

A Study of Conflict and Threat to the Use of Land in Gongulon Town of Borno State

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Abstract: The study was carried out to assess threats to use of land and conflicts in uses of land around Gongulon Town, Borno state. Structured Questionnaires were administered randomly to two groups of twenty farmers and fifteen individual farmers. Field observations were made to confirm the information gathered from the discussion with the farmers. Dominant land tenure system is inheritance with 40%.The major threats to use of land are Bandits and flood with area affected of 240ha and 380ha respectively. The major conflict is that between farmers and pastoralist, which affect almost all the farmers and occurs every year.

Keywords: Conflict, Land use, Threat, Gongulon

INTRODUCTION

Land is a basic resources and a platform of most human activities. It is a cradle of all objects living or inanimate. It is limited in extent exhaustible in time and space. It is diverse in physical characteristics and dimensions. Land is a very important resource to agriculture. Apart from a few crops which may be cultivated by aquaculture e.g. floating rice, most crops have to be grown using soil as a medium[1,14]. Availability of land for agriculture may be dependent on factors which could be economic, political or social[2]. Even when a piece of land is available for agricultural purposes, such factors as soil fertility, topography and climate may influence the agricultural use to which it may be put. Land is a resource and hence has to be managed. Factors limiting the availability of land for agricultural purposes may include physical factors, economical or social factors. The physical factors such as topography and soil types may prevent the utilization of land for agricultural purpose. The economic or social factors governing the use of land often put land to alternative uses other than for agriculture. The uses may include building, industries, airports banks, churches, mosques and construction of road etc. And increase in population will bring about misuse of land; misuse of land will bring about land degradation. Land is therefore becoming very scarce due to increase in population. The scarce land is most at times disturbed by natural and artificial factors such as threats (natural) and conflict (artificial).Therefore this study was carried out with the following objectives.

1. To assess the land tenure system
2. To establish the types, extent and severity of threats to the use of land.
3. To establish the types and severity of conflicts in use of land.

Land Degradation

Land degradation is a process in which the value of the biophysical environment is affected by one or more combination of human induced processes acting upon the land[3]. Environmental degradation is the gradual destruction or reduction of the quality of human activities, animal activities or natural means. Example, water causes soil erosion[4].

Effects of land degradation

The unsustainability of land in Nigeria as a whole has led to the disruption of natural hydrological cycles. Use of land is however very fragile, ecosystem and their conversion to crop land have resulted in many cases to severe ecological and environmental deterioration and degradation[5].

Types of land degradation

Basically there are only two (2) main types of land degradation are; manmade and natural processes of land degradation.

According to Johnson[6], manmade land degradation are as follows: Land clearance such clear cutting and deforestation, livestock including overgrazing, over drafting with inappropriate irrigation, over drafting urban sprawl, commercial development

and soil contamination together with vehicle off loading increasing in field size due to economic scale, reducing shelter for wildlife, as hedgerows and copses disappear. But monoculture destabilizing the local ecosystem and dumping of non-biodegradable trash such as plastics.

Natural processes of land degradation are as follows: Water erosion all forms of soil erosion by water including sheet, rill and gully erosion. Human induced intensification of land sliding, that is caused by vegetation clearance road construction, etc.

But soil fertility decline is used as a short term to refer to what is more precisely described as deterioration in soil's physical properties but wind erosion refers to loss of soil by wind. That is occurring primarily in dry regions, and water logging is the process of lowering in land productivity through the rise in ground water close to the soil surface, but the salinization of the soil is used in its broad senses to refer to all types of soil degradation brought by increase of salt in the soil, it thus cover both the salinization in its stuck sense. There is also the buildup of free salts and codification called alkalization[7].

Conflict in use of land

Conflict in use of land occurs when there are conflicting views on land use policies such as when an increase in population creates competitive demands for the use of land, causing a negative impact on other land uses[8].

Conflict relating to existing use of land

Conflict relating to existing use of land, in Nigeria mostly occurs when people occurs when people or farmers often disagree as to the best way that areas should be used. There will usually be advantages and disadvantage to argue for one kind of land use over another[3].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Background Information on the Study Area Location

The location of the study area is shown in figure 3.1 Gongulon is situated at the extreme Northeastern area of the main Kanem Borno Empire ("Yerwa") and is bounded on the north by Tuba, on the south is bounded by Kesakura and on the North-Eastern is bounded by Khaddamari. It lies on latitude 11⁰55N and longitude 13⁰11E [11].

Climate

The study area is characterized by semi-arid climate with average rainfall of 550mm and an average air temperature of 30°C[12]. The dry season starts from October to April which is followed by a wet season from May to its peak in August. The pattern of temperature in area is usually more constant than that of

Conflict between land ownership (farmer) and pastoralist

Conflict between land ownership and pastoralists in Nigeria, after months of reconciliation attempts and frustrations it was a sigh of relief when the elders from communities in Jos, plateau region of Nigeria put aside their initial resistance and agreed to give peaceful coexistence a chance through dialogue. The two communities of Fulani people (Meyatti Allah) and Berom people have come back to the negotiating table to voice out their concerns and seek viable solution that can bring about non-violent management of the natural resources. Conflict over control of land and water resources between land ownership (farmer) and pastoralist are common along the areas where farmer and pastoralist interact in places like Borno, Benue, Enugu Adamawa and Plateau. The conflict usually arise from destruction of crop field by the livestock in response to the resident farmers and agro-pastoralist erect barricades around areas and across passages leading to productive land and sometimes the farmers and pastoralist were required to pay hefty fines to the authorities even when they were the aggrieved side [9].

An increased human and livestock population has resulted in increase competition for resource including productive land and water. This has contributed significantly to the inter-communal conflicts especially between pastoralists often use their herds to affect their environment. Grazing herds on savannah can ensure the bio-diversity of the savannah and prevent them from evolving into scrub land. Pastoralist may also use fire to make ecosystem more suitable for their food. Animal pastoralist is found in many variations throughout the world, composition herds, managements practices, social organization and all other aspect of pastoralist vary between areas and between social groups [10].

the rainfall. March-April is often the hottest months, while June-August is the rainfall duration.

Vegetation

The vegetation of Gongulon can be described as savannah; this is because it is located within Sahel savannah zone[11]. Because of this reason, vegetation of the area is scanty with only few scattered trees with stunted growth and inter passed grasses especially during the wet season. The vegetation area is low lying shrubs like "Gornogo and Fure", (although not popularly used in recent times, these scrubs still retain their qualities as local tooth dyeing and tooth paste) and thorny trees, some common trees found are;

Baobab *Acacia albida*,
Tamarine *Adonsonia digitata* and;
Neem *Azadiracha indica*.
[11]

Topography

The main feature of the topography of Gongulon mainland is that it is a level land. The base is more characterized by sand dunes. The sand dunes at Gongulon were before the tree planting, a threat that could lead to desertification [11].

Soils

Soils in the area are developed on young sedimentary rocks of the chad formation which consist of mainly clay with some sand horizons and some gravels or red brown soils of the tropical type. In most of the area, clay soils become very dark as a result of organic matter accumulation and often referred to as "firik" exposed surface become plastic and saturated with water during the wet season[13].

Field Work

Reconnaissance survey of the study was made to have a feel of the locality. Questionnaires were

administered to two groups of twenty farmers to obtain the information types of land tenure system, land holdings, soil-suitability for agricultural purposes, and conflicts in the use of land, threats to use of land and the sketching of map to types of soil, land use and threat to use of land by farmers.

Questionnaires were administered to fifteen individual farmers to obtain the similar information as that of the grouped questionnaires, this was done to cross check the information obtained earlier from the group of farmers.

Field observations were along transects at intervals of 100m to confirm the information gathered from the farmers.

Data Analysis

Simple percentages were used to analyze the data.

Table-1: Land Tenure System around Gongulon Town

S/No.	Types of Land Tenure	Percentage (%)
1	Inheritance	40
2	Rent	13
3	Free lease	27
4	Purchase	20

Table-2: Threats to Use of Land around Gongulon Town

S/No.	Type of Threat	Farmer Affect (%)	Area Affected (ha)	Area Affected (%)	Severity Frequency
1	Bandit	22	240	8.01	Yearly
2	Bushfire	15	25	0.80	Once in 2 years
3	Flood	40	380	12.62	yearly
4	Quarry	5	4	0.13	Not severe
5	Gully	18	17	0.13	10m deep 40m long

Table-3: Conflict in Use of Land around Gongulon Town

S/No.	Type of Conflict	Farmers Affected (%)	Frequency of Occurrence
1	Inheritance	20	Once in 5 years
2	Pastoralist and Famer	5	Every year
3	Sale or Purchase	75	once in 5 years

Land Tenure System

The results of land tenure system in the study area are presented in Table-1. Inheritance with 40% is major system. About 40% (Rentage and free lease) of people do not own land In inheritance, land shared into smaller fragment will not be conducive for Agricultural mechanization. Farmers that do not own land may be discourage from adopting long term soil conservation and management practice if such system continue, it will land to land degradation

Threats to Use of Land

The results of threat to use of land are presented in Table-2 the distribution of threats to use of land. The major threats are Bandits and flood affecting

380ha and 240ha respectively. These threats should be avoided to overcome food insecurity and land abandoning/degradation.

Conflicts in the Use of Land

The results of conflicts in the use of land of the study area are presented in the Table 3 the dominant conflict in the use of land is that between farmers and pastoralists which affect almost all the farmers and occur every year. These lead to discourage Farmers, reduction of crop production and abandoning of fertile land. Grazing area should be allocated to reduce conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study area shows that inheritance is the major land tenure systems. About 40% of people do not own land which may discourage the farmers from adopting long term soil conservation and management practices. Land is shared into smaller fragment making land holding too small to support the family, leading to the problem of food insecurity and land degradation. There is loss of agricultural land to other uses which will result in Agricultural land shortage and food insecurity. The major threats to use of land are Flood and Bandits affecting 340ha and 240ha. The conflict in the use of land is that between farmers and pastoralists which affects all the farmers and occur every year.

The result of the study area shows that major threat to use of land is Flood affecting 380ha. The conflict in the use of land is that between farmers and pastoralists which affects all the farmers and occur every year. The following are recommended.

1. Appropriate soil conservation practices should be carried out to improve soil fertility.
2. Cultivated land should be insured against Bandits and pastoralist.
3. Similar study of land use should be carried out in every place to provide a basis for planning land use.

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