

Effects conflicts on growth and development of businesses politics essay



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Conflict is an open clash between two opposing groups (or individuals).

Conflict is actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests,

Conflict has serious implications for development in countries affected by it, not only in terms of the difficulty of implementing development policies, but also because it leads to more poverty and lower growth, which are very serious root causes of conflict.

Conflict between the Mamprusi and Kusasi ethnic groups is long-standing over some decades and has resulted in sporadic and recurrent outbreaks of serious violence resulting in destruction of property and death on many occasions. Indeed the Bawku conflict brought into play a complex matrix of structural and contingent factors that makes the disaggregating of the events particularly difficult.

Hostilities between the Kusasi and Mamprusi is probably as old as the state of Mamprugu itself, since the town of Pusiga, less than ten miles distant from Bawku, was one of the first stopping places for the band of invaders who established the Mamprusi Kingdom.

Most recently, in December 2001, violence broke out following a dispute between a Kusasi and a Mamprusi at a lotto kiosk in the Sabongari section of the town. Subsequent tit-for-tat attacks led to at least 29 deaths and 36 serious injuries in the month of December alone.

The area in which the conflict occurred is ethnically heterogeneous and has one of the lowest income (80% living in extreme poverty) and literacy (26.3% of adults functionally literate) rates in the country. It is a relatively densely populated area with over 100 residents per kilometer. There is

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relatively strong religious (66%) and ethnic (64%) attachment by the populace. Voter consciousness is high and party affiliation (NDC, NPP and PNC) strong with 2000 voter registration figures of 95 per cent. (Source: 2000 population and housing reports) Additionally simmering disputes over the Bawku skin have persisted for years. A number of the protagonists have been brought before the courts, but to date no credible insights have been gained into the motivation for and execution of the attacks. A frequently cited study by Christian Lund provides further information concerning the history of conflict in recent decades, including overlapping issues of land ownership, ethnicity, chieftaincy and others, including the unresolved issue of the Bawku skin (signifying entitlement to the throne);

The skin is the symbol of chiefly authority in northern Ghana, equivalent to the stool in the south. It symbolizes the chieftaincy and the throne. When a chief is enskinned, he is seated on the skin of an ox sacrificed for the occasion. In normal parlance, chiefs who are forced to abdicate are destooled, not de-skinned.

Bawku has a long history as a flashpoint town in Ghana. In 2001, at least 28 people were killed there when factions clashed in another battle apparently sparked by a relatively small crime, the destruction of a small shop.

The international human rights group Amnesty International has expressed concern about the lack of political will to solve the crisis. The group said in a statement that the failure to resolve the conflict stems from a “ game of hurt no one in order to win all votes”.

An interview with the business community in Bawku revealed that some businessmen and women from Bawku have re-located their businesses to other parts of the region notably Bolgatanga and Zebilla.

While some traders felt secure doing business in Bawku, others said they did not, citing the general insecurity and the decline in commercial activities as their reasons.

The decline in business is further reflected in the assembly's revenue mobilization. It collected 507. 2 million cedis as against an estimated revenue target of 749. 3 million cedis at the end of December 2001.

The District Co-ordinating Director, Mr. Ibrahim Alhassan attributed the assembly's plight to looting of its coffers by revenue collectors in the wake of the conflict last December.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) seeking to bring peace to the area have been organising seminars, dialogues and brokered peace accords endorsed by the two main factions, the Kusasis and Mamprusis.

This year's United Nations (UN) day for peace and reconciliation was specially dedicated to Bawku to get the people to appreciate the need for peace the area.

Advocates for peace in the area have suggested the combination of extensive military tactics to retrieve arms and diplomacy and education to bringing lasting peace to the area.

1. 2 STUDY AREA

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE MUNICIPALITY

LOCATION AND SIZE

Bawku Municipality is one of the nine districts and municipalities in the Upper East Region of Ghana. It is located approximately between latitudes 11° 11' N and 10° 40' N and longitude 0° 18' W and 0° 6' E in the north-eastern corner of the region. The municipality has a total land area of about 1215.05 sq km. It shares boundaries with Burkina Faso, the Republic of Togo, Bawku West District and Garu – Tempene District to the north, east, west and south respectively.

The Bawku Municipal Assembly was established by LI 1738, 2004.

LEADERSHIP OF THE ASSEMBLY

Hon. A. A. Awuni – Presiding Member

Hon. MusahAbdulai – Municipal Chief Executive

Mr. P. K. Kuupol – Municipal Coordinating Director

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

LAND COVERAGE AREA

The Municipality has a total land area of about 1215.05 sq km.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

As with the whole of the Upper East Region, Bawku Municipality is part of the interior continental climatic zone of the country characterized by pronounced dry and wet seasons. The two seasons are influenced by two oscillating air masses. First is the warm, dusty and dry harmattan air mass which blows from the north easterly direction across the whole municipality from the Sahara Desert. During the period of its influence (late November – early March) rainfall is entirely absent, vapour pressure is very low (less than 10 mm) and relative humidity rarely exceeds 20% during the day but may rise to 60% during the nights and early mornings. Temperatures are usually modest at this time of the year by tropical standards (26 0c – 28 0c).

May to October marks the wet season. During this period, the whole of the West African sub-region including Bawku Municipality is under the influence of a deep tropical maritime air mass. This air mass together with rising convection currents, provide the Municipality with rains.

The total rainfall amounts to averagely 800mm per annum. A striking characteristic of the rainfall worth noting is the extreme variability and reliability both between and within seasons. Another striking characteristic is the large quantity of rain water normally lost through evapo-transpiration from open water surfaces. An estimate of the volume of rain water loss varies from 1. 55mm to 1. 65mm per annum.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The estimated total population of Bawku Municipality is 205, 849. Its population density is 169 persons per square kilometer. The population of the Municipality constitutes about twenty percent of the Upper East Region's

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population and 0.99 percent of the Nation's population. The population is 20 percent urban and 80 percent rural. The dependency ratio is 1:1:25. About 55 percent of the population is outside the working group which constitutes a stress on the working population.

Household sizes in the Municipality are fairly large like it pertains in most parts of the country. According to the 2000 population census report, on the average there are seven persons per household. Though these large households could mean availability of labour, it has some financial implication in terms of feeding, healthcare, education, clothing etc. The large number of household therefore constitute economic burden.

POPULATION GROWTH RATE

The population growth rate of the Municipality is 1.1.

ETHNIC GROUPINGS

The predominant tribes in the Municipality are Kusasis, Mamprusis, Bissas and Moshies with Kusasis forming the majority followed by Mamprusis. However, there are quite a number of migrants from other parts of the country, especially the south (most of whom are civil servants) and the neighbouring countries like Togo and Burkina Faso. Ethnic heterogeneity has had implications for harmony in the Municipality. In the very recent past, there have been sporadic violent ethnic clashes between the Kusasis and Mamprusis. It is expected however, that inter-marriages among the diverse ethnic groupings will provide the impetus for peaceful co-existence. The predominant languages spoken in the municipality are Kusal, Mampruli,

Bissa and Moli. There are however quite a number of other languages spoken in the Municipality including Hausa, Ga, Gurune, and Twi.

EDUCATION

Education and literacy provide the opportunity for individuals to participate in a wider job market. In the Municipality, the standard of education is generally low as compared to that of the nation as a whole.

Though the Municipality has seen a lot of interventions in the construction of new school buildings, many schools are still accommodated in dilapidated structures with some children still receiving lessons under trees and unroofed pavilions.

Senior High School (SHS):- The Municipality has two (2) SHS, one Technical Institute, a Vocational Institute, Teacher Training College and a Nurses Training College. These institutions are opened to not only the Bawku Municipality but to the whole of Upper East Region and beyond.

HEALTH

The Municipal Health Management Team (MHMT) is headed by the Municipal Director of Health Services, assisted by Medical Assistants, Senior Nurses and Technical staff. Health care in the Municipality is provided through hospitals, health Centres, CHPS Centres and private clinics.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Conflicts are seen as a serious problem in our Ghanaian community and the world at large. The predominant types of conflicts in Ghana are so-called “

Chieftaincy Conflicts”, which are centred on the chieftaincy institution.

Relatively, the institution has survived the impositions of both the colonial and the post-colonial regimes that have included them within the boundaries of the modern states (see Nukunya (1992, 77-78).

A country that has experienced many major developmental programmes undoubtedly is contingent on peace and stability. However, regardless of all this serious conflict-free campaigns, the bawku municipality in the upper east region of Ghana is still saddled with series of conflicts which poses so many threats on life and properties.

People have ascertained that the root cause of the conflict lies on the fact that dubious and unscrupulous people in the area want to use the unsecured nature of the area to intentionally cause fear and panic in order to rob people off their properties. Secondly others are also of the view that the conflicts dwell largely on chieftaincy. Notwithstanding, others still ascertain that their differences in political ideologies, farmlands, celebration of festivals, the inability on the part of the Mamprusis to have their damba festival celebrated and as well perform the funeral of the late Naba Calipha among others are the cause of the conflict in the municipality which leaves in its wake hunger and poverty.

Generally, Chieftaincy disputes erupt when there are two or more rival claimants to a vacant „ stool” or „ skin”, the symbols of kingship or chieftaincy in the „ traditional” state. The rival claimants to such traditional authority may either belong to different ethnic groups or to different lineages of the founding family. These are exacerbated by direct as

well as discreet political interventions in chieftaincy affairs. For instance, when governments support loyal claimants to chieftaincy positions against less amenable ones - has led to tensions between traditional rulers and government officials on the one hand, and between rival claimants to chieftaincy positions on the other hand. So too have attempts by wealthy pretenders to gain the position on the basis of wealth and influence in society. Currently, it is estimated that there are over 100 chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, centred on ethnicity, succession to traditional political office and the struggle over land (Tsikata and Seini, 2004; 25).

In Ghana, the struggle to become a " Chief" may turn violent: when the historical, political, economic and social circumstances around the establishment of the chieftaincy institution in a traditional state become contested; when the rules of succession become unclear; when successive national governments and political parties support one group against the other in a bid to serve their own parochial political interest; and when there are small and light weapons available to the factions in the dispute.

However, though chieftaincy conflicts are largely localized (as the disputes occur within the boundaries of the traditional state), and the associated violence hardly spills over into neighbouring traditional states, the conflict's social, political and economic ripples become felt beyond the conflict zone.

Conflict has serious implications on development in countries affected by it, not only in terms of the difficulty of implementing development policies, but also because it leads to more poverty and lower growth, loss of lives, damage to properties, displacement of families, slows down development, among others.

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The puzzling question remains as to the effects, consequences, and what should be done to eliminate or mitigate the impact of it in our societies these days. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to determine the root cause and its effects on life, property and suggest ways of bringing peaceful resolution and settlement in the conflict prone areas in the Bawku municipality.

1. 4 Objectives and Aims

This study is about how chieftaincy conflicts can impact on the peace and socio-economic development and growth of businesses, Individuals, localities and countries.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main objective is to examine the effects of conflicts on the growth and development of businesses in the Bawku Municipality as well as to make recommendations to policy makers on the way forward.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

To examine the effects of the chieftaincy conflict on economic activities (commerce, agriculture and industry).

To examine the effects of the violence on livelihoods of people: seen in terms of the household poverty and employment opportunities.

Governance in terms of revenue collection and expenditure on security.

To determine the effects of the conflicts on health and education.

To make recommendations on how the conflict can be resolved/managed peacefully on a permanent basis.

1. 5 RESEARCH QUESTION

Is chieftaincy a possible cause of the conflict in the bawku municipality?

Does ownership of farmlands form part of the causes of the conflict in the municipality?

1. 6 Significance of the Study

My research on the effects of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict seeks to present empirical evidence that communal violence negatively affects the socio-economic development of local communities where they take place. This research will investigate the effects of the perennial violence in Bawku on the ability of the Municipal Assembly, the Local Council and the people of the area as a whole to mobilize resources to improve their well being. Apart from contributing to the knowledge base on effects of conflict, this research will provide a basis for policy making towards resolving and managing communal (ethnic and chieftaincy) conflicts

1. 7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

This research is expected to cover a period of one year and the associated limitations will be:

Financial constraints/difficulties to be able to cover the required people and place.

Inadequate and not straightforward answers or response from respondents is eminent or likely.

Risky to venture into homes of respondents who were/are badly affected as it reminds them of their unfortunate and unplanned past memories.

Answers/response will not be objective as respondents are/will be giving responses to favour their faction at the expense of the other faction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 0 Conflict has serious implications for development in countries affected by it, not

Only in terms of the difficulty of implementing development policies, but also because it

Leads to more poverty and lower growth, which are very serious root causes of conflict.

Chronic conflicts continue to exist and to devastate the lives and economies of the

People in the affected countries (and, to a lesser extent, on non-conflict-affected

Countries). Naturally, this has created a precarious and unpredictable

Environment that has not been conducive to fostering economic activities.

Ongoing incidents of violence since 2008 seem to indicate similarly localised and minor disputes can become the basis for inter-group conflict on a larger scale.

There are quite a few published works on the effects of conflicts on development in Ghana in general, but none on the effects of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict on the growth and development of businesses in the bawku Municipality. Recent literature on conflicts in Ghana has concentrated on the inter-ethnic and intra ethnic conflicts, since these are the dominant causes of conflicts in the country. A governance deficiency has been cited by some of these works as the cause of the recurring ethnic and communal violence in many parts of Ghana. (Akwetey, 1996: Lund, 2003: Jonsoon, 2007). Akwetey for instance argues that the absence of adequate democratic institutions is to blame for the recurring violence. Avenues for expressing interest and demands are non-existent. Christian Lund (2003), in an analysis of the longstanding ethno-political conflict between the Kusasi and the Mamprusi in Bawku, has argued that the politicisation of the Bawku conflict has affected government efforts to resolve the conflict. He asserts that a wide range of political- including party-political- and economic competition over chieftaincy, land, markets, names of places and other issues are cut to fit the ethnic distinction as conflicts over rights and prerogatives are rekindled accounting for the perennial violence.

According to Julia Jonsson (2007), in a crises working on Traditional leadership and ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana, asserts that the link between development and conflict in the region, exist on different practical levels: In the actors discourse in the socio-economic grievances they

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perceive as important in the causation of the conflict, through the effects of the fighting. She concludes that conflicts have disrupted the development of the region: destroyed its resources and development projects.

Moreover, according to Kusimi, et al. (2006), in a paper on conflicts in Northern Ghana, have expressed the view that violent clashes in that part of the country affect economic development (destruction of farms and produce; prevents cultivation of lands; disrupt economic activities; discourage investment, labour flow and tourism) (see also Brukum, 2007). They also assert that conflicts in the region affect educational levels and divert government's attention from tackling pressing national issues relating to development, to restoring peace and order.

In an article on the Guinea Fowl War of 1994 in the Northern Region, Emmy Toonen (1999) asserts that the conflict affected inter-ethnic co-operation in the region. Though the situation has improved, she claims that the Konkomba are still too afraid to enter Tamale, the regional capital where the Dagomba are the majority. She also claims that medical and educational facilities in the region were also affected.

Security has a direct impact on the levels of investment. The violence associated with the chieftaincy conflict in the Bawku municipality affects investments in the different sectors of the municipal economy. I present the data on the effects, sector by sector.

Agriculture: The violence resulting from the chieftaincy conflict adversely affects production, marketing and investment in agriculture, the dominant economic activity in the Bawku municipality. During outbreak of violence in <https://assignbuster.com/effects-conflicts-on-growth-and-development-of-businesses-politics-essay/>

the Municipality, farmers, especially those engaged in the cultivation of perishable foodstuffs such as watermelons and onions suffer heavy losses. Watermelons and onions are cultivated by irrigation and need constant tending. When violence breaks out, most farmers are forced to abandon their crops because they fear being either attacked or because of the curfew instituted by the government/security apparatus. Furthermore, the transportation networks are also disrupted during violent clashes and farmers are unable to transport their foodstuff to the market places. These results in the foodstuffs getting rotten on the farms, the markets are deprived of these produce, scarcity sets in while their prices soar in the Municipality and the country as a whole.

Commerce: Commerce, the second most important economic activity in the Bawku municipality, has also been negatively affected by the chieftaincy conflict. The officials from the Municipal Assembly asserted that, commercial activities as a whole is negatively affected by the perennial violence in the Municipality. The Assembly finds it very difficult to attract potential investors. Such activities as looting, robbery and the general lawlessness, which bring businesses to a standstill during violent clashes, scare away potential investors. The officials also cited the out migration of business people to other parts of the country as a direct effect of the perennial violence in the Municipality. Restricted movement, disruptions in businesses, the loss of capital through burning of houses and shops, and limited and selective business transactions (this means that people will normally not do business with members of the other side, this limits the market available to each

trader) were all cited by various respondents as effects of the violence which are disincentives to business in the Municipality.

Amidst these chaos and confusions and the general instability in the municipality pragmatic efforts have been put in place to take of the problem of which a few of those as have been kept in place by the central government and the leadership of the municipality are as seen below;

A number of security measures have been put in place to respond to the perennial violence from the chieftaincy conflict and to reassure people to go about their normal daily lives without fear. Some of these measures include the stationing of a rapid response Air-Borne Force and a significantly larger police force in the Municipality. These measures mean that central government and the municipal authorities have had to channel more resources into maintaining the military and police presence.

The Municipal Assembly spends GH¢25037 every month on the Air-Borne Forces (source; municipal chief executive). In addition, the municipal assembly pays their communication, health, and fuel bills.

Some other steps towards mitigating this conflict and its influence in our society, businesses and the world at as suggested by (source; Emmanuel bombande-executive member of wanepb) are as follows;

(a) the need for effective dialogue by the various stakeholders; (b) the equal distribution of farmlands and other resources; (c) the rightful „ ownersâ€™ should be allowed to occupy the „ Skinâ€™; (d) political parties should stop interfering in the chieftaincy conflict; (e) the Regional House of Chiefs or the

National House of Chiefs are the appropriate authorities to resolve the conflict; and (f) the need for education and understanding. Some pessimists who enjoy pleasure in war argue that the conflict cannot be resolved and suggested that the two sides should be allowed to fight until one faction emerges victorious and asserts dominance

3. 0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The researcher will base his methodology on the following:

Population of the area

Sampling design

Sampling techniques

Data collection techniques

Population of the area

The estimated total population of Bawku Municipality is 205, 849. Its population density is 169 persons per square kilometer. The population of the Municipality constitutes about twenty percent of the Upper East Region's population and 0. 99 percent of the Nation's population. The population is 20 percent urban and 80 percent rural. The dependency ratio is 1: 1: 25. About 55 percent of the population is outside the working group which constitutes a stress on the working population.

Household sizes in the Municipality are fairly large like it pertains in most parts of the country. According to the 2000 population census report, on the average there are seven persons per household. Though these large households could mean availability of labour, it has some financial implication in terms of feeding, healthcare, education, clothing etc. The large number of household therefore constitute economic burden.

POPULATION GROWTH RATE The population growth rate of the Municipality is 1. 1.

Sampling design

The researcher will use an interview process and personal observation in gathering the information. Interview is a personal or one on one interaction between an interviewer and his targeted respondents on an issue where the interviewer has a predetermined motive whereas observation is the personal foresight of how things will go like.

Sampling techniques

The researcher will use simple random sampling where respondents from both factions will have equal chance of being selected for questioning.

Data collection techniques

The researcher will use the primary data in gathering his information. With the primary data, the researcher gathers his information through personal encounter and observation of the situation.