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LAND ACQUISITION AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN JIGAWA STATE: A STUDY OF GAYAWA VILLAGE

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Abstract
Land acquisition for commercial purpose increases across the globe in recent years and this affects the land used for subsistence farming and pasture. This paper aims at studying the socio-economic and political implications of land acquisition by Chinese investors in Gayawa Village, Jigawa state. The paper utilized field research where data were collected using interview and FGD from the affected community members and other stake holders. The data was analysed using qualitative method of analysis (by cross tabulating the FGD with interviews). Globalization theory is used as framework of analysis. The study found that the acquisition negatively affects the community members; the land could no longer be passed to the next generation, sold or leased. Many farmers have lost the only means of subsistence they possessed. Many of the affected farmers used the farming as the primary source of employment to their families and other community members, they lost this source. Some of the affected farmers could not continue with supporting the education of their children. It also found lack of consultations with the stakeholders by the state government. The paper concludes that the acquisition favours the investor because the affected farmers have not been provided with better alternative and this affects them economically, socially and politically. The paper recommends that the affected farmers should be supported financially by the state while at same time providing them with better farmland for them to continue with their farming activities.

Key Words: Land Acquisition, Development, Foreign Investors, Government, Subsistence

Introduction

Land acquisition for commercial purpose has increased across the globe and this affects the land used by farmers for subsistence and pastoralist for pasture. Africa is among the mostly affected regions where millions of hectares have been acquired and millions have been proposed for acquisition. The major investor in Africa's agricultural land include China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, companies from Western Europe, Canada and United States of America (Gorge in Global Land Project 2010). Some of these companies produce food crop while others produce bio fuel plants such as sugar cane, guinea cone, palm oil, cassava etc. Investment in agricultural land is believes to be profitable and secure by investor especially after the 2008 food and financial crises in which loss had been recorded (Future Agriculture, 2011). In Nigeria, thousands of hectares have been acquired with the help of Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for bio fuel plant and food crop production respectively (Friends of the Earth Africa and Friends of the Earth Europe, 2010).

Chinese company, Great Norther Agribusiness Limited (GNAL) invested in Jigawa State where it acquired 20000 hectares of land for sugar plantation and sugar factory. The acquisition affects about 32 communities where some lost the farmland and others lost both

the farmland and residences (government source). The affected farmers had rejected the government decision and protested against, though compensation was offered. The land was acquired on January, 2015, and the project was launched on May 2017. Gayawar Malam village is among the affected communities in which their farmland has been acquired. To some of the farmers the land is the only means of subsistence they possess while others have other means, though the farmland is their primary means of subsistence. This paper aims at studying the socio-economic and political implications of this acquisition on the people of Gayawar Malam village.

1.Research Method

Jigawa State in Northern Nigeria was created from Kano State on 27th August, 1991. It is bordered to the West by Kano State, to the East by Bauchi and Yobe States, and to the North by Katsina and Yobe States and the Republic of Niger (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, 2019). It has a total land area of 23,287 Kilometer Square. Jigawa State has 27 Local Government Areas with total population of 6,176, 192 (male – 3,149,858 and female – 3,026,334). Its vegetation is Sudan and Guinea Savannah (Ibid). The State is located 12o 0'0" N (latitude) and 9o0'0"E (longitude), 380 above sea level (Getamap.net, 10th June, 2019).

The major crops produced include: Hibiscus, Soy Beans, Cowpea, Tomato, Maize, groundnut, millet, rice, sesame, and sorghum. It is also rich in solid minerals which include: granite, tin, kaolin, columbite, iron ore and soda ash, with main investment opportunities that include Agribusiness, Light Manufacturing, Healthcare, Tourism, Energy and Mining (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, 2019). However, these communities largely depend on farming for their survival. During the dry season, members of these communities especially the youth move to neighboring states and even as far as Lagos state in search of greener pasture - (*cirani*), and when the rainy season starts approaching they return to their respective villages and start clearing their farmland in preparation for another farming activity.

Gayawar Malam village is under Gagarawa Local Government Area of Jigawa State. It has a population of about one thousand (1000) people and four hundred (400) house hold (community leader). The major occupation of the people is farming for subsistence. The farmland of the entire household has been affected. With only few escaping with half *safiya* or less.

Field research was conducted and the data were collected from two source; the primary source which is the information from the respondents in the field and the secondary source which include text books, academic journals, newspapers, government documents etc. Sample of eleven (11) respondents was used. They include six (6) affected farmers, two (2) government officials, one (1) traditional leader, one (1) members House of Representative, representing the affected constituency and one member representing the GNAL. The 6 affected farmers were selected randomly because there was no sampling frame. The criteria for the selection is that they must be members of Gayawa community and among those whose land was affected. The two government officials (the surveyor general and Director Jigawa State Investment Promotion Agency (Investjigawa), represented by Head of Advocacy and Strategy for InvestJigawa and Legal Analyst, Desk officer for Renewable Energy for InvestJigawa; a member House of Representatives representing Gagarawa/Gumel/Maigatari/Sule-tankarkar constituency; the traditional leader (Gayawa village head) and representative of the GNAL (Director Agricultural Services) were selected purposively. This is because, their position allows them to have access to key information that is useful to the study.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to collect data from the 6 affected farmers, and Key Informant Interview (KII) was used to collect data from the two government officials, a member representing Gagarawa/Gumel/Maigatari/Sule-tankarkar constituency, the representative of the Gayawa constituency and the traditional leader.

The data were analysed qualitatively using cross tabulation of the FGD with the interviews. However, the representative of the GNAL did not respond.

2. The Acquisition of Land by Great Northern Agribusiness Limited

Great Northern Agribusiness Limited is a subsidiary of MESSRS Lee Group of companies called Lee Group. The mother company has been in Nigeria for over 40 years with investments in steel, footwear and plastic industries, and it has worldwide branches and production locations (Lee Group, 2021). It is a Chinese owned company. It has offices in Kano, Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt in Nigeria. It also has offices in Hong Kong and Shanghai in China (Lee Group, 2021).

The Great Northern Agribusiness limited was incorporated on 5th May 2014, with company number 1188675 as private company limited by shares. Its Directors include Lee Sheau Y, Lee Sheau F, Lee Man L, Earth Wide Company Limited and Crystal Consolidated Enterprises Limited (Corporate Affairs Commission in GN-Check, 2021, B2BHint, 2021). The company's registered office address is number 3 Kijawal District, Ringim Local Government, Ringim, Jigawa State. The incorporation of the company is not unrelated with the interest of investing in agriculture in the state during its first investment summit in 2013 where many investors including the Lee Group attended.

The idea of investing in land by GNAL (owned by MESSRS. Lee Group) came up after Jigawa State Government at its First Summit in 2013 invited investors to come and invest in Jigawa State. The GNAL answered the call, came to Jigawa and showed its interest in investing in sugarcane in the state. The company together with government representatives went to several sites and finally chose Gagarawa axis (Surveyor General, Jigawa State, 2018). The company wrote to the state, and the approval was made on 7th January, 2015, granting 12000 hectares of land including farmland and residential areas of many villagers which affected about forty-two thousand (42,000) households (Zorro, 2018). The Muhammadu Badaru's administration (which assumed office on 29th May, 2015) while rallying campaign for 2015 general elections, promised to repeal the agreement if elected into office. However, after spending 38 days in office a new agreement was signed on 30th June, 2015 between the Jigawa State Government and the GNAL, in which 8000 hectares was added for sugarcane factory, making it a total of 20000 hectares (Zorro, 2018).

3. Literature Review and theoretical Framework

The concept of land acquisition in form of foreign investment is discussed under this section and the global capitalism framework of analysis is discussed and found to be relevant to the study.

3.1 Conceptualization Foreign Investment in form of Land Acquisition

The concept of foreign direct investment (FDI) in form of land acquisition is used interchangeably as land grabbing, land deals, international land acquisition, large scale land acquisition (LSLA) and FDI in land, depending on the perspective, critics call it land grabbing while investors call it FDI or land deals (Cotula, 2013).

The debate over the FDI in form of land acquisition has been on the impact of the FDI on the host communities. While some scholars argue that FDI in form of land acquisition has positive impacts on the host economies (Schonevel, 2011, Agba et al, 2018, others argue that

it has negative impact (Mechiche-Alami et al, 2021; Kachika, 2021 ; Roth, 2012; Raudart and Mazomer, 2015; Golay, 2015; Ndi, 2017; Basu, 2007; Klopp & Lumumba, 2014; German et al 2011).

Schonevel (2011) for instance attributes the current wave of FDI on land to factors such as perception by northern investors, of a long-term demand for bio-fuels in industrialized countries and demand for food products in southern countries from Asia and the Middle East. He argues that though potentially some places like Sub-Saharan African countries are in economically advantageous position as a result of these investments, ineffective domestic governance of land acquisition makes it difficult for these countries to tap the benefits of these investments, and are at risk of becoming isolated in a global market of foreign capital accumulation. Agba et al (2018) argues that after conceiving FDI in form of land acquisition as the flow of foreign income into particular economy through investment which involves multinational corporations, that FDI in land is in the long-run associated with benefits that include increased job opportunities, exchange rate stability, increased interest rate, among others.

Basu (2007) has different position with the preceding scholars, he argues that FDI in land is negative and it involves forceful acquisitions by governments of host countries in the name of 'public purpose' on payment of compensation even when the owner is not willing to release the plot. Basu (2007) argues that the main motive is competition by states to attract global capital. He holds that, one major characteristic that differentiates this age of imperialism from that of 1960s and 1970s of the last century is its overdependence on state power for rewriting economic laws and for their implementation. Supporting Basu's position, German et al (2011) argue that there is connivance between the global capital and the state in securing the fertile agricultural land by the former. They conceive FDI in land as transboundary investment in land for the cultivation of food and bio-fuel crops. They mention the drivers as rising food prices and alternative energy. German et al (2011) argue that results suggested in many cases it is not a global 'land grab' driven only by the private sector but also by a supply-driven process in which governments and local elites (eg. customary) are playing an active role in their taste for foreign capital for development and for revenue in form of rent. They further that customary rights are not protected during negotiations despite the recognition of these rights. They cited evidence from their study which covers four countries – Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. In Ghana for instance, traditional council plays a major role, also, office of the land administrator plays a role by collecting and sharing the revenue. Therefore, FDI in form of land acquisition is taking over the land rights and use by foreign interest through purchase or leasing in many instance without consent and willingness of the local people to give out the land. The foreign investors are supported by the government in question to acquire the land usually in the name of public interest – bringing about economic growth and development, in form of provision of job opportunities, food security and revenue to the state. In reality however, these investments are associated with the opposite of these opportunities.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Globalization theory called global capitalism developed by Robinson (2017) is found to be relevant to this study. The theory has the following tenets:

That we are now in the new wave of major transformation of global capitalism, a transition to a qualitative new transnational or global state. The turning point is the global crisis of 1970s that followed the oil crisis and the collapse of the Bretton Wood system. Capitalism was able to survive after going global, leading to its expansion and more integration of the world economy, and the emergence of transnational capital, transnational capitalist class and

transnational state apparatus. Transnational capitalist class has emerged as the agent of global capitalism. This class is made up of the owners and managers of transnational capital. Its main interest is promoting global accumulation.

Capitalism requires the state in order to function. The capitalist system cannot be sustained through market relations alone. But national governments do not exercise the transnational political authority that global capitalism requires. It is through Transnational State (TNS) apparatuses that the global elites convert the structural power of the global economy into supranational political authority.

Transnational capital's liberation from the nation-state has enhanced its structural power. As a result, there is increased polarization of wealth between the haves and have-nots, which in turn provokes the internal contradictions and generates escalating social conflicts and crisis of state legitimacy.

Robinson's tenets include the transition from the world economy to the global economy facilitated by expansion of production lines of corporations, the intensity in the integration of global financial system, which made possible the emergence of transnational capital, transnational capitalist class and the transnational state. These have resulted in globalization of labour and its exploitation by the global capital.

However, land has also become a global commodity, where governments and corporations have been committing huge resources for food and bio-fuel production for strategic reasons and turnover on the investments. Other factors are: the decolonization process which made more countries independent, market reforms by communist regimes, multiple centers in the world and multiple sources of investment capital. These factors have led to further integration of countries of the world and making capitalism global. Based on these some tenets have been added.

There are multiple sources of investment capital dominated by Western countries and China.

The two dominant poles are competing to have dominant role in the global economy via control of global assets.

The continuous acquisition of global assets (especially agricultural land) by the capitalist (indigenous and foreign) lead to structural impact on the affected population which lead to social transformation that lead to emergence of groups, classes, and economic relations which later transform into political relation (class dominance).

The acquisition of global assets (especially means of production) by global capitalist leads to redistribution of income within and between countries of the world which lead to improvement in living standard of nationals of one country (foreign investors) and poor living standard of nationals of other countries (host country in this case).

The ruling elites allied with capitalist (local and foreign) to promote the expansion of capital across the globe in the interest of both (the ruling elites and the capitalist).

4.1 Data Presentation Interpretation and Analysis

The following table represents the land cleared and used by GNAL and crops lost by the six respondents in Gayawar Malam

Table 1. Land and Crops Lost by the Respondents which FGD was Administered

Land in *Safiya* (0.7	Grains (sorghum	Sesame in	Beans in	Hibiscus in	Bitter melon seed	Groundnut

hectare)	and millet) in bags	bags	bags	Kilogram	(*Guna*) in bags	in bags
5	20	-	10	-	30	-
2	8	5	-	-	-	-
4	20	7	5	500	-	-
4	20	10	10	1000	-	-
7	30	20	10	1000	-	-
2	15	-	10	500	25	-
Total, 24	**113**	**42**	**45**	**3000**	**55**	-
Amount in Naira (N)	**5,424,000**	**4,830,000**	**3,690,000**	**2,700,000**	**2,200,000**	-

Source: Compiled by the author using data collected from the field (2021, updated 2025).

The table above represents the land cleared and used by GNAL and crops lost by the six respondents in Gayawar Malam. The first respondent lost five *safiya* (a *safiya* equals to 0.7 hectare of land). As a result, he could no longer produce what he used to before the lan is acquired, that is, 20 bags of sorghum and millet, 10 bags of beans and 30 bags 30 bags of melon seed. The second respondent whose 2 *safiya* is affected lost 8 bags of millet and 5 bags of sesame. The third respondent whose 4 *safiya* has been affected has lost 20 bags of sorghum and millet, 7 bags of sesame, 5 bags of beans and 500 kilogram of hibiscus. The fourth respondent has lost 4 *safiya* to the acquisition and could no longer produce the 20 bags of sorghum and millet, 10 bags of sesame, 10 bags of beans and 1000 kilogram of hibiscus he used to produce. The fifth respondent respondent whose 7 *safiya* is affected has lost 30 bags of sorghum and millet, 20 bags of sesame, 10 bags of millet and 1000 kilogram of hibiscus. The six respondent whose 2 *safiya* is affected has lost 15 bags of millet, 10 bags of beans, 500 kilogram of hibiscus and 25 bags of melon seed. The total monetary value of these products is N18,844,000.

4.2 Socio-Economic and Political Implications

4.2.1 Social Implication

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents (from the FGD conducted) stated that the acquisition has affected their subsistence negatively. It has so many implications on the affected farmers. Generally, the acquired land becomes nontransferable. It could not be inherited, sold, leased or used as collateral. Prior to the acquisition the farmers inherited the land and were willing to pass it to their next generation; sell it or lease it to satisfy urgent need (especially settling heath bills and marriage expense and other important needs), but it is no longer possible.

The acquisition also affects child education especially in the areas where the work has started by GNAL. 40 percent (FGD respondents) of those whose farms had been cleared and used by GNAL stated that they find it difficult to pay their children's school fees because they lost the cash crops they used to farm and sell for that purpose. For instance, one of the respondents who has 22 children stated that 4 of his children could not proceed from secondary school,

and another who completed NCE could not proceed. Another respondent who has 13 children stated that 5 of his children were in Primary school but could not proceed because he could not sponsor their education.

In this area, the youth have lost interest in farming. More youth are now moving out of the area in search of greener pasture in states from the southern part of the country that include Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Rivers. For instance, about 50 youth left Gayawa (a number far higher than usual migration). Although the State has argued that it provided the affected farmers with alternative farmland, 100 percent of the respondents (FGD) argued that no alternative farm has been provided, and that they were not willing to collect the compensation offered, all they want is their farmland. Gayawar Malam is among the communities where the compensation given by the State Government was not collected by the affected farmers. Although most of them are in possession of the land allocation card issued by the state, the was yet to be allocated to them.

4.2.2 Economic Implication

Economically, it affected subsistence (both food and cash) of 100 percent of the respondents in Gayawar Malam (who participated in the FGD). For instance, 113 bags of grains, 42 bags of sesame, 45 bags of beans, 3000 kilogram of hibiscus and 55 bags of bitter melon seed (used to produce vegetable oil) has been lost annually by the affected farmers. It is also found that the acquisition led to ploratenization of some of the affected farmers (though the number of those employed was not significant). Those who work for the company receive N700 to N800 as wage for a work of ten hours. Not everybody has a chance of being employed by the company. However, the community leader Bulama who argues that the project is beneficial to his community because it provides job opportunities to them confirmed that the number of those employed by the company was two people, and were employed as security, even though many people looking for the company's job have been contacting him (interview with the community leader). 100 percent of the respondents (FGD) argues that they are not willing to work for the company because they still believe they are the owners of the farmland. They refused to collect compensation and have not been provided with alternative land, and this affects their earnings. For instance, the total revenue lost by the respondents is N18,844,000, which is a big money. These farmers used the money generated from the sale of farm produce to buy mean of communication, renovate their houses, marry, and for parents marry up their children. They also use it to take care of the household. This lost implies that they could no longer be able to satisfy these needs. Their purchasing power has been affected and this affects their living standard negatively, and makes them poorer. Though the State Government stated that 50 percent of the lost land was provided as an alternative to farmers for farming for substance and out grower scheme which make job opportunities available (interview with government official), it is found that no alternative land has been provided and the out grower scheme has not been introduced. The farmers whose farmland was cleared and used by GNAL have no any alternative.

4.2.3 Political Implication

Politically, the acquisition led to transfer of ownership of means of production and subsistence from the farmers to the GNAL (the dominant interest). The farmers are now the dominated. Although the State Government claimed that it provided alternative land to the affected farmers (interview with government official), the study found that no alternative farmland has been given to them. The farmers have lost the means of subsistence they possess without being provided with alternative. The GNAL continue with clearing of more land after issuing notice to the affected farmers. Whenever expansion is to be made, security forces are reinforced against the resisting farmers. There were instances of clash. For instance, one of the protesting farmers lie down on his farm and vowed not to allow the

company workers to clear the land. Therefore, the GNAL is now the dominant, the owner of means of production and subsistence, while the farmers are the dominated, losing the means of production and subsistence. The member representing the area has challenged both the state and the GNAL of using force to acquire the land. Initially he supported the acquisition but later opposed it. According to him, the initial proposal was violated. Initially, the government addressed the farmers and informed them of its intention and decision that the land of the affected farmers will be divided into three; one-third to be sold to the company for sugar plantation; tow-third to be owned and managed by the farmers who would plant sugarcane on one and cultivate the other for their subsistence. However, having realized that the acquisition was total, covering the whole farmland, the farmers and the member representing the constituency protested and rejected the project (interview with the member). It is found that the farmers were not adequately represented when the state government took the decision. However, the State Government accused the member of self-interest and that he only rejected the project because the government turned down his demands. The member stated that he was not aware of any demand made to the state. However, in stating another reason for challenges the project, he argues that he proposed that the money for compensation should be paid through Jaiz Bank because to him Islamic bank should be the one to benefit. The State rejected his suggestion. That could be one of the demands the State was referring to. However, the affected farmers led by this member took the State to court and the case is now in Court of Appeal. The land has been acquired and the project has been launched. The ownership of this means of production and subsistence has been transferred to the GNAL. The State Government and the GNAL signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 30th day of June, 2015, and Certificate of Occupancy on 15th March, 2017 for the 12000 hectares, and has paid the ground rent of 500 Naira per hectare (Agricultural Rate) for 21 totaling 10,058473 Naira (Surveyor General, Jigawa State). This transfer was enforced by the state as confirmed by the FGD respondents whose farmlands had been cleared and used by the GNAL.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study has been summarized. Although various governments are struggling to attract foreign investments for economic growth and development, this research found deprivation as a result of such investment. The land acquisition by GNAL does not bring about development to the affected farmers in particular and their communities in general. The farmers lost their means of subsistence (for food and income earnings) without any alternative. They lost their title of being owners of means of production and subsistence; they also lost economic freedom, for they could no longer produce food and cash crops, and this affects their living standard.

6. Recommendations

Alternative land should be provided to the people as promised by the state. This will allow the farmer to continue with their farming activities while at same time have a title to the land.

Special fund should be set aside by the state to support the affected farmers and their families in the areas of education, health, feeding and settlement in the a newly located farmland. This would ease the pressure which the farmers are already in.

Fresh land or reserve that is not occupied by local people should be used for allocated to investors by the state; this is because land lost is associated with difficulties and socio-economic problems that heighten the existing poverty, unemployment.

Government should focus on supporting the local farmers to improve and expand their activities by providing subsidized equipment and inputs, extension services etc, thereby

increasing yield, income, and revenue to the state, this would in turn lead to development of the farmers in particular and the state in general.

Government should carry along all stakeholders in decision making process concerning granting out the land that is already occupied by local people. This would make its decision acceptable to all the parties involved.

Government should focus on stability and welfare of its citizens rather than the revenue they would get from foreign investors. This is because many studies found positive relationship between poverty and insecurity (Salihi, 2012; Walker, 2012; Campbell, 2014). Depriving the local farmers could lead to increase in crime and social vices in the area and neighbouring states.

Inward investment should be encouraged and supported by the State, by providing incentives to the local investors. A strong farmers' association to stand against any pressure from any quarter should be formed by the farmers. This study found that the affected farmers have no union or association that could protect their interests. This is based on the response from the respondents which clearly indicated that they do not have a farmers' association that can confront the state. The farmers depend on the member, House of Representatives, representing the constituency to fight for their right, and is already doing so through court.

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