

Conflict Management and Sustainable Development: A Study of Farmers/Herders Clashes in Imo State (2015-2018)

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Abstract: *This study sets out to examine the conflicts between the farmers and herders and how it can be managed to achieve sustainable development in Imo State. It was necessitated by the lack of food production and food insecurity, indiscriminate burning of homes and farmlands, killings, rapes and maiming of farmers. Over the years, incessant killings and clashes between herders and farmers has led to loss of lives, properties and infrastructure, food shortages, abandonment of farmlands and change in sources of livelihood and environmental degradation. 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 observation of events and face-to-face interview to complement data got from records. The study revealed among others that herders perceive cattle rearing as an inheritance which they should pass down to their generations and so therefore any attempt to kill, poison or maim their cattle results to financial settlement or pay offs but to violence and taking of human lives. Thus flowing from the findings, the recommendations of the study include among others that ; ranches in lieu of cattle colonies should be provided to the herders in their states to reduce migration and encroachment and also; that monitoring and supervisory committees should be set up and empowered to sensitize and checkmate the activities of the farmers/herders to ensure peaceful coexistence and adherence to land use policies and also punishment to those who breach the agreements on peaceful coexistence.*

Keywords: grazing, herders, farmers, sustainable development, conflict management

1.0 Introduction

Conflict has been perceived differently by different scholars, indicating that the single phenomena of conflict can be given different subjective interpretations. Some perceive it as a reflection of interpersonal hostility, while others regard it as an interpersonal disagreement stemming out of different choices or preferences, Barki & Hartwick in Atif and Rehman (2015). A similar point has been presented by Thomas in Atif and Rehman (2015) who identified conflict as the “process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his”.

Indeed, peace is imperative for the development, stability and security of nations and individuals. Cognizant of critical centrality within the context of state-society and inter-group relations especially in a big and plural country like Nigeria, measures and processes must constantly be undertaken towards sustaining peace in the country (IPCR 2017).

Conflict management strategies are the behavioral methods used to resolve conflict (Sportsman S, et al in Sally E.H 2014). Management of conflict is extremely important for the effective functioning of organizations and for the personal, cultural, and social development of human beings (Kunaviktikul W. et al in Sally E.H 2014). The manner in which the conflict is managed typically causes more tension in the situation rather than the conflict itself (Trudel J. et al in Sally E.H 2014). Across the country, especially in the rural areas, the nexus of scarcity and conflict complicated by environmental changes undergirds the frequent clashes between the farmers and herders. Contrary to the common reading of a clash of identity between ‘indigenes’ (farmers) and ‘settlers’, the violent clashes often stemmed from an intense struggle for economic survival of the two occupational groups; that is the farmers and the herders, worsened by the fragility of intergroup relations.

Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced different types of violent conflicts that have negatively impacted on the country’s population across the six geopolitical zones. As expected, peace and security have been badly undermined by the episodic, yet recurring conflict disorders causing harm, displacement and even death (Oshita O. Oshita, 2017). Nigeria as a democratic country with huge socio-cultural and religious diversity, peace is sine-qua-non for democratic consolidation, effective security, management and development.

These conflicts are religious, ethno-religious, indigene-settlers, chieftaincy, land and boundary struggles. The latent occurrences of intense herders-farmers conflicts and the associated problem of cattle-rustling and other forms of criminality driven by informal networks (Kwaya in IPCR 2017) signify the economically-induced nature of conflicts in the zone. The current adversarial

relationships between farmers and herders can be described as a departure from what used to be a cooperative and peaceful relationship which obtained between the two. As at early 20th century, herders in Northern Nigeria have had access to vast areas of grassland. However over time, and with the effect of climate change, urbanization, population explosion and the practice of irrigated farming among others, less pasture has become available to the herders (Olayinku, 2014). Hence, this reality and occupational predicament has often necessitated the southward movement of the herders to the coastal zones (ie. The South-East, South-South and South-West of Nigeria) in search of critical pasture and water-where the rainy season has also tended to be longer.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Conflicts between nomads and sedentary farmers date back to the earliest written records and are mythically symbolized in many cultures. Such conflicts have existed since the beginning of agriculture (Ezeonwuka & Igwe, 2016) in Chukwuemeka, Iloanya, Ananti (2018). They only increased or decreased in intensity and frequency depending on economic, environmental and other factors (Alhassan, 2013) in Chukwuemeka, Iloanya, Ananti (2018). According to International Crisis Group, historically, relations between herders and sedentary farming communities have been harmonious. They lived in a peaceful, symbiotic relationship with herders' cattle fertilizing the farmers' land in exchange for grazing rights. But tensions have grown over the past decade, with increasingly violent flare-ups spreading throughout central and southern Nigerian States; with incidents occurring in at least 22 of the country's 36 states. In the northern part of Nigeria, especially among the Fulani ethnic group, the practice of sedentary pastoralism, nomadic or transhumant pastoralism is the culture. Living their life almost entirely on ruminant animal farming, cattle is noted to be the most important object in Fulani society. The quantity of cattle a Fulani man owns is a sign of his wealth. Saidu, a Fulani pastoralist said, "Our herd is our life because to every nomad, life is worthless without his cattle (Odoh & Chilaka, 2012) in Chukwuemeka, Iloanya, Ananti (2018). A typical Fulani man lives his life around his cattle. As Haman, cited in Imo (2017) in Chukwuemeka, Iloanya, Ananti (2018) noted that cattle farmers suffer material damages when the crop farmers inflict physical injuries on their cattle by using cutlasses, spears or guns or by poisoning the cattle. Crop farmers, on the other hand, cry and argue that the fear of gun wielding cattle herders not only prevent them from going to the farm but that cultivated farm lands and crop yields are destroyed by cattle, resulting in sweeping poverty and unemployment in the land (Famoriyo, 2017) in Chukwuemeka, Iloanya, Ananti (2018). As precious human and animal lives are lost and crop yields damaged, food security is not only being hampered but precious manpower to support economic growth is reduced. Again as the animals are taken round through the open grazing system, they do not only pollute a few available water sources to the local people but also (through their destructive activities) bring their breeders and the settled farming communities into conflicts that heighten inter ethnic tensions in the country. As all these happen, analysts are of the opinion that there is ominous danger to the sustainability and development of the nation which calls for urgent and radical measures to curb these conflicts and forestall future violent occurrences.

1.2 Objectives of Study

1. To examine the extent cattle rustling and destruction of crops influence the conflict in Imo State.
2. To ascertain the effect of these conflicts especially on food security in the affected areas in Imo State.
3. To determine the effective methods of resolving and forestalling these conflicts between farmers and herders in Imo State.

1.3 Hypotheses

1. Cattle rustling and destruction of crops heightens farmers/herders' conflicts in Imo State
2. Incessant farmers/herders' clashes affect food security in Imo State.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Conflict

It is difficult to put forward a definition of conflict that is commonly accepted by all scholars. Conflict has been perceived differently by different scholars, indicating that the single phenomena of conflict can be given different subjective interpretations. Some perceive it as a reflection of interpersonal hostility, while others regard it as an interpersonal disagreement stemming out of different choices or preferences, Barki & Hartwick in Atif and Rehman (2015). Earlier researchers focused on developing a generic definition that encompasses the entire phenomenon and its processes, such as antecedent conditions, emotions, perceptions, behavior Pandy in Atif and Rehman (2015). Corwin in Atif and Rehman (2015) conceptualized conflict as some form of interpersonal or intergroup strain, or as actions (e.g., disputes and information distortions) which violates the norms of cooperation within the organization. A similar point has been presented by Thomas in Atif and Rehman (2015) who identified conflict as the "process which begins when one party perceives that another has

frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his". These definitions have a common theme revolving around identification of elements that trigger and propagate conflict. Conflict is not necessarily related to the differences in the perception of ends. It can also occur when people share the same perception of goals with disagreement related to means. The theoretical underpinning pertaining to conflict and its origin have received a great deal of attention from the ends perspective. Jehn in Atif and Rehman (2015) has postulated that this may not be the case in every situation as conflict is likely to arise out of the disagreement related to means of managing work. The classification of conflict based on means versus ends is one of the commonly used approaches to encapsulate the phenomenon; however, other antecedents of conflict also need to be taken into consideration. Putnam and Poole in Atif and Rehman (2015) argued that the description of conflict essentially needs to be viewed from the perspective of interpersonal interaction. The individuals or groups are incompatible however the work requirements propel them to coordinate with each other, thus illustrating the presence of interdependence. Nevertheless, the incompatibility due to personal, emotional or social reasons results in frequent recurrence of conflict. Recent researchers have also explored this notion, identifying the presence conflict a result of personal and environmental influences on the group members (Almost, Doran, McGillis & Spence, 2010).

Based on this background, a working definition of conflict can be derived as "a cohesive framework of behavior and perception of organizational members, which is triggered (or maintained) by the feelings of being deprived with an awareness of incompatibility with others" (Atif and Rehman 2015).

2.2 Concept of Conflict Management

Conflict management strategies are the behavioral methods used to resolve conflict (Sportsman S, et al in Sally E.H 2014). These behaviors are a consequence of both external circumstances and the individual's own method of interaction with people and problems, and are chosen dependent upon the relative significance of one's concern for self, versus concern for others (Thomas K.W et al in Sally E.H 2014). Management of conflict is extremely important for the effective functioning of organizations and for the personal, cultural, and social development of human beings (Kunaviktikul W. et al in Sally E.H 2014). The manner in which the conflict is managed typically causes more tension in the situation rather than the conflict itself (Trudel J. et al in Sally E.H 2014). Any professional who is concerned with supporting others and the organization in changing negative conflict situations should have an objective of inventive and productive conflict management.

Discoveries were made on various categories of stakeholders involved as mediators before a crisis is resolved. Mostly, is the involvement of religious leaders, also the local chiefs or community leaders followed by the youth leaders? However the impact of law enforcement agencies and sometimes the military were often brought to the scene whenever there was conflict. And as revealed by opinion leaders, the intervention of law enforcement agencies and the military have not brought about any permanent solutions to the conflicts, it has only induced a temporary stop to the mayhem. This shows that in conflict management dialogue is more effective than coercion, (Adeoye 2017).

According to Thomas and Kilmann's MODE instrument there are five modes to dealing with conflict along two dimensions of behavior (Thomas K.W et al in Sally E.H 2014). The five modes are: competing (assertive and uncooperative), collaborating (assertive and cooperative), compromising (falls into the middle), avoiding (unassertive and uncooperative), and accommodating (unassertive and cooperative). Kraybill developed a scale similar to that of Thomas and Kilmann (Kraybill et al, in Sally E.H 2014). Kraybill's five responses to conflict are directing (high focus on agenda, low focus on relationship), cooperating (high focus on agenda and relationship), compromising (medium focus on agenda and relationship), avoiding (low focus on agenda and relationship), and harmonizing (low focus on agenda, high focus on relationship).

2.3 Concept of Sustainable Development

Although many definitions abound, the most often used definition of sustainable development is that proposed by the Bruntland Commission wherein it was stated that – Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the current generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Rio Peak Bruntland's Commission 1987). This broad definition, which will be used in this dissertation, does not limit the scope of sustainability. The explanation does, however, touch on the importance of intergenerational equity. This concept of conserving resources for future generations is one of the major features that distinguish sustainable development policy from traditional environmental policy, which also seeks to internalize the externalities of environmental degradation. The overall goal of sustainable development (SD) is the long-term stability of the economy and environment; this is only achievable through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental, and social concerns throughout the decision making process.

In the application of this definition of sustainable development, one issue concerns the substitutability of capital. There are several types of capital: social, natural, and man-made. The definition of weak sustainable development explains that only the aggregate level of capital matters: man-made, or manufactured, capital is an adequate alternative to natural capital. Strong sustainability, on

the other hand, recognizes the unique features of natural resources that cannot be replaced by manufactured capital. Most ecologists and environmentalists are proponents of the strong sustainability definition (Stoddart, 2011).

In addition to substitutability, this definition of sustainability is also founded on several other important principles. Contained within the common definition of sustainable development, intergenerational equity recognizes the long-term scale of sustainability in order to address the needs of future generations (Dernbach J. C., 1998; Stoddart, 2011). Also, the polluter pays principle states that “governments should require polluting entities to bear the costs of their pollution rather than impose those costs on others or on the environment” (Dernbach J. C., 1998). Thus, government policy should ensure that environmental costs are internalized wherever possible; this also serves to minimize externalities.

The precautionary principle establishes that “where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage; lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measure to prevent environmental degradation” (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1992). Therefore, the proponent of an activity bears the burden of proving that this action will not cause significant harm. Explicitly stated in the Rio Declaration, the notion of common but differentiated responsibilities recognizes that each nation must play their part on the issue of sustainable development. This principle also acknowledges the different contributions to environmental degradation by developed and developing nations, while appreciating the future development needs of these less developed countries (Brodhag & Taliere, 2006; Dernbach J. C., 1998; United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1992). Developed nations, therefore, bear greater responsibility in light of the resources they require and the pressures they exert on the environment.

2.4 Concept of Cattle Colonies

The chief proponent of the cattle colony policy, Chief Audu Ogbeh, the minister of Agriculture offered this perspective: The reason we are designing the colony is that we want to prepare on a large scale, on economy of scale, a place where many owners of cattle can coexist, be fed well, because we can make their feeds. They can get good water to drink. Cows drink a lot of water, We can give them green fodder; Nwabueze (2018). This thinking aligns fully with those of pastoral herdsman, who ‘believe that the expansion of grazing reserves will boost livestock population, will lessen the difficulty of herding, will reduce seasonal migration, and will enhance the interaction among farmers, pastoralists, and rural dwellers, Iro (2018). Conversely, as Prof Ben Nwabueze noted, from what we know, two or more herders will be needed to follow and tend 100 cows. Accordingly, 300 herders will be needed to tend 30,000 cows. A colony of 30,000 cows requires 300 herders living in the colony. We are therefore, talking of 300 Fulani herdsman and their families lodged in the body of a state under the scheme, Obaze (2018). The implications of a herder’s violence multiplier effect remains salient.

Thus sixteen Nigerian States have agreed to the establishment of cattle colonies proposed by the Minister of Agriculture and rural development; Chief Audu Ogbeh as a solution to the incessant herders’ crisis.

It was gathered that some 16 states, all in the North have volunteered land for the establishment of cattle colonies in their domains. The states includes: Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Nasarawa and Plateau. Others are Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Jigawa, Yobe, Niger, Kogi and Kwara State. According to Punch Newspaper, all the 16 states have agreed to volunteer 5,000ha of land each.

However, Benue and Taraba, experiencing herdsman attacks, have rejected the cattle colonies. All the 17 states of Southern Nigeria have also refused to volunteer land for the cattle colonies. Daily Post recalls that His Excellency, Ayo Fayose, Governor of Ekiti State, had vowed not to give Ekiti land for cattle colonies. Similarly the Oodua Peoples’ Congress (OPC) rejected Federal Government plan to establish cattle colonies in South-Western States. (Culled from the Leader Newspaper Published January 28, 2018, page 3).

2.5 Conflict in Relation To Some Variables of Sustainable Development

Food Security – Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the current generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Rio Peak Bruntland’s Commission 1987). This process incorporates immediate and long-term purposes, economic and environment problems, agro food potential and all these elements being in tight connection (Bazga, 2015). The food security and sustainable development of agricultural sector is subject to a wide range of economy-wide policies as well as measures specific to the sector itself. Further development of the food security aspects, connected at the sustainable development is expected as experience is gained in implementing it across the diverse country, especially on the South-East regions. Today, there is a series of risk phenomena in the South-East and most especially Imo State as the menace of herders-farmers clash occur in these recent times.

According to Bazga 2015, A state has food security and sustainable development only when she has enough available food and agricultural products to provide nutrition for all its inhabitants, while ensuring forage for animals and water in case of natural disaster, crises, war etc. thus it is highly important to approach food security as a phenomenon that may generate social

convulsions. The five dimensions of food security therefore must be ensured and highly protected in Imo state to avoid after effects of any sort. The five dimensions of food security are (Bazga 2015);

- Food availability
- Price volatility
- Population access to food availability
- Food utilization
- Stability of food

Economic survival / Growth – When we think in terms of economic growth and survival, we realize that growth is the major economic goal of many nations (McConnell 2002). Thus, as a goal, a nation that can achieve economic growth will be better suited to meet the wants of individuals and resolve socio-economic problems such as poverty (McConnell 2002). Thereby, ensuring the well-being of the economy and improving standard of living, by raising incomes/providing jobs. Consequently, some economists have argued that economic growth will eventually lead to an improvement in the environment. Popp 2010, opines that environment constraints in developing countries are characterized by pressures from population growth, inefficient technology, weak governance, poor health sector, low per capita income, and poverty; therefore more emphasis should be made for developing countries on the need for progress, a desire to have social and economic growth and hence, growth would take precedence to the environment.

Cost/Standard of Living – In many ways we live a world of plenty. Economic growth has produced incredible wealth (Pedro, 2011). Many parts of the world have escaped from economic hardship. Countries like China, which were once very poor, are solid middle income countries. But sustainable development calls for propensity that is broad based (Pedro 2011). And despite living in the world of plenty, there are still large numbers of people, more than a billion, more than one out of every seven persons on the planet, living in extreme poverty (Pedro, 2011). What is the standard of living? If you look at a small farmer in this present Northern Ethiopia (Northern Nigeria compared), there is no modern transport around, no electricity grids in the distance. All you see is a pretty parched environment and that is not a complete coincidence. Poor farmers trying to earn a living, trying to ensure enough annual food production to feed themselves and their families which is being militated against by the constant farmer-herder clashes in the nation. Therefore when we speak about the poor living standard of the masses, we are necessarily speaking about a many dimensional concept (Pedro, 2011). Poverty is usually viewed as lack of adequate income but not just that, it is a lack of income, a lack of access to basic health services. A lack of access to basic amenities that most of the world takes for granted. Safe water, sanitization, electricity, access for children to a decent education. People living in extreme poverty are people who cannot meet these basic needs (Predro 2011)

2.6 Economic Implications of Herders-Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria

Clashes between cattle herders and crop farmers have been a major cause of increasing violence and general insecurity in Nigeria. There has been increasing economic adverse effects and social or relational implications such as;

1 Loss of Human and Animal Lives: In most of these encounters, human and animal lives were regularly lost (Aliyu, 2015). According to Burton (2016), on April 5th, 2016 Fulani militants killed four individuals in Benue State. Again, between 10 and 11th of the same month they killed about 17 persons in Taraba and 40 people were massacred in Enugu State on the 25th of that same month. Following a rivalry between the Tiv and Fulani ethnic groups, a total of 853 people have lost their lives since June 2014. While the Fulani herdsmen claimed to have lost 214 people in addition to 3,200 cows, the Tiv people reportedly killed are estimated to be 633 excluding children and women who died in ramshackle camps in 2014. Moreso, six soldiers attached to the 72 battalion in Makurdi were said to be killed in the cross-fire that ensued between the two groups during the period (Abdulkarkindo & Alupse, 2015). They emphasized that five of the soldiers were killed in Agatu in January 2015 while one, a captain, was beheaded in Guma LGA of Benue State. So far, the Tiv people in Guma, Gwer-West, Makurdi and other towns at the border with Taraba state have recorded about 458 deaths and over 350 communities have been sacked and are now living in IDP camps.

2 Destruction of Crops: According to Ofuoku and Isife (2009), more than 40 million worth of crops are usually lost annually due to invasion of cattle in the South-South region of Nigeria, especially Delta and Edo States. This has not only created an impediment to the survival of the host communities but has forced many crop-farmers to abandon farming for lesser occupations like Okada (commercial motorcycling) riding and other artisan work. Aliyu (2015) argued that the conflict has continued to lead to destruction or loss of properties and crops in Katsina State leaving an already endangered populace even poorer. The food security welfare of urban dwellers especially residents of Calabar that depend on these farmers for food supply has been negatively affected since the incessant clashes in Yakurr, which is predominantly a farming community and prices of available food supply skyrocketed (Ofem & Inyang, 2014). A study conducted by Umeh and Chukwu (2016) in Ebonyi State indicated that the economic loss on both conflicting parties was huge and that the herders seemed to have incurred more in monetary terms than the farmers. While the farmers lost lots of crops and farms to the conflicts, herdsmen

lost several cattle and sheep. The reverse was the case in Oyo State, as Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile (2015) found that farmers were worst hit by the conflicts as it affects their family farming and has led to reduction in farm output, loss of properties and scarcity of food.

3 Reprisal Attacks: Due to the failure of security agencies to control the excesses of the herdsmen, the youth in various communities of Ekiti State have on several occasions launched reprisal attacks on the cattle rearers' abodes ("Gaa"), sacking them and destroying their properties (Olugbenga, 2013). There are similar reports in various places in the country. Reports equally indicate similar reprisals in different farming communities.

4 Displacement of Persons and Animals: There were reports of displaced farmers and herdsmen alike. In the host communities, nomadic herdsmen relocate as a result of conflict. Host farmers especially women who stayed behind stop going to distant farms for fear of attack by nomads in the bush (Ofuoku & Isife, 2009). Such displaced farmers have become a source of liability to other farmers whom they have to beg for food for themselves and their families. This has created a vicious cycle of poverty in such communities. In Yakurr, Cross River State, Ofem and Inyang (2014) observed that herdsmen-farmers conflict has not only resulted to internal displacement of herdsmen and farmers, especially women; but also led to reduction in income/savings and crops output.

5 Distrust between Herdsmen and Farmers: Burton (2016) noted that majority of the members of the expansive Fulani ethnic group are solely pastoralists without connection to militant violence. Even these peaceful ones, however, are largely viewed with suspicion and anger by the sedentary communities on whose land they take their cattle, largely as a result of the actions of the violent group. This has created distrust and altered the mutual relationship that has existed between them and most of their host communities.

2.7 Grazing lands, Routes and Reserves: The law and its implication

The farmers/herdsmen conflicts in Nigeria have demonstrated a high potential to exacerbate insecurity and food crisis, particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts occurs, with reverberating consequences nationwide. To curb the often deadly clashes between farmers and nomads over pasture, IRIN (2009) opined that the creation of grazing reserves become imperative. In response to this challenge, the national government marked out grazing reserves across Katsina and Bauchi states in Northern Nigeria, as well as in the capital, Abuja. The three planned reserves, intended to serve about 15 million pastoralists involve demarcating 175,000ha of grazing land, building veterinary service centres, and constructing settlements for nomads to use a route, at a cost of US\$247 million. The government also demarcated a 1,400km livestock route from Sokoto State in the Northwest to Oyo State in the Southwest; and another 2,000km route from Adamawa State in the Northeast to Calabar in the Delta region.

In spite of the Federal government's efforts to curb incessant conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, AL Chukwuma and Atelhe (2014) reports that the conflicts remain unabated as an estimated 300 people lost their lives between January and May, 2013 in a faceoff between farmers and the herdsmen at different locations in Northern Nigeria. Furthermore, IRIN (2009) observed that over a third of land that was cultivable 50 years earlier is now desert across 11 of Nigeria's Northernmost states: Borno, Gombe, Adamawa, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Yobe, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi, a situation which consequently posed constraints to farmers. In addition, Nigeria officially has 415 grazing reserves, but only one-third are in use, while the remaining 270 have been built on or farmed, and this has aggravated farmers herdsmen conflicts. Moreover, Adisa (2011) attributed such conflicts to inequitable access to land, diminishing land resources, antagonistic values among user groups, policy contradictions and non recognition of rights of indigenous people. Abass (2012) however argued that the major source of tensions between pastoralists and farmers is economic, with land related issues accounting for the majority of the conflicts. This can then be situated within the broader context of the political economy of land struggle, traceable to a burgeoning demography in which there is fierce competition for fixed space to meet the demand of the growing population (Olabode and Ajibade 2010, Solagberu 2012).

2.8 Factors Influencing Herders-Farmers Conflict In Nigeria and the effects on the livelihood of crop farmers

Empirically, evidences have revealed various reasons for the continued conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. Some of the factors that influence the conflict include;

Damaging or Grazing on Crops: The damaging or intentional grazing on crops has been pointed out as the most predominant cause of conflict between farmers and herdsmen (Adebayo & Olaniyi, 2008). In a recent study, Adeoye (2017) found deliberate grazing of cattle on crops, farmers' encroachment on grazing reserves, water holes and cattle paths and indiscriminate bush burning by herders as notable causes of conflict between the groups in parts of Kano, Yobe and Borno States of Nigeria. In another study by Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbil (2015) in Oyo State, about 34.2% of the farmers and 6.7% of the pastoralists indicated that crop damage always triggers conflict between them.

Changing Climatic Conditions: The encroaching desert to the traditional abode of the pastoralists in the Sahel region has been identified as a factor for the continued clash as herders migrate southward where the grass is much lush and often intrude into spaces long claimed or cultivated by settled farmers (Olaniyan et al, 2015). In Nasarawa State, the situation has been exacerbated by the phenomenon of climate change which dynamics tend to have been aggravating natural resource conflicts across the region

(Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Climate change and desert encroachment have made southward movements even more inevitable and confrontations with southern farming communities more frequent (Nwosu, 2017). Long-Standing Disagreements: Burton (2016) noted that many of the recent attacks perpetrated by the Fulanis have stemmed from long-standing disagreements with various communities. For instance, Mayah et al (2016) reported that a Fulani leader alleged that the massacre of Agatu people by Fulanis was a reprisal attack against the killing of their prominent son by the people of Agatu in April 2013 who stole his cows. Mostly in the middle-belt, the conflict was found to have stemmed from a long history of feud over farm lands and herding. Preexisting communal conflicts have sustained the violence as herdsman turned militants in the face of urbanization, desertification and the indifference of the Nigerian government to their plight (Burton, 2016).

Scarcity of Fresh Water: Fresh water scarcity seems to be an under-estimated and under-discussed resource issue facing the world today. It is obvious that the world's water demand grows every year in order to meet up with increasing population. Exacerbated by climate change, fresh water scarcity is creating security concerns in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the semi-arid region (Audu, 2013). He argued that availability of water which is a major resource needed for agriculture is decreasing as a result of changes in global climatic conditions. Farmers and pastoralists who are the main agricultural practitioners in Nigeria depend on water resources to sustain their vocations. In recent times, access to water and grazing land have become more competitive and has led to violent conflicts on a regular basis between farmers and herdsman. Jacobs (1980) noted that fresh water scarcity and insufficient rainfall are causes of social and economic ruins which have left the pastoralists at the mercy of sedentary farmers' communities. Ofem and Inyang (2014) observed that contamination of stream by cattle have led to clashes in Yakurr, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Lack of Access To Farm Or Grazing Fields: The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in conjunction with United Nations Development Programme (IPCRUNDP, 2012) traced the cause of the conflict in Guma and Makurdi LGAs of Benue State to the material needed for existence or survival which is the green of the land and fresh water. As the pastoralists need this for grazing and drinking purposes; the Tiv farmers at the same time need it for farming activities; thus they usually clash.

Negligence: This has been identified on the part of both groups as a cause of the conflicts. Yahaya (2008) observed that the herdsman often left a large number of cattle in the care of children who do not know the consequences in the event of destruction of farm produce. On the other hand, he posits that most farmers usually left their harvested crops on their farm unprotected while others who had poor yield intentionally left them un-harvested for cattle to graze so that they could claim heavy compensation. The Nigerian government is as well indicted in this accusation. Burton (2016) noted that government's silence or negligence on the need for increased grazing space has influenced the conflict. He also argued that the request is not new as the Fulani herdsman have previously called on the government to rectify the situation. He maintained that there has been little action on the part of the government to resolve these problems and some quarters believe that it is just being politicized for selfish gains. The herdsman therefore have grown restless and their impatience has culminated into violent actions.

Disrespect of Traditional Authorities: According to Ofem and Inyang (2014), many communities usually collect levies from local crop and livestock (poultry) farmers in their domain and herdsman normally refuse to pay. This is often perceived as disregard and insult to the traditional authorities. The youth who constitute the local security are usually sent to collect that and the assignment is often met with strict resistance that results to clashes. Similarly, Ofuoku and Isife (2009) equally noted that one of the major causes of the conflict in Delta State communities is the disregard for the host traditional authority by the herdsman.

Increasing Urbanization: The quest to join the league of developed societies has continued to pose a threat to certain agricultural activities in Nigeria. There is increasing erosion of farm and grass lands mostly needed by farmers for planting and herdsman for grazing. This has deprived the pastoralists of valuable grassland, again forcing them to attempt to expand their "grass kingdom" (Burton, 2016). Other issues identified were indiscriminate bush burning, sexual harassment of women by nomads, harassment of nomads by host youth, theft of cattle and indiscriminate defecation by cattle along the road (Ofem & Inyang, 2014). It is worthy of note that indiscriminate bush burning can lead to low productivity as a result of poor quality of farm lands. However, sexual harassment and rape of women by nomads may lead to contraction of STDs, HIV/AIDS and high rate of unwanted pregnancies among the victims. Also, the defecation by cattle can cause environmental pollution which can pose a health hazard to the inhabitants of the affected areas.

2.9 Herdsmen and Farmers Clashes in Nigeria (2015-2018).

The attacks of nomadic herdsman are on the increase. While many have divergent opinions on the causes of conflict between them and farmers, it has been reported that the Fulanis under the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) claim that they are being attacked by gangs from farming communities who steal their cattle and they are just defending themselves. According to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index, these Fulani militants are the fourth deadliest militant group in the world with a record killing of about 1229 people in 2014. Recently, the country records series of clashes between herdsman and farmers resulting to loss of lives and properties, Imo (2017).

Some of them as complied are as follows:

- ❖ **May 2015:** A clash between herdsmen and farmers in Benue State in Tarti, Buruku Local Government Area 60 people were killed. (The leader, May 22, 2015).
- ❖ **May 2015:** A conflict in Ukpabi, Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area 20 persons were killed. (The leader, May 8, 2015).
- ❖ **March 2016:** About 500 people were killed by rampaging herdsmen in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State. Affected communities are Alia, Akwu, Adagbo, Okokolo, Ugboju, Odugbeho, Obagaji and Egba (Premium times, March 12, 2016).
- ❖ **April, 2016:** Two villages were attacked and 15 people were killed in Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba State (Punch, April 13, 2016) Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu State 48 persons were killed. (April 26, 2016, vanguard).
- ❖ **June 2016:** A 46 year old renowned farmer was shot by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen in Ossissa community in Ndokwa East L G A of Delta State. (June 18, 2016, Punch).
- ❖ **June 2016:** Attack on Benue Communities such as Ugodo, Turan and Gabo Nenzen in Logo L.G.A, by suspected herdsmen. About 59 persons were killed. (June 20, 2016 Punch).
- ❖ **September, 2016:** Herdsmen reportedly numbering over 50, armed with machetes disrupted the peace of Ndiagu community of Attakwu, Akegbe-Ugwu in Nkanu West L.G.A. A Catholic Seminarian, Lazarus Nwafor & severely injured four members of the Ogbodo Nwarum family. (September 4, 2016, The Sun).
- ❖ **October, 2016:** Armed Fulani herdsmen opened fire on villages who attempted to stop their cattle from grazing their farmlands in Umuekune village of Irete community in Owerri West L.G.A of Imo State. Several people were wounded in the ensuing stampede with two of the injured on danger list, (October 5, 2016, New Telegraph).
- ❖ **January 2017:** Attack on Idoma in Okpokwu L.G.A in Benue State. 5 people dead and several others wounded. (January 24, 2017), Nigeria Newspapers).
- ❖ **January 2017:** Attack on Rafin Gona and Gbagyi villages in Bosso L.G.A in Niger State. At least 6,000 persons displaced and 9 people killed including a police inspector and an Assistant Superintendent Officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps. (January 16, 2017, Daily Nigeria News).
- ❖ **November, 2017:** Attack on Numan Community, leaving 67 victims dead or injured. (Nov. 6, 2017, The Leader).
- ❖ **December, 2017:** Attack on Lawaru in Dong L.G.A in Adamawa State. Victims include a village head and others (Dec. 4, 2017, leader).
- ❖ **December, 2017:** Attack on Minda in Lau L.G.A in Taraba State. 4 people were killed. (December 28, 2017, The Leader).
- ❖ **January, 2018:** Attack between suspected herders and farmers in Omoku in Rivers State 14 people were killed. (January 1, 2018, culled from The Leader).
- ❖ **January, 2018:** Attack in Guma and Logo L.G.A's. About 7 people were killed, (January 14, 2018, culled from The Leader).
- ❖ **March, 2018:** Attack in Enyanwu Igwe, Igbeagu Community in Izzi L.G.A. About 4 persons were killed, (March 13, 2016, culled from the leader).
- ❖ **April, 2018:** Attack on Ayar Mbalom in Gwer East L.G.A in Benue State, about 19 persons were killed. (April 24, 2018, culled from the leader).

3. 0. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the Ex-post facto research method; and content analysis method.

3.2 Method of data collection

Greater percentage of data were collected from secondary sources which include; related research works of scholars, records from government bureaus/organizations, textbooks, journals and news media & letters. And so to further compliment data got from records, observation of events was conducted; focus group discussion, and face to face interview were held; which are the primary sources of data.

3.3 Method of data analysis

Data gathered was analyzed using content analysis

4.1 Findings

- Incessant conflicts between farmers and herders portends calamity to sustainable development in Nigeria.
- Farmers and herders' clashes contribute negatively to food security in Imo State and the nation Nigeria at large.
- Farmers – herders conflict heightens insecurity in Imo State and Nigeria at large

4.2 Conclusion

- There are numerous causes of the conflicts between farmers and herders ranging from cattle rustling, destruction of farmlands to financial burdens and infrastructural damages.
- 2. That setting up of local vigilante was more result yielding in warding off attacks of herders than running helter-skelter and waiting for the intervention of military or armed personnel to salvage clashes or feuds.
- That the effects of these clashes on food production ranges from low or insufficient food supply, lack of beef and dairy products and exorbitant prices of available beef substitutes to community unrest and abandonment of their means of livelihood to less life-threatening jobs.
- Also the effects of these clashes on sustainable development ranges from loss of lives and properties, scarce ecological resources and abandonment of means of livelihood to high dependency ratio on well to do relations, increase in urbanization, displacement of persons and animals and continued lack of distrust between farmers and herders.
- The opinion of respondents, shows that some measures could be implemented to reduce the feuds/clashes between the farmers and herders ranging from setting up of cattle colonies, government's concern over deaths and killings of both man and animals, enactment of land use laws and clear demarcation of grazing routes to setting up of policies to encourage and promote peaceful coexistence between both parties in the dangers of violence and its resultant psychological effects.

4.3 Recommendations

This study therefore recommends the following:

- The Federal Government should consider setting up cattle colonies for these herders in their states of origin so that all the needs of their herds are provided in one place; to reduce, migration and encroachment and then conflicts that may arise.
- Land use laws should be enacted, monitored and regulated to control the herders and farmers activities in the nation.
- Also grazing routes (if need be for migration) should be clearly marked to solve the issue of cattle encroachment on farmlands.
- Herders should be sensitized and encouraged to adopt settlement practices because, to ameliorate the incessant conflict between them and their hosts.
- The cattle breeders' association like the MIYETTI ALLAH and MACBAN in each state should sensitize their members to avoid conflict and make any instigator of conflict to face the law with sentiments or covering them.
- Lastly, the Federal Government should be fair and firm in its resolution and implementation of decisions to all concerned without fear or favour

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