

Herdsmen/Farmer Conflict, New Dimension of Violent Conflict in Nigeria: The Case of North Central Region 2014-2018

ADENYI THEOPHILUS OKECHUKWU¹, NNAMCHI KEVIN CHIKWADO², ONYIA MICHAEL CHUKWUKA³

¹ Department of Political Science University of Nigeria Nsukka.

^{2,3} Department of International Relation/Peace Conflict and Strategic Studies University of America, MURRIETA CA 92563 USA

Abstract- The Fulani herdsmen/ farmers conflict in the North Central Region and other parts of Nigeria has made violent conflict in the country to take another dimension. This study examined herdsmen/farmers conflict as a new dimension of the conflict in Nigeria with a study of the North Central Region. The specific objectives of the study were to discover the factor(s) triggering herdsmen attack in the North Central Region of Nigeria, find out the effects of farmers/herdsmen attack on socio-economic development and food production in the region and identify and recommend measures to end herdsmen/farmers conflict and waste of lives and properties of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria. The study adopted survey and documentary research method. Data was sourced through the use of primary and secondary sources of data collection. Data for the study were collected using 17 questionnaires items. Findings of the study revealed that the factors triggering herdsmen/farmers conflict in the region are competition for resources (grazing land), desertification, anti-open grazing law, and one-sided reporting by the media, lack of appreciable efforts by Federal Government to stop the attack, That the consequences of herdsman attack are; low agricultural output, loss of lives and properties, hunger and human insecurity. The study, therefore, recommends among others that the Government of Nigeria should embark on peace building through public enlightenment and education of the Fulani herdsmen modern method of grazing and also on the need to live in peace with their host communities. The government should tackle the problem of desertification and drought as this will make the Fulani Herdsmen to stay back in their territories in

the North. The Nigerian press should ensure a balanced reporting of the herdsmen/farmers conflict as a means of de-escalating the conflict.

Indexed Terms- Attack, Desertification, Conflict, Farmers/Herdsmen, Grazing

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Conflict emerges from interaction among human beings who in their day to day activities interact with one another either at the interpersonal level or inter-group level. Such interaction may lead to incompatibility or opposition as a result of the pursuit of interest and goals. Conflict according to Adenyi (2016) has no generally or scholarly acceptable uniform definition as different scholars defined it according to their perspective, though conflict is seen as any condition or state of struggle, opposition, incompatibility, interference, divergence of interest, tension, division, indifference among human beings in their process of interaction among themselves.

Nigeria in recent time had witnessed a rise in herdsmen/farmers conflict which has added a new dimension to conflict in the country.

Clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farmers used to be confined to the Northern-most region of the country but has spread to North Central zone as well as parts of Southern Nigeria. The causative factor of this dimension of conflict according to Amaze (2016) is due to the increasing desertification of nomadic grazing land (those areas which are traditional cattle-rearing territories) overgrazing, and low rainfall; the nomadic herdsmen

have been pushing farther and farther South in search of grass and water for their herds. This has caused clashes between them and farmers whose farmlands are destroyed in the country's North Central Region; the country's most fertile agricultural belt. Amaze (2016) also noted that these increasingly deadly clashes have started taking place more frequently in the Southern States, something even Boko Haram has not attempted to do. There have been attacks in states like Rivers and Enugu, in the South-east, and Ondo, in the South-west, where a former presidential candidate, Olu Falae was abducted from his farm by herdsmen for days. So far, it is estimated that Nigeria loses about \$14 billion annually to these clashes. The Fulanis represent a significant component of the Nigerian economy. They constitute the major breeders of cattle, the main source of meat, the most available and cheap source of animal proteins consumed by Nigerians. The Fulanis own over 90% of the nation's livestock population which accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP and 3.2% of the nation's GDP (Fabusoro&Oyegbami, 2009).

From a historical point of view, scholars such as Blench (2010) and Abbaas (2012) observed that conflicts resulting from cattle grazing have existed for as long as the practice of agriculture. Statistics have shown that the influx of herdsmen from Nassarawa to Benue is on the increase at a rate of 3 – 4% annually and this led to a large percentage of livestock in the Benue valley every year. The type of grass, the soil type that encourages and supports vegetation cover creates an enabling environment suitable for the herdsmen to desire to pasture in this valley. The number of cattle and herdsmen is thus increasing in the area.

On the side of the herdsmen, one of the factors that triggers conflicts between the Tiv-farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in the region is "the claim by the Fulani's of payment of compensation to the traditional rulers" in the area which gave them the right to graze over the land but when deprived, the resultant effect is attack on such community (Women Environment Programme, 2012). Nwosu (2017) noted that Nigeria is currently going through a very challenging phase in its history such as economic challenges; acute unemployment, an exchange rate crisis and the attendant runaway inflation, official corruption which

adversely affects the working of government, while corrupt elements and judicial bureaucracy impede the current Administration of Mohammed Buhari's much-vaunted war on corruption. All these challenges nonetheless, insecurity appears to have been the most formidable challenge met by the current administration upon assuming office in May 2015. While the Buhari administration recorded measurable success in its fight against Boko Haram, it appears that the menace of the herdsmen-farmer conflicts has defied the government. The brazenness with which suspected Fulani herdsmen slaughter communities and raze down villages is a sad reminder of the enormous security challenges still facing the Buhari administration (Nwosu, 2017)

II. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have been repeated bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and host communities for several years in Nigeria which claimed thousands of lives and properties. According to Buchanan (2015), Fulani militants were the fourth deadliest group in 2014 and they use machine guns to attack villages, assault and intimidate farmers which resulted to killing of about 80 people between 2010 and 2013, while it rose to 1,229 deaths in 2014. Most of these deaths occurred in the Nigerian North Central State, mostly in the states of Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba, which recorded 847 deaths. The state of Zamfara, in the Northern Western belt, recorded 229 deaths. There were also similar Fulani herdsmen and farmers armed conflicts with groups from Eggon, Jukun, and Tiv farming communities in the region. These conflicts resulted in 712 deaths (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). The year 2016 saw further incidents escalating to Agatu, Benu, and Nimbo, in Enugu State. The Agatu attack led to the death of about 300 people. The Nimbo attack in Enugu State claimed about 40 lives and properties worth millions of naira destroyed; leaving thousands fleeing their homes while children were rendered orphans.

In another development, on New Year eve of 2018 various news media in the country reported that over seventy people were killed by Fulani herdsmen in Benue State and this drew wide condemnation both within and across the country. On the part of the farmers seeking defense, some angry youths, local

hunters and farmers in many communities in the country have however acquired weapons to repel attack by Fulani herdsmen. They have also vowed to stop what they have described as mindless killings and destruction of their farmlands by rampaging Fulani herdsmen (Punch, 2018). The attackers came in military uniforms and in some cases, they come using speed boats by river Benue and when they completed their assignment and they go back through the same route. The more disturbing aspect is that no arrest and prosecution has been made despite promises by security agencies in the country. It is instructive that Fulani attackers use sophisticated weapons, which did not only kill people but also set into flames houses and structures. Such tensions usually emanate from the farmers accusing the herdsmen of damaging their crops, while the host communities are sometimes accused of cattle rustling – stealing of cows. Also, the religious divide between the mainly Muslim Fulani and their largely Christian hosts adds another dimension to potential conflicts, as religious fanatics on both sides exploit the sometimes deep religious fissures that occasionally show up in Nigeria. However, religion is not the underlying cause of the crisis (Nwosu, 2017). It is against the backdrop of incessant clashes between farmers and herdsmen in different parts of the country that this paper seeks to examine farmers/herdsmen conflict as a new dimension of conflict in the country with a study of North Central Region of Nigeria.

III. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- The objectives of this study were to:
 1. Identify the factor(s) triggering herdsmen attack in the North Central Region of Nigeria.
 2. Find out the effects of farmers/herdsmen attack on socio-economic development and food production in the region.
 3. Identify and recommend measures to end herdsmen/farmers conflict and waste of lives and properties of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria.

- Research Question

This study is guided by the following research questions

1. What are the factors triggering the herdsmen/farmers conflict in the North Central region of Nigeria?
2. Does herdsmen/Farmers conflict in the region affect socio-economic development and food production in the region?
3. Are there measures that can end the killing of innocent people in the region and beyond as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict?

- Research Hypotheses

H₀¹: Contention over grazing land does not trigger herdsmen/farmers conflict in the North Central Region of Nigeria.

H_a¹: Contention over grazing land triggers herdsmen/farmers conflict in the region.

H₀²: Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in the region does not affect socio-economic development and food production in the region

H_a²: Herdsmen and Farmers conflict affects socio-economic development and food production in the region

H₀³: There are no measures to end the killing of innocent people in North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict.

H_a³: Peacebuilding and public enlightenment strategy are measures to end the killing of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict.

IV. LITERATURE

- Concept of Conflict

Conflict is an integral part of human existence. One cannot avoid conflicts in families, at work or even when watching news on television (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014). Conflict is a process in which one party suggests that its interest is being opposed by another party. People see only the observable part of conflict such as angry words and actions of opposition (McShane and Von Glinow, 2008). According to Adeniyi (2016) conflict is a phenomenon that exists in human society. The nationality of conflict on human society also transcends to the animal kingdom. Most

often, we see two animals like elephants or lions fighting or slugging it out among themselves. Even domesticated animals like goat, fowl, cow among others also do engage in violent actions against themselves, which is an indication that conflict occurs among them. Manu, Bime, Fon & Ajaga, (2014) opine that conflict emanates from the insatiable nature of human wants but competition for scarce resources is the foremost cause of community or inter-group conflicts.

- Overview of Fulani Herdsmen

The Fulanis according to Nwosu (2017) are an ethnic group not unique to Nigeria. They can be found in a number of West and Central African countries including Chad, Mali, and Senegal, and even in South Sudan in North East Africa. In Nigeria, the Fulani are often grouped together with the Hausa ethnic group (hence the identifier, Hausa-Fulani), though both ethnicities are distinct. Majekodunmi, Fajinmi, Dongkum, Shaw & Welburn (2014) added that the Fulanis are the primary pastoralist group in Africa and have roots in West Africa as far back as 900 A.D. and that the largest Fulani population reside in Nigeria, where they make up a considerable portion of the population with over 18 million people and 270 clans. Nwosu (2017) further posited that the Fulani in Nigeria are nomadic pastoralists, though a number of them live in settled communities while others herd their cattle down Southern Nigeria in search of grazing fields and water for their cattle. In the nomadic Fulani's process of economic migration, according to him, tensions often develop between them and settled communities. This is especially true in the rich agricultural Middle Belt basin, and particularly in Plateau and Benue State.

- Factors triggering herdsmen/farmers crisis in Nigeria.

Elnathan (2014) in his study on the predicaments of the pastoralists and farmers and the true stories behind their conflicts, found that the existence of one-sided reporting by the media, research articles and interested parties trigger the conflict. Majority of reports according to the researcher, tend to highlight and report cases in which the pastoralist faulted farmers and tend to ignore the other side of the stories or even their losses. This situation according to Ibrahim, Abdurrahman & Umar (2015) aggravates the situation

and adds to the speculation and allegations of the pastoralist.

Bagu and Katie (2017) observed that farmers/herdsmen violence is neither an ethnic nor religious conflict, but rather a competition for resources playing out on ethno-religious lines in a fragile country characterized by impunity and corruption. They also argued that the current violence emanates from brutal responses to land disputes and attacks on livelihoods (crops and cattle), triggering self-perpetuating cycles of indiscriminate reprisal confrontations. They further contend that gangs of criminals, often youths from farming and herding communities and/or local bandits, take advantage of growing insecurity, fear, and cyclical attacks to loot villages, engage in highway robbery, and rustle cattle for personal gain and concluded that farming and herding communities suffer from this criminality. Environmental degradation, population growth, increasing cattle prices, and regional instability influence and exacerbate farmers/herders conflict dynamics. Fulani herdsmen are completely dependent on pastures which the desertification of the Sahel region has depleted and this resulted to their going all out to get these pastures elsewhere thereby making them susceptible to resistance which they fight back and this leads to violent conflicts (Bagu & Katie, 2017)

- Effects of farmers/herdsmen attack on socio-economic development and food production in Nigeria.

Ijirshar, Ker & Yange (2015) in their study used regression analysis to examine the effect of the attacks on farmers' output in Benue state. The study found that the number of Fulani herdsmen/farmers attack and deaths recorded has negative effect on Benue farmers output and the socioeconomic effects of the conflict result to reduction in crop yield and income of the Benue farmers; displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties, loss of products in storage and destruction of public and private facilities. In the same manner, Kamal-deen(2016) observed that violence of various types claimed the lives and properties of many Nigerians. The writer cited the attack on Agatu people of Benue State by Fulani herdsmen which left 40 people dead and over 700 displaced while government, corporate and private properties lost are in billions of Naira. Tenuché&Ifatimehin (2009) in

their study observed that farmers/herdsmen conflicts are most responsible for the unsustainable utilization of land resources as the trampling by the hooves of herds of cattle compacts the soil of farmland, destroy farm crops, places restraint on effective utilization of arable farmland and other available resources. The writers also found that the economic and human effects of these conflicts do not encourage the government in the provision of a sustainable economy and infrastructure to its citizens. Nchi (2013) opines that the herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa state have copious economic undertones as both sedentary farmers and pastoral farmers fight for pastures in farmlands which are decreasing as the population of humans and cattle increase. Okoli & Atelhe (2014) in their study on nomads against natives: a political ecology of herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa state, Nigeria found that the socio-economic impact of the conflicts is evident in the glaring level of rural impoverishment and destitution in the hinterlands of Nassarawa State. The internecine violence associated with the conflict tend to exacerbate hunger and human insecurity. This does not augur well for sustainable socio-economic and wellbeing of the people. The economic impact of the conflict situation could be seen in terms of losses associated with the destruction of homes, farmlands, community assets, and household properties (Okoli & Atelhe (2014).

- Measures to end herdsmen/farmers conflict and waste of lives and properties of innocent people in North Central Region of Nigeria

Scholars have suggested different measures to stem the tide; Dimelu, Salifu, Enwelu, and Igbokwe (2017) recommended that all stakeholders (government, nongovernmental organizations, extension agencies, rural institutions among others) should intensify efforts to build cooperative and peaceful coexistence between farmers and pastoralists through public enlightenment, education, and campaign in agrarian communities. Dimelu *et al.* added that Government and NGOs should promptly intervene with aids/compensation to reduce vulnerability, persistence and further spread of such conflict to communities. Ijirshar, Ker & Yange (2015) recommended that elements of compromise and arbitration should be devised to resolve the conflict through education of the farmers on the need to tolerate the seasonal migration of the nomads and the nomads on the other hand on

the need to exercise patient with their animals until the farmers are through with their harvests in order to reduce the number of attacks/deaths arising from the use of land. Adekunle & Adisa (2010) advocated for setting up of a farmer/herdsmen conflict management at community, local, state, and federal government level. Okoli and Atelhe (2014) recommended that in order to forestall mass movement of pastoralists towards the North-Central belt there is need for mitigation of desertification and drought in the far North by the government, communities and individual and in addition a sensitization of stakeholders – farmers and herdsmen alike – on the need for mutual co-existence and peace; as this would help to forestall needless provocations and opportunistic violence. Nte (2016) recommends that government should come up with policies to create grazing reserves and dams for pasture and water in states that are predominantly Fulani so that they don't stray long distances in search of pastures which degenerates into conflict.

According to the International Crisis Group (2017), the reaction from Nigeria's Federal and State authorities, so far, have been wanting because apart from the push against Boko Haram and military operations against cattle rustling, they have done little to address rural insecurity in the north. Federal security and law enforcement agencies have established neither early-warning nor rapid response mechanisms; they have not arrested and prosecuted perpetrators of violence nor offered redress to victims. In the same vein, officials have paid little attention to improving livestock management practices to minimize friction with agrarian communities. State governments' response overall had been short-sighted; most of them have failed to encourage community-level dialogue. As a result, both herders and farmers take matters into their own hands, and further aggravate conflicts.

The International Crisis Group (2017) further added that in April 2014, then president Goodluck Jonathan's government inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves, tasked with proposing strategies for ending the conflicts. He also set up a political Committee on Grazing Reserves, chaired by then Benue State Governor Gabriel Suswam. The report issued by Suswam's committee called for the recovery and improvement of all grazing routes

encroached upon by farmers and recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria should release a total of N100 billion (\$317 million) to the country's 36 state government for ranch construction. The group ICG (2017) lamented that the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved these recommendations but Jonathan's defeat in the March 2015 elections interrupted their implementation. In the same manner, the Premium Times (2016) reported that soon after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock development plan including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, an FMARD committee recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes. On 25 January 2016, the government announced that it was presenting a plan to the Nigerian Governors Forum to map grazing areas in all states as a temporary solution for cattle owners until they could be persuaded to embrace ranching. Most Central and Southern states, however, opposed the plan, which they viewed as favouring Fulani herders.

V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- The Eco-Violence Theory

This study chose to adopt eco-violence theory as its theoretical framework. The theory was developed by Homer-Dixon in 1999, the theory of eco-violence is a new theoretical construct seeking to explain the relationship between environmental factors and violent conflicts. The major assumption of the theory is that decrease in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth, and resource access act in various combinations to increase the scarcity for certain population or groups of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. Homer-Dixon noted that in such a scenario, the affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands and this often triggers conflict when they move to new areas. Onuoha (2007) noted that implicit in the eco-violence theory is the assumption that competition over scarce ecological resources engenders violence. This trend has been aggravated in contemporary times owing to the

impacts of climate change, which has exacerbated ecological scarcity across the world. In effect, ecological scarcity raises the competitive stakes and premium that the various societal groups may place on available ecological resources. This condition tends to precipitate violent conflicts.

The theory of eco-violence offers insights into the nature and dynamics of the herdsman/farmers conflicts in Nigeria. In this regard, it is to be observed that the conflict is driven by the desperation of the affected groups to protect and advance their livelihood and economic interests in the context of an ever-shrinking ecological space, characterized by resource-scarcity, livelihood crisis, population explosion, and resource competition.

The main tenets of the theory as postulated by Homer-Dixon (1999) are thus summarized:

1. Large populations in many developing countries are highly dependent on four key environmental resources that are very fundamental to crop production: fresh water, cropland, forests, and fish.
2. Scarcity or shrinking of these resources as a result of misuse, over-use or degradation under certain circumstances will trigger off conflicts.
3. Resource scarcity is the product of insufficient supply, too much demand or unequal distribution of a resource as a result of environmental hazards that force some sector of a society into a condition of deprivation and violence.

The application of this theory in this study is to show that the herdsman attack on farmers in the North Central States of Nigeria, was caused by climate change-induced migration of pastoralists from the far North to the North-Central Region of Nigeria in search of grazing fields. As Adogi (2013) observed if the population is increasing, definitely there will be as well increase in demand for land, water, forest products and grazing land within the territories inhabited by Fulanis and farmers; these groups are forced to find new ways to cope with different types of conflict at once because of competition over marginal resources and this position of Adogi is the triggering factor of Fulani herdsman and farmers conflict in the study area which has led to herder/farmer conflict, which has defied all remedies

• Research Methodology

This study was carried out in Benue and Nassarawa States of North Central region of Nigeria. The North Central region of Nigeria is made up of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and Federal Capital Territory. The region has a population of 20,266,250 people (2006 Census). This study adopted mixed method of research which according to Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2008) represents research that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon. The researcher adopted survey and documentary research method. Data was sourced through the use of primary and secondary sources of data collection. The former enables the researcher to get a raw data which will be analyzed to arrive at the finding of the study while the later enables the researcher to analyze already existing data relevant to the topic of the study. Primary data was collected with 17 well-structured questionnaire item that was used to elicit the responses of the respondents. While secondary sources explored are books, journals, internet materials, newspapers and magazines among others. Data generated were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis technique. The population of the study is Two Hundred and Fifty (250) respondents selected using judgmental sampling method which is a non-probability sampling technique, based on their knowledge of the topic of the study.

• Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1. Personal data of the respondents

Age of the Respondents		
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	47	18.8
31-40	134	53.6
41-50	22	8.8
51-60	25	10
60 years and above	22	8.8
Total	250	100
Gender of the Respondents		
Male	152	60.8
Female	98	39.2
Total	250	100
Qualification of the Respondents		

SSCE/NECO	76	30.4
OND /NCE	22	8.8
HND/B.SC	49	19.6
MA/M.SC	13	5.2
Ph.D	10	4
Others	80	32
Total	250	100
Occupation of the Respondents		
Farming	71	28.4
Civil Servants	97	38.8
Housewives	49	19.6
Artisans	33	13.2
Marital Status		
Single	60	24
Married	147	58.8
Widows/widowers	23	9.2
Divorced	12	4.8
Separated	8	3.2
Total	250	100

In table 1, the age distribution of the respondents showed that 47 respondents representing 18.8%, were between the ages of 20-30, 134 were between 31-40 and representing 53.6 percent, 22 were between the ages of 41-50 and representing 8.8%, those between the ages of 51-60 were 25 representing 10%, those who are 61 years and above were 22 representing 8.8%. The gender of the respondents showed that 152 were male representing 60.8% while 98 were females representing 39.2%. The qualifications of the respondents showed that those with SSCE/NECO were 76 representing 30.4%, OND/NCE holders were 22 representing 8.8 %, HND/B.SC holders were 49 representing 19.6%, MA/M.SC holders were 13 representing 5.2%, and Ph.D. holders were 10 representing 4% while those with other qualifications were 80 representing 32%. Occupation of the respondents showed that 71 respondents representing 28.4% were farmers, 97 representing 38.8 were employees, and 49 representing 19.6% were housewives, while 33 respondents representing 13.2% were artisans. The marital status of the respondents showed that 60 representing 24% were single, 147

representing 58.8% were married, widows and widowers were 23 representing 9.2%. Those who were divorcees were 12 respondents representing 4.8%, 180 respondents representing 60 percent were married, 40 respondents representing 13.3 percent were Widows/Widowers, 12 representing 4.8% were divorcees while those that are separated were 8 representing 3.2%.

- Research Question One: What are the factors triggering herdsmen/farmers conflict in the North Central region of Nigeria?

Table 2. Response on factors triggering Farmers/herdsmen conflict in the region

S/ N		SA	A	D	SD
1	Competition for resources (grazing land).	80 (32%)	100 (40%)	39 (15.6%)	31 (12.4%)
2	Environmental degradation such as desertification.	100 (40%)	130 (52%)	18 (7.2%)	2 (0.8%)
3	Ethnic sentiment	23 (9.2%)	72 (28.8%)	75 (30%)	80 (32%)
4	Anti-open grazing law.	50 (20%)	141 (56.4%)	55 (22%)	4 (1.6%)
5	Existence of one-sided reporting by the media.	21 (8.1%)	111 (44.4%)	109 (43.6%)	9 (3.6%)

Data on Table 2 showed that in answer to research question one, 80 respondents representing 32% strongly agreed that competition for resources (grazing land) is a factor triggering herdsmen/farmers conflict in the area, 100 respondents representing 40% agreed, 39 respondents representing 15.6% disagreed, while the remaining 31 respondents

representing 12.4% strongly disagreed. On the other hand, 100 respondents representing 40% strongly agreed that environmental degradation such as desertification is a factor triggering the conflict. 130 representing 52% agreed, 18 representing 7.2% disagreed while the remaining 2 representing 0.8% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that ethnic sentiments are the cause of the conflict were 23 representing 9.2 percent, 72 representing 28.8% agreed, 75 respondents representing 30% disagreed while 80 representing 32% strongly disagreed. On Anti-open grazing law, 50 respondents representing 20% strongly agreed that it is one of the factors that triggered the conflict, 141 respondents representing 56.4% agreed, 55 respondents representing 22% disagreed, while the remaining 4 representing 1.6% strongly disagreed. On the existence of one-sided reporting by the media, 21 respondents representing 8.1% strongly agreed that it also triggers the conflict, 111 respondents representing 44.4% agreed, 109 representing 43.6% disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 3.6 percent strongly disagreed.

- Test of Hypotheses One

H₀₁: Contention over grazing land does not trigger herdsmen/farmers conflict in the North Central Region of Nigeria.

H_{a1}: Contention over grazing land triggers herdsmen/farmers conflict in the region.

Using the Formula:

Where $\chi^2 =$ Chi – square

Σ = Summation

F_o = Observed frequency

F_e = Expected frequency

Level of significant = 5%

Degree of freedom (DF) = (R-1) (c-1)

Where R = Row

C = Column

DF= (2 -1) (2-1) = 1x1 =1

Category of responses	Observed (Fo)	Expected (Fe)	Fo - Fe	(Fo - fe) ²	(fo - fe) ² /fe
Strongly Agree	80	62.5	17.5	313.25	5.012
Agree	100	62.5	37.5	1404.25	22.558
Disagree	39	62.5	-23.5	552.25	8.871
Strongly Disagree	31	62.5	-31.5	992.25	15.876
	250				52.3
	X ²				17

T_{tab} (x²) = 3.84

T_{cal}(x²) = 52.3

- Decision rule:

Where Chi-Square (X²) value is greater than the table value the null hypothesis is rejected, In table 2 the calculated Chi-Square value is 52.3 while the table value at p = 0.05 significance level, with 1-degree of freedom is 3.84. The Null Hypothesis (H₀) which stated that Contention over grazing land does not trigger herdsmen/farmers conflict in the North Central Region of Nigeria was rejected while the alternate hypotheses which stated that contention over grazing triggers herdsmen/farmers conflict in the region was upheld.

- Research question 2: Does Herdsmen/Farmers conflict affects socio-economic development and food production in the Region?

Table 3: Respondents response on the effects of herdsmen/Farmers conflict on socio-economic development and food production North Central Region of Nigeria.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Low agricultural output.	143 (57.2%)	80 (32%)	20 (8%)	7(2.8%)
2	Loss of lives and properties.	108 (43.2%)	100 (40%)	18 (7.2%)	24 (9.6%)
3	Loss of trust between farmers and herdsmen.	116 (46.4%)	96 (38.4%)	22 (8.8%)	16 (6.4%)
4	Glaring level of rural impoverishment and destitution in the area.	123 (49.2%)	121 (48.4%)	3 (1.2%)	5 (4%)
5	Hunger and human insecurity.	23 (9.2%)	117 (46.8%)	80 (32%)	30 (12%)

Table 3 showed that in answer to research question two 143 respondents representing 57.2% strongly agreed that herdsmen/Farmers conflict led to low agricultural output in North Central Region of Nigeria, 80 respondents representing 32% agreed, 20 respondents representing 8% disagreed, while the remaining 7 respondents representing 2.8% strongly disagreed. Among the respondents, 108 representing 43.2% strongly agreed that the conflict led to the loss of lives and properties, 100 representing 40% agreed, 18 representing 7.2% disagreed while the remaining

24 representing 9.6% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that it led to loss of trust between farmers and herdsmen were 116 representing 46.4%, 96 representing 38.4% agreed, 22 respondents representing 8.8% disagreed while the remaining 16 respondents representing 6.4% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that the conflict contributed to the glaring level of rural impoverishment and destitution in the area were 123 representing 49.2%, those who agreed were 121 respondents representing 48.4%, 3 respondents representing 1.2% disagreed, while the remaining 5 representing 4% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that the conflict led to hunger and human insecurity in the area were 23 respondents representing 9.2 %, those who agreed were 117 representing 46.8%, and those who disagreed are 80 representing 32% while 30 representing 12% strongly disagreed.

- Hypotheses Two:
Test of Hypotheses One

H₀₂: Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in the region does not affect socio-economic `development` and food production in Nigeria.

H_{a2} Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in the region affects socio-economic development and ` food production in the region

Using the Formula:

- Where $\chi^2 =$ Chi-square
- Σ = Summation
- F_o = Observed Frequency
- F_e = Expected Frequency
- Level of significant = 5%
- Degree of freedom (DF) = (R-1) (c-1)
- Where R = Row
- C = Column
- DF= (2 -1) (2-1) = 1x1 =1

Category of responses	Observed (Fo)	Expected (Fe)	Fo -Fe	(Fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
Strongly Agree	143	62.5	80.5	6480.25	103.684
Agree	80	62.5	17.5	306.25	4.9
Disagree	20	62.5	-42.5	1806.25	28.9
Strongly Disagree	7	62.5	-55.5	3080.25	49.284
	250				186.8
	χ^2				

T_{tab} (x²) = 3.84
T_{cal}(x²) = 186.8

- Decision rule: Where Chi-Square (X²) value is greater than the table value the null hypothesis is rejected. The calculated Chi-Square value is 186.8 while the table value at p = 0.05 significance level, with 1-degree of freedom is 3.84. The Null Hypothesis (H₀) which stated that Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in the region does not affect socio-economic development `and food production in Nigeria` was rejected while the alternate hypotheses which stated that herdsmen and Farmers conflict in the region affect socio-economic development and food production the region was upheld.

Research Question Three: Are there measures to end the killing of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict.

Table 4: Measures to end the killing of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	The reaction from Nigeria's Federal authorities, has been wanting.	112 (44.8%)	128 (51.2%)	8 (3.2%)	2 (0.8%)
2	Only President Jonathan regime inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves to recommend strategies to stop the conflict	23 (9.2%)	134 (56.3%)	86 (34.4%)	7 (2.8%)
3	Building cooperative and peaceful coexistence through peacebuilding between farmers and pastoralists	148 (59.2)	47 (18.8)	40 (16%)	15 (6%)
4	Creating grazing reserves and dams for pasture and water in states that are predominantly Fulani	65 (26%)	132 (52.8)	45 (18%)	8 (3.2%)
5	Mitigation of desertification and drought in by the government	112 (44.8%)	92 (36.8%)	21(8.4)	25 (10%)
6	Public enlightenment and education	50 (20%)	102 (40.8%)	65 (26%)	33 (13.2%)

7	Setting up of farmer/herdsmen conflict management committee in conflict prone areas.	90 (36%)	99 (39.6%)	31 (12.4%)	30 (12%)
---	--	----------	------------	------------	----------

Table 4 showed that in answer to research question three, 142 respondents representing 44.8% strongly agreed that the reaction from Nigeria’s Federal authorities, has been wanting, 128 respondents representing 51.2 % agreed, 8 respondents representing 3.2 % disagreed, while the remaining 2 respondents representing 2 % strongly disagreed. Among the respondents, 23 representing 9.2 % strongly agreed that only President Jonathan regime made an attempt to resolve it by the inauguration of an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves to recommend strategies to stop the conflict, 134 representing 56.3% agreed, 86 representing 34.4% disagreed while the remaining 7 representing 2.8 % strongly disagreed. On the measure to end the conflict, those who strongly agree that building cooperative and peaceful coexistence through peacebuilding between farmers and pastoralists is a measure to end the conflict were 148 respondents representing 59.2 %, those who agreed were 47 representing 18.8%, those who disagreed were 40 representing 16% while 15 representing 6% strongly disagreed, 50 respondent representing 20% strongly agreed that public enlightenment and education of both the farmers and the herders on modern method of grazing will halt the tension, 102 representing 40.8% agreed, 65 representing 26% disagreed while the remaining 33 respondents representing 13.2% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that creating grazing reserves and dams for pasture and water in states that are predominantly Fulani is a measure to end the conflict were 65 representing 26%, those who agreed were 132 respondents representing 52.8%, 45 respondents representing 18% disagreed, while the remaining 8 representing 3.2% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that mitigation of desertification and drought by the government is a measure to end the conflict were 112 respondents representing 44.8%, those who agreed were 92 respondents representing 36.8%, 21 respondents representing 8.4% disagreed, while the remaining 25 representing 10% strongly disagreed. Those who strongly agreed that setting up of farmer/herdsmen

conflict management committee in conflict-prone areas is a measure to end the conflict were 90 respondents representing 36 %, those who agreed were 99 representing 39.6%, those who disagreed were 31 representing 12.4% while 30 representing 12% strongly disagreed.

• Test of Hypotheses Three

Ho₃: Peacebuilding and public enlighten strategy are not measures to halt the killing of innocent people in North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict.

Ha₃: Peacebuilding and public enlighten strategy are measures to halt the killing of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict

Using the Formula:

Where χ^2 = Chi-square

Σ = Summation

Fo = Observed frequency

Fe = Expected frequency

Level of significant = 5%

Degree of freedom (DF) = (R-1) (c-1)

Where R = Row

C = Column

DF= (2 -1) (2-1) = 1x1 =1

Category of responses	Observed (Fo)	Expected (Fe)	Fo-Fe	(Fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
Strongly Agree	112	62.5	49.5	2450.25	39.2
Agree	128	62.5	65.5	4290.25	66.6
Disagree	8	62.5	-54.5	3192.25	51.1
Strongly Disagree	2	62.5	-60.5	3660.25	58.6
	250				215.5
	χ^2				

$$T_{tab}(x^2) = 3.84$$

$$T_{cal}(x^2) = 215.5$$

- Decision rule: Where the calculated Chi-Square (X^2) value is greater than the table value the null hypothesis is rejected. The calculated Chi-Square value is 215.5 while the table value at $p = 0.05$ significance level, with 1-degree of freedom is 3.84. The Null Hypothesis (H_0) which states that peacebuilding and public enlightenment strategy are not measures to halt the killing of innocent people in North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict was rejected while the alternate hypotheses which state that peacebuilding and public enlightenment strategy are measures to end the killing of innocent people in the North Central Region of Nigeria as a result of Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict was upheld.

- Summary of findings

The study has revealed that the factor(s) triggering herdsmen attack in the North Central region of Nigeria are competition for resources (grazing land), desertification, ethnic sentiment, anti-open grazing law, as well as one-sided reporting by the media. It also revealed that the Federal Government of Nigeria has not made appreciable efforts to stop Fulani/Farmers clash in North Central region of Nigeria because apart from President Goodluck Jonathan that inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves no other meaningful measures have been undertaken by the Federal Government to quell the violence associated with the conflict. It was also revealed that the consequences of herdsmen attack socio-economic development of Nigeria are; low agricultural output, loss of lives and properties, loss of trust between farmers and herdsmen, glaring level of rural impoverishment and destitution in the area as well as hunger and human insecurity. The study also revealed that building cooperative and peaceful coexistence (peacebuilding) between farmers and pastoralists in the area, public enlightenment and education of both the farmers and the herdsmen on the need to live in peace and setting up of farmer/herdsmen conflict management committee in the region are measures to stop the killing of innocent people in the area. It was also found that there is a need for measures to be put in place for mitigation of the effect of desertification

and drought and creation of grazing reserves and dams so that the Fulani herdsmen can stay in their place and herd their cattle.

CONCLUSION

The conflict between the herdsmen and the farmers has negative consequences to both human and the economy of Nigeria as no meaningful development thrives in an atmosphere of rancor and disorder. The study has been able to identify factor(s) triggering herdsmen attack in North Central Region of Nigeria, the effect of the conflict on socio-economic development and food production in the region as well as measures to halt herdsmen/farmers conflict and waste of lives and properties of innocent people in North Central Region of Nigeria. This paper strongly argues that the federal government of Nigeria has not done enough to curtail this violent conflict as it has done in other regions where insecurity and violent conflict erupted such as militancy in the Niger Delta, Secessionist agitation by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in South East, Boko Haram in the Northeast as well as armed banditry in some North Western states especially Zamfara State. The study, therefore concludes that the inability of Federal Government to curtail Herdsmen/Farmers conflict in Nigeria will spell doom for the country in future going by the way and manner this new dimension to conflict in Nigeria is spreading across other regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested as measures that can bring to end herdsmen/farmers conflict in the country in general.

- That the Government of Nigeria should embark on peacebuilding by preaching peaceful coexistence between farmers and pastoralists in the North Central region of the country and beyond.
- That there should be public enlightenment and education of the Fulani herdsmen on the need to adopt modern methods of grazing cattle which is more economical and crisis-free.
- That Government should set up a farmer/herdsmen conflict management committee in the region as a measure to stop the unwanted and incessant killings there.

- That the federal government of Nigeria should as a matter of urgency tackle the problem of desertification and drought as this will make the Fulani Herdmen stay back in their territories to graze their cattle.
- That Governors of the states dominated by the Fulani Herdsmen should create grazing reserves and dams for pasture in the region as a measure to reduce migration of the herdsmen to different parts of the country in search of land for grazing.
- That those sponsoring and fueling the farmers/herdsmen conflict should be identified and prosecuted by the Federal government so as to serve as a deterrent to others
- That Nigerian press should ensure a balanced reporting of the herdsmen/farmers conflict as a means of de-escalating the conflict.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abbass, I. (2012) No retreat, no surrender: Conflict for survival between the Fulani pastoralist and farmers in Northern Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal* 8(1): 331-346.
- [2] Adekunle, O. A. & Adisa, R., (2010) An Empirical Phenomenological Psychological Study of Farmer-herdsmen Conflicts in North-Central Nigeria. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 2(1): 1-27
- [3] Adenyi T. O (2016) Elements of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution. Enugu Otek Publisher
- [4] Adogi, M (2013). *Fulani-farmers conflicts in Nasarawa State: The ecology, population and politics*. Abuja: Murry Greens Consult
- [5] Amaza, M., (2016) Nigeria's next Security Challenge is at a Tipping Point and could be as deadly as Boko Haram. Quartz Africa. Retrieved from z.com/africa/670768/nigerias-next-security-challenge-is-at-a-tipping-point-and-could-be-as-deadly-as-Boko-haram/
- [6] Bagu, C. & Katie, S (2017). Past is Prologue: Criminality and Reprisal Violence in Nigeria's Middle Belt, (1st ed). Washington DC:
- [7] Blench, R. (2010). Conflict Between Pastoralists and Cultivators in Nigeria, Review Paper prepared for DFID, Nigeria Kay Williamson Educational Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.rogierblench.info/Development/Nigeria/Pastoralism/Fadama%20II%20paper.pdf>
- [8] Buchanan, R. T. (2015) Global Terrorism Index: Nigerian Fulani Militants named as Fourth Deadliest Terror Group in the world. UK: The Independent. November, 18 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/global-terrorism-index-Nigerian-Fulani-militants-named-as-fourth-deadliest-terror-group-in-world-a6739851.html>
- [9] Dimelu, M. U., Salifu, S. D., Enwelu, I. A., & Igboke, E. M (2015) Livelihood issues in herdsmen-farmers' conflict among farming communities in Kogi State, Nigeria *African Journal of Agricultural Research* 12(24):2105-2115
- [10] Elnathan, J. (2014). The Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria: questions, challenges, allegations. Retrieved from <http://elnathanjohn.blogspot.com>
- [11] Fabusoro, E. & Oyegbami, A. (2009): Key Issues in livelihoods security of Migrant Fulani Pastoralists: Empirical Evidence from Southwest Nigeria. *ASSET, Series C*, 4(1): 44-51
- [12] Homer-Dixon, T & Blitt, J (1998) *Ecoviolence*. Rowman & Littlefield
- [13] Ibrahim, M., Abdurrahman, B. E., & Umar, M. I (2015) An assessment of farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria using GIS. *International Journal of Engineering Science Invention* 4 (7): 23-33
- [14] Ijirshar, B. U., Ker, G. & Yange, C. T., (2015) Socio-Economic Effects of Farmers-Fulani Herdsmen's Conflict on Farmers Output in Benue, Nigeria. A paper presented at International Academic Conference on Nigeria and Emerging Challenges in the 21st Century: The Wayforward", 25th-28th August
- [15] International Crisis Group (2017) Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict *Crisis Group Africa Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-Nigeria-s-expanding-deadly-conflict>
- [16] Kamal-deen O. S. (2016) Religious Violence in Contemporary Nigeria: Implications and

- Options for Peace and Stability Order *Journal for the Study of Religion* 29(1):85-103
- [17] Leech N, & Onwuegbuzie A, (2008) A typology of mixed methods research designs, *Quality and Quantity*, 43(2):265-275.
- [18] Manu, I. N., Bime. M, Fon, D. E. & Ajaga, N (2014). Effect of farmer- grazer conflicts on rural development: a socio-economic analysis. *Scholarly Journal of Agricultural Science* 4(3):113-120
- [19] Majekodunmi, A.O, Fajinmi, A, Dongkum, C., Shaw, A.P.M & Welburn, S. C Pastoral livelihoods of the Fulani on the Jos Plateau of Nigeria. *Research, Polic, and Practice* 4(20) doi.org/10.1186/s13570-014-0020-7
- [20] Mcshane, S & Von Glinow, M.A. (2008). *Organizational Behavior: Emerging Realities for the Workplace Revolution*. (Fourth ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [21] Nte, T. U., (2016) Fulani Herdsmen and Communal Conflicts: Climate Change as Precipitator. *Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research* 2 (1): 26-32
- [22] Nwosu, C., (2017 April, 23) Between Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers. National Security under Buhari. The Republic Newspaper.
- [23] Okoli, A. C., & Atelhe, G. A., (2014) Nomads against Natives: A Political Ecology of Herder/Farmer Conflicts in Nasarawa State, *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 4 (2):76-88
- [24] Omisore, B. O., & Abiodun A. S., (2014) Organizational Conflicts: Causes, Effects and Remedies *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences* 3(6): 118-137. DOI: 10.6007/IJAREMS/v3-i6/1351
- [25] Onuoha, F.C. (2007). "The state and water conflict in Africa: A focus on the Lake Chad, 1960 – 2007". M.Sc. A thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science University of Nigeria Nsukka
- [26] Premium Times (January 25, 2016) How I plan to end Fulani herdsmen, farmers' clashes – Buhari",
- [27] Punch Newspapers Editorial (January 8 2018) Nigeria: Benue State Conflict Leaves 83 Dead in 1 Week
- [28] Tenuche, M. S and Ifatimehin, O. O. (2009) Resource conflict among farmers and Fulani herdsmen: Implications for resource sustainability. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*. 3 (9): 360-364
- [29] Women Environmental Programme (2012) Project Report on Conflict Mapping into incessant crises between the Tiv farmers and the Fulani Herdsmen in Guma and Makurdi Local Government Areas of Benue State, Nigeria and Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue. United Nations Development Programme.