

Role of interfaith mediation centre in managing conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Conflict among different communities is one of the serious challenges persisting peaceful coexistence across the globe. In Nigeria conflict related to farmers/herders has adverse effects on people and their livelihood. This paper aims to investigate the role of the Interfaith Mediation Centre in managing conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria with specific objectives: To examine the positive indicators in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen and to analyze the challenges facing Interfaith Mediation Centre in Managing conflict between farmers and herdsmen within the intended area of study. The peace-building theory was adopted. This study adopted a case study research design. The research instrument used for data collection in this study was a semi-structured interview designed by the authors. The purposive sampling technique was guided in the selection of the participants. The thematic content analysis was adopted in analyzing the data according to the study objectives. The paper's findings show that the Interfaith Mediation Centre worked with security agencies, Farmers Association, and Cattle Breeders Association in promoting peace. The organization has experienced backlash from the two dominant groups of farmers and herdsmen who are dominantly Muslims and Christians. The paper is significant in the context of managing the conflict within Bauchi State. Thus, the paper concluded that the interfaith Mediation Centre has been effective in curbing violent conflict among farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State. Hence, the paper recommends that the interfaith mediation Centre should be strengthened financially to carry out its functions hitch-free; a report on dialogue should be utilized.

Keywords: Conflict management, Dialogue, Farmers/Herdsman, Interfaith, Mediation

1. Introduction

The Faith-Based Organization played a significant role in the management of conflict, mobilizing both religious and political leaders in promoting sustainable peace across the conflicting parties in the world. Faith-Based Organizations use their resources in encourages sustainable peace and also mediate the conflicting parties (UNESCO, Final Declaration, 2003). The primary objectives of Faith-Based Organizations are to provide relief materials to the victims of the conflicts and also promote a culture of peace (Saleh, 2020). More than sixty (60) Faith-Based Organizations in Israel facilitate mediation, negotiation, reconciliation, and dialogue among the warring parties (Flanigan, 2013). Faith-Based Organizations in Nepal conducted a community sensitization between Muslims and Hindu believers to inculcate the culture of peace (Owen & King, 2013). In African countries such as Somalia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Sudan religious interfaith groups play an important role in managing violent conflicts (Haynes, 2007). Particularly, Protestant and Catholic religious communities have been involved in several conflict management processes (Smock, 2006).

British colonial administration saw herdsmen as a threat to their colonial power. The colonial government considered a danger to their peace due to their power over farmers. To control their power, herdsmen were expected to pay tax on each cattle or animal and were also required to obtain written permission before moving their cattle (Toulmin, 1983). British colonial administration marginalized herdsmen and distanced them from power this resulted in their widespread groups into grazing areas (Kratli & Toulmin, 2020). In Africa, the conflict between farmers and pastoralists is not a new story (Chatwin, 1989). In recent years the conflict seems to surpass measures for addressing conflict between farmers and herdsmen but the prevalence of conflict has caused fighting between farmers and herdsmen (Norman, 2013). In Central and West Africa, a conflict between farmers and herdsmen are prevalent pervasive over a period of time. Socio-political and environmental degradation have shifted tensions amongst farmers and herdsmen, increased farmers migration, forced displacement, and livestock outputs, leading to violent conflict, erosion of inter-communal relationships, as well as the destruction of local agriculture (Mercy Corps, 2015).

Nigeria is a multi-religious society such as Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion which frequently confronted with disagreements over beliefs. Most of the herders are predominately Muslims while Christians are dominantly farmers. In 2016, more than 3541 people were kill, over 309 people was wounded, more than 4900 houses were destroy, and 180530 people have been displace in the clash between farmers and herders (Amnesty International, 2018). The prevalence of violent conflict in Northern Nigeria specifically among herdsmen and farmers has caused many community outcries. The violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen have interrupted the agricultural production, and state economy of the state (Saleh, 2020). The consequential, effect has directly influenced the high poverty, hunger, insecurity, criminality, and corruption among other sufferings. Thus, this violence conflict between two groups has adversely affected economic, political, and security development in Bauchi State.

The reoccurrence of conflict between farmers and herdsmen has caused a public outcry in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The farmers and herdsmen conflict has resulted in a reduction in the income of farmers as well as the destruction of crops by the herdsmen. Research confirmed that conflict between farmers and herdsmen leads to the destruction of crops, disputes over access to land resources, and cattle rustling among others (Mercy Corps, 2016). The conflicts have adversely affected food security, rural agricultural development, economic welfare of people, and food supply among others (Garba et al., 2014; Ofuoku & Isife, 2009). Government is unable to act decisively in action or measure in addressing conflicts between farmers and herdsmen led to the establishment of the Interfaith Mediation Centre in order to manage the conflicts. Numerous studies have been conducted to comprehend the scale of conflicts between farmers and herders across the globe (Gofwen; 2004; Flanigan, 2013; Haynes, 2007; Sarah, 2014; Schefer, 2018; social science research council, 2018; Williams, 2019; McIntosh & Burkley; 2019; Owen & king, 2013). None of these studies, however, covered the activities of the Interfaith Mediation Centre in managing conflict between farmers and Herdsmen in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Therefore, the paper achieved the following specific objectives: the challenges facing the activities of Interfaith Mediation Centre and the positive indicators of Interfaith Mediation Centre in managing conflict between Farmers and Herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

1.1. Farmers' and herdsmen conflicts

Globally, human insecurity is the major challenge that directly caused cyber security threats, instability, regional conflicts, counter-terrorism, and economic conflict. More so, advanced developed countries were affected by the global economic crisis such as the decline in the global market and regional growth prospects (Schafer, 2018; William, 2019). Many countries across the world have been affected by violent conflicts and their economy was

declined from at least 40 to 70 percent of Gross Domestic Product. Moreover, globally the cost of the conflict was projected as \$ 15.3 trillion every year and poses a vital threat to the 2050 agenda (Schafer, 2018). The widespread violent conflict has affected political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions across all the boundaries (Social Science Research Council, 2018).

The third world countries such as Africa, and Latin America experienced a high level of armed conflicts, insurgency, and economic conflict among others (Gofwen, 2004). Many countries suffered from the effect of conflicts in terms of economic decline, displacement of the population, and GDP decline. However, countries like Tanzania, Kenya, and Nigeria countries with high levels of farmers and herdsmen conflict affected their economic GDP (McIntosh & Burkley; 2015). In Africa and the Middle East economic impact of violent conflict between 2011 to 2016 over \$ 1.50 trillion was lost while over one million people were killed (McIntosh and Burkley, 2015; Martins, 2014).

Most of the conflicts that occurred in the affected area such as Adamawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Benue, and Zamfara states reported that several villages were destroyed and many cattle were killed as well as farmers were displaced as a result of herdsmen attacks (Amnesty International, 2018). Other factors have been pointed out such as the rapid expansion of small farms, high level of banditry, lack of knowledge about grazing rule, lack of security, cattle rustling, climate change, high level of unemployment, desertification, disapproval of lands, water pollution, damaging of crops and farmlands by grazing cattle, intimidation of farmers by herdsmen and among others (Chukwuma et al., 2018; Mawoli & Adamu, 2020; Musa et al., 2014; International crisis group, 2017; Umoh, 2017).

In Taraba state, victims of herdsmen conflict resulted in the loss of many people during one of the attacks. Herdsmen slaughtered pregnant wives by force, many people were injured because of the attack. Yet, herdsmen continue a series of terror attacks without adequate security intervention (Amnesty International, 2018). The presence of aggression, hatred, and disagreement between different religious groups spurs the tension of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen (Dickson & Musa, 2020). Most of the conflicts escalate as a result of common problems, but religious affiliation come in, causing more divisions, and devastating farming and land disputes (Mercy Corps, 2016).

Ethnic affiliation influence the act of conflict against a specific set of groups (Tonah, 2006). Herdsmen and farmers do not share the same ethnic identity, there is a prevalence of conflicts among them. Herdsmen are mainly Muslims from the Fulani ethnic group who feels marginalized by the host communities comprising farmers dominantly are Christians (Mawoli & Adamu, 2020; Maiangwa, 2017). Herdsmen were discriminated against as the minority in the host communities' which led them to migrate from one community to another. They are excluded from the part of the community that organizes the farming population, they were marginalized and intimidated by the farmers' community. Herdsmen were marginalized because of their religion in some parts of Nigeria. This increase in the perception of religious diversity is more harm than good. Communities with different religions engage in more violent conflict than communities with similar religions, as an indication of the relationship between farmers and herdsmen Fulani herders (Adaeze, 2022).

At the beginning of the 2000s, several farmers were killed by the herdsmen in Nigeria. Sometimes, farmers killed herders' cattle, discriminate against each other, conflicted about scarce resources and how to share the resources, daily attacks, burning of rural areas, rape, and tension between farmers and herdsmen groups (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010). The conflict between the two conflicting parties is inevitable due to the lack of alternative of either retreating or surrendering (Kawu, 2016). In 2015, over 280 people died as a result of one attack by the Fulani herders in Benue state alone (Akinwotu, 2016). In April 2010, the Berom region in the Plateau State experienced several attacks by some suspicious herder. In Kuka Jenta some of the suspected attackers were

arrested and more than 5 houses and 6 vehicles were destroyed but no single life were lost in the incident. In May 2010, Berom attackers murdered herder at Tusung village of Barkin Ladi Local Government where, more than 2000 people lost their lives and thousands of properties across the area (Punch, 2015).

1.2. Ways of managing conflict between farmers and herdsmen

Islam is a religion of peace that has abolished oppression against one another and also condemned all forms of conflicts, violence, crisis, or riots, especially with the name of ethnicity and religion. Both farmers and herdsmen deserved all forms of protecting lives and their properties (Adaeze, 2022). Moreover, ethnicities and religion played a vital role in the conflicts because farmers and herders need strong feelings to secure and create defense mechanisms as well as collective identities to get together and protect their communities against any forms of attacks (Genyi, 2017). Trotta and Wilkinson (2019) state that religious actors greatly influence many people against hate speech, and embrace religious tolerance. Furthermore, the voice of religious actors in conflicts is very important; consequently, if religious leaders are silent in the process of peace then the conflict between farmers and herders will escalate. Moreover, conflict among them led to food insecurity and poverty (Raphiou et al., 2019). It is the ability of the affected communities' leaders to prevent and manage the recurrence of conflict according to effective communication between herders and farmers (Turnera et al., 2020).

The research found that religious intervention in the conflict between farmers and herders is likely to be weak when political influences are attached. People believed that Fulani herdsmen are imposing harm on farmers confidently because the president of Nigeria is from the same ethnic background as the herders. For an effective Faith-Based Organization to occur, intervention from political sentiment should be avoided (Adaeze, 2022). Kmec and Ganiel (2019) argue that the inclusion of religious leaders in the peace process could be helpful when they reject participating in political reconciliation that produces a peace agreement. Hence, religious actors emphasize that the limitations of Faith-Based Organizations in political negotiations could lead to effective faith-based dialogue.

National Interfaith Council was established in 1999, with aimed to foster peace and reconciliation across Nigeria. The organizations addressed the farmers' and herders' conflicts. In 2018, conflict occurred between the two parties in Benue state, more than 15 Christians and two pastors were killed by Fulani herders. This led to reprisal attacks by the youths against Hausa Muslims, more than 5 people were killed. This series of attacks preceded especially in the neighboring states. For the first time in more than four (4) years, National Interfaith Council addresses the issue. On 22 March 2018, more than 47 Muslims Imams and over 220 Christian leaders made up the summit to promote peaceful coexistence between farmers and herdsmen (Omotosho, 2014). Through the use of mediation tent, Faith-Based Organizations in Nigeria such as Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), Justice Development, and Peace Caritas have been deeply participated in fostering harmony, promoting peace, rebuilding trust in various communities in Nigeria (Kwaja, 2014).

International Non-governmental Organizations as third parties create room for the warring parties to talk and negotiate. For instance, the Swiss Organization carried out mediation activities among local organizations and community leaders in some parts of Nigeria. Local civil society organizations such as Miyyeti Allah Cattle Breeders Association and the All Farmers Association of Nigeria defend their groups' interest in the conflict, but they also participate in promoting peace between farmers and herders (Clingendael, 2019; Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, n.d.). To sustain the direct dialogue between farmers and herdsmen both religious and community leaders, as well as civil society organizations, should actively take part in the talks and present their communities' interests (International Crisis Group, 2017). In 2015, Search for Common Ground launched a

program that builds socio-cultural bridges amongst farmers and herdsmen in Plateau, Kaduna, and Nasarawa states. The program used mediation and dialogue as tools for peace building and strengthening intercultural understanding between farmers and herdsmen as well as supporting efforts toward conflict management or conflict resolution (Kwaja, 2014).

The Faith-Based Organizations adopted several approaches to managing conflict between farmers and herders across Northern Nigeria (Nwgavi, 2013). The engagement of religious leaders facilitates a lot in addressing conflict between farmers and herdsmen in various affected communities (Baca, 2015; Yusuf, 2008). Inter-religious groups played a vital role in addressing the conflict between farmers and herders. They also engage the conflicting parties in peace talk through negotiation, reconciliation, and mediating between the warring parties (Tsejeard et al., 2005; Kwaja, 2009). Wuye (2014) noted that faith-based organizations engage as peacebuilders among the warring parties, the organizations also serve as peace educators and also address ethnoreligious, a conflict between farmers and herders among others across Northern Nigeria and beyond. Interfaith Mediation Centre is working with Christian Muslims Peace Movement and other faith-based organizations including Women Christians Association and the Muslims Women Association to promote peace within the conflicting parties (Saleh, 2020). The activities of the faith-based organizations are to settle the dispute between conflicting parties, educate the community members on peace building and capacity building, engage the youth in problems solving workshops, train the youth in peace education, and others (Saleh, 2020; Princen 1992). Moreover, Smock (2007) noted that the interfaith dialogue help in promoting peaceful coexistence and also serves as an effective advocate for the prevention of religious conflict, and farmers and herders conflict mediation both locally and regionally.

2. Theoretical framework

Studies on the management of conflict have adopted some underpinning theories. These underpinning theories include the followings: theory of transformative mediation, cooperative model, human needs theory, ripeness theory among others. All the above aforementioned theories were not appropriate for this study. The reasons behind are as follows:

Burtens (1990) states that the human needs theory identified solving the basic needs of the warring parties will avoid conflict and promote peace. He also argues that improving basic needs has a direct link to a lasting solution to any conflict. Therefore, providing basic needs to opposing parties is a key to solving conflicts within communities. The human need theory has little application to the current study but farmers and herdsmen put their religious identity to achieve their communities' interests. Furthermore, the transformative theory is not applicable to this study due to the inability to provide a lasting solution to the conflict. Ripeness theory of conflict argues that decision-makers serve as intermediaries to mediate or negotiate conflict among the warring parties (Zartman, 2000). The theory has little application to this current study due to its subjective nature in reconciling the two parties' differences. Therefore, this study adopted peace building theory proposed by Lederach. Peace-building theory serves as a third-party intervention and it has three levels of actors in conflict management. Moreover, a peace-building theory is more suitable and will yield a better outcome.

Peace Building Theory Lederach (1997) divided the conflicting societies according to three actors: the first actors deal with governmental responsibility in protecting the people's properties and their lives at all levels. Furthermore, the primary responsibility of the government (politicians) is to engage in peace education, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation within the conflict zones. He also argues that the second actors dealt with NGOs. The civil societies engage in problem-solving workshops, training some youths, and women in promoting peace within various communities in such a way that the culture of peace spreads within the conflict

zones. The third actor influences the other actors in promoting peace. The third level of actors (grass-root) focuses on local leaders who became relevant in providing psychological work, prejudice reduction, and grassroots training in promoting the culture of peace within the conflict zone. The study predicted by peace-building theory explained that politicians, humanitarian actors (IMC), and local leaders played a significant role in addressing the conflict between farmers and herders within the state. This theory relates to the findings of the study based on three levels. The first and second levels of actors consist of political and religious leaders who are always in the position of negotiation and mediating the conflicting parties.

3. Research methodology

A case study research design was adopted in this paper. The case study research design is suitable for this topic of investigation because, qualitative research is about description, explanations, narration, and interpretation content which tends to assess the quality of things using words (Indrayan, 2008). Descriptive research design is the method that generally emphasized narration and explanations rather than measurement in the collection and analysis of data. It is generally inductive and interpretive (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Descriptive design guided this research through interviews to understand values, opinions, experiences, and feelings among others.

Bauchi State is located in the North East of Nigeria and has a total population of 4,643,066 as of the 2006 census (NPC, 2008). The southern part of the State is predominantly Christian and in the north is dominated by Muslim. The research population consists of the total number of elements (persons or objects) living in a geographical location and other characteristics as defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher (Indrayan, 2008). For this research, the population of the study is geographically confined to Imams, Church leaders, Interfaith Mediation Centre officials, Christian Muslims Peace Movement officials, community leaders, and Government officials with a total population of one hundred and seven (107) who were purposively selected as the target audience (National Population Commission, 2008). This sampling aims to select suitable sample elements or populations so that the focus of the study can be applied. In the case of study research, an effective sample selection technique is very important because an inappropriate method may hamper the outcomes of a study (Violeta & Dean, 2013).

The purposive sampling technique is one of the types of non-probability in which the respondents are been choose according to some criteria based on the topic under investigation (Violeta & Dean; 2013). A purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents. The purpose of adopting purposive sampling is to entail selecting the sample according to the judgmental principle who would be suitable for the study based on the established criteria (Kanupriya, 2016; Mugenda, 2003). Purposive sampling, also known as targeted or judgment sampling, is used by qualitative researchers to discover instances based on a predetermined set of criteria (Stephen et al., 2012). When using purposive sampling, a researcher uses his or her discretion to select the population of respondents who will take part in the study. In order to save time and money, it enables the researchers to address their target market directly and also generate a representative sample by exercising smart judgment. Additionally, the researcher eliminates replies that are irrelevant or do not meet the parameters of the study (Tadakaluru, 2020). Ten (10) participants were chosen purposively from this large population to represent the sample of the study. The sample size of ten (10) respondents was selected because of manageability and accessibility. Thus, the sample size enabled the phenomenon under study to be explored in detail for a better understanding.

The primary data was collected by using audio recordings and the interview guide for the respondents. After the researcher familiarize and visit the participants, a date was set for the actual data collection process. For

effective data collection, an audio recorder was used to record all the interview sessions. The researcher interviewed the participants of the study to get more in-depth data on conflict management. The research instrument used for data collection in this study was a semi structure interview and it designed by the researcher. The main data collection were primary and secondary sources. Semi-structured interviews for oral, focus group discussions and document analysis were used as methods of data collection. Oral interviews were used on government officials, Interfaith Mediation Centre Officials, local NGO for Christians Muslims Peace Movement officials, community leaders, pastors, and Imams, and women and youth leaders. The research assistant recorded the comment of each participant against the interview question while the researcher on the other hand became the moderator of the interviews. The method of data collection was the secondary source which include reports, and published and unpublished texts.

The researcher conducted a Focus Group Discussion with IMC officials and peace-building initiative stakeholders on matters of the activities of IMC in ethnoreligious conflicts and peace building. Therefore, 10 stakeholders residing in Bauchi State served in the focus group interview. During the focus group, discussion respondents were coordinated for the conduct of the interviews. The interviews lasted for two days where comments and opinions of the respondents were gathered for transcription. The final method of data collection is secondary literature which comprises relevant published and unpublished texts, reports obtained from the IMC office, governments, and other sources during the fieldwork. The data collected was analyzed based on the research objectives. Recorded data were transcribed, and categorized in line with the objectives of the research. The data was then subjected to chronological and thematic content analysis. On the ethical considerations, the researcher informed the purpose of the study and also sought the consent of the respondents before collecting the data. The researcher also assured and keep anonymity.

4. Data presentation and discussion

This section is devoted to the analysis of the data gathered from the respondents based on the interview conducted and the reports. The research raised some issues regarding the role of IMC in managing conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The section has also dealt with the positive indicators in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen as well as challenges faced by the Interfaith Mediation Centre in managing conflicts in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The responses are analyzed under the following themes:

4.1. Positive Indicators in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen

The study found that; the “Interfaith Mediation Centre engaged both herdsmen and farmers in training workshops in peace building and peace education” (Wuye, Ashafa, 2019). Another respondent in FGD added that IMC has done good work in mediating conflict between the livestock farmers and crops farmers in several places across Bauchi State. Moreover, the study findings confirmed that IMC has done quite a lot of work in so many places across the country (Focus Group Discussion, 2019). The above study corroborates with Wuye (2014) who established that IMC engaged in peace sensitization between the two groups; farmers and herdsmen in the Sanga community of Kaduna State where they signed the peace treaties in 2000-2008. Echoing the similar sentiments as the preceding respondent another interviewee stated;

“IMC worked in collaboration with government agencies, Farmers Association and Cattle Breeders Association in promoting dialogue between the farmers and herdsmen” (Aminu, 2019).

Revelation by the respondent coincides with the findings of the IMC report (2013) observed that IMC in collaboration with Search for Common Ground, Mercy Corps, and the two conflicting parties successfully organized the National Farmers/Pastoralist conference from time to time in addressing the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Northern Nigeria (IMC Report, 2013). The findings of this study are in line with Brewer et al., (2010) state that for achieving positive peace, Faith-Based Organizations played a vital role in dealing with the issues of mediation. He further argues that when religious groups ignored the presence of civil societies, peace processes are hindered. All the religious leaders promote a peace dialogue that will lead to a lasting solution between the farmers and herdsmen conflict in Nigeria. Another official from IMC added;

“The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria and All Farmers Association of Nigeria was to seek community voices with regards to causes and find lasting solutions to the unending conflict between farmers and pastoralists in the country. The following key presentations were made: Peace and conflict technology, Farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria, Alternative dispute resolution and the art of forgiveness” (Pastor David, 2019).

IMC worked with the Joint Action Committee, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, and All Farmers Association of Nigeria to ensure that it meets and acts upon these recommendations, including engaging in interventions to stop escalating tensions between farmers and herdsmen (Wuye, 2014). In essence, the peace-building theory has been applied as it encompasses dialogue not only between the conflicting herders and farmers but also between mediating groups. The peace-building theory is appropriate in this study because Interfaith Mediation Centre as humanitarian actors organized problems solving workshops and conferences for both the farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State. IMC worked with Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria and All Farmers Association of Nigeria in addressing the conflicts between the farmers and herders. The study found that creating water dams across Bauchi State for the herdsmen brings a lasting solution to the conflict. Moreover, the Bauchi State government created several cattle routes to manage conflict between farmers and herdsmen. Interfaith Mediation Centre worked with the government and grassroots level actors in promoting the culture of peace between farmers and herdsmen (IMC report, 1995). The findings are in line with peace building theory postulated by Lederach (1997) states that the first level of actors (government) played a vital role in addressing conflict between two groups of people (farmers and herdsmen).

4.2. Challenges of interfaith mediation centre in managing conflict

The study found that;

“Like other organizations, IMC is not exempted from hurdles that seem to affect its operation fully. For instance, the organization lacks sustainability in terms of funding (Pastor Wuye, 2019)”.

The above findings correspond with the work of the IMC Report (1999) revealed the main challenge affecting the organization was unable to undertake huge projects on peace despite the organization having garnered different support from other institutional funders such as the United State Institute for Peace (USIP) and United State Agency for International Development the demands surpass the supply of sponsorship that IMC receives. Another notable challenge owes to the misunderstanding that revolves around the mission of IMC. More often than not, the organization has experienced backlash from the two dominant groups of farmers and herders who are dominantly Muslims and Christians. An oral interviewee stated that since 1996, IMC has faced some challenges, for instance, people misunderstand the reason why Muslims and Christians are coming together. Some people have claimed that IMC is a fusion of religions that we are trying to amalgamate the two religions

calling it "CHRISLAM" (Pastor Wuye, 2019) In addition to the above statement one of the key participants said the following;

"Some people also misunderstood our mission as people who want to compromise our religious values by celebrating the other. In fact, initially, some young people issued a religious statement that we should not be listened to, that nobody should have anything to do with us, particularly the Muslim young people. He added that similarly, a few young people also on the Christian side were not comfortable with us working as an interfaith entity; some of them left the initial meeting of IMC (Pastor Samuel, 2019).

Sustaining trained community members and regular meetings have proved difficult owing to a lack of financial support for IMC/tolerance. Delay in the release of monthly funds from USAID affects the execution of IMC activities (IMC Report, 2013). Another respondent added that:

"IMC has challenges of funding, since 1995, we were on that point sometime supporting ourselves by paying the rent for our offices" (Imam Ashafa, 2019)".

The study also found that the Women Interfaith Network is yet to implement any of its action plans, due to a lack of funds and poor commitment by the members (Aminu, 2019). In essence, the peace-building theory has been reflected as it encompasses dialogue not only between the conflicting herders and farmers but also mediating groups which in this case is IMC in resolving the differences between farmers and herdsmen and embracing peaceful coexistence. Moreover, peace building theory Put more effort on capacity building and helped the IMC to work with other Faith-Based Organizations, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria and All Farmers Association of Nigeria in promoting peace between the farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State (Lederach, 1997; IMC Report, 2013).

The findings of this study revealed that IMC has played a vital role in mediating conflict between the livestock farmers and crops farmers in several places across Bauchi State and other parts of Northern Nigeria. Moreover, IMC has done quite a lot of work in so many places across the country. The above findings are supported by Punch Newspaper (2009) which revealed that the British Council in collaboration with Nigeria Reconciliation Project encouraged herder and farmers" dialogue through various local initiatives. Likewise, USAID hosted and sponsored a conference on herdsmen-farmers dialogue including the warring parties and others interfaith groups (Leadership newspaper, 2015). A notable challenge, however, owes to the misunderstanding that revolves around the mission of IMC. More often than not, the organization has experienced backlash from the two dominant groups of farmers and herders who are predominantly Christians and Muslims, respectively. However, in corroboration with the study findings, IMC Report (2013) showed that delay in the release of monthly funds from USAID affects the execution of IMC activities across Northern Nigeria.

The study also found that there was a clash between farmers and herdsmen in Tafawa Balewa of Bauchi State on several occasions. From 1997 to 2009 report has shown over 325 incidents of violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen across Nassarawa, Plateau, and Benue states (Amaza, 2016). Moreover, the findings of this study also revealed that IMC encourages herders-farmers dialogue through various local initiatives in promoting peace within the state and country at large. The findings supported by the USAID Report (2015) state that IMC has facilitated conflict mediation between farmers and herdsmen in Sanga of Kaduna and Plateau States. IMC worked with Search for Common Ground on conflict mitigation through capacity building of various Faith-Based Organizations, local Leaders AFAN and MACBAN in addressing the conflict between farmers and herdsmen (Jinelle, 2014). The Interfaith Mediation Centre was the most important factor in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen was proved to be true. IMC improved early warning and early response

systems towards minimizing conflict between farmers and herdsmen. IMC adopted a strategy for promoting a lasting solution to the unending conflict between farmers and herdsmen in the state. The peace-building theory that guided this study demonstrated that IMC influences top-down actors in the management of conflict. The theory precepts were in the application as the top, middle and grassroots actors facilitated the peace process within the conflict zones was achieved in Bauchi State.

5. Research implication

Theoretically, this paper has contributed by studying the influence of the Interfaith Mediation Centre in managing conflicts between farmers and herdsmen using peace building propounded by John Paul Lederach. This theory explains the three levels of actors. The first level of actors (government) actively engages both the conflicting parties and promotes peace within a community. The second level of actors (NGOs) IMC is one of the civil society organizations that work with different individuals, groups, and organizations as partners toward achieving peaceful coexistence. The third level of actors (community leaders) is involved in several conflict management within their respective communities. Interfaith Mediation Centre's effort is to promote a culture of peace.

Methodologically, this study has provided empirical pieces of evidence on the role of IMC in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria. It utilized semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions few reports and was supported by an empirical study. The data were obtained and generated through a heterogeneous sample of respondents to enhance the transparency and credibility of the data. Moreover, the study has identified practical challenges for the IMC in strengthening financially and carrying out its function hitch-free.

This study will significantly contribute to the government on the conflict management, particularly on the influence of the Interfaith Mediation Centre on promoting sustainable peace within a conflicting party. The study has thrown up various issues that will spur further research by scholars. It is expected that further research topics (influence of traditional leaders in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi state, government responses in managing farmers/herders conflicts in North East, a quantitative or mixed methods research should be conducted to explore in-depth information between farmers and herdsmen) will help for future academic research.

6. Conclusion and recommendation

The study concluded that IMC in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi by the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) located in Kaduna State. The paper examined the positive indicators adopted by the IMC in managing conflicts and the challenges facing the Interfaith Mediation Centre in the management of conflict between farmers and herdsmen across Bauchi. The study finding shows that IMC engaged in mediating farmers and herdsmen conflict in various places within Bauchi State. This study shows the similarities of cases in Kaduna and other parts of Northern Nigeria. The study also conclude that the IMC officials and interfaith groups played a vital role in addressing the farmers/herders conflict in Bauchi state. The positive indicators were also discussed. Among the activities of the IMC entails engaging in training between farmers and herders. Finally, the study concluded that Interfaith Mediation Centre should be strengthened financially to carry out its functions hitch-free as well as IMC report on dialogue should be continue utilized.

Bauchi State government should involve farmers/herdsmen unions and the community affected with relevant stakeholders to carry out campaign advocacy and sensitization to educate them on the importance of peace-building within the society at large. The Bauchi State government should create water dams for the

herdsmen; this would bring a lasting solution to the conflict. The government should create cattle routes to manage conflict between farmers and herdsmen. IMC should sustain its efforts in organizing workshops and conferences to find lasting solutions to the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

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