



SECURITY IMPLICATION OF FARMERS AND FULANI HERDSMEN CONFLICT IN MIDDLE BELT ZONE-2010-2018

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ABSTRACT

The growing increase cases of conflict between farmers and Fulani Herdsmen has become serious issues that affected the security of lives and property of peoples in Middle Belt Zone, particularly in states like Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa. However despite several efforts adopted by relevant policy makers in the Middle Belt Zone you hardly pass a month without security information of attack in Benue, Plateau or Nasarawa State. In each of these attacks property worth millions of naira and lives are destroyed on a large scale. The huge human loss is the most worrisome of all. The objective of this study is to discuss the causes, as well as the socio-economic, political and religious implications of these attacks for sustainable development of Peace in Nigeria. The study adopted qualitative and phenomenological approaches in its investigation and analysis of data drawn from secondary source of existing literature to investigate the problem of conflict between the two groups of farmers and herdsmen. The study discovered that many people have lost their property and lives and some has been displaced from their homes, these actions are making the peace, security and unity of this country as a federation are being seriously threatened by the conflict in the Middle Belt Zone which was referred before as a food basket center for peace in Nigeria. The paper has recommended for peace to reign in the Middle Belt all hand need to be put in desk by both Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen must recognize the importance of peaceful living and dangers attached to violence between the parties in Conflict through adopting a peaceful means of addressing the problems as well government at all level to provide policies that could help in addressing the problems of both two parties.

Keywords: Fulani Herders, Farmer, Violent approach and Grazing Land.

INTRODUCTION

Violent confrontations between farmers and herders have become a defining feature of inter-group relations among communities in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. Environmental degradation, social manipulation of ethno-religious biases, and technological advances has altered relationships that were historically inter-dependent and mutually beneficial. Conflicts between farmers and herders exist on a large scale, both within Nigeria and the greater Lake Chad Basin and Sudan-Sahel region; however, states within Nigeria's Middle Belt have witnessed an increase in casualties as consequences of these fractured relationships. Crop damage, attacks on cattle, and cattle theft/rustling are major conflict triggers that initiate violence between the two groups, which often leads to cycles of revenge attacks. The tense relationships and cycles of attacks have killed thousands of people and displaced more than 62,000 people in the Middle Belt. The instability and displacement have resulted in extensive loss of crops and cattle in an area considered to be the "food basket" of Nigeria. The federal and state governments, civil society, religious groups, and communities have responded to the different manifestations of this conflict in a variety of ways, but key gaps and opportunities remain to better prevent violence and improve inter-communal relations.



This paper examines existing responses by government and non-government actors at the community, state, and national levels to the protracted conflict between farmers and herders, and offers some recommendations for the management or resolution of this conflict.

The Fulani pastoralists appear to be greater in number than any other group in Nigeria that are involved in the business of animal rearing. They are the most prosperous. They make cattle meat affordable and readily available at the door post of Nigerians. Their animal meat constitutes a huge source of protein for the citizens. Hence they contribute substantially to the Nigerian economy. Eniola, (2010) opined that the Fulani indisputably represent a significant component of the Nigerian economy. They constitute the major breeders of cattle and the main source of meat, the most widely available and cheapest source of animal protein consumed by Nigerians. The Fulani own over 90% of the nation's livestock population, which accounts for one-third of the agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and 3.2% of the nation's GDP (Bello 2013). Nonetheless, the frequent attacks on the farmers and citizens of Nigeria these days by the herdsmen are terribly alarming. Attesting to this fact, Adetula (2016) avers that previously the herdsmen were known to wreak havoc in certain communities in Nigeria, but now the rate at which they are committing these crimes has increased exponentially. This threatens the peace, security and unity of the nation as one geographical entity and will retard growth and development in all spheres of people's lives. This negative attitude tends to negate their huge economic contribution to the gross national product (GNP). The aims of this study are as follows: to discuss the causes and socio-economic, religious and political implications of these attacks for national development and to suggest possible solutions to this malady. The study adopted qualitative and phenomenological approaches in its investigation and analysis of data. The work attempts to examine various areas in Nigeria where the herders unleash mayhem on the people.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria for quite long time subsistence farming has been the major occupation of the farming communities. Agriculture was contributing over 60% of the Gross Domestic product (G. D. P) since in the 1960s. Even when farmers were using primitive tools, they were producing 70% of Nigeria's export and 95% of its food needs. Various Government in Nigeria both militaries and the elected civilians has their own policy document on agricultural development through facilitation of boosting farming activities, communication, and distribution of agricultural products to improve the quality of life of the farmers. The current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari since his first tenure in 2015 has place agriculture as one of his priority policy agenda with a goal of diversifying the nation economy with a focus on agriculture but unfortunately this cannot be achieved because of clashes between farmers and Herdsmen across different part of the country.

The nature of poor policies that cannot address the peculiar needs of both farmers and Herdsmen has given rise to un-healthy rivalry between the two groups, leading to violence



characterized by loss of lives and property. These crises take place in states like Benue, Plateau, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Kogi, Ekiti, Kwara, Edo, Delta, Enugu, Abia, Ebonyi, Ondo and Osun. But this paper has given a focus to ideally what happen in the Middle Belt in stats like Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau. In Benue state some ethnic groups like Tiv, the Agatu people of Idoma and the Igede, have been under attack by some undesirable herdsmen destroying farms land and kills large number of peoples. The menace started in the neighboring Jos city of Plateau State in 2001 and spilled over to Benue State in 2008. The confrontation was characterized by occasional fighting, low levels of violence, and search for allies by parties, mobilization of resources, strained relations and polarization. In February 2014, herdsmen invaded and killed Benue farmers using chemical weapons. Speaking to journalists immediately after undertaking a personal fact-finding visit to the affected areas, the former Director General of the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) Paul Orhii (2014) said: Chemical weapons have been used on our people and for the first time I saw it yesterday. It was concealed in canister smells. This dimension gave credence to the suspicion that the Herdsmen were leveraging their contacts with international terrorist networks through illegal trafficking in weapons of mass destruction. Losses to the country as a result of herdsmen activities since 2001 have been estimated at over \$14 billion, Gundu ,Z.(2017). Between 2013 and 2017, herdsmen killed close to 2000 people in Tiv communities of Benue State, and over 755,538 persons internally displaced. The Tiv community in zone A and B lost farm produce and other valuables worth over N39,823,798,469

Idyorough, A(2017). In the **Idoma and Igede communities** (zone C) over 1600 lives were lost and properties value over N6.232.421.669 destroyed. Violent conflicts in Benue state have become the mode of collective interaction of the duo. However, looking at the above cases of attacks by unknown herdsmen to states like Benue and Plateau the origin of all the menace can easily be traced as lack of coordinated working policy between federal government and units of states in making agriculture business an economic venture rather than using politics to drive benefit of dividing the nation which is a serious collateral damage to both the economy and sustainability of the country as a one nation.

Operational Definition of Concept

Conflict: 'Conflict' has been defined variously by different scholars under different ideological, historical and cultural influences. However, Francis (2007:20) defines conflict as the 'pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups'. Conflict is a continuing feature of social existence. It is not the absence of conflict that marks out a great nation but the manner in which conflicts are resolved. Conflict is a situation of disagreement or incompatibility between two parties characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences. In this study, conflict is the outcome of opposing or opposed interests, concerns and needs of Fulani herders and farmers over grazing of their cattle on the latter's farmlands



Herders: These are nomadic pastoralists who are mainly Fulani's, one of the ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria. Their main pre-occupation is rearing of livestock (cattle, sheep and donkey)

Farmers: Farmers in Nigeria are found in every part of the country. Most Nigerians are farmers-small scale (peasant) farming or large scale. Farmers till the land and cultivate all kinds of crops for either cash or consumption. Farmers belong to virtually all ethnic groups in Nigeria

Pastoralist: is an aspect of agriculture that has to do with the rearing of animals like goats, sheep, and cattle and so on. This is done by different people around the world, including the Fulani people. Fulani herdsmen are seen more in the Sahel region of Africa. Another account describes pastoralist as a way of life based primarily on raising livestock, particularly small ruminants, cattle and camels. Pastoral livestock production systems are mostly found in Africa's vast arid and semi-arid areas. These areas are characterized by marked rainfall variability and associated uncertainties in the spatial and temporal distribution of water resources and grazing for animals.

National development: According to Tolu and Abe (2011:238), national development is the 'the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation'.

Research Objectives

The Paper has the general objective of investigating the security implication of herdsmen and farmers clashes in the Middle Belt Region, while the specific objectives are:

- i. To find out the nature of security problems raised by conflict between the farmers and herdsmen in Middle Belt Zone.
- ii. To investigate how does this conflict affect the lives and properties of the peoples in the Middle Belt Zone.
- iii. To examine the economic implication earn as result of farmers and herdsmen conflict in Middle Belt Zone.
- iv. To suggest ways on how to address and solve the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Middle Belt.

Research Questions

The Paper has provided answers to the following questions:

- i. What is the nature of security problems raised by conflict between Farmers and herdsmen in Middle Belt Zone?
- ii. Does Conflict between farmers and Herdsmen destroy large number of peoples and properties in Middle Belt Zone?
- iii. What is the nature of economic backwardness earned as result of farmer's herdsmen conflict in Middle Belt Zone?
- iv. What are way that would help in addressing the problems of conflict between Farmers and Herdsmen in Middle Belt Zone?



Research Methodology

The paper has uses both qualitative and quantitative in nature using data from secondary sources publications from conferences, journals, Government Reports and other relevant source of information's that can supplement our ways of investigation of the subject matter.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories were used for the study and a model:

- i. Dialectical Materialism Theory
- ii. Frustration Aggression Theory

The paper is anchored on the Dialectical Materialism Theory of Karl Marx (1818-1883) which maintains that conflicts result from man's consciousness of himself and material conditions existing in the society. The theory postulates that man attaches great importance to what he possesses or what he can call his own in the society. That is, that life is determined by social or economic production. In other words, what is produced, how and who produces it, how that which is produced is shared; material possessiveness. In analyzing the application of the theory to his study, Vaaseh in Wuam and Ikpanor (2013) aver that since the resources are unevenly distributed or are naturally scarce, the struggle over their possession usually brings conflicts. This aptly fits in these situations of herders and farmers conflict. While farmers lay claim to those limited rich vegetation lands of the Central and Southern Nigeria and try to hold tight onto the lands for farming, the nomadic herders who lack same in most of the northern parts of the country from where they come turn to struggle over them with the farmers for the grazing of their herds. The result is the conflict that ensues, with both parties trying to possess the land and enhance their means of production and livelihood. Secondly, the paper is supported by the Frustration Aggression Theory, propounded by Dollard and Associates in and later expanded by Yates and Berkowitz 1960 and 1962 respectively. This theory maintains that the scarce resources remain and the quest to acquire or even takeover control exist, the farmers who feel challenged get frustrated and attempt to resist in defense while those herders also feel frustrated too as they apparently don't see better alternatives. Both parties are frustrated. Consequently, the Frustration Aggression Theory applies. In either case, there must be deliberate efforts to ensure harmonious co-existence in the event where the conflict has already created some level of hostilities, apathy and/or total disharmony.

Antecedents of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria

In January 2013, Fulani herdsmen attacked some villages in Nasarawa State, killing 10 people and displacing over 5000 people. In a fresh attack on some villages in Nasarawa State, about 33 people were killed in November 2014 (<http://naijagist.com/Fulani-gunmen-attack>). More attacks by the armed Fulani herdsmen came in 2016. Duru (2016) reports a gruesome attack on Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State in February 2016 in which about 7000 people were driven from six villages by the Fulani herdsmen. The villagers observed that despite heavy gunshots by the herdsmen, no military or security presence was felt. Over 200 persons were killed and houses were razed. In April 2016 there was a renewed attack on Agatu by the armed herdsmen. Statistics from the Benue State



Emergency Management Agency indicates that no fewer than 30 persons died in the renewed violence.

Mamah et al. (2016) reveal that the Fulani herdsmen in Enugu State in April 2016. The herdsmen attacked Ukpabi Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area on 25 April 2016, killing over 40 people. Survivors fled to neighboring communities. Two days after the Ukpabi Nimbo attack, there was another attack by the Fulani herdsmen in Umuchigbo community in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. It is clear that the deadly escapades of arms-bearing herdsmen are becoming increasingly unsettling. They have left their footprints in virtually every part of the country. In their last outings, they have been very unsparing of the communities (Ede, 2016:25–26). Militants from the Fulani ethnic group are believed to have killed at least 1229 people in Nigeria in 2014, according to the latest Global Terrorism Index, which ranked African nations as the world's third most terrorized countries. The Fulani militants, together with the terror group Boko Haram, were responsible for more than 7000 deaths that occurred in Nigeria in 2014. While Boko Haram is predominant in the news related to terrorism in Nigeria, little is known about the attacks and abductions by the Fulani herdsmen (Ludovica, 2015). Adetula (2016) says that according to statistics provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace, 1229 people were killed in 2014, up from 63 in 2013, and Benue State seems to be the hardest hit in recent times. Barely 5 days before the end of Governor Gabriel Suswam's administration in May 2015, over 100 farmers and their family members were reportedly massacred in villages and refugee camps located in the Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa areas of the state. According to reports, in July 2015, suspected herdsmen attacked Adeke, a community on the outskirts of the state capital, Makurdi. In December 2015, 6 persons were killed at Idele village in the Oju Local Government Area. A reprisal attack by youths in the community saw 3 Fulani herdsmen killed and beheaded. In February 2016, as a result of a clash between herdsmen and farmers in Benue State, 40 more people were killed, about 2000 displaced and not less than 100 were seriously injured (Duru, 2016). Most recently, more than 92 Nigerians were massacred by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Benue and Niger States. Also, before this time, there were reported attacks by the Fulani pastoralists in the southern states of the country, including Enugu, Ekiti and Ondo States.

The Igbo Youth Movement, IYM, has lamented that Fulani herdsmen have killed 710 other Nigerians, excluding the 48 Agatu people in Benue State in the last 10 months, without the federal government addressing the issue. The statement signed by the founder of the IYM and leader of the South-East Democratic Coalition, Evangelist Elliot Uko, entitled, 'Ten Months of Carnage', read: 'Between June 2015 and April 2016, Fulani herdsmen have killed over 710 Nigerians (excluding [the] Agatu incident) in 48 recorded incidents, the highest in recent years' (Emeka & Clifford 2016). Another deadly attack was that of the 2016 southern Kaduna massacre, which some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have labelled as genocide against southern Kaduna indigenes. Ajijah (2016) relates that the Catholic Archdiocese of Kafanchan says that the unrest in southern Kaduna State has claimed 808 lives. Moreover, 53 villages have so far been



attacked and 57 people injured, according to the church. Governor Nasir El Rufai said the attackers were foreign Fulani herdsmen, who were avenging past attacks on them and their livestock. Mr Yakubu said 4 local government areas have been attacked, with 808 people killed and 1422 houses, 16 churches, 19 shops and one primary school destroyed (Ajijah 2016). However, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, the umbrella organisation of herdsmen, notes that it has lost no fewer than 6000 cows to the crisis in southern Kaduna (cited in Ibenwa & Uroko 2017:7). Garba (2017) reports that the National Emergency Management Agency said that 204 people have been killed in the southern Kaduna crises. Moreover, the clashes between Fulani herdsmen and locals in southern Kaduna have lasted for months. The latest now is an attack on farmers and other people living in Jos, Plateau State, on Saturday 24 June, at 11 pm by Fulani herdsmen. Most Nigerians described the incident as most painful and deeply regrettable. News agent Idegu (2018:37) reports that no fewer than 86 persons were killed that weekend when gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked many communities in Plateau State. Police Spokesman Terna Tyopev, who confirmed the figure, said 8 persons were hospitalised and about 50 houses were razed. He added that 6 suspects were arrested. Yusuf also reports that Berom Villages – Xland, Gindin Akwati, Kura Falls, Nghar and Ruku – were completely sacked. However, more people might have died because many families buried their dead before the police arrived. Tyopev added that some bodies were deposited at the Jos University Teaching Hospital mortuary and security had been tightened in the affected villages to restore peace.

Causes of Conflict between Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers

Some factors have been considered to be responsible for many of the conflicts that happen between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. The factors are stated as follows. Firstly, unauthorized encroachment into farmlands have led to serious conflicts between the farmers and herdsmen in recent times, because of the damage they cause to crops and fallow lands left to replenish the nutrients after long years of use. The herdsmen's cows often stray into the farmlands of the farmers without permission and destroy crop nurseries or full-grown crops, which they hope to harvest and sell in the near future. This attitude, no doubt, provokes the farmers to go after their animals (Eme, 2017). Okoli and Atelhe (2014:80) reveal that the shrinking of ecological space and resorts creates an atmosphere of eco-scarcity, which raises the stakes and puts a premium on the available resources. What usually results from this is fierce competition and a desperate struggle for subsistence. In this context, therefore, conflict not only becomes inevitable; it simply becomes a matter of survival. Secondly, the Fulani herdsmen use other people to buy land for them in their own name while they lie to the natives that they are people buying the land for one business or the other. However, the owners of the land discover later that they have been tricked by the herdsmen when they see the land being used by herdsmen for cattle business, contrary to their will; this leads to conflicts (Odo, 2017). Thirdly, climate change is one of the major causes of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. This is so because when there is unfavourable weather the herdsmen will be compelled to leave their original habitation to another area for greener pastures. Lending support to this, Gleick (2010:331–332) says that climate change has been tipped as the greatest single factor



to induce migration and population displacement. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, this will affect people displaced by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and agricultural disruption. According to Ibenwa, Nwokocha and Okoli (2017:290), migration is the movement of people from one geographical region to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence. Fourthly, lack of political will by the government to arrest and punish the offenders adequately is one of the factors fuelling the activities of the herdsmen in Nigeria today. A case in point was what happened in Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area and in Enugu town in 2016, all in Enugu State. The Fulani herdsmen attacked farmers at Nimbo because of a misunderstanding over grazing fields and killed over 50 persons and destroyed their property, worth thousands of naira (Mamah et al. 2016). From that time to the present no serious arrest has been made and the Fulani come back at intervals to attack farmers and villagers on their farms. A few months after the attack at Nimbo and Enugu, Fulani herdsmen entered a farm to feed their flocks and while they were doing that the owners of the farm land came and chased them and their cattle away. Sequel to this, at midnight the Fulani herdsmen came and attacked the people, killing a pregnant woman. Fifthly, the inability of government in most cases to respond quickly to distress calls and early warning signs is an issue that promotes conflict. This negative attitude has made it difficult to stop crises that would have been prevented if government had responded accordingly to distress calls and warnings.

Negative Effects on National Development

The effects of the Fulani herdsmen's activities cannot be overemphasized. Hereunder they are enumerated.

Economic Effect

It is an indisputable fact that the activities of the Fulani herdsmen against the farmers have resulted in a huge economic setback in Nigeria today. Some of these setbacks are discussed here below. Creation of artificial scarcity: From what we know, anytime farmers are attacked they will run away from their farmlands and find it difficult to return for fear of being attacked again. This sometimes lasts for a long time, thereby hindering sowing and reaping. This undoubtedly creates an artificial scarcity of goods and services. In line with this, Ebele N. Ibenwa (personal communication on 10 March 2017) expressed that the Fulani's frequent attacks on the farmers have led to the creation of an artificial scarcity of goods and services and, consequently, to inflation and devaluation of the naira. To buttress her point further, she cited the Zaki-biam Yam Market attack in Benue State that happened on 20 March 2017, in which over 50 people were killed, and out of fear the traders refused to come back to the market for a long time. This created a man-made scarcity, which ordinarily would have been avoided if the Fulani herdsmen's attack on the farmers and villagers had not happened. Inflation and devaluation of the naira: Inflation, simply put, is a persistent increase in the prices of goods and services over a period of time. Anyanwuocha (1996:25) defines it as a persistent rise in the general price level. The artificial scarcity created by the frequent attacks of the herdsmen on citizens as stated earlier leads to inflation, which in turn leads to devaluation of the naira. Ebele N. Ibenwa



and Emmanuel C. Anizoba, in a personal communication with the researcher on 05 March 2017, with this viewpoint, argued that the money is devalued because much money is now chasing few goods and services. The money cannot buy as much quantity as it could before. There is a decrease in output per capita, because of restrictions on people's movements as a result of curfews. Moreover, the daily output in goods and services is seriously affected. People can no longer move to their farms, shops and business centers freely as they wish. Lending credence to this view Ebele, Z (2017) averred that the overall output of the people was decreased because of the check placed on the people. Discouragement of foreign investment: The incessant attacks by the Fulani herdsmen scare away foreigners who have come to Nigeria to do business. In the course of the attacks, lives and property, public companies, film-producing houses and industries are destroyed. When foreigners see these things happen, they get discouraged and withdraw their businesses and go back to their countries (Ibenwa, 2012). Creation of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs): Anytime there is any serious attack on the citizens, houses are burnt down and people are rendered homeless. Consequently, some of them who are not well-to-do cannot easily find themselves a home and, therefore, they are quartered in public buildings as IDPs. Okoli and Eze noted that war creates refugees and large numbers of people are displaced, which are popularly known as IDPs. People are displaced from their houses as a result of arson by the Fulani herdsmen and they camp in public buildings (Anuli, 2017).

Political Effects

Politically, it makes for distraction in government programmes and a waste of time. Whenever there is a violent attack by the herdsmen, government attention is required. It leaves whatever it is doing to address the herdsmen issue and spends time addressing it. Uwaegbute and Diara, lending credence to this viewpoint, said that government is truly distracted in times of crisis of this sort (personal interaction with Uwaegbute Kingsley and Dr Diara Benjamin, 27 March 2017). Extra financial burden on the government: In a very serious attack the government is required to provide relief materials like foodstuffs, clothes and medicines, to mention but a few, for victims of the attacks. This view was upheld by Nwaoga and Eme (Chinyere T. Nwaoga and Okechukwu Eme, in a personal communication on 04 April 2017), when they quipped that government spends a huge amount of money in taking care of the victims of war, and sometimes this calls for a supplementary budget.

Educational Effects

Educational effects: These activities lead to closure of primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions. When the schools are closed the school timetable of events is adjusted, thereby prolonging the students' duration of study (Obeta, 2017).

Security Effects

Increased unemployment gap: Because companies, films and industries are destroyed during such crises, it takes owners of these businesses time to rebuild their destroyed



business centres. Their employees spend this long period without work to do. They add to the number of unemployed youths that are roaming our streets. Attesting to this fact, Dr Charity, U and Dr Chinyere T. Nwaoga (2017) in their interactions with the researcher said that it was true of any war that involved the use of weapons. Change in population size: People living in areas experiencing frequent Fulani herdsmen attacks usually relocate to areas not prone to attacks. This is what has been happening in southern Kaduna from the middle of 2016 to 2017. Dr Anuli Okoli and Favour Uroko (2017) confirmed this to be true when they argued that many strangers have decided to move down to their homes, thereby decreasing the population of the people living in Kafanchan and increasing the population of the place they are relocating to.

Wanton destruction of lives and property: It is common knowledge that whenever herdsmen carry out an attack, people are killed in the tens, hundreds or thousands and property worth hundreds of naira is destroyed. To this end, Christopher Okwor and Gift Chukwuma, in their discussion with the author on 02 March 2017, averred that crisis or war leads to destruction of lives and property worth thousands of millions of naira and irreparable loss of human lives.

Increase in number of physically challenged people: During the pastoral attacks people are killed or maimed. Those who are maimed may no longer be able to do what they hitherto did themselves because of impairment. And they may resort to begging as a means of livelihood, thereby increasing the number of beggars on the streets of our towns and cities. In an oral interview with Dr Anuli B. Okoli and Precious Ukeachism (on 07 March 2017), they opined that war no doubt increases the number of physically challenged people in the society because of the use of offensive weapons during riots that give people deep cuts and all forms of deformities.

Restriction of movement or declaration of state of emergency: Most times when there is an attack, people's movements are restricted. In some cases the government may decide to declare hours of curfew or a dawn to dusk curfew. This is an infringement on the statutory freedom of movement of the citizen. Damian, O (2017) stressed the fact that whenever there is any serious attack on citizens by any grieved group, whether it is a religious sect, Fulani herdsmen, an ethnic group or political group, the government usually declares a state of emergency or curfew. When this happens, people's movements are restricted

Religious effects

The herdsmen's conflict, like other conflicts in Nigeria, such as the Maitatsine religious conflict, OIC conflict, Sharia conflict and Boko-Haram terroristic activity, have adversely affected religious activities such as night vigils, midweek services, Sunday services and open-field crusade, particularly night vigils, which Ugwuobute believed was one of the most powerful means of attacking Satan, evil spirits, witches and wizards and occult men and women (Ugwuobute, 2017).



Efforts by Federal and State Governments over farmers and Herdsmen Conflict in Nigeria

Creation of Grazing Reserves: In 1965, the northern regional government of Nigeria initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the crisis of pastoralist that was linked to emerging conflicts between farmers and herders in the country. The *Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965* created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. Peace and Security forum (2017) has highlighted that reserves were envisioned to section off large swathes of land to be exclusively used by herders to graze their livestock. While initially considered a legislative solution, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access and usage of the reserves. In addition, herders were often unable to find sufficient pasture and water within the confines of the reserves due to climate changes and poor maintenance. Keeping livestock in one place increases the animals' vulnerability to disease and banditry, which incentivized herders to keep their herds moving outside the boundaries of the reserves. The federal and state governments have been derelict in the upkeep of these reserves to meet these concerns of farmers and herders. Amidst the absence of a concrete response plan to label and enforce the law on cattle routes by governments at all levels, existing reserves are being distorted. (Land Act, 1976)

Establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education: The federal government established the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989 through Decree 41. It is presently known as *Nomadic Education Act, Cap No. 20 Laws of the Federation*. The main goal of the program was to economically and socially integrate nomadic pastoralists into the national life, through the provision of relevant, functional, and mobile basic education and livelihoods skills provision. It was also designed to help the pastoralists modernize their techniques of rearing cattle to maximize their economic potential, including dairy processing and marketing, animal vaccinations, and modern herding techniques. The program on nomadic education currently suffers from dilapidated infrastructure and human resource deficits, primarily due to a lack of adequate funding from the federal government. (Alabi, 2015)

Deployment of Security: The deployment of security agencies has been a dominant feature of the federal government's response to farmer-herder conflict. In Plateau state, a Special Task Force – Operation Safe Haven (STF-OSH) – has been deployed since 2001 to restore law and order. This Task Force is composed of officers and infantry of the armed forces, including the police, with the mandate to restore order and stability. Recently, the federal government expanded its mandate to include Kaduna state, thereby replacing Operation *Harbin Kunama II*, (Scorpion Sting). The justification for the replacement was anchored on the fact that the security situation faced by Plateau and Kaduna states was similar. There are reports that security agencies who are part of STF-OSH and were sent to protect at-risk farmer and herder communities have committed crimes and human rights violations, such as physical torture, extortion, and other forms of gender-based violence against the communities they were deployed to protect. In fact, the



deployment of security agencies has often had the unintended consequence of breeding local resentment and further increasing divides, as many communities perceive them to be biased with one side. This perceived or actual bias risks alienating the communities and people they are meant to protect.

The National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016: In 2016, the National Assembly attempted to pass legislation to address conflicts between farmers and herders through the controversial *National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016*, which ultimately was not passed. This is largely due to the fact that the *Land Use Act of 1978* vests all powers related to the regulation of ownership, alienation, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state governors.⁹ This attempt and others by the National Assembly to legislate on grazing reserves were in violation of the *Land Use Act of 1978* and perceived as a move to usurp the powers of the governors.

State-level Legislations Prohibiting Open Grazing: Benue State Government enacted the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017, on May 22, 2017, in response to the lingering conflict between farmers and herders in the state. Implementation of the law began on November 1, 2017. In the wake of the Benue State legislation, other states have considered similar legislation to respond to lingering conflicts between farmers and herders within their borders. For instance, the Taraba State Governor also signed the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Bill 2017 into law on July 24, 2017, to begin implementation on January 24, 2018. More analysis on the state level legislation in Benue and opportunities for violence prevention is contained in

The Implications of the Open-Grazing Prohibition & Ranches Establishment Law on Farmer - Herder Relations in the Middle Belt of Nigeria

The Great Green Wall Initiative: In response to the economic, political, and security challenges posed by climate variability and environmental degradation, the African Union introduced the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) in 2007. The GGWI set out to create an 8,000km (nearly 5,000 miles) of trees along the southern Sahel, accompanied by rural development and ecosystem management initiatives, to combat the encroaching desertification of the Sahara Desert. In 2013, the Nigerian government answered the call by establishing the Great Green Wall Agency (GGWA) to fight desertification, which has been responsible for the migration of herders from the northern part of the country to the Middle Belt region in search of water and pasture.¹⁰ The purpose of the GGWA is to create a green shelter-belt (wind-breaking trees), in the front line states of Borno, Katsina, Kebbi, and Zamfara, to protect the northern part of the country against desert encroachment. The GGWA has established orchards and nurseries in northern Nigeria, as well as solar and wind-powered boreholes, but their activities have slowed down due to funding challenges from the federal government. (Fulani. I 2017)



The Federal Government's Comprehensive Livestock Development Plan: In 2015, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) formulated what was referred to as a "comprehensive livestock development plan." The plan was to address lingering conflict between farmers and herders across the country and develop grazing reserves as well as cattle routes, through a review of the existing program. Despite the fact that the Central Bank of Nigeria release the sum of N100 billion (nearly USD \$300 million) to the 36 states for this purpose, no state has been able to construct a ranch, reserve, or address the issue of stock route due to poor commitment to the issue, International Crisis Group (2017).

Responses by Civil Society, Communities, and Other Non-State Actors

Community-Level Conflict Management and Resolution: Traditional and community leaders have been major influencers in conflict management and resolution for localized conflicts between farmers and herders. Many victims perceive formal courts to be corrupt or a waste of time, based on their low adjudication rate. In cases where there have been adjudications, such as in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area (LGA), some individuals have reported that the results further entrenched divisions between the two groups as they declared a winner and a loser. For this reason and in contexts where the state has not been able to effectively respond to localized conflicts, traditional and community leaders have been important bridges within this governance and security vacuum. Lawry, S (1990) has cited that these leaders are viewed as "the poor man's high court" and have made significant contributions to peace building processes through the trust and credibility they have within the communities. Farmers and herders have generally lived peacefully and in symbiosis for decades, and the desire for a sustained, mutually beneficial social relationship is a key consideration why farmers and herders prefer the traditional conflict management mechanisms. The participatory nature of traditional conflict resolution, where all the conflicting parties are involved in the process, makes it easy for parties to the conflict to abide or accept the decision.

The Use of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT): The Middle Belt region is experiencing a "commercialization of cattle theft or rustling," to meet the demand of an underground and informal criminal economy that has taken advantage of the protracted conflicts between farmers and herders to steal cattle. The increasing price of cattle and the vast syndicate for stolen cattle has made migrating livestock particularly vulnerable to banditry and criminal attacks. This banditry and theft has become one of the features of the social conflict between farmers and pastoralists, with more sophisticated groups of rustlers, coordinating at-tacks to profit off cattle theft and trade. Bandits profit from instability and often reinforce or ignite existing communal divisions. When cattle are stolen, herders also often respond through violence, creating a cycle of reprisal attacks. In response to cattle theft, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), in partnership with Zycom Surveillance Nigeria and Datamars of Switzerland, has developed and adopted a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) system that is capable of tracking and monitoring the movement of cattle.¹⁹ The Cattle Rustling Information System (CATRIS), which was designed by the Centre for Information



Technology and Development (CITAD) is able to provide real time information and alerts on cattle rustling in states within the North West region of the country. CITAD conducted a pilot test of the CATRIS in Kaduna, Kano, and Zamfara states.²⁰ Additional research is needed on the impact of these initiatives and whether they have led to the return of stolen cattle.

Programmatic Interventions by Civil Society Organizations: In 2012, Mercy Corps launched a program on Community-Based Conflict Management and Cooperative Use of Resources (CONCUR), in four states of the Middle Belt – Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau. The intervention focused on working with local actors such as the Pastoralist Resolve (PARE) and the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN).²¹ Similarly, Search for Common Ground launched a program in 2015 to build social and cultural bridges between farmers and herders in Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau states. The program used dialogue and mediation as tools for building and strengthening intercultural understanding between the two groups; as well as supporting efforts towards the conflict prevention, management and resolution as the case may be. Through the use of mediation, Nigerian-based organizations and agencies such as the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre (IMC), Justice Development and Peace Caritas, Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) have been deeply involved in series intervention with some degree of success that are linked to fostering harmony, rebuilding trust and the cessation of violence in several communities throughout the Middle Belt.

Major Key Findings

The paper has following key findings that have promoted the level of clashes between farmers and herdsman conflict in the middle belt.

- i. Unauthorized encroachment of farm land by Fulani herdsman has created point of tension where farmers revolt for damage.
- ii. Climate Change issue, the nature climate change has lead some Fulani even from neighboring countries of Niger Republic, Chad , Cameroun, Mali and Libya coming across to Nigeria to feeds their animals.
- iii. Some hidden criminals use the symbol of Fulani herdsman to attacks farmers in various Middle Belt States to make assume they are the real Fulani's.
- iv. Poor Policies of Government and Lack of political by the stakeholders has support and prolong this conflict unnecessary.

CONCLUSION

The nomadic system was appropriate when humans and animals populations were small and land was huge just as the system of shifting cultivation was appropriate. But over the last couple of decade populations of both have exploded fallow periods have been drastically reduced and weather patterns have changed. In this 21st century when the whole world has to pay serious attention to the issues of environment and agricultural production, there can be no place for the nomadic system of animal production. It is complete illegality for Herdsman who have not acquired such lands to invade places when it is a known fact that, over grazing drastically reduces vegetation and breakdown is an



irretrievable and widespread devastation scale of the natural regulatory mechanisms of the planet earth which are very necessary for crop production. Although the conflict has caused so much damage, the resolution of Herdsmen conflict with the Middle Belt farming communities is possible and less problematic after the moral consciousness and behavior will be fully restored and attitude changed. This restoration will revive the effective functioning of the combatant faculties of knowing, thinking, reasoning, deciding, choosing and exercising freewill. It is then that the perils of war will become clear to the parties in conflict and the demand for peace, security, order, stability and welfare will be made, and roundtable negotiations whole heartedly accepted with appreciation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper has recommended the following issues as solution to the problems of farmers/Herdsmen conflicts in the Middle Belt Zone, Nigeria:

- i. Government at all level should provide laws that can regulate the over proliferation movement of Fulani Herdsmen for them to a reserve grazing land for their animal and other social facilities for them and their families in different parts of the countries.
- ii. Government should add more serious conscious in our borders to put strategy of not permitting illegal herdsmen migrant to flows in to the country and create tension for us.
- iii. Government and communities at large should imbibe the culture of plant and vegetable preservation to manage the effect of global warming and climate change.
- iv. Government at all level should not play politics with issue of insecurity and conflict management.

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