

Group Communication as an Effective Tool in the Management of Farmers/Herdsmen Crisis in Southern Kaduna - Nigeria.

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Abstract

Communities across the world have faced a growing number of challenging events in the recent time, such as violent attacks, terrorism, oil spillage, riots, and water crisis that have brought untold hardship to the people, especially the poor masses. Recently, there have been escalations of reported attacks by herdsmen who brutally killed natives of farming communities, including women and children in various states across the country. Nonetheless, a lot of factors can be attributed as causes of the crises. Some of these factors include religious differences, breakdown in farmers and herdsmen relationship, intolerance, self-interest, unemployment and poverty. Hence, the present article aims to examine the potentials of group communication in bringing the farmers and herdsmen in Southern Kaduna together as a group in view of managing the lingering crisis between them. Through conceptual analysis of relevant literature, the paper argues that, despite all the causes of the crisis, there are various ways of tackling them, including proper communication strategy. Thus, it concludes that, when parties in crisis are educated and equipped with group communication skills, a peace-building process would achieve its desired goal. Therefore, among others, the paper recommends that, the State Government should strive to initiate a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to heal the already existing open wound between the Farmers and Herdsmen. Also, the leaders of Farmers, as well as the Herdsmen in Southern Kaduna need to accept and embrace the challenge to dialogue as a group for finding lasting solutions to the lingering crisis in the region.

Keywords: Crisis, Group Communication, Farmers, Herdsmen, Management, Participatory, Southern Kaduna.

Introduction

Communities across the world have faced a growing number of challenging events in recent times, such as violent attacks, terrorism, oil spillage, riots, and water crisis that have brought untold hardship to people, especially the poor masses. The high rate of killings experienced in some parts of Southern Kaduna of Nigeria by armed bandits for over two years now has crippled the social,

economic, agricultural, educational, religious and other activities in the region. Southern Kaduna as a geographical entity and region has a unique, large, fertile environment conducive for arable and livestock farming. Writing about the region Bagobiri (2017) states that

For the record, Southern Kaduna senatorial District is made up of Eight (8) Local Government areas: Sanga, Jema'a, Kaura, Jaba, ZangonKataf, Kagarko, Kachia and Kauru. These Local governments are densely populated by Christians. This land, fertile and agrarian, is blessed with adequate rainfall enough to make our crops yield bounteously. The beautiful hills and valleys are a sight to behold (p. 153).

Thus, the territory contains a mixture of over thirty (30) ethnic nationalities, including: Atyap, Attachirak, Tsam, Kagoma, Fantswam, Adara, Akurmi, Minkyop, Agbiri, Amap, Bajju, Ham, Ikulu, Koro and others, all of which are predominantly Christian. The area is of historical interest due to its development over the centuries in relation to the more politically organized emirates of Zazzau and Bauchi to the North and Keffi and Kontagora to the south (Madaki, 2017 cited in Gudaku, 2017).

Unfortunately, Southern Kaduna that has for years been known to be peaceful is now in crisis. Majority of its people are living in fear. Farmers dread going to their farms for fear of being attacked. As a result Government higher institutions of learning were at a time closed due to various attacks. No doubt, there have been conflicting reports on figures about the lives and properties that have been lost, but it is sure that a great deal in terms of lives and properties have been lost over the years. A lot of factors have been attributed as causes of the crises. Some of these factors include religious differences, breakdown in farmers/herdsmen relationship, intolerance/self-interest, unemployment and poverty.

Recently, there were escalations of reported attacks by herdsmen who brutally killed natives of farming communities, including women and children in various states across the country (Ogebe, Daniel and Ligom, 2019). Different communities in Nigeria for example, have had their share of these crises in the past and the resultant effects of such disasters on the socio-economy and other aspects of the communities in question and even the nation has been catastrophic. Similarly, there have, in some instances, reports of reprisal attacks against herdsmen and their cattle by members of aggrieved communities for the killings they suffered in their hands and for the destruction of farms they caused with their cattle. Benue, Taraba, Nassarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara states have been the worst hit of late having tested the devastating

attacks by herdsmen with heavy toll on human lives and property and still counting their losses. Most worrisome is the brutality and impunity with which the assailants operate without regard for the law and the sanctity of human life (Emmy, 2018) coupled with the inability of security agents to defend the victims mercilessly killed in their homeland.

Regrettably, this level of criminal impunity is happening in a sovereign State with a constitution, which declares that the security and welfare of the citizens shall be a major responsibility of the state (Nigerian Constitution, 1999, Art. 14(2b)). Furthermore, the impact this crisis is having on the economy of the country should be a thing of concern to all well-meaning Nigerians particularly the Government. The agricultural sector is only second to oil as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. As such one can only imagine the suffering that can befall this country if these crises persist. There is undoubtedly grave danger ahead because, some, if not all ethnic nationalities incessantly attacked have warned that if the Government fails in protecting them, they will be left with no other choice than to form their militia. The inauguration of “*Amotekun*”, the Western Nigeria Security Network that was setup to curb in security in the region, is an excellent example of this.

It is against this backdrop that this article argues that despite all the causes of the crisis, there are various ways of tackling them most importantly through an effective communication strategy. This study, therefore, argues for a committed, sustainable and a renewed interest from farmers and herdsmen in Southern Kaduna through group communication. It is believed that if group communication is employed by the farmers and herdsmen, and if they are educated and enlightened on the importance of peace, they would be able to embrace peace and contribute immensely to their development, that of the state and Nigeria in general. Thus, the present article examines the potentials of group communication as a veritable tool in bringing the farmers and herdsmen in Southern Kaduna together as a group in view of managing the lingering crisis between them.

The concept of communication

Okwechime (2009) remarks that “communication is the transmission of information from one party to another through the use of symbols within the frame of reference of both parties. Thus, communication is useful when the meaning is understood” (p. 194). Similarly, Kelly & Shawn (2011) state that “human communication is the process of understanding our experiences and the experiences of others through the use of verbal and non-verbal messages” (p.7). In their view, Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwan-Uwaoma (2017) write that “communication is the process by which people interactively create, sustain and manage meaning. As such, communication both reflects the world and

simultaneously helps to create it" (p.1). They further explain that communication should just be "one more thing that happens in personal and professional life; it is the very means by which we produce our personal relationships and professional experiences; it is how we plan, control, manage, persuade, understand, lead, love and so on" (p.1). Thus, one can say that, as a process that brings, creates, sustains and manages human life, communication is integral to human beings. In other words, communication is an essential part of human society since it helps to bring meaning to human activities and existence.

One thing that runs through all the definitions given by different scholars of communication is the fact that communication can be done verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication is a type of communication that is done with the use of words, this can be written and spoken words (Okosine & Okolo, 2013); while non-verbal communication refers to communication without the use of words. It includes gestures, body language, paralinguistic cues, facial expression, eye contact and silence (Okosine & Okolo, 2013).

Why groups?

Groups are formed to perform a variety of functions, like information gathering, study or decision making. But very importantly, groups are formed to solve problems. According to Gamble & Gamble (2002) "we form small groups to share information that will permit us to solve common problems and make decisions about achieving certain identified common goals" (p. 324). Thus, in many ways, using a group to solve a complex problem is more logical than relying on one individual. They also point out positive effects of small groups in problem-solving as follows:

First and foremost, it permits a variety of people with different information and different points of view to contribute to problem-solving and decision-making process. Secondly, participating in a group apparently increases individual motivation. Group efforts often lead to a more significant commitment to finding a solution and then to greater commitment to the solution that has been arrived at. Thirdly, group functioning makes it easier to identify other people's mistakes and filter out errors before they can become costly or damaging as groups tend to produce superior decisions and solutions. Furthermore, the decision or solutions of a group tend to be better received than those of an individual. The person or persons to whom a group solution is reported tends to respect the fact that some people working together came to one conclusion. And lastly, working as part of a group is generally more pleasant and fulfilling than working alone as the groups provide companionship, a chance to affirm ideas and feelings, as well as opportunity for self-confirmation (Gamble & Gamble, 2002).

An understanding of group communication

Communication process occurs at different levels – intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and mass. However, the focus of this article is on group communication. Rossenfeld (1973) defines a group as "two or more people who share the perception of their existence as separate entities and pursue goals through interaction that is characterised by dialogue, participation, mutual understanding, shared meaning and experience" (p. 34). Similarly, according to Brilliant, Galanes and Adams (2001), one key feature of a group is an interdependent goal, meaning that all members succeed or fail together in accomplishment of a group's purpose. Furthermore, for them, discussion is another term essential to the concept of a group, which is primarily the verbal exchange among members through which the work of a group is accomplished, to increase understanding, coordination of activity or a solution to share problem. Consequently, Gamble & Gamble (2002) note that a group is a collection of individuals who interact verbally and non-verbally, occupy specific roles concerning one another, and cooperate to accomplish a definitive goal.

Of course, group communication is "where more than two individuals are involved in the exchange of ideas, skills, and interest" (Hasan, 2013, p. 15). Hasan goes further to describe a group as, "a number of people with a common goal who interact with one another to accomplish their goals, recognise one another's existence and see themselves as part of the group (Hasan, 2007, p. 15). In a similar vein, Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwana-Uwaoma (2017) view group communication as a communication that takes place when a group of people come together to exchange ideas and achieve specific objectives that have been set. Earlier, McCutcheon, Schaffer & Wycoff (1994) describe group communication as a group discussion that involves a spirited exchange of lively thoughts, witty remarks, and exciting stories. For these scholars, groups are relevant because they have more power than any one person, and their decisions usually carry weight.

Gamble and Gamble (2012) assert that groups are everywhere. One belongs to some groups for fun and others for profit. One may join a group to increase one's prestige while; other people may join groups merely because they must. Some groups help one to fulfil personal or professional objectives. Others aid one in meeting both moral with ethical needs and give one a sense of well-being. Thus, knowing how to relate to others in a group setting is not only vital if one is to attain personal success, but also critical in achieving professional success.

From the preceding, there could be many different groups for various reasons. According to Hasan, (2013), groups that are causally formed with friends over a drink, coffee break, games, dances or religious gathering have a different

purpose from groups attending a meeting or seminar to help fight Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or the on-going pandemic of Corona Virus Disease or Covid-19. The purpose of the above groups will certainly be different from groups formed to draft a proposal, or constitution for instance. Groups can be classified into small and large groups. To Hasan (2013), small groups are formed among three to seven members, informal and less structured, while, large groups adopt formal rules to maintain order.

Functionally, there are two major types of small groups: primary and discussion groups. A primary group is very informal and functions as a support system for members. An excellent example of a primary group is a neighbourhood meeting. In a primary group, the conversation is loosely structured; there are no rigid membership rules, no formal place, or timings, etc. Such groups share characteristic features like face-to-face interaction and leadership. All members of such groups get opportunities to respond, react and adapt to the communication of other participants while contributing their own. Such groups are also characterised by leadership. A discussion group could have one or more leaders. The leader tries to take the interaction in a positive direction. Discussion groups usually share common characteristics like the same geographical location, social class, economic level, lifestyle, educational level, etc.

For McCutcheon, Schaffer & Wycoff (1994), face-to-face communication helps makes a group. Obviously, the size of a group affects how comfortable people are in sharing their ideas. Some researchers say five to seven members are the best size for a group because people participate better in small and in an informal setting. Even the least talkative person, research has shown, talks in a small group. Groups of four or fewer, however, are too small because they lack the diversity needed for discussion. In small groups people can be too busy working on personal relationships to get down to business, while groups of more than seven people are often too big. In such groups, quiet persons rarely talk and people with high status dominate. In groups of more than ten, a few people do most of the talking while the rest listen (McCutcheon, Schaffer & Wycoff, 1994). Thus, according to scholars, as a group gets bigger, each person has fewer opportunities to speak. Consequently, large groups alienate some members.

Participation in a small group

It is evident from the foregoing that the members or participants determine whether a group is small or large. In a way, participating in small group communication means trying to achieve the objectives or solve the problem at hand. It involves contributing to the success of the goals. Hasan (2013) classifies the responsibilities of participants in a small group as follows:

- i. Having an open mind towards an issue or topic being discussed and other members of the groups
- ii. Having an objective mind and
- iii. Showing sensitivity towards other's sentiment and moods.

The responsibilities are further categorised into two, communicating and listening and feedback (p.16)

What this implies is that participating actively and positively in a small group entails one having good speaking and listening skills. In other words, the discussions in groups must not be dominated by an individual or two, but that all group members should be actively involved in the discussions.

Farmers and herdsmen crisis in Southern Kaduna

There is a complex history of violent conflicts (Abdulkarkindo, Alupsen & Gloria, 2018) between Hausa-Fulani, ethnic nationalities (who are mostly cattle rearers or herdsmen) and the indigenous people of Southern Kaduna (who are mainly farmers). Various efforts at bringing a lasting solution to the conflicts have failed. Different commissions of inquiry and panels of investigation as well as communities of conflict resolution have been set up over the years to make policy recommendations for ending the conflicts to no avail (Abdulkarkindo, Alupsen & Gloria, 2018).

Since the early 1970s, according to Abdulkarkindo, Alupsen & Gloria (2018), Kaduna state has experienced various forms of conflict. Moreover, Southern Kaduna has become the threshold for violent and massive killings perpetrated, especially in the years 1987, 1992, 2000, 2011; with the most recently, and still ongoing one which began over two years ago. In 1987, violence erupted in the College of Education Kafanchan over an alleged misinterpretation and interpretation of the Quran. The violence soon extended to Zaria, Kaduna, Katsina, Ikara and other places. On 6th March 1987, the fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) of the Kafanchan College of Education held a revival. The guest speaker, who was a convert from Islam, Reverend Abubakar Boko, was accused of allegedly blaspheming against Islam. A Muslim student Aisha Garba was so provoked by the sermon that she jumped onto the platform, seized the microphone and called on all Muslims to rise in defence of Islam (Abdulkarkindo, Alupsen, Gloria, 2018). In that crisis, hundreds of people were killed with worship centres and properties worth millions of naira destroyed. In 1992, Zangon Kataf was twice engulfed in violent clashes between the indigenous Christians of Atyap community and Muslim residents over the relocation and opening of a market on the outskirts of the town in February and May of 1992. Then the sharia crisis followed in 2000 and the post-presidential election violence in April 2011. The conflict spread to many cities and towns

within the state including Kafanchan and other parts of Southern Kaduna (Olayoku, 2017).

The most recent violent crisis in Southern Kaduna, which started towards the end of 2015 between indigenous farmers and herdsmen and has not yet come to an end, is a severe issue of concern. Of great fear and worry is the nature or form that most of the attacks are carried out. Unarmed, unsuspecting and defenceless indigenous nationalities are attacked killed with sophisticated weapons or, in some instances, slaughtered in their sleep with their houses and stored crops destroyed. There have also been reports of farmers assaulted on their way to their farms or even at the farm which has also taken its toll on the social, political, religious, economic and other aspects of the life of the Southern Kaduna region.

The unprovoked attack on indigenous people of Southern Kaduna has led to reprisal in some instances; thus, heightening the tension in the region. In what has been regarded as Government's inaction, Government at all levels has failed in its primary assignment of protecting the lives and properties of its citizens. More disturbing is the fact that Government in most instance seems to portray cluelessness or ignorance of the perpetrators of these violent attacks. Another look into Government's stand on the issue seems to give one insight into complicity. Governor Nasir EL-Rufai while fielding questions from selected journalists in his office in Kaduna said, "His government has traced some violent, aggrieved Fulani to their countries and paid them to stop the killings of Southern Kaduna natives and destruction of their communities saying that the renewed violence is carried out by bandits" (Vanguard, 2016). The question that arises on hearing such statements from those in Government is: why pay and not prosecute those guilty of the criminal act of murder?

Consequently, Kaduna State is currently in a humanitarian crisis and, the Southern part of the State has become the epicentre of deadly violence, most of it inflicted by herdsmen on farming communities. In the area, many lives have been lost and many farmers are unable to plant and harvest for years. Reports on the effects of the attack by herdsmen have been given by individuals and agencies. In its report, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), through its North-West Zonal Coordinator, Musa Ilela, declared that two hundred and four (204) people have been killed in the Southern Kaduna crisis (Mohammed, 2017; Premium Times, Jan. 13). Also, Shiklam (2016) claims that the leadership of Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan in Kaduna State disclosed that a total of eight hundred and eight (808) people were killed in fifty-three (53) villages across four (4) local Governments in Southern Kaduna. In the same vein, giving a statistic of the killings and destruction in a statement in Kafanchan, Shiklam (2016) avers that the Church leaders said:

Fifty-seven (57) people were injured while farm produce estimated at billions of naira were also destroyed. The report disclosed further that a total of one thousand, four hundred and twenty-two (1,422) houses and sixteen churches were burnt during the attack. The affected communities are spreading across Kaura, Sanga, Jama'a and Kauru Local Government Areas (n.p).

In a related development the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) through its National Secretary, Baba Othman Ngelzarma said the crisis was like any other between herdsmen and farmers across the country (Odunsi, 2017). The official recalled that the Southern Kaduna crisis started from farm destruction in Godogodo community. He commented that it was mismanagement of the destruction episode that degenerated to the current situation. He further stated that herdsmen were not only culprits in the crisis but also victims. "Media is not balancing its report; they just jump into conclusion portraying the herdsmen as the culprits. The herder is a victim and culprit at the same time. We are at the receiving end" (Odunsi, 2017, Daily Post Feb. 6).

When faced with conflicts, it is natural for people involved to become defensive as we have seen above from claims of different groups representing affected communities in the Southern Kaduna crisis. However, being defensive can only make a bad situation worse. Therefore, rather than being defensive, the leaders of farming communities affected by the crisis and the leaders of Herdsmen in Southern Kaduna should be encouraged to come together as a group and listen to each other's grievances to find workable solutions to the persistent crisis. This initiative can be facilitated by any corporate organisation, non-Governmental organisation (NGO), religious group or even the Government.

Effectiveness of group communication in crisis management

As pointed out earlier, groups are formed to perform a variety of functions, like information gathering, study group or decision making. But very importantly, groups are formed to solve problems. "We form small groups to share information that will permit us to solve common problems and make decisions about achieving certain identified common goals" (Gamble & Gamble 2002, p. 324). Dialogue in a group between warring communities has proven to be the best way of resolving or managing crisis in human history. As stated earlier, this study aims at looking at the ways that group communication can be effectively used as a tool in managing the lingering Farmers/Herdsmen crisis in Southern Kaduna. In putting an argument for group communication in managing the Southern Kaduna crisis, this article looks at how group dialogue was effective in healing the wounds and bitterness of post-apartheid South Africa.

In 1994, South Africa formed a new government of national unity that featured one person, one vote democracy after at least forty-six (46) years of apartheid or official racial separation. During apartheid, about one million White people had oppressed some forty million Black and Coloured (mixed-race) folks. Millions of non-Whites had been banned, forcefully moved to or forced to remain in impoverished homelands or Bantustans, and thousands of others had been ill-treated, tortured or murdered. Besides, horrendous black-on-black had been fomented by the Apartheid regime to weaken anti-apartheid resistance and prove that Blacks were barbaric (Culbertson & Bojinka, 2010). Decades of racial violence and oppression brought about terrible hatred and enmity.

After the 1994 election in which Nelson Mandela was elected President, the country was thought to be on the brink of civil war. The two parties (the Apartheid Regime and African National Congress) realised a military solution was impossible without unthinkable death and destruction. After extensive consultations with the varied sectors of society, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed in 1995. The intent was to facilitate the compromise needed to avoid civil war, mitigate hatred and help the country heal. At its very core, the commission designed a two-way communication process in which victims and perpetrators were encouraged to engage in dialogue on politically motivated crimes against human rights and persons in the nation from 1960, the African National Congress and other protest groups were banned to 1994. Violations were defined as extreme acts of violence (murder, rape, beating, kidnapping, etc).

Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu chaired the Commission with members appointed by President Mandela under three Committees. The first, the Human Rights Violations (HRV) Committee, investigated human right abuses, seeking through hearing and broad investigations, backed up by subpoena power, the identity of the victims, their fate, the nature and extent of harm they suffered. Second, An Amnesty Committee which considered applications of amnesty for people judged to have carried out abuses in furtherance of apartheid-era political objectives. And third, the Reparation and Rehabilitation committee which proposed policies such as monetary reparations that aided the healing process of victims (Graybill, 1998).

Archbishop Tutu spelt out the two significant goals of the Commission as: First, was to address extreme asymmetries in power, voice and resources created under the apartheid regime. Second, the Commission gave primary emphasis to building relationships with the African notion of Ubuntu. The concept holds that a person's humanity is bound up with the humanity of others. Thus, the victim and perpetrator of a violent crime both lose humanity and need to regain

it through renewed relationships and empathy with each other based on facing the truth (Culbertson & Bojinka, 2010).

An essential part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work was creating opportunities for face-to-face dialogue and relationship building. The Human Rights Violations Committee worked to make its hearings accessible and held these in at least fifty-nine locations around the country between 1996 and 1998. About 21,000 victims of gross human rights abuses made submissions to the Committee. Largely because of time and resource limitations, only 1,200 victims testified in public hearings (Culbertson & Bojinka, 2010). The media covered the trials extensively, contributing to national awareness of victims' plights and providing victims with the feeling that they indeed had a voice.

Seeing victims and perpetrators being responsive to the others' views and showing consideration and care for the other, obviously, were essential aspects of the hearings that were consistent with authenticity. Indeed, amazing instances of forgiveness and reconciliation were reported as victims faced and asked questions of their former torturers, showing concern for relationship development (Tutu, quoted in Culbertson & Bojinka, 2010)

The return of peace and stability to the troubled region of Southern Kaduna will undoubtedly not only benefit the area alone but Kaduna state and the Nigerian nation in general. Aside from other consumable crops that it produces, Southern Kaduna is the highest producer of ginger in the country. As we all know, ginger is a well-sought commodity all over the world but the natural endowments of the region cannot be positively explored amid violence. One fact that stands out very clearly is that the farmers and the herdsmen are all in the business of agriculture and are both critical to any given society. In fact, each complements the other if they coexist harmoniously. The faeces from the cattle of the herdsmen can serve as manure for the farmer's farm, while the chaff from the processed crop of the farmer can serve as food for the herdsmen's cattle. Therefore, the coming together as a group of farmers and herdsmen in Southern Kaduna is an urgent necessity as a means of finding a workable solution to the persistent crisis which according to Apkan (2017) has crippled economic and other activities in the area.

Farmers and herdsmen are essential to society because together they can produce all the fruit, food, meat, milk, vegetable, cotton and the like that we eat and use. The stuff we get from the market or supermarket does not just appear there. They get there because of the handiwork of farmers and herdsmen. Therefore, there must be mutual understanding and cooperation between the farmers and herdsmen for a sustainable economy in our society.

The massive success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa is a clear indication of how effective group communication can be in the management of crisis. The South African story should be a source of inspiration to the Farmers and Herdsmen in Southern Kaduna to embrace positive dialogue in a group to reconcile their differences and heal the wounds created by crisis and thereby contributing positively to nation-building.

Conclusion

It is pertinent to reaffirm the effectiveness of group communication in the management of crisis, particularly the lingering Farmers and Herdsman crisis in Southern Kaduna. It has been seen that the effectiveness of group communication in managing crisis is dependent on the parties in crisis having an understanding or being educated and equipped with excellent communicative skills, which entails good speaking, dialogue and listening skills. It is thus of utmost importance to possess excellent communicative skills and knowledge of the views or grievances of the other party in any peace-building process.

Bearing this in mind, sincere dialogue between parties in crisis as a group would be fruitful. As pointed out, the participants in a group must have an open mind towards the issue or topic of discussion and other members of the group, have an objective mind and also be sensitive towards others' sentiments and moods. In other words, one must be ready to speak, listen and provide feedback as at when due and necessary.

Many peace-building processes have failed because the parties involved lacked excellent communicating skills, particularly the skill of dialogue. As such, the processes failed due to a breakdown in communication. However, as seen in the case of South Africa with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the aim of restoring relationships and healing the nation was achieved because victims and perpetrators of human rights abuses were given equal opportunities to be heard and to hear each other as a group. Thus, when parties in crisis are educated and equipped with group communication skills, a peace-building process would achieve its desired goal. Therefore, group communication can be instrumental in managing the Farmers/Herdsman crisis in Southern Kaduna.

Based on the issues discussed in this paper, it is expedient to conclude that proper application of excellent group communication skills is beneficial in a peace-building process, since adequate utilisation of group communication principles enhances trust between parties in dialogue and strengthens the process. However, a peace-building process must be founded on trust, sincerity and objectivity for it to be applicable, credible and practicable. There is no doubt

that, a proper application of group communication principles is a useful tool in the management of crisis.

Recommendations

1. Private and public organisations with communication experts need to take up the challenge of educating and equipping Farmers and Herdsmen in Southern Kaduna with group communication skills and challenge them to embrace it. This can be done through counselling, seminars/workshops, lectures and the likes.
2. The leaders of Farmers, as well as the leaders of Herdsmen in Southern Kaduna, need to accept and embrace the challenge to dialogue as a group for finding lasting solutions to the lingering crisis in the region.
3. The State Government should strive to initiate a Truth and Reconciliation Initiative or Commission to heal the already existing open wound between the Farmers and Herdsmen. It is believed that this commission will help to open up the aggrieved parties to dialogue and reconciliation.
4. There is a need for an honest effort from the Government of Kaduna State to fulfil its primary role of securing the lives and properties of its indigenes, especially in Southern Kaduna.
4. The Federal Government of Nigeria should comply with her mandate and oath sworn to protect both human life and properties as well as ensure the adequate promotion of peaceful co-existence of the citizens without preferential treatment to any group or sector.

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