

Government Institutions and Land Conflicts Management in Western Uganda

Byabashaija Deusdedit^{1*}, Kwikiriza Wilson²

¹Kampala International University, P. O. Box 71, Bushenyi, Uganda

²Mountains of the Moon University, P.O. Box 837, Fort Portal, Uganda

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*Corresponding author: Byabashaija Deusdedit

Kampala International University, P. O. Box 71, Bushenyi, Uganda

Abstract

Original Research Article

This rational study analyzed the relationship between government institutions and land conflicts management in Kabarole district, in Western Uganda. The planned study utilized a descriptive research design with quantitative paradigm. A sample of 299 participants out of 1071 parent population was selected utilizing Slovenes formula. Data was gathered engaging intellectual created questionnaires and interview guides and summarized using Descriptive measurements and Pearson linear Correlation Coefficient for quantitative analysis. The examination study results came up with a significant correlation between government institutions and land conflicts management in Kabarole district. It was hence proven that issues related with land conflicts management must be handled meticulously in order to help the populace live a harmonious life in society in Western Uganda. The research study recommended that appropriate government officials charged with land conflict resolution need to follow the right procedures in land issues and within the law. The government of Uganda should ensure that bureaucrats in government institutions should operate in a corruption free environment in order for justice to prevail.

Keywords: Government institutions, Land conflicts management, Justice, Uganda.

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INTRODUCTION

In the United States of America, Urmilla (2010) noted that land reformation processes are relevant given that contestations over land resources are most noticeable among the poor. Additionally land conflicts are intensifying and becoming more wide spread. Declaiming access to land or rather to the returns from human uses of land is seen as a key process that cause livelihood contraction and hence increases the risk of people joining armed groups (Huggin *et al.*, 2005). He asserts that a major challenge facing land policy implementation programs is how to balance often conflicting social, economic and political issues. The multiple demands and high number of potential beneficiaries has resulted in a range of land conflicts linked to land policy implementation.

Land reforms in Africa is generally undertaken to address political, social and economic imperatives and is deemed to be central to addressing developmental gaps and implementation of government projects that have been stalled due to nature of

ownership. Land reforms are viewed as one key means of positively changing peoples' lives. Land reforms can take various forms including the allocation of land itself, compensations, subsidies, laws that protect the land rights of previously disadvantaged groups or combination of the mechanisms (Challan, 2020).

Reuveny (2007) states that land conflicts have resulted in environmental migration. For example, in Africa 600,000 people move from central/northern Ethiopia to south western region because of drought and famine which resulted in nomad farmer conflicts over land during early 1990' in Rwanda, 1.7 million people moved from central region and rural south to northern Rwanda and Zaire as a result of ethnic conflicts and genocide which were exacerbated by land and water scarcity and degradation.

Sub Saharan Africa has a history of land dispossession and contestation which have resulted in various types of inequalities and a skewed distribution of land resources. Land in sub Saharan Africa has been subject to conflict conquest, expropriation and

exploitation thus resulting in many discrepancies that exist today (Urmilla, 2010). This situation has resulted in numerous land conflicts and in numerous land conflicts and in most sub Saharan countries, the land question and past inequalities remain unresolved. He stresses that land conflicts are generally influenced by a range of complex and interrelated factors, specifically, aspect relating to poverty and in equalities as well as land related conflicts in Sub- Saharan Africa (Urmilla, 2010).

In Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda, Kangwaji (2009) asserted that the question of land ownership and access by the population is increasingly scarce. Land and related resources have been at the Centre of fostering conflicts between ethnic groups in the region. He further asserts that at community, house hold and individual levels. A range of factors influence who accesses and controls land resources. These relate to one's bargaining position which influences the levels of success or failure in acquiring land; the external factors such as broader economic and political forces, quantity and quality of land available and the local economy and culture. These largely influence market prices, the amount and quality of land available.

The internal factors such as demographic aspects like gender, age, house hold status and lineage, economic status and social networks can deny rights to certain groups such as women and generally define who will benefit and prioritize terms of accessing land. Kensay (2004) asserts that land reform programs identify specific beneficiaries that are to be targeted in particular projects. The targeting of particular groups is partly a result of government taking into consideration that there are specific priority groups and the fact that there are limited resources which have to be effectively and efficiently utilized. This often results into conflicts as some people feel that they are disadvantaged and do not benefit from land reform processes. He states that there are resettlement failures across the continent which have resulted in conflicts and as in the case with Zimbabwe; it undermined the national security (Khan, 2020).

In addition to the above, the market led land reforms project (the approach often adopted in African countries) usually results in the wealthiest segments of society benefiting. Challan and Khan (2008), notice that the inability of government to deliver on restitution claims has other unpleasant consequences. In many cases claimants lose faith in the entire process and see land invasions (which often have detrimental impact on the environment) as the only option to speed up the process and attract government attention.

In Uganda, there is yet another group of stakeholders that need to be considered. In terms of Land claims, a highly controversial aspect is the future of the natural conservation areas. Challan and Khan

(2020) illustrate that wild life conservation in Africa has often completed with rural indigenous communities for land, water and other resources. Many claims are on natural reserves or game parks where land invasions which have often been associated with violence have already occurred as is the case with Semuliki and Queen Elizabeth national Park, Elgon forest reserve and Kibale forest and game parks. Environmental and social conflicts have often emerged or have been worsened by the slow pace of land restitution and redistribution. Kabarole District has been overwhelmed by rampant land disputes that have resulted into conflicts and murders in the district. About 80% percent of the conflicts and murder cases in Kabarole district are said to have caused by land wrangles (District Land Board Annual Report, 2016).

As streamlined in the national land policy, government institutions such as the Police, District land boards together with the Office of Resident District Commission are meant to be at the fore front in handling most of these cases through community dialogues, reconciliation and making referrals for legal proceedings. However, a number of two to five cases related to land conflicts are reportedly being registered per day and the most affected county being Burahya. Whereas the Uganda's National Land Policy (NLP) is meant to ensure efficient, equitable and optimal utilization and management of Uganda's land resources for poverty reduction, wealth creation, and overall socio-economic development of the country (MoLHUD, 2015), the continued land conflicts in Kabarole district calls for a comprehensive investigation in consideration with the entire land policy implementation.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Data Capturing

The facts utilized for the premeditated research study was composed while applying both primary and secondary frameworks of data. Primary figures were garnered while engaging questionnaires for the well-ordered research study. Additional substantiation was assembled with the use of written histories. The sensible empirical study applied a survey descriptive investigation design which was quantitative in nature.

Amin (2005) indicated that descriptive examination design is usually used to rebound an occasion and its data sorts. The academic came up with a total of 299 participants (sample size) while using Slovenes formula to belong to the inquiry study.

Sampling Methods

The researcher involved simple random sampling and stratified random sampling strategies in the examination strategic study. The reachable population involved the groupings like farmers,

government officials, lawyers, business men, traditional functionaries and political leaders.

Questionnaires and Interviews

The researcher used a regulated questionnaire to gather facts from the ground because it covers a varied geographical universe in data exposure; it collects much evidence within a little period, and offers strong guarantee in relationship to confidentiality.

Validity and Reliability of Practical Research Instruments

Validity of the researcher amended questionnaire was determined by engaging content validity Index. After testing of the validity of the investigation study tools, the intellectual got content validity index (CVI) of 0.78 which was fine above 0.75 suggesting that the research instrument was candid to elicit data crucial for the credible orderly project.

Reliability of the organized questionnaire was considered by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula looking at the examination study variables that attained an alpha coefficient of value more than 0.70. Since the reliability digit got by the educational researcher was 0.79 alpha value, it proposed that the research facts gathering method was reliable to yield data reliable for the research.

Data Analysis

The study statistical tools which were involved in scrutinizing data for this careful investigation study included; descriptive statistics like tables, frequencies, percentages, and inferential statistics like Pearson linear Correlation Coefficient for scrutinizing numerical data.

RESULTS

Background Characteristics

This section presents facts about the respondents namely; gender, age bracket, marital status and education level of the respondents.

Table 1: The data on the background characteristics of respondents

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	150	65.5
	Female	79	34.5
	Total	229	100
Age Brackets	20-30 years	80	34.9
	31-40 years	95	41.5
	Above 41years	54	23.6
	Total	229	100
Marital status	Single	44	19.2
	Married	174	76.0
	Separated	5	2.2
	Windowed	6	2.6
	Total	229	100
Level of Education	O' Level	3	1.3
	A' Level	10	4.4
	Tertiary	46	20.1
	Degree	164	71.6
	Postgraduate	6	2.6
	Total	229	100

Source: Primary Data

The results on gender category showed that the larger percentage of 65.5% were males with females being 34.5%. This suggested that the higher percentage of the respondents were males. However, views were representative of both gender groups because the difference between both groups was big. With respect to age groups of the respondents in years, the results revealed that the larger percentage of 41.5% of the respondents were between 31-40 years followed by 34.9% that were of years between 20-30 years and 23.6% were above 41years. These results showed that respondents of different age groups participated in the study. Therefore, the views presented captured the perceptions of respondents of various age groups hence

providing that results could be generalized. The data on education level of the respondents showed that larger percentage (71.6%) of the respondents were degree holders followed 20.1% who finished tertiary levels, 4.4% finished advanced level certificate and 1.3% had ordinary level certificate while 2.6% had postgraduate qualification. These results suggested that respondents were having different education levels. Therefore, the views were representative of respondents with different education background. On the marital status, most of the respondents for example 76.0% were married because most of the study participants were above 18 years and were old enough to get married; 19.5% were single; 2.6% of the respondents were widowed; and

finally, 2.2% of the respondents were separated/divorced. Therefore, the views presented captured the perceptions of respondents of various marital statuses hence providing data that could be generalized.

Descriptive Statistics on Land Conflict Management

Land Conflict Management was studied using 10 items. The results on the same were as presented in Table 2 below;

Table 2 Descriptive statistics on land Conflict Management

	F/%	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Managers do allow land conflicts to escalate in their areas of jurisdiction	F	25	11	-	106	88	1.69
	%	10.8	4.6	-	46.2	38.5	
I am aware that land conflicts are part and partial of our lives	F	113	78	7	14	18	3.87
	%	49.2	33.8	3.1	6.2	7.7	
In my district, there is a land conflict management department or a disciplinary committee that handles conflicts.	F	35	11	7	102	74	2.23
	%	23.3	10	3.1	44.6	37.5	
Managers use proper channels of communication that avoid land conflicts	F	109	67	11	18	25	3.45
	%	47.7	29.2	4.6	7.7	10.8	
Reconciliation is a priority in the reconciliation procedures of my district	F	21	18	-	127	63	2.15
	%	9.2	7.7	-	55.4	27.7	
Managers at sub-county levels have been properly trained on how to handle land conflicts.	F	116	63	7	11	25	3.59
	%	50.8	27.7	3.1	7.7	10.8	
Managers of the district land board do compromise in the process of reconciling the citizens	F	18	14	7	127	53	1.68
	%	7.7	6.2	3.1	55.4	23.1	
The conflicting parties concerning land issues do show clear signs of collaboration in the process of reconciliation.	F	120	56	7	21	25	3.83
	%	52.3	24.6	3.1	9.2	10.8	

Source: Primary data

The results in Table 2 above with respect to whether managers do allow conflicts to escalate in their areas of jurisdiction, the majority percentage (84.7%) of disagreed with the statement while 15.3% agreed and with the low mean equal to 1.69 close to code 2 which on the scale used corresponded with disagreement, the results suggested Managers do not allow land conflicts to escalate in their areas of jurisdiction. The findings also revealed that senior employees are aware that land conflicts are part and partial of our lives because the majority percentage (83%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 13.9% of them disagreed and only 3.1% of them were neutral. The results were confirmed by the high mean equal to 3.87 and this suggested that majority of employees are aware that land conflicts are part and partial of our lives. Also, with the majority percentage (82.1%) of the respondents disagreeing and the low mean equal to 1.83, the findings suggested that in Kabarole district, there is a land conflict management department or a disciplinary committee that handles conflicts. The findings further indicated that managers use proper channels of communication that avoid land conflicts because the majority percentage (76.9%) agreed with the statement and this was supported by the high mean equal to 3.45. this suggested that there is usage of proper channels of communication by managers of Kabarole in order to avoid land conflicts. Furthermore, with respect to whether reconciliation is a priority in the land conflict management procedures of Kabarole district, the majority percentage (83.1%) of the respondents disagreed that there is reconciliation while 16.9% agreed with the statement and with the low mean equal to 2.15 suggested that there is no

reconciliation in managing land conflicts in the local governments.

The results in Table 2 with respect to whether Managers of sub-counties have been properly trained on how to handle land conflicts, showed that cumulatively, the majority percentage (78.5%) of them agreed with the statement while 18.4% disagreed, 3.1% were neutral and with the high mean equal to 3.59 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded with agreement, the results suggested Managers of sub-counties have been properly trained on how to handle land conflicts. The findings also revealed that managers of the district land board do not compromise in the process of reconciling the citizens because the majority percentage (78.5%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 18.4% of them disagreed and only 3.1% of them were neutral. The results were confirmed by the high mean equal to 1.69 and this suggested that managers of the district land board do not compromise in the process of reconciling the citizens. Also, with the majority percentage (3.83%) of the respondents agreeing and the high mean equal to 3.83, the findings suggested that the conflicting parties in the sub-counties do show clear signs of collaboration in the process of reconciliation.

The Relationship between Government Institutions and Land Conflict Management in Kabarole District

To establish whether government institutions were related to land conflict management in Kabarole district. The results were as given in Table 3 below;

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for government institutions and land conflict management

Correlations			
		Government institutions	Land conflict management
Government institutions	Pearson Correlation	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	299	299
Land conflict management	Pearson Correlation	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	299	299
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Primary data

The study found out that government institutions significantly ($p=0.000<0.05$) influenced the land conflict management in Kabarole district in Uganda. Also, there was a moderate positive relationship ($r=0.593$) between government institutions and land conflict management in Kabarole district. In this context, government institutions improved land conflict management in Kabarole district; because the government officials were able to follow the right procedures in land conflict resolutions and being within the law. This implied that the set null hypothesis was rejected saying that government institutions have a strong correlation with land conflict management in Uganda.

DISCUSSION

The results revealed that the relationship between government institutions and land conflicts management in Uganda was statistically significant. This meant that the government institutions really affect land conflicts management in Kabarole district.

This outcome was in accordance with the study conducted by Wehrmann (2022) on Land conflict in Africa, who found out that resolving land conflicts in a corruption free environment normally helps the citizenry to access justice. However, these results are not in consonance with the study directed by Among (2017) on land acquisition challenges who found out that the personality of government bureaucrats may betray them in passing verdicts on land issues in society.

CONCLUSION

The examination study results came up with a significant correlation between government institutions and land conflicts management in Kabarole district. It was thus established that issues related with land conflicts management must be handled meticulously in order to help the populace live a harmonious life in society in Western Uganda.

Implications for the Study

The research study recommended that appropriate government officials charged with land conflict resolution need to follow the right procedures in land issues and acting within the law. The

government of Uganda should ensure that bureaucrats in government institutions should operate in a corruption free environment in order for justice to prevail.

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