



PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS OF RADIO BENUE IN AWARENESS CREATION ON THE ANTI-OPEN GRAZING PROHIBITION LAW OF BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study is on the perceived contributions of Radio Benue in awareness creation on the anti-open grazing law of Benue State. The study seeks to ascertain the contributions of radio broadcasting in promoting the anti-open grazing law of Benue state through awareness creation. The study adopted the survey research method using questionnaire as the main instrument of data collection and 400 respondents were sampled. Based on the results from the field, the study found out that security watch and issues of the moment as the programmes identified on Radio Benue programme that promotes the anti-open grazing law campaign of Benue State. The study also found out that Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign is effective and that the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State includes reduced herders/farmers crisis, create room for farmers/herders cordial relationship and promotes ranching to open grazing in Benue State. The study therefore concluded that the "Perceived Contributions of Radio Benue in creating awareness on Anti-Open grazing Law in Benue State in that Radio Benue Makurdi has been effective in promoting the anti-open grazing law of Benue State. The study recommended among other things that radio and television stations should promote all anti open grazing prohibition laws programmes; and Radio Benue programe producers should also increase the number of security watch/issues of the moment to be aired per week.

Keywords: Radio, Anti-open grazing, Law and Agenda Setting Theory.

INTRODUCTION

More recently, Nigeria have been witnessing a continued expansion of conflict between farmers and the pastoralist, the traditional cattle-herders who have grazed their herds in the semi-arid regions for centuries. With the changing ecology and security environment following the creation of colonial Nigeria, herders were able to move south and exploit the rich grazing of the higher rainfall zones. This was made possible by a reduced fear of attacks on herds and veterinary advances, protecting the cattle against the trypanosomes, which had previously kept them out (Thébaud, 2017). However,

this large-scale migration southwards was peaceable, and the government of Nigeria, both under the British and in the post-Independence era, made efforts to facilitate the process by demarcating cattle routes and establishing grazing reserves. Since Nigeria has a very large urban sector which requires both meat and dairy products, this was largely seen as beneficial to the overall economy (UNEP, 2011).

Importantly, Alaigyu, (2019) states that radio broadcasting has a great role in creating environmental education in every society, because environmental problems are escalating with the ever increasing rise in population, there is an urgent need to preserve the environment and improve it qualitatively forward and future generations. According to Charles, (2017); Prathap, & Ponnusamy, (2006). The growing concern for herder-farmer's issues is also evident from the fact that many national and international reports, conferences, campaigns, organizations had frequently come up for protecting and banning activities that endanger all human environment. According to Neil, Liam & Jessica, (2011), the mass media serve as a platform for the public to individually and collectively engage government in the formulation of policies and law-making for the general good of citizens.

This is possible with the unfettered access radio offer. Jimoh, (2017) noted that mass media are seamless and boundless regarding interactions, interrelationships, and information sharing and exchanges. Generally, the anti-open grazing law entails, prohibits, and establishes the potential legal and social implications for the Law's implementation. According to Touré, Ickowicz, Wane, Garba and Gerber (2012) As stated in the legislation, the overall purpose of the Law was to achieve six goals: (i) prevent the destruction of crop farms by open grazing; (ii) prevent clashes between nomadic livestock herders and crop farmers; (iii) protect the environment from degradation and pollution caused by open rearing and over grazing of livestock; (iv) optimize the use of land resources in the face of overstretched land and increasing population; (v) prevent, control, and manage the spread of disease and enhance the production of high quality and healthy livestock for local and international markets. Prior to the sponsorship of the executive bill and its attendant assent by the Benue State government, the public had generally advocated for a legal instrument to address the menace of open grazing by herdsmen on Benue farmers in particular (Sidiqat & Lawal 2012). Therefore, when the executive bill was finally sponsored it generated some controversies during legislative



consideration. On her part, the state government appeared indisposed in signing it into law. Members of the public construed the inexplicable intrigues as an affront to their sensibilities (Joseph, 2017). This was greeted with intense and fierce social media attack. Evidently, some civil society movements including Movement against Fulani Occupation, MAFO, Vanguard Against Tiv Massacre, VATIM, and the Tiv Diaspora Forum, TDF exploited social media presence to champion the anti-grazing cause by pressuring the state government to expedite action on the bill. By implication, using all available means of communication, both social media and the traditional platform of communication, these groups opened a new vista for public debate on the policy. It also prompted other citizens in the vanguard of 'herdsmen-must-go or at best be ranched' to make informed input on the consequences of open grazing (Neil et'al, 2011).

In light of the growing demand for legislative solutions to the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria and Benue State in particular, this policy brief examines the implications of the Benue State Open Grazing Prohibition Law on relations between farmers and herders and its effects for neighboring states. However, the above facts still remains an understudy which this research is yet to filled, hence, the study seeks to ascertain how Radio Benue, Makurdi has contributed in awareness creation on the Anti-open-grazing Law of Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Over time, there has been a growing light of the demand for legislative solutions to the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria and in Benue State in particular which to this effect, the 2017 Benue State Open Grazing Prohibition Law on relations between farmers and herders and its effects for neighboring states. The 2017 Open Grazing Prohibition and Establishment of Ranches Law was greeted with both support and opposition. Those that support the legislation have gone so far as to label it the best antidote for farmer-herder conflict in the state. Whereas, those that oppose it claim that the law is discriminatory against herders, does not provide or support the production of alternative livelihoods, and effectively evicts herders from the state (Onkargouda, Shilpa, & Namrata, 2013). Despite the conflicting responses, the Open Grazing Prohibition Law went into effect on November 1, 2017 (United Nations Environment Programme, (UNEP, 2011). Contrarily, Stewart, Dubow, Hofman, & Van Stolk, C. (2016), are of the opinion that the

transition from open grazing to ranching necessitates a shift in worldview for the herding community away from their traditional social relations and lifestyle. So far, the Benue State Government has not developed incentive structures to entice herders into ranching or provided the veterinary and feed distribution facilities needed to help herders transition from open grazing to running a ranch as reported, thus this study is set to close this gap through an empirical investigation of the perceived contributions of Radio Benue in creating awareness in anti-open grazing law or otherwise.

Objectives

The broad objective of this study is “Perceived Contributions of Radio Benue in creating awareness on Anti-Open grazing Law of Benue State. Specifically, the study intends:

- i. To identify Radio Benue programmes that promote anti-open grazing Law Campaign of Benue State
- ii. To ascertain the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on anti-open grazing Law Campaign in Benue State
- iii. To establish how anti-open grazing law has contributed in reducing herders/farmers crisis in Benue State

Research Questions

This question is therefore guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are Radio Benue programmes that promote anti-open Grazing Law campaign of Benue State?
- ii. What is the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on anti-open Grazing Law campaign in Benue State?
- iii. How has the Anti-open Grazing Law contributed in reducing herders/farmers crisis in Benue State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law in Benue State

It was in response to growing violence in Benue State and the wider Middle Belt region, the Benue State Government passed the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017. The Law prohibits open rearing and grazing of livestock and calls for the establishment of ranches and livestock administration, regulation, and control. The law entails, prohibits, and establishes; and the potential legal and social implications for the Law's



implementation. As stated in the legislation, the overall purpose of the Law was to achieve six goals: (i) prevent the destruction of crop farms by open grazing; (ii) prevent clashes between nomadic livestock herders and crop farmers; (iii) protect the environment from degradation and pollution caused by open rearing and over grazing of livestock; (iv) optimize the use of land resources in the face of overstretched land and increasing population; (v) prevent, control, and manage the spread of disease and enhance the production of high quality and healthy livestock for local and international markets; and, (vi) create a conducive environment for large scale crop production (Joseph, 2017). In order to achieve this agenda, the Law restricts the free movement of cattle and requires that livestock be bred in ranches. The Law vests authority for its implementation in the Livestock Department of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Practically, the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law is closely linked to Nigeria's Land Use Act of 1978, which vested authority of land administration within the state governors. The authorities' structure and the legal precedence of this legislation has served as the legal precedence for the Open Grazing Prohibition Law and for similar potential legislation elsewhere in Nigeria. While the Land Use Act of 1978 provided the legal precedence for state governors to establish laws dictating how land is distributed within their states, it also provides that there must be means of recourse for the revocation of land rights by the state. However, according to the provisions of the Anti-open Grazing Prohibition Law the ranching lease and permissions granted maybe revoked without the payment of compensation to the leasee. Further, while the Livestock Department is responsible for issuing and approving ranching permits, the State Governor has the ability to with draw ranching rights for a variety of reasons, including "overriding public interest. (Sidiqat & Lawal, (2012).

Grazing Reserves and stock routes

According to Joseph (2017), the colonial and early Independence era saw the establishment of system of grazing reserves and stock routes, intended to create spaces for pastoralists and thereby minimize conflict. These systems have been maintained for a long time, and broadly speaking have been respected. Unfortunately, however, legal responsibility for maintaining the stock routes was given to the states. In many cases the states have rejected even the concept, claiming they have no mandate to support what are essentially Federal regulations. A functioning system of stock routes is an

essential tool in reducing conflict between herders and farmers and with the rise in human population has become more important, not less. If such a network was fully functional it would be a valuable tool in reducing conflict, but unfortunately, these routes exist only in theory in many places. Since the states are controlled by politicians elected by farmers, they have little interest in maintaining the system and in some cases have openly declared they do not accept it. Taking a practical example in the Northern central region, Nasarawa State has several grazing reserves, some developed, others existing in name only. The most important of these is Keana, Southeast of Lafia, which at one time benefited from World Bank investment. Often the reserves were sited in places where there were few or no farmers.

Implications of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law for Farmer-Herder Relations

The initial reactions and concerns expressed via traditional and social media have illustrated some of the underlying rifts girding the implementation of the Law. Based on this assessment of the reactions and the legal considerations, this section will discuss the various implications that the continued implementation may have on farmer-herder relations in Benue and the Middle Belt, especially if similar legislation is enacted in neighboring states

Economic Implications: The prohibition of open grazing and the continued transfer of the herders out of Benue State will have economic consequences for the state economy. Many people in Benue rely on livestock for food and industrial uses and as the number of herders leaving the state rises, the prices of livestock will continue to increase (Jimoh, 2017).

Identity Implications: From an identity stand point, the law prohibits open grazing, which almost exclusively is done by Fulani herders, and places stringent conditions on non-indigenes to apply for ranching leases. The discrepancy in terms of how the law applies to indigenes and non-indigenes has heightened the perception that the law is discriminatory to persons that are not indigenous to Benue State.

Legal Implications: The legal implications of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law are two fold, the enforcement of the legal specifications and challenges to the constitutionality of the Law. Throughout November 2017, there was inconsistent enforcement of the law outside of Makurdi, the Benue State capital.

Security Implications: First, the Benue Trough is a popular destination for both transhumant and Nigerian herders migrating within the country. As the



Open Grazing Prohibition Law is implemented, it proposes that migratory access for these herders along this corridor will be denied. Movement into the Benue Trough is busiest between December and February when water resides significantly in other grazing hubs like the Bogoro-Azare axis in Bauchi state.

Review of Empirical Studies

A study was done by Chukwuemeka Aduma & Eneh, (2018) on "The Logic of Open Grazing in Nigeria: Interrogating The Effect on Sustainable Development. This study sets out to examine the implications of open grazing system on sustainable development in Nigeria. It was necessitated by the unprecedented burning of houses, killing and maiming of farmers across different blocs of Nigeria. The study adopted ex-post facto research method. And content analysis method was used as analytical tool. An in-depth survey was carried out adopting focus group discussion, face- to- face interview to complement data got from records. The study revealed among others that pastoralists perceive cattle breeding as government business which should take preeminence over other agricultural activities in Nigeria. Any slightest attempt to manhandle their cattle leads to violent conflict between herders and farmers. In the light of the findings, the following major recommendations were proffered. They include: building of ranches in lieu of the proposed cattle colony. The question is who will provide land? It is also recommended that effective regulation of grazing and farming activities in Nigeria through efficient land use laws/regulations and administration. In another study, Ahmed-Gamgum, (2018) carried out a study on "Herdsman and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria: Another Dimension of Insecurity". The objective of the study is to understand the rationale and how specific perennial conflicts between herdsman and famers in Nigeria are being resolved before 2019 election in Nigeria to enable the people to resume normal life. In doing this we critically examined the perspectives of the disputants and the policy adopted by Federal and some State Governments to resolve it. The study collected data from both primary and secondary sources. And the technique of "content analysis" was used in analyzing the data. This study found that the conflicts created tension not only in areas where there was direct confrontation between the disputants but the conflicts terrorized every community and put them on alert to ensure that both short term and long solution was provided to return the State to a violent free community. Some State Governments made specific policies which include intergroup committees and or after due process of law making in a democratic society, presented open grazing prohibition and

establishment of ranches laws to guide behaviors and the resolution of future conflicts that may arise between farmers and herdsmen in their respective States. Yet pocket of threats to life and property continued in some parts of the country to ensure the laws are not enforced and “cattle colonies” were established instead. The study recommends that both parties to the dispute should continue to exercise restraints, and obey Government policy/law by using institutional approaches to resolve grievances. And a stop should be put to the destruction of life and properties.

Theoretical Framework

The proposition of Agenda-Setting Theory dates back to Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw (1968)'s study on the 1968 presidential election in North Carolina titled 'Chapel Hill Study'. In their research, McCombs and Shaw determined the degree to which the media sways public opinion. The major propositions of this theory are that there is a correlation between what news viewers watched and their perception of important events, mass communication is the process whereby professional communicators use technological devices to share messages over great distances to influence large audiences and that the more the media plays a story, the more accessible that story is to the viewer's mind. The Agenda setting can be described as a process through which certain issues are more significant than others. McQuail (1994) explains that the media provide relevant attention to issues in news coverage by influencing the rank order of public awareness of issues and attribution of significance, which, in effect could influence public policymaking. In practice, the perception of many communication scholars is that media system in developing countries often emphasizes certain issues, with only some light coverage, and others rarely mentioned them or totally neglected such issues Peterson, (2003). By influencing media users to focus on a selected agenda and think in a certain way, the news media are thought to be engaged in what can be called indirect government interventions. This reduces them to mere propaganda machine of incumbent governments to distribute political power among societies. According to Peterson (2003), people's opinion of reality are entirely contingent on the information available to them. It is therefore important to identify the agenda's and forms used by media system in order to understand what and how environmental issues are effectively covered. This theory is relevant to this study simply because the perspectives on agenda-setting have direct effect on the audience, also this effects does not give the audience the free will to learns same facts about the



“environment” from the media agenda, but also learns how much importance to attach to those facts on the basis of the emphasis placed on them by the news media.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative survey research method was employed for this study using the entire Benue State as area of the study. Survey design according to Forrett & Galapago (2010) represents one of the most common types of quantitative, social science research. The study employed the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The population for the study is the entire population of Benue State. Data released by City Population (CP, 2020) Benue State, holds that, the population of Benue State is put at five million seven and forty one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, (5,741,815). This forms the population for this study.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the study is 400 and it was determined using the sample size determination formula Taro Yamane. Taro Yamane’s formula was applied as the population of the study is said to be greater than 10,000 (>10,000).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n (Sample Size) = N (Total Population)

E = Margin of Errors allowed.

Substituting the value therefore,

$$N = \frac{5741815}{1 + 5741.815 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{5741,815}{1 + 5741,815 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{500.400}{287,090.75}$$

$$n = 400$$

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One:

Table 1: Radio Benue programme that promotes anti-open grazing law

Options	Response	Percentage (%)
Security watch.	230	62.63
Issues of the moment	150	39.47
None of the above	-	-
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

By implication, the above analysis can be interpreted that security watch and issues of the moment as the programmes identified on Radio Benue programme that promotes the anti-open grazing law campaign of Benue State.

Research Question two:

Table 2: Effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State

Options	Response	Percentage (%)
Reduced herders/farmers crisis in Benue State	200	52.63
Create room for farmers/herders cordial relationship.	113	29.73
Promotes ranching to open grazing.	67	17.63
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State includes reduced herders/farmers crisis, create room for farmers/herders cordial relationship and promotes ranching to open grazing in Benue State as seen above.



Research Question Three:

Table 3: Whether anti-open grazing law been able to reduce herders/farmers crisis in Benue State

Options	Response	Percentage (%)
The anti-open grazing law has been able to reduce herders/farmers crisis in Benue State.	216	56.84
The anti-open grazing law have not reduce herders/farmers crisis in Benue State.	164	43.15
All of the above	-	-
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above table shows that 216(56.84%) of the respondents said the anti-open grazing law have been able to reduce herders/farmers crisis in Benue State, 164(43.15%) of the respondents said the anti-open grazing law have not been able to reduce herders/farmers crisis in Benue State. The anti-open grazing law of Benue State have been able to reduce herders/farmers crisis.

Discussion of Findings

It was also discovered that security watch and issues of the moment as the programmes identified on Radio Benue programme that promotes the anti-open grazing law campaign of Benue State. Where data in table 6 shows that 230(62.63%) of the respondents identify security watch as one of the programmes on Radio Benue programme that promotes the anti-open grazing law campaign of Benue State 150(31.57%) of the respondents also identified issues of the moment as one of the programmes on Radio Benue programme that promotes the anti-open grazing law campaign of Benue State. The above findings is in line with the findings of Jimoh, (2017) & Neil, Liam and Jessica, (2011), when they argued that the mass media serve as a platform for the public to individually and collectively engage government in the formulation of policies and law-making for the general good of citizens. The study also found that Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign is effective and that the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State includes reduced herders/farmers

crisis, create room for farmers/herders cordial relationship and promotes ranching to open grazing in Benue State as seen above. Where table shows that 200(70.26%) of the respondents said the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State is reduced herders/farmers crisis in Benue State while 133(29.73%) of the respondents said the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State is the create room for farmers/herders cordial relationship the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State is promotes ranching to open grazing

The above findings supported the findings of Vibha, (2015), when he concluded that radio broadcasting play an important role in forming the positive attitudes of the public towards the environment and media's role in increasing environmental awareness of the population is an enormous one as it reaches a vast percentage of India's complex society. There is now a question whether modern education as provided would adequately equip the young generation to take up the future challenges of the technology-driven, environmentally-degraded globalized world. Aseen Khan (2016), also collaborated the above view when he mentioned that the role of the radio broadcasting raised community concerns and commitment for social and environmental issue is a very critical one as well as awareness creation for the protection of the environment and the sustainable use of finite resources are matters that directly concern each citizen. The media can be an instrument in breaking the silence that surrounds the environmental problems and in creating an environment that encourages discussions of how the community can participate and change their behavior.

CONCLUSION

The study therefore concludes based on research findings, that the "Perceived Contributions of Radio Benue in creating awareness on Anti-Open grazing Law in Benue State in that Radio Benue Makurdi has been effective in promoting the anti-open grazing law of Benue State. The study also concluded that the effectiveness of Radio Benue programmes on the anti-open grazing law campaign in Benue State includes reduced herders/farmers crisis, create room for farmers/herders cordial relationship and promotes ranching to open grazing in Benue State.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on research findings, the following recommendations are given:

- (1). The study recommends that radio and television stations should promote all anti open grazing prohibition laws programmes; and Radio Benue programme producers should also increase the number of security watch/issues of the moment to be aired per week.
- (2) The Government of Benue State through its ministry of environment set up a formidable taskforce on environment and forestry patrol to improve the security situation in Benue State and to forestall future recurrent of farmers/herders crisis.
- (3) The study also recommend that programme producers should conduct intensive one on one research with farmers/herders before they produce anti grazing law programmes for optimum results.
- (4) The study will also recommend that Radio Benue content producers should create a feedback mechanism channel where respondents/audience feedback would analyzed for optimum results, as this will help for both personal and collective development and peace in Benue State and beyond.

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