

Role of Chiefs in Managing and Resolving Resource Conflicts Between Farmers and Pastoralists in Ghana

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Introduction

- There is increase in the value of land in Agogo-Ghana and therefore increased competition because of commercialization, commoditization and expansion in agricultural activities.
- Increased competition for land resources (farming land, pasture land water) between farmers and pastoralists has resulted in violent conflicts in the area with many consequences (Fig.3 & Fig.4)¹.
- Despite this violence, chiefs have played active roles in preventing, managing and resolving resource conflicts between farmers and pastoralists.

Materials & methods

- Qualitative ethnographic study using interviews, narratives, participant observations and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). A total of 137 interviews and two FGDs were conducted.
- Specific Case studies of Kowereso community using the *Odikro*, *Zongo* Chief and the Fulani leaders.

Study Objective

The study examined the role of chiefs in managing violent resource conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Agogo in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, which has been a 'hub' of violent confrontations.



Study area

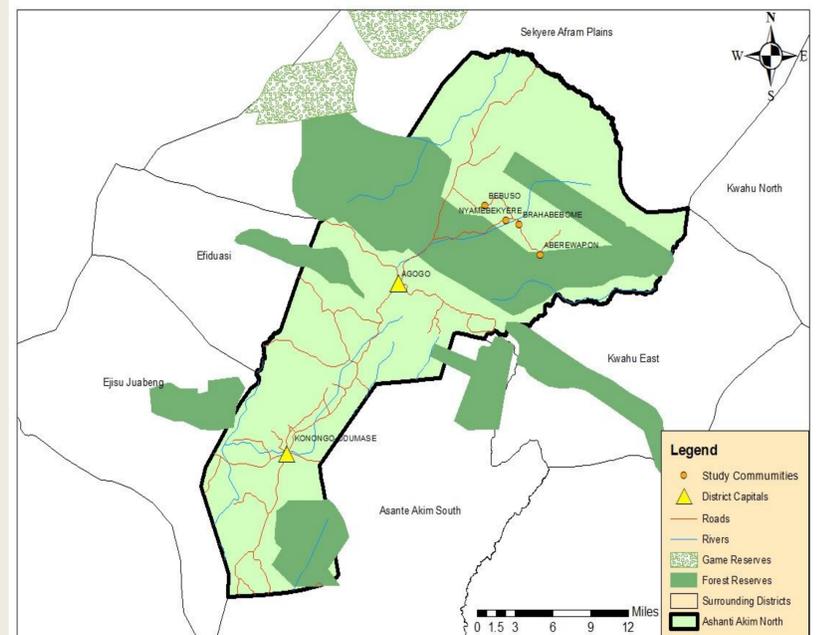


Fig.1: Map Of the Asante Akim North District showing the Agogo Traditional Area



Fig. 2. Destruction of Maize Farm by Fulani Cattle.



Fig .3. Fulani Cattle killed by Local Farmers.



Fig. 4. Chiefs are at the Centre of Settling Farmer-Pastoralist Conflicts.

Findings

- Chiefs as managers of community lands have final say in the acquisition and distribution of land as well as settling land disputes in the community.
- Pastoralists, farmers and community members see traditional chiefs as important in managing conflicts over land disagreements, land allocation and leases and mediating between them.
- They therefore prefer and resort to chiefs in settling cases (including violent ones) between them than the police and other government officials.
- They mediate the payment of compensation and determine its final payment by cattle owners to farmers. Their decisions on compensation payment is agreed by all farmers and pastoralists.
- Chiefs mediate over the use of resources such as land for pasture and the use of water bodies.
- Pastoralists' chiefs and cattle owners are also seen as crucial in restraining herders from organized attacks.
- Community chiefs (*Odikros*) daily prevents violent attacks in their communities.

Conclusions

- Traditional methods of handling violent farmer-herder conflicts where traditional chiefs, elders, cattle owners and local influential opinion leaders, are involved have remained useful in preventing violent escalation of conflicts.
- What is needed is for a legalized and formalized involvement of community chiefs in conflict management and resolution at the local/community level (Bottom-up Peace).

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References

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