

Communal Conflict and Rural Development in South East Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study is about "Communal Conflict and Rural Development in South East Nigeria". The specific objectives were to: identify the effect of communal land disputes on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria; ascertain the effect of communal chieftaincy tussle on healthcare services delivery in South East Nigeria and determine the effect of communal conflict over control of natural resources on Human Capital Development Index of South East Nigeria. This research employed survey research design. The population of the study was 9,372,347. The sample size of the study was 369, determined through the use of Freund and Williams formula. The collected data was analyzed through the use of Mean score. The Chi-square test was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that: Communal land boundary disputes, Communal chieftaincy tussle and the struggle for control of natural resources had a significant deleterious effect in rural development of South East Nigeria. The study accordingly concluded that communal conflict had a devastating effect on the development of rural communities in South East Nigeria. The study recommended among others that while government and international organizations take meaningful actions to bring perpetrators of communal violence to book, the root causes such as political corruption be addressed in order to reduce scarcity and desperation.*

Keyword: Communal, Conflict, Development, Chieftaincy, Healthcare, natural resources

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict and security are issues that affect the entire world (Muhammad-Bande, 2015). This is due to the fact that the structure and character of societies are inherently antagonistic and are inextricably supported by variations in resource endowments, which influence how people behave in pursuit of both socioeconomic and political interests. There has never been a time in human history when there hasn't been some sort of violent upheaval somewhere in the planet. People who live in a society have diverse personalities and desires, and they also attain their goals to varying degrees. Similar to this, communities, social groupings, or societies are designed and set up to accomplish the objectives chosen by the group's organs and members.

But conflict might develop as a result of trying to accomplish these objectives. This means that conflict can arise when individuals with differing aims pursue them in areas that are close to one another or far apart (Akpenpuun, 2013).

This study defines communal conflict as a conflict between non-state organisations that are unified by a common communal identity. Conflict is when two or more parties are trying to dominate a contested or viewed as unalienable resource, like a plot of land or local political influence. Community or communal conflict occurs when there is a lack of understanding and camaraderie between members of two ethnic communities. This is typically brought on by mistrust, anxiety, and a propensity for confrontation (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). Conflicts between communities are more widespread in Africa nowadays. All areas of human endeavor have been greatly concerned by these conflicts, which are primarily of an ethnic nature. There is a tendency for communal violence to have an impact on both the direct and indirect socioeconomic activities among the communities in the opposing camps. According to Ikejiaku (2016), the nations of Africa, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa, have experienced a volatile combination of violence and insecurity. The peace project on the continent is being undermined by the issue of war and insecurity. Seidman and Mbana (2016) backed up this assertion. The biggest threats to peace, security, and stability now include territorial conflicts, armed conflict, civil wars, violence, and finally the dissolution of governments and the state. Over the past fifty years, very little economic growth has taken place in parts of Africa as a result of unresolved conflicts. Compared to thirty years ago, some nations are even poorer now. For decades, Sub-Saharan Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been the lowest (Ikejiaku, 2009). It is sufficient to note that community disputes seriously harm socio-economic activities like agricultural production, healthcare, and the development of human capital in many Nigerian communities.

The process of social and economic change in a particular society is known as rural development (Nwaorgu, and Nwankwo, 2014). Some metrics are used to measure rural development, including GDP growth, life expectancy, literacy levels, the human development index, levels of production, and consumption, among others (Ojo, 2011). According to Chikaire (2016), communal violence tends to have an impact on the socioeconomic activity among communities in the opposing camps both directly and indirectly. According to Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz (2012), communal disputes pose a serious threat to human security, claim thousands of lives annually,

and frequently serve as the catalyst for civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2011). In Nigeria, elites have frequently used contentious legal manipulation to their advantage in battles for control and private ownership of land (Omonigho and Opafunso, 2015). Interethnic conflict, social inequality, and the number of landless people—particularly among the rural poor—have all been significantly exacerbated by the growth in land control and private ownership. Due to these encounters, the land acquisition procedure is now under pressure from scarcity and other distributive factors (Nwagwu, 2016). These circumstances have also led different ethnic, regional, and religious communities to construct sub-national notions of ethnic citizenship, which has exacerbated strife in Nigeria since the 1980s, with the help of the corrupt and rent-seeking elite at the federal level. It appears that the main cause of violent conflict among groups in Nigeria is competition for economic or political resources. Thus, there are several regional and state-level communal conflicts throughout the nation, with South East Nigeria being no exception (Kimenyi, Adibe, Djiré, Jirgi, Kergna, Deressa, Pugliese and Westbury, 2014).

The struggle for resources to survive has ironically been the main determining force in South East Nigeria, posing serious risks to the socioeconomic growth of the population. Neighboring villages have pounced on each other with destructive ferocity, rarely justified by long-standing rivalries, from Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State to Nenwe-Mgbowo in Enugu State, Izza-Ezillo, Ntezi-Izzi, Nkalagu all in Ebonyi State, etc. Fighting broke out between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities a few years ago over a boundary dispute, and automatic guns and explosives were used to kill people and damage homes. There were reports of more than 300 deaths and thousands of displaced persons (Emeagwali, 2009). According to (Oji, 2015), the ongoing recurrence of communal disputes in a number of South East communities has had a catastrophic impact on national development. To put it another way, conflicts have the potential to significantly impede development efforts by damaging infrastructure, disrupting the production chain, and directing resources away from useful applications. Because disputes are an inherent part of our social order, their prevalence is not the main issue. The fact that these inter- and intrastate conflicts result in significant loss of life and property as well as disturbance of the social, political, and economic lives of the general populace is somewhat alarming. This is particularly true when these disputes include purported "brothers and sisters." It is based on these that the study examined the Effects of Communal Conflicts on Rural Economic Development in South East Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

A large amount of a developing nation's development programs must be devoted to the development of rural communities in order for that nation to achieve sustainable development. Only when the peaceful coexistence of the communities and their means of maintenance, upkeep, and sustainability become successful with the presence and existence of sufficient protection of lives and property can everyone in South East Nigeria benefit from its socioeconomic growth. Community disputes over boundaries, chieftaincy disputes, and natural resources are now typical occurrences in contemporary culture. All areas of human endeavor have been greatly concerned by these conflicts, which are primarily of an ethnic nature. There is a tendency for communal violence to have an impact on both the direct and indirect socioeconomic activities among the communities in the opposing camps.

Conflicts over land boundaries, chieftaincy disputes, and battles for control of natural resources are on the rise in many states in South East Nigeria. Activities of rural residents are typically impacted during wars. Since agriculture is the primary concern of the rural people in Enugu, communal violence or conflicts have major implications for food supply and availability. They also have an impact on health care services and the development of human capital. The primary economic activity of the population is the cultivation of crops and the care of cattle. The same incidents that traumatize a community also devastate or weaken the healthcare system from a health standpoint. During times of conflict, vital services like primary and reproductive health care are frequently disrupted or inaccessible.

Multiple communities in South East Nigeria have experienced communal violence repeatedly, which has had devastatingly detrimental effects on the development of the country. In other words, wars have the potential to significantly impede development efforts by damaging infrastructure, halting output, and diverting resources from useful uses. Community disputes thus have a significant impact on rural development. These served as the foundation for the study, which looked at how Communal Conflicts Affect Rural Development in South East Nigeria.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine Effect of Communal Conflict on Rural Development in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Identify the effect of communal land disputes on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria;
- ii. Ascertain the effect of communal chieftaincy tussle on health care services delivery in South East Nigeria
- iii Determine the effect of communal struggle for control of natural resource on human capital development index of South East Nigeria.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- i. What is the effect of communal land boundary disputes on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria?
- ii. What effect does communal chieftaincy tussle have on health care services delivery in South East Nigeria?
- iii. What effect has the communal struggle for control of natural resource on human capital development index of South East Nigeria?

5. Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were raised for the study

- i. Communal land boundary disputes do not affect rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria.
- ii. Communal chieftaincy tussle has no effect on health care services delivery in South East Nigeria.
- iii. Communal struggle for control of natural resource do not affect human capital development index of South East Nigeria.

6. Scope of the Study

The study looked at how racial conflict affected rural development in south-eastern Nigeria. South East Nigeria is where the location is. The focus of the content is on community violence in South East Nigeria as it relates to agricultural output, the provision of healthcare services, and the human capital development index. In South East Nigeria, the study includes on-the-spot evaluation and in-depth interviews with people who were impacted by intercommunal conflicts as well as conflict management specialists.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

7. Communal Conflict

This study defines communal conflict as a conflict between non-state organisations that are unified by a common communal identity. This definition requires some additional explanation. According to Ewetan and Urhie (2014), conflict happens when two parties are vying for control of a disputed and perceived indivisible resource, such as a plot of land or local political influence. These are non-state organisations. This indicates that although the state might play a significant supportive role in a social conflict, neither player has control over it. Therefore, compared to civil conflicts, this type of collective violence is more symmetric. In communal disputes, no party has the power that a government possesses, and no one is in charge of the national army.

Conflicts involving communal groups as participants are generally referred to as communal conflicts. Additionally, communal groupings are those where members' primary identities take precedence over other identities. According to Azuonwu (2002), a disagreement between two or more communities is referred to as a communal conflict. According to Oboh and Hyande (2006), community conflict refers to disputes or acts of violence between two or more groups over matters including claims of land ownership, religious beliefs, and political disagreements that result in casualties and property damage. Similar to Dzurgba (2006), Dzurgba defines communal conflict as a conflict between two or more communities over territory, including agriculture and fishing waters. According to the ideas presented above, there is some degree of overlap between ethnic and/or community conflict and communal conflict. Therefore, violent disagreement over the distribution of values among communities manifests itself as communal strife. Conflict between communities is primarily caused by rivalry over shared values.

8. Boundary Dispute

The form of disagreement that develops between groups that share land borders is called a boundary or territorial dispute (Ibeogu, 2017). Boundary and territorial disputes frequently come from material and/or cultural claims, while they can occasionally also be the result of fundamental shifts in the local and global surroundings. Boundary and territorial conflicts may occasionally even develop into geopolitical contests between competing great powers. We have examined the five elements (resource scarcity, locational feature, domestic politics, geopolitical competitiveness, and cultural difference) in this chapter and how they have significantly impacted cross-border conflicts in disputed territories using ten case studies (Gallup, 2013).

9. Chieftaincy Tussles

Tussle, according to Mgbada (2010), is a type of social interaction in which participants try to win a particular prize by obliterating or undermining rivals. Tussle, according to Adedoyin (2015), is a conflict over principles and claims to status, power, and resources that tries to eliminate one's opponents. Disagreements amongst people are where the word "dispute" first appeared. The chieftaincy, a crucial institution in African society that unites the people, is rife with conflicts. Chieftaincy disputes are disagreements about the appointment of a chief between two or more sections, or disagreements between the current chief and some of his subjects. Serious debates or disagreements could be categorized as chieftaincy disputes. It alludes to disputes, fights, battles, and wars that take place between people, groups, and nations.

10. Struggle for Control of Natural Resources

Natural resources are those that exist (on the earth) without being influenced by human activity (Hendrix and Salehyan, 2019). These are the resources that are created naturally from materials found in the environment. Natural resources are substances derived from

the earth, such as food, materials for buildings and clothing, fertilizers, metals, water, and geothermal energy (Brosché, 2015). Natural resources are substances that occur naturally and are useful to man or could be useful under conceivable technological, economic, or social circumstances. Natural resources have always been the purview of the natural sciences. In Nigeria, conflicts between communities over control of natural resources have grown increasingly serious over time. People have always slaughtered each other for resources, claims Jeff Spoden. Empires and nation-states fought for control of resources that have become increasingly limited throughout the twentieth century, and this was no exception.

11. Rural Development

The term "development" will be defined before the concept is explained. Development is seen as a multifaceted, human-centered phenomenon (Nnadi, 2019). It is a process that gives people the power to realize their full potential and to learn how to use nature to their advantage in order to meet their everyday requirements. (Njoku, 2011). According to Nwankwo (2016), development is made up of a number of interconnected factors, including the development of human capital as well as rural, economic, social, political, and administrative growth. The process through which countries evolve to reach these stages is frequently referred to as development.

Regarding its significance, prospects, obstacles, etc., the idea of rural development is not widely accepted. Rural development is a multifaceted notion that encompasses socioeconomic, educational, and political growth. Rural residents must practice logical economic behavior and must be competitive in order to assure economic improvement. According to the World Bank (2018), rural development is a strategy intended to promote the economic and social well-being of a particular population, the rural poor. It entails sharing the advantages of development with the most vulnerable people who live in rural regions and depend on them for their livelihood. Small-scale farmers, tenants, and those without land are some of these categories. Rural agricultural production, healthcare service delivery, and human capital development were the study's markers of rural development.

12. Theoretical Framework

The Marxist Viewpoint

The writings of Karl Marx and his friend Frederick Engels are the sources of the Marxist school of thought. Social production primarily serves as the foundation for societal analysis. That is what is made, how it is made, and how the finished product is distributed. The theory contends that society is made up of conflicts over limited resources between numerous struggling factions and inconsistencies. The competition and quest for power and material resources is what led to these contradictions. Conflict in the society is unavoidable due to the competition and struggle for resources. Marxist philosophy places more emphasis on interests than on standards and principles when discussing social conflict.

This disagreement is not considered an uncommon occurrence but rather a natural element of society. Conflict is frequently sparked by competition over few resources. There are three layers of theory: (a) groups struggle for resources in society; (a) Social groupings constantly compete for power while pursuing their own interests. (c) Social groupings will take advantage of their resources in order to further their own objectives.

According to this viewpoint, social disputes are caused by the contradictions present during the process of producing material goods. Magubane (1996) emphasized the importance of social structure in understanding communal conflicts and urged special attention to: The material foundation of the society, the nature of the social system, the political structure, the structure of social consciousness, the ideological and socio-psychological orientation of society's participants, the opinions of the ruling class and various social groups, and competition between various groupings within the ruling circles. The Marxist school of thought contends that historical materialism should be used to explore and evaluate intercommunal conflicts. Marxists view ethnic creation as a historical phenomenon that permeates all social systems, including class structures. Therefore, assuming that racial conflicts are independent of one another is false. They interact with factors in the economy, politics, and religion. According to Keen (1997), economic motivations are the main cause of conflict and violence. For him, economic objectives are paramount, and fighting may be a very effective means of achieving them. Inferring from the above, economic competition between ethnically or socially distinct working-class sectors or ethnically distinct traders, customers, or farmers is the cause of communal violence. According to Horowitz (1998), ethnic or group entrepreneurs' actions and elite competition are the main causes of communal conflict.

Elites create ethnic conflict in order to exploit ethnic identities for political gain. The conflict theory was chosen for this study because it acknowledges the fight among diverse societal groups for control of the political, economic, and religious spheres. Conflicts and violence are produced by rivalry and conflict.

13. Empirical Review

A study in Benue and Nasarawa States, North-Central Nigeria, Jacobs, Umar, and Shehu (2018) investigated the impacts of intercommunal conflicts on the operations of field extension workers. For the study, 121 extension employees in total were chosen using a stratified sample technique. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire, and descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to test the results. It was determined that the actions of extension workers were hampered by communal conflicts that occasionally occurred in the two states.

Effects of Community Conflicts on Rural Economic Activities in Osun State, Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable Development was the title of a (2017) study by Alabi and Famakinwa. Suitable descriptive and inferential statistical methods were utilized to analyze the data. According to the findings, disagreements over boundaries, political squabbles among community members, chieftaincy disputes, competition among community members for scarce resources, and problems with tribute payments were the main sources of violence. Conflicts have been linked to a variety of negative outcomes, including property loss, income loss, disruption of economic activity, and job loss, among others.

Ani, Chikaire, Ogueri, and Orusha (2013) evaluated how communal disputes affected the delivery of agricultural extension services in Imo State. Structured questionnaires were used to gather the data, and simple descriptive statistics, such as percentages shown in frequency distribution and mean scores, were adopted to analyze the data. The findings showed that political-religious conflicts (64.6 percent) and farmer/pastoralist conflicts (75.4 percent) were the two main types of conflict. High mean responses indicate that land shortages, encroachment on farms, and boundary disputes are the main results of violent conflict in the study area. Conflicts have a variety of implications on how extension services are delivered, as seen by the following negative reactions: project implementation challenges, difficulty carrying out programs, and work abandonment.

Omotara (2016) studied the Socioeconomic Impacts of Farmland Conflicts on Rural Residents in Southwest Nigeria. Data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the results. The main reasons for disputes over farmland in the region, according to the findings, were failure to respect boundaries, disputes over who should inherit land boundaries, and abandoning of previously established guidelines for access to and use of the land. Farmland disputes end peaceful coexistence and social interaction between people, leading to mistrust between neighbors, the destruction of products and property, and fatalities. Based on the results, it was found that disputes over farmland had a negative impact on the socioeconomic activities of rural communities.

Oji, Eme, Okechukwu Innocent, Nwoba (2015) in their study examined the Human Cost of Communal Conflicts in Nigeria: A Case of Ezillo and Ezza-Ezillo Conflicts of Ebonyi State, (2008-2010). Analysis of the study's material was used. The study discovered that competition for access to land and other natural resources in various sections of the country is the cause of family/boundary and communal conflicts in Nigeria. These difficulties and problems are caused by the Ezza-Ezillo communal strife. In 2010, a protracted land dispute between the villages resulted in the deaths of 150 people, prompting the state government to evict everyone from the contested territory and restoring some kind of calm. In addition to mothers and children between the ages of three and five, the incident also claimed the life of the head of crimes at a police station.

A study on cocoa as an economic crop that significantly raises farmers' socioeconomic position and contributes significantly to the nation's gross domestic product was undertaken in 2010 by Bolarinwa, Oyeyinka, Ajayi, and Fakoya. Direct observation and an interview schedule were used to gather the data, which was then analyzed using frequency, percentage, and t-test. Because 76 percent of them were evicted from their farms, OCA recorded a higher cocoa mean production level (HCMPL) of 828.4 tonnes per year as contrasted to the lower HCMPL of 105.0 tonnes recorded in CCA. The difference in cocoa production between the core and non-core conflict areas is statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). As a result, the bulk (70 percent) of farmers in the main conflict zones are subsistence farmers.

Inter and Intra Community Conflicts in Selected Communities in States of Nigeria, Implications to Socio-Economic Development of the Areas was the topic of a 2019 study by Ibeogu, Abah, and Chukwu. The study used secondary sources and observation to acquire information. The results show that there are too many elements that contribute to inter- and intracommunal conflict, one of which is competition for supremacy among fighting tribes and a struggle for resource control.

Nexus of Land Conflicts and Rural-Urban Migration in South-West Nigeria: Implications for National Development in Nigeria was the subject of a 2016 study by Adebayo and Oriola. Correlation analysis was employed to test the hypotheses while content analysis was used in the study. Conflicts over access to land caused by the rural population's growth, the failure of successive governments to maintain rural infrastructure, indifference toward agriculture, and the desire for white-collar work were all proven to be among the push-pull drivers behind rural-urban migration.

The Economic Costs of Divisive Social Conflicts in Nigeria and the Public Relations Antidote for Managing the Problem was studied by Odoh and Longinus in 2014. The study used the qualitative situation analysis framework (QSAF) for its approach and exclusively utilised secondary data from reliable national and international statistical bodies. Results obtained indicate a strong correlation between the frequency of social crises and conflicts in Nigeria and the level of poverty in the country. Geographic regions with huge cases of poverty are more vulnerable to and have reported more conflicts, while rural areas with higher poverty rates have experienced more insurgency attacks recently than cities.

In their 2013 study, Sambe, Avanger, and Alakali focused on Communal Violence and Food Security in Africa. The study used a thematic analysis of the data. The study makes the case that communal violence has an impact on food security by limiting access to food, destroying the infrastructure for food processing, reducing access to food sources, and physically destroying and pillaging farms, livestock, and food storage. The displacement of labour and the use of food as a weapon of war are other effects.

13. Gap in Literature

The empirical literature showed that communal conflict poses serious challenge to human society especially in Africa where persistent violent conflict has destroyed human lives and properties. Some studies were conducted in South West and different areas of the country but none of these was carried out in South East Nigeria. It is this gap that this study will filled.

METHODOLOGY

14. Research Design

In their study, the researchers used a descriptive research approach. The survey was conducted by way of questionnaire distribution. This is seen as effective because it allowed the researchers to speak with respondents directly and elicit replies based on the study's aims. This design was chosen because it gives the researcher the chance to interact directly with the community and gives them the chance to go to the field, where they may freely gather information.

In South East Nigeria, the study was carried out. One of Nigeria's principal geopolitical regions is its south-east. The South East geopolitical region consists of five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. Three South Eastern states—Imo, Enugu, and Ebonyi—were the main subjects of the study. Nigeria's Southeastern Zone has a land area of 5,530 km² and is located between latitudes 40°45'N and 70°15'N and longitude 6°50'E.

The researcher made use of primary and secondary data.

Primary Source of Data: In this study, the respondents served as the primary source of data, which was gathered primarily through the use of questionnaires.

Secondary Source of Data: Textbooks, journals, magazines, and the internet were employed as secondary sources of data in this study since they contained information that was already public before the research was done.

15. Population of the Study

The population of the study included all the residents of three states of the South East Nigeria, specifically, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The population of the three states according to 2013 Nigeria Census were as shown in table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Population Distribution Table

States	Population	Percentage
Ebonyi	2,176,947	23
Enugu	3,267,837	35
Anambra	3,927,563	42
Total	9,372,347	100

Source: Population Census 2021

The sample size for the study was 369. This was determined through the use of Freud and Williams statistical formula.

16. Sampling Technique

The sample was chosen using a stratified random sampling procedure, which provided each state in the South East an equal chance of being chosen. This made the sample representative. The South East was divided into five categories. The study selected states in the strata that have seen some degree of intercommunal strife. These were whittled down to three groups with noticeable intergroup strife. Using purposive sampling, the researcher chose Anambra, Enugu, and Ebonyi based on the presence of conflict and convenience.

Oral interviews and questionnaires were the instruments utilized for data gathering. A total of thirty (30) questionnaire items were created by the researcher and sent to the study's sample. The questionnaire was administered and collected on the spot by the researcher.

The contents of the questionnaire were validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation before taken to the project supervisor for final approval. The researcher therefore claimed the validity of the instrument.

The goal of this exercise was to determine the instrument's dependability after measuring the object several times and getting the same, very identical, or identical results. Twenty copies of the test instrument were pre-tested by the researcher prior to the study. Using SPSS, the pre-study response was tested for internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha method (statistical package for social sciences). The reliability test result of 0.81 indicated the real result that was used for judgment based on the inter-item correlation on the questionnaire. This demonstrated the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire's items.

17. Methods of Data Analyses

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), which was used to assess the reliability test, mean, and chi-square analysis, was used to translate the data from the survey questionnaire into valuable information. To paint a clearer picture of the data gathered, tables and figures were used. At the bottom of each table and figure was an explanation. The descriptive analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analysis were the three main statistical methods used in this study.

The hypotheses were tested using the chi-square test method.

The chi-square formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

χ^2 = Chi-square, O = Observed Frequency, E = Expected Frequency, \sum = Summation of all items

18. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected were presented and analyzed in this section. Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were distributed and three hundred and sixty copies of questionnaire were returned:

Research Question 1: What is the effect of communal land boundary disputes on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria?

Table 4.1: Effect of communal land boundary disputes on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria

s/n	Response	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
1	Communal land conflicts have brought a lot of untold hardship on food production	160	100	20	40	40	360	3.8	Accepted
2	Communal conflict have displaced farmers from their farm	120	140	10	50	40	360	3.8	Accepted
3	Land boundary disputes have deterred farmers from going to their farm land thereby stopping food production	100	130	10	70	50	360	3.4	Accepted
4	Land dispute have contributed to forceful takeover of farm land by the government thereby retarding food production	130	100	10	60	60	360	3.5	Accepted
5	It have weakened farmers ability to delve into agricultural production	140	120	20	40	40	360	3.8	Accepted
Grand Mean								3.66	

Source: Field Survey 2022.

The respondents' mean responses on how communal land boundary conflicts affect rural agricultural productivity in South East Nigeria are displayed in Table 4.1. Based on the Grand Mean of 3.5, the acceptance of all items 1 through 5 in the table indicates that respondents in South East Nigeria gave good responses (based on tabulated acceptance mean rating of 3.0). Conflicts over communal land have severely hampered food production and driven farmers from their farms, prevented farmers from going to their farms, halting things like food production.

Research Question 2: What effect does communal chieftaincy tussle have on healthcare service delivery in South East Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Communal chieftaincy tussle has no effect on healthcare service delivery in South East Nigeria

s/n		VHE	HE	U	LE	VLE	Total	Mean	Decision
1	Manipulations in the chieftaincy institution lead to unnecessary confusion and endemic disputes in the system which often lead to disruption of basic health institutions in the community	130	120	10	40	60	360	3.6	Accepted

2	Many communities in South East have been denied of basic health services as a result of chieftaincy dispute	120	140	10	50	40	360	3.1	Accepted
3	Chieftaincy disputes over successions to the throne of traditional rulers have led to abandonment of health care system in many communities	140	130	15	45	30	360	3.7	Accepted
4	Many chieftaincy conflict have led to destruction of health facilities in many communities	150	100	10	60	40	360	3.7	Accepted
5	Communal conflicts as a result of chieftaincy disputes often lead to overstretching of health care facilities due to fatalities and diseases	130	130	10	50	40	360	3.4	Accepted
Grand Mean								3.5	

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The respondents' average thoughts on how community chieftaincy disputes affect the provision of healthcare service in South East Nigeria are displayed in Table 4.2. According to the tables above, health care services are paralyzed by chieftaincy disputes. Additionally, the grand mean of 3.5 showed that respondents firmly believed that communal chieftaincy disputes affected the provision of healthcare service in South East Nigeria.

Research Question Three: To what extent has the communal struggle over control of natural resource affected human capital development index of South East Nigeria?

Table 4.3: Communal struggle over control of natural resource affected human capital development index of South East Nigeria

s/ n	Response	VH E	HE	D	LE	VLE	Tota l	Mean	Decision
1	Communal conflict over natural resource have led to breakdown of law and order	120	145	15	50	30	360	3.8	Accepted
2	It have caused Poverty arising from disarticulation of the farming activities and the economy	160	130	20	30	20	360	4.1	Accepted
3	It Increase number of youth soldiers in the communities	130	140	10	50	30	360	3.8	Accepted
4	It triggered unemployment in many communities	150	120	10	55	25	360	3.9	Accepted
5	It have given rise to more widows and destitute children	120	150	10	50	30	360	3.8	Accepted
Grand Mean								3.88	

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The respondents' mean thoughts on how the conflict between communities over natural resources influenced South East Nigeria's human capital development index are displayed in Table 4.3. The harsh comments were all complimentary. The grand mean of 3.88 showed that the respondents fully agreed that the South East Nigerian region's human capital development index had been impacted by communal disputes over natural resources.

19. Test of Hypotheses

Data generated from the study were used to test the hypotheses using the chi-square test tool with formular as: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

Where O = observed frequency; E = Expected frequency

Assumptions: Level of significance = 0.05

Decision rule: Reject Ho if the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the critical value of χ^2 otherwise accept Ho.

Test of hypothesis one

Statement of hypothesis one

Ho: Communal land boundary disputes do not significantly affect rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria.

Table 4.4: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	93.403(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	90.626	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.602	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	350		

a 13 cells (52.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .24.

SOURCE: SPSS Output version 23

D.F = Degree of freedom. D.F = 6

$\chi^2_{cal} = 93.403$, $p = 0.05$, $d.f = 16 = \chi^2 = 26.43$

Decision Rule: The null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated value of 2 is less than the table value; however, if the calculated value of 2 is larger than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis because the calculated value of $\chi^2_{cal} = 93.403$ is higher than the table value of $\chi^2_{tab} = 26.43$. Communal land boundary disputes do have a major impact on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria, according to the statistical significance.

Test of hypothesis Two

Statement of hypothesis Two

Ho: Communal chieftaincy tussle has no significant effect on healthcare service delivery in South East Nigeria.

Table 4.5: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	190.310(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	125.398	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	40.659	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	350		

a 8 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .47.

SOURCE: SPSS Output version 23

D.F = Degree of freedom, D.F = 12, $\chi^2_{cal} = 190.310$, $p = 0.05$, $d.f = 16$, $\chi^2 = 9.95$

Decision Rule: The null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated value of 2 is less than the table value; however, if the calculated value of 2 is larger than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis because the calculated value of χ^2_{cal} is bigger than the table value of $\chi^2_{tab} = 9.95$. The statistical significance showed that the delivery of healthcare services in South East Nigeria is significantly impacted by communal chieftaincy disputes.

Test of hypothesis Three

Statement of hypothesis Three

Ho: Communal struggle for control of natural resource do not significantly affect human capital development index of South East Nigeria.

Table 4.6: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	208.236(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	152.495	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	76.788	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	350		

a 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .34.

D.F = Degree of freedom, D.F = 12, $\chi^2_{cal} = 208.236$, $p = 0.05$, d.f = 16, $\chi^2 = 9.95$

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis because the computed value of $\chi^2_{cal} = 208.236$ is higher than the calculated value of $\chi^2_{tab} = 9.95$ in the table. The statistical significance showed that the South East Nigerian region's human capital development index is considerably impacted by intercommunal conflicts over natural resources.

20. Discussion of Findings

The Chi-square test of hypothesis one revealed that communal land boundary disputes do have a considerable impact on rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria (value of $\chi^2 = 103.403$ and table value of $\chi^2 = 26.43$). This result is consistent with that of Alabi and Famakinwa (2017), who found that the main sources of conflict were disagreements over boundaries, political squabbles among community members, chieftaincy disputes, competition among community members for scarce resources, and problems with the payment of tributes. Conflicts have been linked to a variety of negative outcomes, including property loss, income loss, disruption of economic activity, and job loss, among others.

The outcome of hypotheses two and three both showed that communal chieftaincy disputes had a substantial impact on the provision of healthcare services in South East Nigeria. This result is consistent with Omotara's (2016) findings, which showed that the main reasons for disputes over farmland in their area of study were failure to respect boundaries, disputes over who should inherit land boundaries, and abandonment of previously established guidelines for access to and use of land. Farmland disputes end peaceful coexistence and social interaction between people, leading to mistrust between neighbors, the destruction of products and property, and fatalities. They came to the conclusion that disputes over farmland had a negative impact on rural communities' socioeconomic activity.

The third hypothesis demonstrated that the South East Nigerian region's human capital development index is highly impacted by intercommunal conflicts over natural resources. The estimated value of $\chi^2 = 190.310$ is bigger than the table value of $\chi^2 = 9.95$, according to evidence from the hypothesis. This finding is consistent with that of Odoh and Longinus (2014), who found that the frequency of social crises and conflicts in Nigeria is significantly correlated with the level of poverty in the country. Geographic regions with higher poverty rates are more prone to conflicts and have recorded more of them, and rural areas with higher poverty rates have also experienced more insurgency assaults in recent years than cities.

21. Summary of Findings

The following were the findings from the study.

- i. Communal land boundary disputes significantly affected rural agricultural production in South East Nigeria. This suggests that Land dispute had contributed to forceful takeover of farm land by the government thereby retarding food production.
- ii. Communal chieftaincy tussle significantly affected healthcare service delivery in South East Nigeria. This goes to show that Chieftaincy disputes over successions to the throne of traditional rulers have led to abandonment of health care system in many communities.
- iii. Communal struggle for control of natural resources had significant implication on rural development of Nigeria. This implies that Communal conflict over natural resource have led to breakdown of law and order.

22. Conclusion

The study confirmed that struggles for control of natural resources, chieftaincy issues, and border disputes all had a detrimental impact on the socioeconomic development of rural communities in South East Nigeria. Multiple communities in South East have seen recurrent communal strife, which has had a catastrophic impact on the development of the country. Communal conflicts have the potential to significantly impede development efforts by damaging infrastructure, disrupting the production chain, and channeling resources from uses that will lead to economic growth. The main issue wasn't only that conflicts were commonplace since they were an inherent part of our social order. The fact that these inter- and intrastate wars result in significant loss of life and property as well as disturbance of the social, political, and economic lives of the general populace was somewhat upsetting. This was especially so when these conflicts are between supposed "brothers and sisters".

23. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- i. Community leaders and members should pay special attention to the issues that were found to be relevant, such as border disputes, political squabbles, claims of ethnic supremacy, chieftaincy disputes, etc., in order to prevent similar problems in the future. It was suggested that actions be taken to promote continuous sustainable development in the region, including the promotion of tolerance by religious leaders, the organisation of conflict resolution workshop for community members by the grass-roots tier of government, government sensitivity to the needs of the people, and urgent intervention by local and political leaders.

- ii. The study found that conflict-prone areas cannot experience meaningful growth. This study suggests combining the traditional African and Western Models of conflict transformation since there is a need for a broader dialogue to broaden the scope of the peace process and expedite socioeconomic development for cultural exchange.
- iii. The government and international organisations should take significant steps to hold those responsible for acts of racial or communal violence accountable. This will dissuade people from using their ethnic or community identities to accomplish socioeconomic aspirations in the future.

24. Contribution to Knowledge

A framework for understanding the causes of conflict in South East Nigeria has been provided by the study. This study has shown that territorial disputes, chieftaincy issues, and conflicts over natural resource ownership lead to intercommunal conflict, which has a detrimental impact on rural economic growth. The study supports the importance of Marxism in understanding conflict and its causes.

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