and conflict has in most cases focused on analysis of impact of conflict on groups of households. This neglects the socio-economic differences that determine entitlements and sharing of resources between groups. According to the World Bank (2013), conflict may not only lead to socio-economic disruption, but may also create new economic opportunities. That said, the immediate aftermath of violent clashes is often characterized by destruction of assets and livelihoods, displacement, and a breakdown in social order and cohesion (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015; Kindi, 2016). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that conflicts affect households differently, a result of their divergent vulnerability context. For purposes of this study, vulnerability is defined to mean the possibility and significance of being affected by events and processes that threaten the livelihood, security and wellbeing of households (Ellis, 2015). Thus, in the case of the Karamojong - Iteso ethnic conflict, the vulnerability context of households is determined through a focus on their livelihood and level of insecurity.

Ellis (2013) posits that livelihoods relate to assets, activities, and the access to resources that together determine the living conditions of individuals or households. Similarly, deducing from the above, the study conceptualized livelihood as comprising the ways in which households' access and organize assets or resources (physical, financial, social, natural and human) necessary for survival and pursuit of their long-term wellbeing, thereby reducing vulnerability to ethnic conflict in Katakwi district. In this section, the study critically reviews and discusses the findings of scholarly publications on the livelihood effects of ethnic conflict on households. This serves as background knowledge and will thus inform the findings of this study in relation to the Karamojong-Iteso ethnic conflict. Some of the key impacts are discussed here under.

Conflicts tend to lead to displacement of large population from the conflict scenes either to other countries or as internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps. The UNHCR Annual Global Trends Report (2015) estimated that globally the number of displaced people had risen to 59.5 million by the end of 2014 from 37.5 million a decade before. Up to 86% of the refugees and IDPs are from less developed regions and countries. In Asia, the number of refugees and displaced people stands at 9 million, while Sub-Saharan Africa has 3.7 million refugees and 11.4 million are internally displaced (UNHCR, 2015). During the Northern Uganda conflict, nearly 2 million people were internally displaced from 1996 to 2006 (UNHCR, 2012). The Karamojong-Iteso conflict in North Eastern Uganda sent about 100,000 Itesots to IDP camps in 2001 (Teso Initiative for Peace, n.d). However, there is little empirical

evidence on the specific number of displaced households as most research has focused on collecting general event data based on counting numbers of refugees and internally displaced populations.

In terms of household livelihood, the situation of migrants or internally displaced persons and households is worsened in the absence of available store of resources or assets (human, financial, physical, natural and social) during and post-conflict. Justino (2009) particularly notes that education, financial and social capital could generate economic opportunities where migrants with desirable employable skills can sustain household livelihoods by finding jobs or creating enterprises with relative ease, compared to migrants with lower levels of education, training and/or financial capital. Moreover, Bujones et al (2013) point out the possibility where new settlements could prove hostile grounds due non-acceptance of migrant groups by host communities, as well as increased competition between indigenes and migrants over available resources. Thus, although migration often represents an immediate response following violent conflict, it does not always constitute a viable path to securing household livelihood during and post-conflict.

De Weijer (2013) postulates that in the absence of livelihood opportunities and migrant integration in new settlements, the likely outcome is that migrants return to their communities of origin. However, the decision to return home is often influenced by three main factors namely; the absence of security fears post-conflict, access to appropriated lands and properties, as well as lingering social networks in their place of origin (USAID, 2012). That is, displaced households tend to be less willing to return to their communities of origin if security concerns remain or where individual or household resources, as well as structural and social networks for livelihood support are destroyed due to violent conflict.

Violent conflicts kill, injure and psychologically damage those from affected communities and displaced populations. Per the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the number of conflict-related deaths globally rose to 176,000 in 2014, an increase from 113,000 in 2013. It is estimated that the Islamist insurgency in Nigeria claimed between 7,000 and 10,000 lives, and in Southern Sudan, in January 2014 alone, between 1000-10,000 people were killed (IISS, 2015). It can be argued that, Uganda is not immune to killings as a result of internal conflicts. Ethnic conflicts in Uganda have intensified in the post-colonial period with about one million people killed between 1962 and 1986 (Quinn, 2014). Still in Uganda, the exact mortality figures in the Northern Uganda conflict are not well established. Further, the scanty facts do not show evidence on specific household mortality and are not gender disaggregated.

During conflicts, households lose assets and property through plunder and sometimes the assets and property are destroyed through fighting and looting. These may include houses, land, labour, utensils, cattle, livestock and other productive assets. Displacement makes women and men to lose access to land and other assets and exposes them to greater risks as their knowledge base and coping mechanisms may not apply in host areas (Bouta, 2015).

In the Kosovo conflict, half of the entire housing stock was damaged or destroyed; in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 60 percent of the homes were destroyed; in Sri Lanka, 50 percent of homes in the conflict areas were damaged (UNHCR, 2005). During the Rwandan genocide, households suffered cattle raids (Verpooten, 2013). The militia (Hutu) also killed cattle for their consumption and to spread terror because cattle were a valuable asset and a symbol of power to the Tutsi (Verpooten, 2013). Uganda has also faced a series of such related incidences of loss of property and assets as a result of conflict. In the North-Eastern region, households have lost cattle and other assets in the violent conflicts between Karamojongs and their neighbouring tribes. The UNHCR notes that a combination of losses during conflict and breakdown of institutions are factors leading to high levels of homelessness and landlessness amongst vulnerable groups (UNHCR, 2015).

Kreuzer (2015) asserts that ethnically motivated conflicts feature prominently in Indonesia. Large scale and deadly violence has been a common feature of modern Indonesian history. It has permeated all spheres of politics leaving retrogressive marks on all processes of social interaction. Mutually hostile narratives patented by community stereotypes against each other are common in Indonesia. Inter-ethnic conflicts occur in a specific cultural setting. They are representatives of, filled with, understood through and explained by specific cultural symbolism. They are “constituted largely by the taken for granted, common sense understanding that people have about their world, including themselves and other people who inhabit it”.

Cultural views on inter-ethnic conflicts tend to accentuate the perspective which is the belief about social and political conflicts held by the members of the violence inflicted society. Village elders tell endearing narratives which endorse the tradition of fighting villages with gusto. Such conflicts are solved through enhanced group representation and a significant strengthening of the state at all levels of politics. Establishment of regional parties to ameliorate tension of a particular ethnic group within a framework of a federation and a parliamentary system of government is a tenable inter-ethnic conflicts intervention option. The opinion is shared by (Sheikh, 2014).

In their socio-economic study of inter-ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, Nafziger and Auvinen (2012) contend that economic inequality is an important cause of inter-ethnic conflicts. They argue that high income concentration by a few increases the perception of relative deprivation by affected segments of society, thereby increasing the risk of political disintegration. Policies that lead to inequality for example land distribution, taxation, public expenditure can exacerbate ethnic and regional competition and inter-ethnic conflicts (Nafziger and Auvinen, 2016).

Intervention Strategies for Addressing Conflict in Local Communities

Household adaptive and coping strategies in terms of gender roles and relations: Acemoglu, Autor, and Lyle (2014) state that, individual or household adaptation or coping strategies adopted during or post violent conflict depends on its relationship to its environment. In this sense, adaptation could mean altering one's relationship to the environment, making it a more fitting place to live or making one fit to live in such an environment by taking advantage of limited or new resources or opportunities. Bujones, Jaskiewicz, Linakis and McGirr (2013) echo similar sentiments by noting that human adaptation is accomplished by socio-cultural means by harnessing the new situations or opportunities. In terms of gender roles and relations, adaptation during conflict could thus mean altering structural norms that hitherto constrained or defined gender roles or participation to take advantage of emerging situations or opportunities during the conflict and post-conflict phase.

As Bouta (2015) argue, household members often have to take up alternative activities for which they are under-equipped and untrained. There is altered traditional labour allocation and roles in families to secure adaptability and resilience (World Bank, 2013; Mazurana and Proctor, 2013). In Angola and Somalia conflicts, women bore the main financial burden of providing for the family while men took on responsibility for children and domestic chores. In Sudan, a shift from subsistence to an urban cash economy increased dependence on women's work in petty trade (El-Bushra, 2010). Much as there is evidence for altered gendered roles for households, adaptation based on the impacts of conflicts, reversal of gender roles is not accompanied by an ideological shift. And so, men experience more difficulty than women to adjust to new situations because cultural norms regarding the position of men in society sometimes make men resist adjustment to the consequences of conflict (El-Bushra, 2010). Thus, as a study in Rwanda revealed, while there were role changes in female headed households because of ethnic conflict, the roles of men in their households did not change (O'Connell, 2011).

Changes in gender roles, relations and functional opportunities for change: Studies on perceptions of gender roles in conflict situations are relatively new (Schindler, 2010). Sociologists have paid much attention to the pattern of adaptation and mechanisms for survival in a new culture, giving limited attention to how males and females perceive their gender roles before, during and after a conflict. Despite the devastating effects of the conflict on households, women have often used post-conflict periods to reshape societies, rewrite the rules, and advance women's rights, and changes in the perception of gender roles (Arostegui, 2013). Conflicts do also sometimes destroy oppressive patriarchal structures and create space for women greater autonomy and new roles (Calderon, Gáfaró, and Ibáñez, 2011). Feminization of the informal sector in urban areas often occurs during conflict with women entering the sector more easily because it requires less education, training, and start-up capital. This situation sometimes continues to work after conflict. Women may therefore conceive this as a way of liberation and empowerment (Bouta, 2015).

Additionally, Bouta, (2015) argue that displacement often forces men and to a certain degree woman, to develop new skills and engage in new income-generating activities. Iranian immigrant women regard their immigration from Iran to the neighboring countries and European countries as a form of liberation from various restrictions imposed on them by cultural traditions and social customs (Mahdi, 2011). In Somalia and Angola, men have accepted their dependence on women passively and acknowledge that women's resourcefulness and industry have pulled families through crises (El-Bushra, 2010). Whereas before a conflict many more men than women are employed outside the home, unemployment during conflict undermines a key foundation of male identity and male perceptions of self-worth. Men see women's increased power in the households and their own disempowerment in different ways. The disempowerment of men as providers in households undermines their position and sometimes makes them respond to this impact with negative behaviors (Bouta, 2015).

A study conducted by Davenport (2011) in Northern Uganda after the LRA conflict revealed a desire to reclaim cultural identity by the Acholi people because the changes were perceived to have rendered children and women uncontrollable. Whereas many studies reveal that conflict reshapes society positively, some observe that it only happens in individual cases, and with scattered and temporary gains (World Bank, 2013; El-Bushra, 2010).

Promoting new gender roles and relations for better relations in communities: Sustaining the changes in gender roles as a result of conflict, especially the newly acquired skills by both men and women remains a major development challenge. There is a need to design adaptive programs built on women's and men's newly acquired skills that encourage them to continue in their new roles (Bouta, 2015). In support of the above, the UN Women (2007) calls for a positive engagement of national authorities, through

participatory approaches to foster changed knowledge and actions by policy makers. In a bid to promote gender equality in the post conflict period in Sierra Leone, the state established and mandated the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs to implement and promote a national policy on gender equality in all government institutions (Castillejo, 2011). However, there is a shortage of empirical evaluations on interventions aiming to challenge gender inequality and promote women’s and men’s newly acquired skills. El-Bushra (2013) and O’Connell (2011) argue that the ideological ground sustaining traditional gender relations look resistant to change and that interventions targeting to use the rapid changes to encourage transformations in gender relations may fail. This is evidenced by study after the Northern Uganda LRA conflict which found that the desire to return to old values acted as barriers for development policy makers and other partners (El-Bushra, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research was carried out using a cross-sectional design where data was collected at a single point in time without repetition. The design was chosen due to the fact that it is cost-effective, less time consuming and much information can be obtained in a relatively short time (Malthews and Ross, 2010). Additionally, the design was suitable for the study as data collected can be used for the statistical description and determination of relationship between variables. The study involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches during data collection. Qualitative approach enabled the researcher to give a complete, detailed description of phenomenon while quantitative approach enabled the researcher to construct statistical models in an attempt to explain the findings.

Study Population

The target population for the study was 460 including local leaders, local community members and policemen. The researcher considered household heads on the part of local community members, 4 policemen at Kyanamira Sub County and 20 LCI, 2 LCII and 1 LCIII chairpersons

Sample Size

The researcher used a sample of 213 respondents which was reached using Israel Glen (2012) formula $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$ where N is the target population, n is the sample size, e is the level of precision (0.05)

$$n = \frac{460}{1 + 460(0.05^2)} = n = \frac{460}{1 + 460(0.0025)} = n = \frac{460}{2.15} = 213$$

The distribution of the sample was indicated in the table below;

Table 3.1: Sample Size Distribution

Categories	Study population	Sample size
Local community members	433	186
LCI	20	20
LCII	2	2
LCIII	1	1
Policemen	4	4
Total	460	213

Sampling Techniques

The researcher employed purposive and simple random sampling in selecting respondents;

Purposive Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling to select 4 policemen, 20 (LCI), 2 LCII and 1 LCIII. This technique was used because it helped to select most knowledgeable people with information on the topic of study by virtue of their status in in the sub-county since they were involved in disputes. These respondents would provide an in-depth understanding on most of the issues of concern to the study.

Simple Random Sampling

This method involved giving all the members in the target population an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. The researcher sought assistance from the local administration and the village heads. A list of household heads was requested from the village heads. Respondents were chosen randomly from the list and the names of the household heads chosen were marked until the entire sample required was exhausted. Simple random sampling was used because it would give each of the total sampling units

of the local community members an equal chance of inclusion. Through the simple random sampling, a sample of 186 respondents was picked.

Data Collection Instruments

These included questionnaire, interview guide and documentary guide as discussed below;

Questionnaires

According to Mark & Philip (2009), a questionnaire is a reformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers. Questionnaires were used as a supportive primary data collection tool alongside the interviews conducted. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to fill on the topic under investigation. The questionnaires were used because of their busy schedules of the respondents to allow them ample time to give their responses at their leisure time. The design of the questionnaire was based on the objectives of the study.

Interview Guide

The interview guide is a research instrument that contains a list of questions you ask your participants during the interview in order to obtain firsthand information about a phenomenon. The research interviews were used in a situation where the respondents had no time to attend to questionnaires. The data in this case was collected from key informants using an interview guide. The researcher designed structured questions and face to face interviews with key informants were conducted using logically related questions. Interviews were used because they were simple and firsthand information was obtained.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data generated from the interviews was analyzed through careful interpretation of meanings and contents; and through organizing, and summarizing in accordance with the issue under investigation. In line with this, the researcher made descriptive presentation of the data in a reflexive and narrative manner whilst keeping its original content. Furthermore, the analysis was supported by data with secondary. The analysis of quantitative data was done using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The presentation of data was done using tables that were drawn using micro soft excel program of a computer.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the households involved in the study are sex, age, household size, marital status, economic occupation, education background and ethnicity of the respondents. The study had targeted a sample size of 213 but on returning the questionnaires only 209 were brought to the researcher which indicated a response rate of 98 percent.

Findings on the socio demographic information of respondents are presented below;

The results (Table 4.1) show that 44% of the respondents were aged between 18 and 40, followed by 38.3% of those whose ages ranged between 41 and 60years, and 17.7% of respondents were above 61 years. This implies that the majority of the household heads in the study area were in their productive age group, which means that they could engage inland conflicts. According to URT (2013), the age group from 15 to 64 years is regarded as the productive age group.

In respect of the sex of respondents, 90.4% of the respondents were male while 9.6% were female. Of all women (20 out of 209 respondents) involved in the study, there was no one from the pastoral communities. The findings revealed that most of the households in the study area were male headed. These findings support previous studies by Sango (2003) and Hoza (2009) who found that it is likely that the majority of men are involved in land conflicts as opposite to women, because men are the heads of the households and are the ones who own land in the study area. The study also revealed that typical characteristics of most African societies whereby most households are male-headed while very few of the households are headed by females were relevant in the study area.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (n=209)

Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Male	189	71.0
	Female	20	29.0
Total		209	100.0

Age	18-40	92	44.0
	41-60	80	38.3
	≥61	37	17.7
Total		209	100.0
Marital status	Married	169	80.9
	Widow	12	5.7
	Separated	9	4.3
	Single	19	9.1
Total		209	100.0
Family size	1-4 family members	89	42.6
	5-8 family members	97	46.4
	9-12 family members	23	11.0
Total		209	100.0
Education	Non formal education	54	25.8
	Primary education	138	66.0
	Secondary education	13	6.3
	College	4	1.9
Total		209	100.0
Main occupation	Farmers	171	81.8
	Business	38	18.2
Total		209	100.0

The household sizes varied as shown in Table 4.1 which reveals that 42.6% of the heads of household had family members from 1 to 4 people, while 46.4% had the sizes from 5 to 8 people and 11.0% of households had more than nine family members. Based on the main economic occupations of the household heads, the results indicated that almost 81.8% of the respondents were crop farmers while 18.2% were involved in business. According to Pacific (2012), the results indicate that having the highest percentage of respondents engaged in farming is attributed to strong land holding as well as low level of education which limits them from performing non-farming activities.

The study found that, the majority (72.7%) of the respondents had the ability to read and write. Levels of education among the respondents varied from non-formal to post-secondary level. The majority (66%) of the respondents had primary education. Respondents with secondary and college were 6.7%, followed by 25.8% with no formal education. This finding is similar to that by Emanuel and Ndimbwa (2013) who found that in many rural areas, still the level of education is very low and cannot enable smallholder communities in rural areas to be employed in the formal sectors hence hinder their development.

Causes of Conflicts in Local Communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale

The table below shows the findings on the causes of conflicts in local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale and the following were the findings;

Table 4.2: Causes of conflicts in local communities in Kyanamira Sub County, Kabale District

Variable	n	%
Scarcity of resources	35	16.7
Corruption	32	15.3
Unclear village boundaries	27	12.9
Poor awareness on land rights	25	12.0
Population growth	25	12.0
Lack of land use plans	21	10.0
Ethnicity	20	9.6

Poor community participation	10	4.8
Delay to solve land conflicts	9	4.3
	5	2.4
Total	209	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2020

The results in Table 4.2 show that delaying in resolving land conflicts causes conflicts. It was the one the most influential variable to influence incidences of conflicts. The results imply that delaying to intervene and resolve land disputes in time increases chances of land conflicts occurrence. Based on the explanations given by the respondents, it was found that there had been delay in dealing with incidents of land conflicts. This had greatly contributed to a state which contributed to eruption of frequent land conflicts. The respondents claimed that issues of land administration and conflicts resolution on land used by smallholder communities had not been given due consideration as expected whereby, in some cases, the responsible authorities had not been taking appropriate efforts to deal with indicators of land conflicts until conflicts escalate and become violent.

During the study, one of the farmer respondents said *“this is the cultivation season, but we are currently unable to cultivate our farms due to the long-running disputes without solutions so we are planning to organize a strike to pressurize the responsible authorities to give us our right”*. Wehrmann (2008) argues that people, especially those in a position to resolve conflicts, often ignore land conflicts until they cannot be controlled any longer, that is to say tension escalate and violence rises to a level which threatens major parts of society. In other cases, political motives contribute to hinder provision of timely solutions to land conflicts where those in position use the existing conflicts for political gains.

When the respondents were asked to provide their opinions on causes of land conflicts (Table 4.2); 15.3%, 10.0%, 12.9% and 2.4% of the respondents showed their concern in corruption, poor administration on land use plans, village boundaries and delay to solve land conflicts.

The respondents concern was much more on corruption as a root cause in delaying to solve land conflicts. The respondents claimed that unfaithful leaders and government officials had been using prevailing disputes over land as a source of income by demanding bribes from parties involved in the conflicts. This has contributed to fuelling conflicts. During FGDs, each community (farmers and pastoralists) blamed one another for using bribes to gain favour from law enforcers. On one side, farmers had been accusing pastoralists to gain favour from government authorities by using their wealth to bribe public officials, including the police, judiciary staff as well as local government officers and politicians. One of the respondents from a farming community said *“Corrupt public leaders are the main cause of land conflicts that have been increasing over the years in our areas, especially between pastoralists and farmers”*.

A similar observation was also shared by the pastoralists whereby on their side they blamed government officials for collaborating with farmers to introduce and authorize high and unbearable fines as well as stealing of their cattle. Though many of government officials and political leaders were not willing to accept the accusation, but through information given by the respondents, key informants and FGDs, it was noted that the way land is governed in the study area provides loopholes for corruption to persist.

These results support the observation by Myenzi (2005), TALA (2012) and Benjaminsen *et al.* (2013) who observed that good governance on land in Tanzania is hindered by corruption which leads to loss of trust in authorities such as local government, the police or the judiciary, and in the willingness of these authorities to prevent conflicts in the future. TI (2011) went further and stressed that, when corruption is present in the land sector, related actions and decisions are driven by distorted interests and policies that favour few people. The implication of losing trust to government authorities will often lead communities to use violent means to get their rights. Therefore, any efforts to improve land management and dealing with land disputes in the study area and in other areas in the country should be taken in line with efforts to curb corruption that has been said by communities as a barrier to getting sustainable solutions to land conflicts.

It was disclosed by some that the involvement of the communities in land conflict resolutions and governance of land in general is essential in combating corruption as well as increasing transparency in land management. This assumption is supported by ACCORD (2010) and URT (2015) which emphasize that community participation is important since there is general consensus that if people participate in the process of taking a decision, they are more likely to support it. The rationale behind this is that their participation increases and creates a sense of ownership and accountability. Contrary to that, poor community participation in decision making processes on land matters creates a sense of isolation amongst the people; hence they find another way of expressing their anger which mainly involves violence. In doing so, they are likely to resort to violent ways.

This observation was further confirmed by the opinions given by the respondents where 4.8% of them mentioned poor community participation as one the factor responsible for land conflicts. Also 12.0% mentioned poor awareness on land rights as another factor on land conflicts, which makes a lot of sense with the model results because lack of awareness is likely to lead to poor community participation.

When the respondents were asked to give their opinions on the causes of land conflicts in their area 16.7% of the respondents (Table 4.2) mentioned that scarcity of resources was a major problem in their area that resulted in disputes over land. On the other hand, farmers explained shortage of resources, water and pastures in particular as a situation that was caused by increased cropland. All the interviewed farmers said that land used for crops was greater in surface area than the grazing land they could access.

Similar findings by Mworira and Ndiku (2012), Msuya (2013), Benjaminsen (2013) and Mohamed (2014) revealed that the shortage of basic resources such as land and water in rural communities are predominant conflict causing items in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Tanzania. However, these results were different from the figures that have been released by the government (URT, 2011), revealing that arable land in Tanzania is plentiful whereas out of the 44.0 million hectares, it is only 10.5 million hectares that are utilized, which is 23% of the area suitable for agriculture. These figures prove beyond doubt that we still have enough land to practise agriculture. The problem is in the distribution of land resource for the people engaged in farming. In this regard, and as many of the respondents are advised, there is a need of effective coordination mechanisms to regulate the allocation and use of available land to all users.

Interventions by Local Communities and Government Agencies to address conflicts and improve Social Cohesion

The following are the findings on interventions by local communities and government agencies to address conflicts and improve social cohesion

Table 4.3: Interventions of government agencies to address conflicts and improve social cohesion

Variable	n	%
Key actors	140	67.0
Government authorities		
Religion institutions	1	0.5
Civil societies	20	9.6
Traditional institutions	48	23.0
Total	209	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2020

Table 4.4: Interventions of Communities to address conflicts and improve social cohesion

	n	%
Application of LUP	31	14.8
Combating corruption	20	9.6
Provision of title deeds	11	5.3
Improving good governance	19	9.1
Setting clear village boundaries	68	32.5
Improving livestock infrastructures	3	1.4
Emphasizing respect	9	4.3
Introduction of land conflict EWS	6	2.9
Educating communities	19	9.1
Organizing regular meetings	4	1.9
Strengthening capacity of VLCs	12	5.7
Introduction of “special zones”	7	3.3
Total	209	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2020

The greatest proportion of the respondents (32.5%) proposed demarcation of village boundaries as a strong solution to the prevailing land disputes in the study area. Demarcation of village boundaries was said to be a priority and solution to both the absence of land use plan and land conflicts. Setting of village boundaries will result into more village land certification, introduction of land use plans and issuing of Customary Certificate Rights of Occupancy (CCRO) to individual villagers, families and group land holders in villages as the case may be. The suggestion is in line with the observations made by Baha (2008), Hoza (2009) and Kizoka (2014) who observed that the existence of frequent land use conflicts is a result of disregarding village boundaries. They further concluded that where village boundary is a problem also land disputes are inevitable.

The application of land use plans as a means of reducing land conflicts was opted by 14.8% of the respondents (Table 7). The respondents explained the need of having formal land use plans not only to ensure tenure security of their land, but also to enable village governments to provide CCROs to land owners. Those comments were made in line with the call for provision of the title deeds. These claims indicate the importance of government authorities to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to implement land use plan as a means of supporting sustainable land use and eliminating land disputes among different competing land users. Implementation of land use plans may apply also to enhance sustainable utilization and management of natural resources.

Combating corruption was ranked third by 9.6% of the respondents (Table 4.4) in terms of its contribution to land conflicts in the study area. Though some community leaders interviewed as key informants during the study denied the existence of corruption in land management, some of them, however, admitted and even claimed that corruption was the root cause in escalating land conflicts in their villages. Dealing with corruption in land administration was viewed by the respondents as a cross-cutting issue similar to comments given by Brankov and Tanjevic (2013) who asserted that corruption undermines the rule of law, democracy and human rights, undermines good governance, fairness and social justice, distorts competition, hinders economic development and endangers the stability of democratic institutions and the moral foundations of society.

The results in Table 4.4 revealed that 9.1% of the respondents had the views that awareness creation on land and conflict management would play a crucial role in achieving sustainable solution in resolving land conflicts. It was reported by one respondent that sensitization of communities on their land rights is a recommendable approach since it increases community involvement in addressing the challenges around land issues and reduce unnecessary conflicts before they escalate to serious levels. Any initiatives towards awareness creation should go hand in hand with the assessment of the specific needs to enable the provision of tailored services by considering that that ignorance among community member scan create room for exploitation of one's land rights.

In the interview with household heads, the FGDs and key informants recommended improving good governance over land. It was mainly based on two aspects: community participation in decision making processes and capacity building of village land committees. Sometimes those terms were used by respondents interchangeably. The results (Table 3) reveal peoples' opinions on those aspects whereby 9.1% recommended community participation and 5.7% recommended improving capacity of village land committees. Poor or complete lack of community participation in land management seemed to be one of the factors contributing to land disputes. Therefore, suggestion on increasing participation is an integral part of the solution. Participation also provides avenues for sharing of information and learning. It was also noted that the root cause of conflict over land is people's inability to develop effective institutions. The respondents' arguments were not only the absence of committees as required by laws that governed land matters, but also the existence of capable committees in performing their duties properly.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study concludes that there was reasonable level of awareness of the community on the existence of land tenure systems and other important aspects related to land. However, the percentage of those who were not aware (46.4%) was also greater to the extent that it could affect daily land management as well as playing a significant role as a barrier to conflict resolution and community participation in decision making processes on land governance. The lesson learned from community awareness on land rights is that awareness itself does not guarantee non-emergence or recurrence of land based conflicts; instead there is a need for major improvement regarding systems and institutions dealing with land governance and land based conflict resolution.

In the light of factors influencing occurrence of land conflicts, it is concluded that delay in solving land conflicts, poor community participation in conflict resolutions, corruption and scarcity of resources are among the major causes of land conflicts. These factors influence occurrence of land conflicts; if they were tackled and dealt with as early as possible, this would significantly contribute to ending land based conflicts.

With regard to efforts made to mitigate land conflicts in the study area, it was found that government and traditional institutions had been playing a major role in resolving land conflicts. Also, it was found that other actors such as CSOs and religious institutions were important in mitigating land conflicts among smallholder communities in the study area. It is clear that different stakeholders, government, religious, and traditional institutions play a key role in mitigating land based conflicts in the study area. However, one may conclude that much more coordinated, reliable, sustainable, and prompt measures are needed to deal with land conflicts in the study area.

Recommendations

It is obvious that much is still needed to be done in the study area on land tenure systems that are responsive to the needs and interests of people in the study area. Therefore, in view of the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Measures to increase land tenure security in Kyanamira Sub County as well as other rural areas in Uganda must be complemented by pro-poor policies to ensure setting of clear village boundaries and proper application of land use plans since the current systems are not properly planned and designed to accommodate all land users equitably.
- ii. Awareness creation on land related matters and conflict resolutions should be considered as a priority issue for security of land use by smallholder communities. The government; in collaboration with other actors like CSOs, religious and traditional institutions; should work together to sensitize community on land rights. Through such sensitization, communities will be able to participate effectively in curbing corruption on land as well as increasing their ability to solve land disputes and participate in decision making processes on matters related to land and other natural resources.
- iii. In order to maintain peace and harmony in the society, change of the mind-set of different land user groups, the farming and pastoral communities, for example, should consider the value of each other in order to avoid land conflicts. The farmer should respect and protect the land allocated for pastoral activities and the pastoralist should also respect the land allocated for crops farming. Having this in mind will reduce to great extent chances of conflict to occur.

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