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Effects of Communal Conflicts on Agricultural Programmes in Southeast, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study analysed the effects of communal conflicts on agricultural programmes in Southeast Nigeria using 405 respondents selected through a multistage sampling procedure involving random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected from primary sources using a structured questionnaire administered in the form of an interview schedule. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, multinomial logit regression, and factor analysis. Results showed that the causes of conflicts included boundary dispute (99%), destruction of crops by herders (97%), struggle for power (94%), encroachment into farm land (90%), disregard for local traditional authority (84%), contamination of streams by cattle (76%) and non-compliance with rule (71%), International Fund for Agricultural Development Projects (99%), N-power-Agro (98%), Agricultural Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Scheme (96%), Agricultural Development Programmes (95%), National Fadama Project (89%) and Agricultural Transformation Agenda (71%) were agricultural programmes in the study area. Conflicts between families, farmers, groups, communities, and herders were significant and negatively related to agricultural programmes. The constraints to mitigating communal conflicts were traditional, political/religious, and institutional constraints. It was concluded that communal conflicts have deleteriously affected agricultural programmes in Southeast Nigeria. It was recommended that herders should be encouraged and assisted to adopt an intensive system of rearing cattle to reduce the increasing farmers-herders' conflicts, among others.
Keywords: Communal, Conflicts, Agriculture, Programme, Southeast, Nigeria

Introduction

Communal conflict has been very common in African societies and in Nigeria in particular. This has destroyed lives, property, livelihood, and hindrance to agricultural programmes in the affected areas. Ubi and Iyanam (2021) reported that conflict is generally the reality of social relations. Otite and Albert (2019) posited that conflicts at any sphere arise from divergences of interests, desires, goals, values, and aspirations.

In the competitiveness for resources to meet with imposing demands on social life in a clearly stated socio-physical environment. As long as human existence continues, conflicts will definitely abound as a result of the struggle for natural resources. Communal conflicts are as old as man, and it is taking new dimensions in contemporary times, because the weapons used are highly sophisticated and the destruction is usually fatal. Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria experienced inter-kingdom dynastic crises and inter-community conflicts (Ogban-Iyam, 2015). In recent times, numerous Nigerian communities have witnessed a series of conflicts. For instance, the Ezza and Ezillo communal conflicts and invasion of Fulani

herdsmen in Egedegede and Azuinyaba communities in Ebonyi State, Kidnapping and insurgency in Anambra, Abia, and Imo State (Ubi and Iyanam, 2021).

One significant feature of conflict is the aftermath effect. In Nigeria, the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War was the formation of different pressure groups in the Southeast geo-political zone, such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). These groups have been agitating for self-determination as they still perceived injustice and the over-aged marginalization of the people in the distribution of the wealth of the nation by the Nigerian government. However, this study is limited to communal conflicts and agricultural development programmes in Southeast Nigeria. At present, conflict has taken a very serious toll on agricultural programmes in the zone.

It is fascinating to note that more people are realizing day by day that agriculture is becoming the most profitable enterprise and has been identified as the largest employer of labour (Amaechi and Okafor, 2018). However, to boost the sector further, there is a need to increase the level of food production to match the rising food demand through sustainable agricultural development projects and programmes. Hence, one of the reliable strategies that any government can use to encourage its citizens' involvement in agriculture is by creating avenues where they can access agro-inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, and seedlings, grants, and loans (Amaechi and Okafor, 2018). On this basis, various successive Nigerian governments have been able to initiate a series of agricultural policies, projects, and programmes aimed at increasing farmers' access to best agronomic practices, agricultural inputs, and financial aids (Iloh, Nwalieji and Nwoye, 2021).

However, some of the agricultural programmes in Nigeria aimed at increasing food production and reducing poverty according to Nwoye and Nwalieji (2019) included, the Third National Fadama Additional Financing Programme (Fadama III-AF), Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) initiated by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with the target of supporting smallholder farmers in the six benefiting States of Benue, Anambra, Ebonyi, Taraba, Niger and Ogun in rice production, Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), Green Alternative, which is the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FAMARD) and of recent, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan of the Federal Government of Nigeria (Adisa, 2018).

Communal conflicts in Nigeria usually take the form of clashes of varying interests, sometimes violently, either between two or more communities, religious groups, or cattle herders versus farmers. The violent nature of most such conflicts continued to threaten the implementation of agricultural programmes in the zone and the country in general (Idoko and Teru, 2021). Conflicts over access to land resources continue to hinder agricultural development in Nigeria (Adzenga *et al*., 2019). Robertson and Steve (2018) reported that incessant resource-based conflicts have adversely affected the effective delivery of extension services by extension agents, which in turn reduced farmers' level of utilization of technologies in the area. Kimenyi *et al*. (2014) stated that agricultural extension agencies and institutions like the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) and research institutes that support the agricultural sector are also affected during the conflict situations.

Conflicts have become endemic in Nigeria, particularly in States like Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Taraba, Kaduna, Zamfara, Borno, Ogun, Ondo, Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Ebonyi, and Cross-River (Turkur, 2019). In these States, agricultural programmes seem to have been stagnated, and as such, the degree of the effects of communal conflicts on agricultural programmes seems not to have been empirically determined and documented, hence the gap in knowledge the study tends to fill. Again, communal conflicts have intensified due to population pressure on natural resources and the pressure on the fragmented land

used for agricultural crop production and livestock grazing space in the area, whose effects on agricultural programmes seem not to have attracted the much-needed studies. Furthermore, various studies (Olobatoke and Amusain, 2017; Anyoha *et al.,* 2018; Adzenga *et al*., 2019) have been conducted on conflicts and agricultural production in different parts of the Nigeria, but much or little seems not to have been conducted on the effects of communal conflicts on agricultural programmes in southeast, Nigeria.

It is against this backdrop that the study analysed the effects of communal conflicts on agricultural programmes in Southeast Nigeria. Specifically, the study analyzed the causes of communal conflicts in the area; ascertained the agricultural programmes available in the area; determined the effects of communal conflicts on agricultural programmes in the study area; and analyzed the constraints to overcoming communal conflicts in the study area; The study was guided by the null hypothesis *(H_O)* which stated that communal conflicts have no significant effects on agricultural programmes in the study area.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was carried out in Southeast Nigeria. Southeast Nigeria (Fig. 1) is made up of five States, which include: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. It lies between longitudes $6^0 50^{/}$ and $8^0 30^{/}$ E, latitude $4^0 30^{/}$ and $7^0 5^{/}$ N, covering an area of about 58,214.7 square kilometers and a total projected population of 45.92 million people at a projected rate of 2.8% (NPC, 2022). The area is bordered in the north by Benue and Kogi States, south by Akwa-Ibom State, in the east by Cross-River State, and west by Delta and Rivers States. Geographically, it is located within the rainforest regions of the country with two major seasons, which are the rainy and dry seasons, with a little dry spell in August, and a temperature range of 18^0C to 34^0C within the year. Crops such as rice, yams, cassava, cocoyam, maize, poultry, sheep/goat, piggery, and fishery dominated the area. The area has witnessed several communal conflicts, ranging from land conflicts, farmer-herder conflicts, and inter- and intra-community conflicts.

Sampling Techniques

A multistage sampling procedure was adopted in the selection of respondents for the study. Stage one involved a purposive selection of three States out of five Southeast States based on the prevalence of communal conflicts. The States selected were Ebonyi, Enugu, and Anambra States. Stage two involved purposive selection of three (3) Local Government Areas that were directly involved in communal conflicts from the three States already selected to make a total of 9 LGAs. Stage three was purposive selection of three (3) communities that were directly involved in communal conflicts from the selected 9 LGAs, making a total of 27 communities. Stage four involved a random selection of 15 farmers from each of the selected communities using the list of farmers that was obtained from ADP and IFAD to give a total of 405 respondents that were used for the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study used primary data obtained with the aid of a structured questionnaire and administered as an interview schedule. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages were used to achieve objectives one and two. Objective three was achieved using multinomial logit regression. While objective four was realized using factor analysis.

Model Specifications

Multinomial Regression Analysis

The model was based on cumulative logistic probability, and the logistic probability function was used. The logistic regression model computed the maximum likelihood estimates of β_i given the non-linear probability distribution of the random error μ_i.

The multinomial regression model was expressed as

$$\text{Prob } (y^* = 1) = 1 - F^* (\sum X_i\beta_j) = \frac{e^{\sum Xi\beta j}}{1+e^{\sum Xi\beta j}} \ldots\ldots\ldots (1)$$

$$\text{Prob } (y^* = 0) = F^* (\sum X_i\beta_j) = \frac{e^{\sum Xi\beta j}}{1+e^{\sum Xi\beta j}} \ldots\ldots\ldots (2)$$

$$Y^* = (-\sum Xi\beta j) + \mu_i \ldots\ldots\ldots (3)$$

Explicitly, this model can be linearized as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \ldots + \beta_5 x_5 + et \ldots\ldots\ldots (4)$$

Where,

Y = Agricultural programmes (ADP = 1, IFAD = 2, FADAMA III-AF = 3)
X_1 = Conflicts between families (Yes = 1, No = 0)
X_2 = Conflicts between farmers (Yes = 1, No = 0)
X_3 = Conflicts between groups (Yes = 1, No = 0)
X_4 = Conflicts between communities (Yes = 1, No = 0)
X_5 = Conflicts between farmers and herders (Yes = 1, No = 0)
a_0 = Constant
$a_1 – a_5$ = Parameters
et = Error term

Factor Analysis Model

In order to obtain the factor loadings of each of the variables necessary for achieving objective four, a factor analysis model was used. The associated assumptions were applied accordingly, while the suitable numbers of factors were subjectively selected based on the varimax rotated factor matrix. The exploratory factor analysis techniques using the principal factor model with interactions and varimax rotation were adopted. The factor loading under each constraint represents a correlation of the variables to the identified constraint factors and has the same interpretation as any correlation coefficient. Each dependent variable (Y) can be expressed as a weighted composite of a set of latent variables (F) such as:

$Y = \alpha_1 F_1 + \alpha_2 F_2 + ---------- + \alpha_n F_n$ ……. (5)

Where:
Y = Dependent variable
α = Constant
$F_1 - F_n$ = Independent variable
n = Number of independent variables

For this study, factors loading of ≥0.40 were selected, as was used by the studies of Nwibo, Mbam, and Ibiam (2016) who worked on determinants of agripreneurship among the rural households of Ishielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Test of Hypothesis

H_o: Which states that communal conflicts have no significant influence on agricultural programmes was tested using likelihood ratio statistics (chi-square statistics) of multinomial logit regression.

Results

Causes of communal conflicts

The causes of communal conflicts were analyzed and the results presented in Table 1. The result of the analysis showed that one of the major causes of conflicts in the area was boundary disputes (99.3%). This implied that poor intra and inter boundary adjustment in communities is are primary cause of communal conflict. This is supported by the findings of Mogborukor, Arisabor, and Yusuf (2022), who reported that about half of the land conflicts in conflict-ridden communities are boundary disputes. The second cause of conflict was the destruction of crops by herders (96.8%). This showed that the grazing of cropped land by herders was the cause of farmers-herders conflicts in the agricultural communities of Southeast, Nigeria. This is similar to the findings of Tukur (2019), who reported that farmer-herdsmen conflicts in Southeast States were competition-driven conflicts between arable crop farmers and cattle herdsmen. This also corroborates with the findings of Adisa (2018), who reported the causes of communal conflicts (between pastoralists and farmers) to include one or more of inequitable access to land, diminishing land resources, antagonistic values among user groups, policy contradictions, and non-recognition of rights of indigenous people.

The power struggle (93.8%) was another cause of conflict in the zone. This implied that the quest for power over the control of natural endowment and severe marginalization of some ethnic groups in the country could cause conflicts that impede the implementation of agricultural projects and programmes. Farm land encroachment (89.9%), disregard for local traditional authority (84.4%), contamination of streams by cattle (75.6%), non-compliance with rules (70.9%), and encroachment on water bodies (64.7%) were different causes of communal conflicts. All these could be attributed to the different kinds of infringement on individual rights or bundles of rights in the control of natural endowments. This is consistent with the finding of Adzenga *et al*. (2019), who reported a quest for leadership positions, power, and control over

existing natural resources as the causes of communal conflicts.

Agricultural Programmes Available in the Area

The available agricultural programmes in the study area were analyzed, and the result obtained is presented in Table 2. Result revealed that the major agricultural programme available in the study area was the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD projects (98.8%). This result agreed with the findings of Nwoye and Nwalieji (2019), who reported that the Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) initiated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is operational in rice-producing States of the Southeast, Nigeria.

The result also showed that N-power Agro (98.3%), Agri-business/Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Scheme (AGSMEIS) (96.3%), and Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) (95.3%) were the second, third, and fourth available agricultural programmes in the area. This is in line with the findings of Idoko and Teru (2021), who reported that the programmes were made for improved agricultural technologies and increased food production, and the livelihood of the area. National Fadama Project (88.9%), Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) (71.4%), and National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) (62.7%) were also available in the area. According to Prince, Custodian, Nimiye and Victoria (2016), these programmes were intended to reduce rural poverty among rural dwellers, increase food security, and contribute to the achievement of key Millennium Development goals since the source of livelihood for the majority of people in the rural areas is primarily dependent on farming.

Effects of Communal Conflicts on Agricultural Programmes in the Study Area

The result of multinomial logit (MNL) regression analysis, as shown in Table 3, showed that the selected agricultural programmes in the area were IFAD, ADP, and FADAMA III-AF. The result revealed the LR Chi-square of 19.345 that was significant at 1%, which implied that the model has a strong explanatory power. Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.673, which was significant at 5%, also means that communal conflicts significantly affected the agricultural programme. From the analysis, it was shown that the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) was the reference category of the sets of agricultural programmes, meaning that ADP gained wider recognition in the area.

The coefficient of all the variables (conflicts between families, conflicts between farmers, conflicts between groups, conflicts between communities, and conflicts between farmers and herders) was negatively related to agricultural programmes, which implied that conflicts have adverse effects on agricultural programmes in the study area. Specifically, the coefficient of conflicts between families (-0.005) had a negative and significant relationship with IFAD at a 10% ($P < 0.1$) probability level. This means that an inverse relationship exists between conflicts between families and the IFAD agricultural programme. Marginally, it implied that a 10% increase in conflicts between families would lead to a 0.05% decrease in IFAD agricultural programme effects in the area. This is similar to the findings of Uhumwangho (2018), who reported that during conflict, people abandon their farms and other valuables and run for safety, and this invariably affects their farming activities and effective programme participation.

Furthermore, conflicts between farmers (-0.022) and (-0.015) were negative and significantly related to IFAD and FADAMA III-AF programmes, respectively. Thus, a 10% increase in between farmers' conflicts would reduce their effect in IFAD and FADAMA III-AF programmes by 0.22% and 0.15%, respectively. This further implies that conflicts discourage the IFAD and FADAMA III-AF agricultural programme in the study area. This result is supported by the These support findings of Chikaire *et al.* (2016), who reported that conflicts impede the effective utilization of agricultural programmes for increased agricultural production. Conflicts between groups (-0.006) were negative and significantly related to FADAMA III-AF. This implied that conflict between groups, such as religious/political conflicts, significantly and

negatively influenced the FADAMA III-AF programme in the study area. This corroborates with Idoko and Teru (2021), who reported the non-achievement of the agricultural programmes' mandate in the conflict area.

Again, conflicts between communities (-0.001 and -0.052) were significant and inversely related to IFAD and FADAMA III-AF, respectively. This implied that a 10% increase in the conflict between communities would decrease IFAD and FADAMA III-AF agricultural programmes by 0.01 and 0.52%, respectively. These explain why there is no meaningful development in conflict areas. This is supported by the findings of Uhumwangho (2018). who reported that during conflict, people run for safety and abandon agricultural activities. Moreover, conflicts between farmers and herders (-0.018 and -0.027) were negative and statistically significant with IFAD and FADAMA III-AF programmes, respectively. This implied that a 10% increase in farmers-herders' conflicts would lead to a 0.18% and 0.27% decrease in IFAD and FADAMA III-AF effect, respectively. This corroborated the findings of Iloh *et al.* (2021), who reported that herder-farmers' conflicts have negatively affected arable crop production in Nigeria. From the significant Chi-square value of 19.345 of the model of Table 3, the stated null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted, and the study concluded that communal conflicts have a significant effect on agricultural programmes in the study area.

Constraints Faced by Farmers in Overcoming Communal Conflicts in the Study Area

The result of the constraints faced by farmers in mitigating communal conflicts in the study area is presented in Table 4. From the point of view of the Kaiser's rule of thumb of ≥0.400 factor loading the constraints faced by farmers in overcoming communal conflicts as was used by Otite and Albert (2019) were categorized into traditional, political/religious and institutional factors and as such, the variables that loaded for traditional constraints included modernization and disintegration of traditional structures (0.678), loss of traditional values (0.772), and greed and avarice (0.611). Whereas politics of division (0.686) and ethno-religious allegiance (0.812) loaded for Political/Religious constraints. Institutional constraints were insincerity of community leaders/corruption (0.613), and poverty and unemployment (0.551). The traditional factors implied that traditional values have decayed to a great extent, such that most youths are morally bankrupt amid corrupt and insincere traditional institutions. Their interactions led to the conflicts in communities in the study area. This could be attributed to the failure of traditional structures that have transformed into political structures rather than neutrality in society. This is similar to Babatunde *et al.* (2017), who reported that our traditional structures no longer function effectively in most parts of Nigeria.

The constraints from political/religious factors implied that the existence of innumerable political/religious organizations has caused havoc in Nigeria. This is because the majority has not really comprehended the ethics of politics and religion. Misconceptions, uprisings from politics and religion have led to all forms of conflicts. These have led to different nicknames of conflicts such as banditry, unknown gunmen, and boko-haram which are problems to economic growth and development. This is in line with Mogborukor, Arisabor, and Yusuf (2022), who reported that power interplay and over-ambition of politicians encouraged the procurement of weapons in order to pursue their inordinate political ambitions. Results from institutional factors implied that most of the constraints to overcoming conflicts were from the leadership of institutions such as the government. This finding agreed with Ubi and Iyanam (2021), who reported that Nigeria is ravaged by underdevelopment, unemployment, illiteracy, and poverty, which have instigated grievances against the system and created a breeding ground for conflicts.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that communal conflicts have deleteriously affected agricultural programmes in Southeast Nigeria. However, the challenges to

mitigating communal conflicts were constrained by traditional, political/religious, and institutional factors. Given the conflicts between herders and farmers, there is a need to encourage and assist the herders to adopt an intensive system of rearing cattle to reduce the increasing farmers-herder's conflicts. There should be more advocacy by the government and NGOs on how to bring lasting unity among communities and herders. There should be value re-orientation among leaders of government, religions, and traditional institutions as a way of restoring their lost public trust by avoiding corruption and upholding accountability. There is a need for the relevant ministry of the government, such as the Ministry of Border, Peace and Conflict Resolution, to strengthen land administration and boundary maintenance as a way of reducing communal conflict in the study area.

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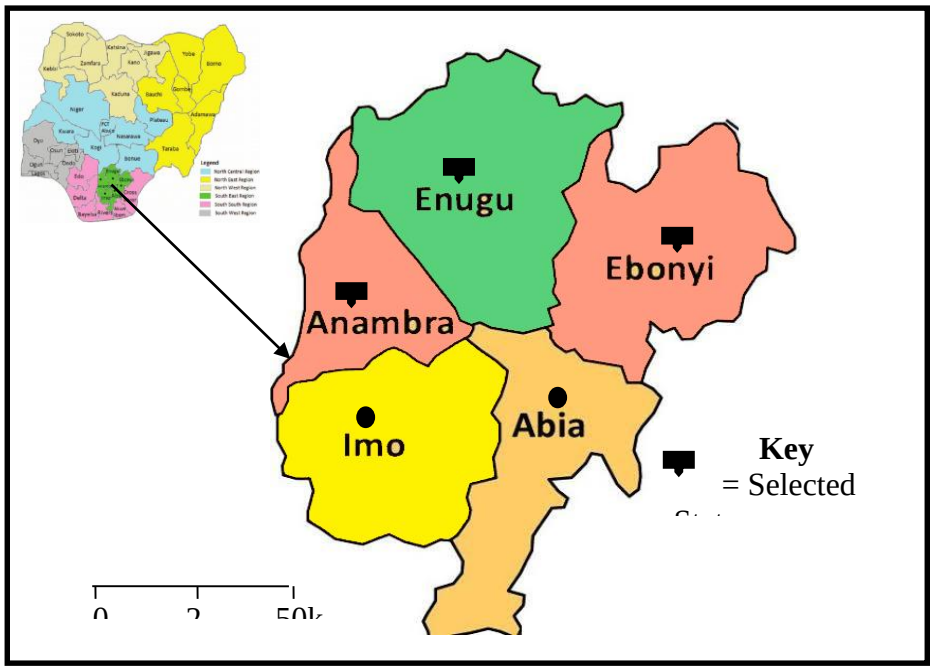

Fig. 1: Map of Southeast, Nigeria showing the study Area

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Causes of Communal Conflicts

Causes	Frequency (N = 405)*	Percentage (%)	Rank
Boundary dispute	402	99.3	1st
Destruction of crops by herders	392	96.8	2nd
Struggle for power	380	93.8	3rd
Encroachment into farm land	364	89.9	4th
Disregard for local traditional authority	342	84.4	5th
Contamination of streams by cattle	306	75.6	6th
Non-compliance with the rule	287	70.9	7th
Encroachment on water bodies	262	64.7	8th
Scarcity of land	202	49.9	9th
Contested ownership	180	44.4	10th
Population pressure	160	39.5	11th
Urbanization	151	37.3	12th
Extra-judicial killing	143	35.3	13th
Lack of respect for customs	120	29.6	14th

Source: Field Survey, 2023 *Multiple Responses Recorded

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents based on Available Agricultural Programmes in the Area

Agricultural Programmes	Frequency (N = 405) *	(%)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Projects	400	98.8
N-power-Agro	398	98.3
Agricultural Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Scheme (AGSMEIS)	390	96.3
Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs)	386	95.3
National Fadama Project	360	88.9
Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA)	289	71.4
National Programme for Food Security (NPFS)	254	62.7
Youth Employment in Agricultural Program (YEAP)	230	56.8
Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISAN)	185	45.7
Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP)	94	23.2
Mobilization for Agriculture and Industries (MOSAI)	82	20.2
National Intervention Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)	72	17.7

Source: Field Survey, 2023 *Multiple Responses Recorded

Table 3: Results of Multinomial Logit on Effects of Communal Conflicts on Agricultural Programmes in the Study Area

Variables	Agricultural Programmes	
	IFAD	FADAMA III-AF
Constant	0.090 (0.544)*	0.486 (1.986)**
Conflicts between families	-0.005 (-0.024)*	-0.011 (-1.678)NS
Conflicts between farmers	-0.022 (-0.405)*	-0.015 (-0.184)**
Conflicts between groups	-0.007 (-0.571)NS	-0.006 (-0.340)*
Conflicts between communities	-0.001 (-0.075)*	-0.052 (-2.445)**
Conflicts between farmers and herders	-0.018 (-0.655)**	-0.027 (-0.675)***
LR-Chi-square	19.345***	
Pseudo-R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0.673	
Log Likelihood	12.321	
Number of Observations	405	

Source: Field Survey, 2023. Reference category = ADP, ***, **, * and ^{NS} shows the significance at 1%, 5%, 10%, and not significant, respectively. Values in brackets = Z-values

Table 4: Varimax Rotated Component Matrix on Constraints to Overcoming Communal Conflicts in the Study Area

Constraints	Components		
	Traditional	Political/Religious	Institutional
Modernization and disintegration of traditional structures	0.678	0.219	-0.407
Loss of traditional values	0.772	-0.462	0.309
Proliferation of arms	0.727	0.771	0.255
Politics of division	0.200	0.686	-0.270
Ethno-religious allegiance	0.212	0.812	0.014
Greed and avarice	0.611	-0.070	0.098
Insincerity of community leaders/corruption	0.253	-0.079	0.613
Poverty and unemployment	-0.223	0.150	0.551
Corruption	0.245	0.228	-0562
Poor health status	0.341	0.098	-0.437

Source: Field Survey, 2023