Research on Humanities and Social Sciences
ISSN 2224-5766(Paper) ISSN 2225-0484(Online)
Vol.2, No.6, 2012

Integration and Conflict Management among Igbo Migrants Farmers and Odolu/Igalamela Indigenes of Kogi State Nigeria

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Abstract
Migrant farm workers suffer immensely from separation, isolaton, and discrimination due to their poor integration into the host communities. The study was designed to asses the extent of integration, causes and management of conflict among migrant farmers and indigenous people of Odolu/Igalamela in Kogi state. A total of 100 respondents were purposively selected from five out of nine town communities that make up Odolu/Igalamela ethnic region. A semi structured interview schedule was used to collect information from the respondents. Percentage, mean score and factor analysis were used to analyse the data obtained. The average number of years spent by the respondents in the destination area was 11.5 years. Irrespective of this number of years spent in the area, migrant farmers had not been properly integrated into the host communities. Majority of them (84.4%) had no land on freehold, although there were a number of intermarriages, there were also many cases of divorce (72%) and majority of them (75%) still bury their dead in the place of origin and hold ceremony at the same place. Majority (86%) of the migrant farmers had no title or leadership position in the destination area but belonged to migrant farmers association mainly for ceremonial and welfare purposes. There were no serious types/causes of conflict among migrant farmers but migrant farmers had conflicts with the indigenes mainly due to jealousy. These conflicts were resolved by formal, informal and interpersonal methods. The study emphasized the need to initiate policies that will favour the settlement of migrant farmers in the destination area as integration and consequent peaceful atmosphere ensure sustained agricultural production.
Key words: Migrant Farmers Agriculture Integration conflict

1.Introduction

Migration involves a change of residence across a defined geo political boundary. A mere change in residence may not always constitute a migratory movement especially if there is no intention to make the change a permanent one (NPC, 1998). Population pressure on scarce resources will always remain a major factor in. directing the flow of mass migration (Galtung 1998). Population mobility provides opportunity to improve the life chance of a wide spectrum of the world population especially those under land shortage and degradation problem.

Countries with higher population growth rate have experienced faster conversion of land to agricultural uses there by putting additional pressures on land and natural habitat (World Bank, 1992). As a result of this all farming systems are affected by conflicts over land, be it tenure rights, land shortage or conflicts with other users (FAO, 2001). Thus the concentration of farmers in a particular location for farming activities is purely on the basis of favourable resources (Grant, 1998).

United Nations (1998) observed that migrant workers and their families face economic exploitation and discrimination related to labour as well as low income, poor working standard and lack of job security. To buttress this point further, Castle (1998) noted that migrants are socially disadvantaged by concentrating in areas with poor housing and social amenities. In their efforts to adapt psychologically and adjust culturally to the host community, they also suffer from hostile attitude from government, local, prejudices and other human right abuses (Castle, 1998).

It should be stressed that the successful integration of migrants is a demand in process which requires a holistic policy approach (European Foundation, 2007). A core element of integration policy is to provide effective solutions to the global challenge of large world wide migration streams (European foundation, 2007). Effective integration requires that migrants be helped to manage the rapid changes that are happening in their lives. Integration must also ensure that the receiving society itself evolves and responds positively to changes in its population (European Foundation, 2007).

This integration of migrants raises the challenge of managing change (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) (OECD, 2006).

The link between agriculture and conflict is one that has not received enough thoughtful discussion and analysis (Zaur, 2006). The impact of conflict on agriculture is fairly straight forward and intuitive, though there are problems in assigning causality to the relationship (Zaur 2006). The author further stated that production in the agricultural sector demonstrably drops on average by 12.3% per year during period of violent conflict. Conflict sensitivity within agriculture is of interest as it is well placed to have a potentially large impact on the risk factors associated with conflict and in supporting long term peace(http;//www:trocaire.org/international/peace building discussion paper. Pdf. Accessed, 16/7/08).

Consequent upon this situation, the study sought to find out the agricultural activities of Igbo migrant farmers found among Odolu/Igalamela people of Kogi state of Nigeria, with emphasis on their level of adjustment/integration as well as causes/types of conflict among them, causes/types of conflict between them and the indigenous people and the methods used in resolving these conflicts.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Odolu/Igalamela, a rural sub -ethic region of Igala-land bordering the north western end of Enugu state. Five towns Odolu, Akpanya, Avrugo, Ajaka, Ekwulu Oko were purposively selected for the study from the nine towns that make up the ethnic region. This was because of high concentration of Igbo migrant households in these towns. From each of the selected towns, 20 households were purposively selected hence 100 heads of households participated in the study. Structured interview schedule was used to collect relevant information (major crops grown, farming/ cropping system, farm inputs used, sources of farm inputs, length of migration, size of land on freehold, intermarriages, cases of divorce, handling of the dead, things shared in common, causes of conflicts, methods used in resolving conflicts between migrants and indigenes, etc) from the respondents The extent of integration of migrant farmers into the destination area or host community was assessed by using a four-point likert type scale with responses ranging from "Not at all" to "very often" and scaled 0 to 3, respectively. Thus mean scores of 1.5 and above were regarded as traits shared by both migrant farmers and indigenes. Data were summarized using percentage, mean scores and factor analysis (using Varimax rotation and Kaiser's decision rule where a variable with coefficient of 0.30 and above was considered as having a high loading and was used in naming a factor).

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Agricultural activities of the respondents.

3.1.1 Crops and cropping systems.

Table I shows that the major crops grown by the respondents were yam (79%) cassava (78%) and cocoyam (68%). Maize (48%), peppers (18%) and tomatoes (6%) represent other major crops grown by a minority of the respondents. This finding suggests that the migrant farmers produce mainly root crops which are among the most important group of staple foods grown and consumed in the tropical world. Mixed cropping (70%) and fallowing (63%) were the farming/cropping systems commonly practiced by the respondents. The migrant farmers might have adopted mixed cropping to guard against crop failures and fallowing because of abundant land.

3.1.2 Farm input use and sources

The major farm inputs used by the respondents as revealed in Table1 were seeds (100%) and stem cuttings (100%). Other inputs used by the respondents were organic manure (47%) and fertilizer (32%). These inputs were procured mainly from the market (84%) and personal reserves (62%). Other sources of farm inputs included fellow migrant farmers (23%), indigenous farmers (11%) and agricultural extension /ADP (3%). This finding shows that Agricultural Extension/ ADP did not serve as source of farm inputs. This may be because performance of agricultural extension services in Nigeria has not been satisfactory.

Table 1 further shows that majority (75%) of the respondents had no knowledge about existence of Agricultural extension and ninety three percent of the respondents had not been visited by extension agent in the last one year.

3.2 Extent of integration of the migrants.

A number of indicators were selected and measured in order to ascertain the extent of integration of migrants into the native population. These included length of migration, title/post held at the destination area, land ownership, number of

intermarriages, divorce cases, handling of the dead, membership of migrant farmers association and shared traits between migrant farmers and the indigenes.

Table 2 shows that the number of years spent by the respondents in the destination area ranged from 1 to 30 years. Majority (79%) of the respondent had spent 11-30 years while the mean number of years they spent in the area was 14.5 years. Irrespective of this number of years spent, majority (86%) of them held no organizational post or local/village title in the destination area.

Table 2 also shows that majority (84%) of the respondents had only usufruct right to land. The size of land held on free hold by 16% of the respondents ranged from 0.50ha (7%) to 5ha (1%).

There were intermarriages between the migrants and indigenes (Table 2). Forty percent of the respondents reported that there had been more than sixty intermarriages between migrants farmers and indigenes. Also, 31% of the respondents reported that there were 1-15 intermarriages, 16% reported 16-30 intermarriages, 9% reported 46-to 60 intermarriages while 4% reported 31-45 intermarriages between migrants and indigenes. In these intermarriages, there were many cases of divorce which varied. Forty three percent of the respondents indicated 31-45 cases of divorce and 23% indicated 16-30 cases of divorce. The finding tends to suggest that the increased number of intermarriage cannot be interpreted as increasing rate of integration. This is because of the prevalence of divorce in the intermarriages.

Majority (83%) of the respondents were members of Igbo migrant farmers association in the destination area while 17% were not members (Table 2). The respondents indicated many reasons for their membership which included ceremonial purpose (78%) welfare purpose (63%), co-operation/security (53%) and solving problems together (40%). This finding is in line with Castles (1998), who stated that migrants may be socially disadvantaged by concentrating in areas with poor housing and social amenities but they frequently want to be together in order to enjoy mutual support, rebuild family and neigbourhood networks.

Table 2 further shows that majority of the respondents (75%) buried their dead in the place of origin and also held ceremonies at the same place. Twenty six percent of the respondents buried their dead in destination area and held ceremonies at the same place. For the proportion that was unable to bury the dead at source, mock burials were conducted at source whenever they were able to make a return. Since majority of these migrants still buried their dead and held funeral ceremonies at their places of origin, it shows that they have not been properly adjusted and integrated into the host community.

3.3 Shared traits (Things shared in common between migrants and indigenes)

The respondents were requested to rate traits which they perceived to share with their hosts (Table 3). The item "children from both sides attend the same school" rated highest among other items with a mean score of 2.89. Another item, that rated high was "having equal voting right with the natives" with a mean score of 2.18. These two traits serve as the most important or common things the respondents shared in common with the indigenes. These two traits might have rated high because they are public services provided by the government.

Other items that rated high were farming in the same area with the natives (x = 1.90), living in the same area with the natives (x = 1.85) and attending ceremonies on both sides together (x = 1.70). It could be deduced that on a social level interaction/integration was relatively high between migrants and their hosts. This social integration is by the very nature a two way process which requires the active involvement of migrants and members of the host society (European foundation, 2007)

3.4 Causes of conflict

Table 4 shows that causes of conflict among fellow migrant farmers were derived from domestic quarrels (31%), children fighting (26%) and drunkenness (14%). The finding shows that there were no serious causes of conflict among migrant farmers. The table also shows that the major causes of conflict between the migrant farmers and indigenes were derived from petty jealousy (62%). Other causes of conflict arose from discrimination (41%), children fighting (24%). Contrary to views held in literature, land disputes is uncommon and therefore it could be said that the level of integration is growing.

3.5 Conflict resolution among fellow migrant farmers

Entries in Table 5 show the factors/ methods used in resolving conflicts among migrant farmers. Judging from the item loadings, interpersonal resolution (0.93), adjudication by fellow migrant farmers (0.90), adjudication by fellow migrant farmers and indigenes (0.75), adjudication by community/organization leaders (0.71), adjudication by local

chiefs (0.70),expulsion from the camp (0.65) and adjudication by indigenes (0.57) loaded high in factor 1. Factor I was therefore named informal method of conflict resolution. Other factors namely adjudication in customary court (0.94) and adjudication by police court (0.92) loaded high in factor 2. Factor 2 was named formal method of conflict resolution. These two factors (formal and informal) represented methods of resolving conflicts among the migrant farmers in the destination area.

3.6 Methods used in resolving conflicts between migrant farmers and indigenes

Table 6 shows the factors/methods used in resolving conflicts between migrant farmers and indigenes. Judging from the item loadings, adjudication by local chiefs (0.90), adjudication by community/organization leaders (0.87) adjudication by customary court (0.86), adjudication by police (0.84) and expulsion from the camp (0.54) loaded high in factor 1. Factor I was therefore named formal method of conflict resolution. Other factors namely adjudication by fellow migrant farmers (0.95), adjudication by indigenes (0.87), interpersonal resolution (0.85) and adjudication by fellow migrant farmer and indigenes (0.71) loaded high in factor 2. Factor 2 was named interpersonal method of conflict resolution. These two methods (formal and interpersonal methods) represented major methods of resolving conflicts between migrant farmers and indigenes. This finding is in line with Gauley (2006), who stated that conflict resolution and peer mediation have evolved over the past forty years. While their beginnings have stemmed from different sources, the main focus is to resolve conflict. There may be need to incorporate the idea of Bickmore (1999) in conflict resolution who stated that Blaming and excluding perpetrators of violence might back fire by reinforcing mutual distrust instead of offering non violent alternatives. She further stated that conflict must be presented as a learning opportunity.

4. Conclusion

The study has revealed that the Igbo migrant farmers found among Odolu/Igalamela people of Kogi state were not poorly integrated into the host community. This might have resulted from the low level of conflicts especially land disputes. However there was a clear evidence that migrant farmers were excluded from extension services as most of them were not knowledgeable about agricultural extension and the number of visits was almost non-existent.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that movement of farmers (especially those having land shortage and degradation problem) to another location with better prospects be encouraged. Policies that favour the settlement of migrant's especially migrant farmers in the destination area should be put in place and infrastructure developed to encourage commercialization of agriculture. Efforts should be made to eliminate discriminatory attitude in selecting contact farmers among all citizens and consequently increased the migrant farmers extension contact, ensure proper integration and adjustment of these migrants and reduce conflicts. A conducive atmosphere will boost and ensure sustained agricultural production among migrant farmers.

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Appendix

Table 1: Agricultural Activities of the respondents

Agricultural Activities	Percentage
Major Crops grown	
Yam	79
Cassava	78
Cocoyam	68
Maize	48
Pepper	18
Tomatoes	6
Farming/cropping system	
Mixed cropping	70
Mono cropping	43
Fallowing	63
Continuous cropping	6
Crop rotation	9
Farm input used	
Seeds	100
Stem cuttings	100
Organic manure	47
Fertilizer	32
Insecticide	8
Herbicide	2
Sources of farm inputs	
Agricultural extension/ADP	3
Markets	84
Indigenous farmer	11
Fellow migrant farmers	23
Personal reserves	62
Knowledge about agricultural extension	
Knowledgeable	25
No knowledge	75
Agricultural extension contact in last one year	
Once	7
None	93

Table 2 extent of integration of the migrants into the host community

Integration indicators	Percentage	Mean
Length of migration (years)		
1-10	21	14.5
11-20	55	
21-30	24	
Title/post in the destination area		
Number with organizational post	14	
Number with local or village title	0	
Number without title or post	86	
Number /size of Land on free hold (ha)		
None	84	
0.50	7	
0.75	2	
1	3	
2	2	
3		
1		
5	1	
Number of intermarriages		
1-15	31	
16-30	16	
31-45		
4		
46-60	9	
>60	40	
Cases of divorce		
None	28	
1-15	6	
16-30	23	
31-45	43	
Membership of migrant farmers association		
Member	83	
Non-member	17	
***Reasons for membership**		
Ceremonial purpose	78	

Co-operation/security	53
Welfare purpose	63
Problem solving	40
***Handling of the dead**	
Bury them at source and hold ceremony at source	75
Bury them in destination and hold ceremony at destination	26
Bury them in destination and hold ceremony at source	6
Bury them in source and hold ceremony at destination	6
Buy them in destination and give and give mock burial at source	5

***multiple responses.**

Table 3: means scores of shared traits between migrants and their hosts (indigenes)

Shared traits	Means score	Standard deviation
Children from both sides attending the same school	2.89	0.55
Having equal voting right with natives	2.18	0.76
Farming in the same area with the natives	1.90	0.87
Living in the same area with the natives	1.85	1.16
Attending ceremonies on both sides together	1.70	0.89
Dressing in the same way with the natives	1.09	1.06
Living in the same house with the natives	0.99	0.97
Belonging to the same association with the natives	0.94	0.91
Having equal right to elective position with natives	0.49	0.86
Taking the same chieftaincy title with the natives	0.15	0.58

Table 4: Causes of conflict among migrants and between migrants and indigenes.

Causes of conflict	**Percentage(%)**	**Percentage(%)**
Conflicts	Among migrants	Between migrants and indigenes
Land dispute	11	14
Marital dispute	3	3
Livestock trespassing on croplands	10	6
Burning of farm crops	7	22
Children fighting	26	24
Domestic quarrels	31	23
Drunkenness	14	19
Indebtedness	10	19
Theft	5	14
Jealousy	1	62
Disagreement at meetings	3	0
Discrimination	0	41

Table 5: Methods used in resolving conflicts among fellow migrant farmers

Methods of conflict resolution	Factor 1 informal Method	Factor2 Formal method
Interpersonal resolution	0.93	0.18
Adjudication by fellow migrant farmers	0.90	0.24
Adjudication by fellow migrant farmers and indigenes	0.75	0.06
Adjudication by local chief	0.71	0.40
Adjudication by community/organization leader	0.70	0.31
Expulsion form the camp	0.65	0.44
Adjudication by indigenes	0.57	0.02
Adjudication in customary court	0.11	0.94
Adjudication by police court.	0.18	0.92

Table 6: Methods used in resolving conflicts between migrant farmers and indigenes

Methods of conflict resolution	Factor1 formal method	Factor2 interpersonal method
Adjudication by local chief	0.90	0.27
Adjudication by community/organization leader	0.87	0.33
Adjudication by customary court	0.86	0.42
Adjudication by police court	0.84	0.45
Expulsion from the camp	0.54	0.06
Adjudication by fellow migrant farmers	0.18	0.95
Adjudication by indigenes	0.27	0.87
Interpersonal resolution	0.27	0.85
Adjudication by fellow migrant farmers and indigenes	0.50	0.71