

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATION OF FARMERS-HERDSMEN CONFLICT IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the socio-economic implication of farmers-herders conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. Farmers-herders conflict had displaced no fewer than 5,000 persons in the wake of the crisis in Benue State. Such displaced farmers have become a source of liability to other farmers whom they have to beg for food for themselves and their families. Thereby, creating a vicious cycle of poverty in such communities. The study adopted simple random sampling technique in selecting five local government areas in the State and they include; Guma, LGA, Ipiga LGA, Logo LGA, Mkgovur LGA, and Tse-Akaa LGA in Benue State. The study made use of quantitative methods of data collection and as a result, four hundred and seventy (470) copies of questionnaire were used to illicit information from the respondents. The study revealed that 79.2% agreed that the cause of farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is due to overlap of farmlands. Also, 90.1% attest the conflict is associated with the conflict of land resource use exacerbated by dwelling resources in Benue State. Furthermore, it revealed that 86.2% confirmed that it leads to relocation of people from Benue State, 84.4% believed that it affects investment and foreign earnings in Benue State, and 86.4% agreed that farmers-herders' conflict have retarded development in Benue State. The study therefore concluded that farmers-herders conflict affects the socio-economic livelihood of people in Benue State, and by extension in Nigeria where there is conflict. As a results, the study recommended that government at all levels (local, state and federal) should put machinery in place to reduce and curb the conflicts between farmers and herders in the State. Also, residents should be sensitized and educated to always report any suspicious activities of the herdsmen to the security agencies in Benue State, Nigeria. Finally, Government and relevant stakeholders should embrace ranching as a way forward for livestock production in Benue State and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: *Conflicts, Displacement, Economic Implication, Framers-Herders Conflict, and Social Implication*

Introduction

Introduce the Problem

The persistent and continuous conflicts of farmers-herders in Nigeria, especially in Benue State, have resulted in loss of lives, destruction of properties and environmental degradation. It is important to note that these conflicts have direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of those involved. They also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of pastoral production and agriculture in West Africa (Moritz, 2010). These

conflicts reinforce circles of extreme poverty and hunger, and destroy social status, food security and affect mostly the most marginalized groups that include women and children. It has affected education of children leading to obstacles in their development and mass displacement. This awful situation becomes worse, especially when either the farmer or the pastoralist is categorized into a group relating to religion, tribe or region. *Abbass* (2012) warned that the disharmony in pastoralism and sedentarism reflect enhanced sedentarisation and increased pastoralism leading to constant conflict with the agrarian societies. Large geographical area of Benue State has placed farmers in a situation that compel them to live with the Fulani herdsmen especially during the dry season. *Musa, Shabu and Igbawua* (2016) averred that herdsmen practice the crudest form of animal husbandry, the free range system. They move from one place to another in search of pasture and water. The abundant presence of pasture and water in the Benue Valley, encourage the migration of herdsmen from far North to Benue State (Tukur, 2013). These have increased the competition for arable land between herdsmen and farmers and pose high pressure in the area. Especially now that it has resulted to high hostility and social friction between the herdsmen and the crop growing natives of the guinea savannah over the right to land, which in most cases, results in the destruction of their farm lands by the cattle, killing of cattle by farmers and loss of lives and properties. The component of land use system that has changed over time has culminated in the present day tension and conflict between herdsmen and host communities as envisaged by *Tenuche and Ifatimehin* (2009). In addition, *Musa et. al.* (2016) reported that the Benue valley region in Nigeria has witnessed violent conflict enough to attract both state and national attention. Land, crops, livestock, water resources and vegetal resources played a key role in the development, maintenance and projection of socio-economic strength of a society. *Musa, et. al.* (2016) noted that resource ownership and its utilization have resulted to conflicts involving man since time immemorial.

Several studies have emerged linking the conflicts between farmers and the herdsmen to climate change. *Blench* (2010) cited in *Olaniyan and Okeke-Uzodike* (2015) noted that the phenomenon is as old as the beginning of agriculture, its intensity since the late 1980s is a function of the increasing war over resources, mostly grass and water, which is occasioned by climate change. In a well-articulated report on the impact of climate change in Nigeria, *Sayne* (2012) paid particular attention to the creeping desertification of northern Nigeria and weak state capability as responsible for the phenomenon of herders' migration leading to violent conflicts. Looking at it from another angle, *Oladele* (2011) have not only examined, but also linked the debilitating consequences on food production in the savannah area of the Oyo State to the pastoralist-farmer conflicts over access to resources in the area. Also, in the study of farmer-herder conflicts in North-Central Nigeria, *Olaniyan and Okereke-Uzodika* (2015) identified the primary causal factor as climate change-induced depletion of soil fertility. *Onuoha and Ezirim* (2010) are also clear in their study on human insecurity in Nigeria that climate change is one of its causal factors.

Scholars such as *Adisa* (2012), *Olaniyan and Okereke-Uzodika* (2015) and among others observed that the menace of herdsmen appears to have dire implications for socio-economic development in the State. In Benue State where the herdsmen and farmer's crisis is pervasive, properties were destroyed and cases of rapes slog the people's economic and social opulence back by several steps. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic life in the state is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed. According to *Tenuche and Ifetimehin* (2009) the overall implication for sustainable development is that the farming, economic and social activities seem to be fast deteriorating. Also, a substantial part of the State's budget has been spent on caring for the displaced people and compensation of families who lost their relations to the herdsmen and farmers crisis. Also, huge amount of money is being spent on weapons and ammunition acquisition so as to equip the military and other security agencies to handle the situation on ground (*Okoli and Atelhe*, 2014). All these seem to have affected the socio-economic development of the State. Hence, this study is aimed at examining the socio-economic implications of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Benue State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the socio-economic implication of farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. To achieve this, the following specific objectives were to:

- i. identify the factors responsible for farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria;
- ii. examine the extent of socio-economic implications of farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria.

Relevant Literature Review

Causes of Herders – Farmers' Conflict

John (2014), studied the predicaments of the pastoralists and farmers, and the causes behind farmer-herders conflicts and how it can be resolved. However, results from the study shows the existence of one-sided reporting by the media, research articles and interested parties. Majority of those reports tend to highlight and report cases in which the herdsmen faulted farmers and tend to ignore the other side of the stories or even their losses (John, 2014). This appears to aggravate the situation and adds to the speculation and allegations of the herdsmen. Some researchers have linked the crisis to environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources which lead to conflict and violence between the herdsmen and farmers (*Okoli and Atelhe*, 2014). This may explain the dwindling grazing resources (land, pasture, and so on) and poor management of existing grazing reserves as culpable (*Adisa*, 2012).

Furthermore, other researchers relate the causes of conflict to the global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands, forcing pastoralists to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock (*Abbass, 2012; and Okoli and Atelhe, 2014*). It has been observed that climate change-induced rainfall shifting patterns/amount and desertification reduces crop lands, and farmers have to follow these patterns leading to overlap on grazing lands. More so, the herdsmen are also competing with large-scale agricultural schemes that narrow the grazing lands. The use of tractors, herbicides and fertilizers have revolutionized agriculture in the country leading to more and more grazing lands being farmed extensively (*Iro, 2010*). As farmlands increase to the detriment of grazing lands, animals can easily veer into farmlands and destroy crops. In addition, land acquisition by capitalist farmers exacerbates the upsurge of conflict as pastoralists can no longer find where to pass let alone to talk of where to stay (*Abbass, 2012*). Changing access rights are dwindled as traditional communal property is being replaced by private ownership (*Adisa, 2012*). It is common to see that Burtalis (cattle pathways) close to cities do not exist anymore as houses and filling stations have taken over their places. Cattle now have to compete with motorists on the only path that is tarred road.

There are many other predominant causes, which include blockage of waterholes by farmers and fishermen, crop damage by pastoralist livestock and reprisal attacks on pastoralists by sedentary farmers when ethnic or religious disputes occur (*Audu, 2014*). Also, allocation of grazing lands as government layouts without compensating the pastoralist, breakdown of law and order and taking side by local rulers or Judges responsible for dispute resolution (*Rasak, 2011*). Others are gradual decline of social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers and conflict of cultures (*Abbass, 2012; Bello, 2013*).

Socio-Economic Implication of Farmers-Herders' Conflict in Benue State

Conflict has severe socio-economic repercussions on the society, many of which affect the country today. According to *Mwangi, Jideofor, Moussa, Bigail and Alpha* (2012), conflict leads to the withdrawal of International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from the conflict-affected zones to more secure areas. Insecurity disrupts the provision of public services, such as hospitals, pharmacies and schools educationally report shows that most of the schools in the affected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benue State are not functioning well because of the fear of herdsmen attack. Pervasive looting of financial service providers and cereal storehouses during conflict reduces the capacity to provide credit and mitigate food security in the region. Tourism and foreign aid are also highly affected in Benue State. Moreover, the conflict displaces thousands of people within the state to neighbouring states around them. Reduction in output and income of crop farmers are a result of the destruction of crops by cattle and indiscriminate bush

burning. Many farmers have lost part or the whole of their crops. This meant reduced yield which translated into low income on the part of the farmers who take farming as a major occupation (Mwangi *et al*, 2012). This tends to negatively affect their savings, credit repayment ability, as well the food security and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply. This discourages the farmers and rural/agricultural development.

As regards the impact of the incessant attacks, study conducted by *Tenuche and Ifetimehin* (2009) claimed that community leaders lamented that economic activities in the affected local government areas of Benue State can no longer take place. As they are mainly farmers, but as it stands now, nobody can go to prepare the farms for the farming season that is fast afoot, because they do not know when the herdsmen will come and attack them in the farms (Tenuche and Ifetimehin, 2009). Few people engage in fishing activities along the river banks and ponds that abound in the area but the conflicts have displaced the fishermen. In the host communities, the herdsmen relocated to *Loko* in Nasarawa State as a result of conflict and some to Kogi and Taraba States. For instance, on February 29, Vanguard news reported that no fewer than 5,000 persons were displaced in the wake of the crisis between herdsmen and farmers of Benue State. The displaced persons who were sacked from *Mbataho, Tse Ago, Tse Ause, Tse Tinghir, Tse Tsav* and many other villages in *Mbalagh* were refugees at the IDP camps in *Abagana, Agan* Toll gate and LGEA primary school in Makurdi and other neighbouring communities. Such displaced farmers have become a source of liability to other farmers whom they have to beg for food for themselves and their families. As averred by *Adisa* (2012), this has created a vicious cycle of poverty in such communities. Erosion (land degradation) as a result of zero grazing, the exposure of the soil makes it susceptible to erosion which is worsened by the rain. This is accelerated by the topographic nature of some of the areas, which are hilly. Erosion causes a lot of loss of soil nutrients and difficulty of cultivation. Loss of lives, a lot of killing of crop farmers by Fulani herdsmen and reprisal killing of herdsmen by the host communities takes place during the conflicts (*Okereke*, 2012). Herds of cattle belonging to the herdsmen are also killed. Also, some of the victims (young and old) are badly injured or maimed. This has made some women widows, some children orphans and some men widowers.

Theoretical Framework

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory derived its substance from classical or bourgeois political economy associated with the works of avid Ricardo, avid Hume, John Stuart Mills, Thomas Malthus, Alfred Marshall and Adam Smith. Classical (Bourgeois) political economy laid so much emphasis on the production, distribution and exchange of commodities without disclosing law of the capitalist system with sufficient levels of consistency. Karl Marx describes classical (bourgeois) political economy as 'vulgar' and consequently introduced the science of understanding the society in its large nature as stated by *Yusuf* (2004). Marx came out with a rebirth of political economy - a political economy that scientifically tides the society relations, class conflict and the organic relationship between the substructure (economy) and the superstructure. The basic assumption of the theory is founded in dialectical materialism and historical materialism. While the former emphasize the contradictory nature of the society, the latter explains how society has moved through the various epochal periods of data mode of production in the basis of the scientific analysis of Marxian political economy paradigm. Mode of production pertains to the ways and manner in which available scarce resources are organized for the purposes of production (*Ogooluwa*, 2017). It has two components, viz; forces of production and social relations of production. The former focuses on those forces that propel production to higher levels such as manpower, natural resources, science/technology and industrialization. Thus, the extents to which these factors are improved upon underpin the level of development in any society.

Social relation of production on the other hand is tantamount to the kind of relationships people find themselves in the process of production. There are always two groups who neither own nor control but have their labour power which they use the commodity to earn a living. These relations determine who gets what, when and how (*Adisa*, 2012). Those who own and control the means of production (i.e. the bourgeoisies) take to themselves the lion share of whatever is produced to the disadvantage off those who just contribute

their physical labour (i.e. proletariat). This kind of exploitation by way of accumulation or surplus sows the seed of discord between the two classes. While the group, which enjoys the system tries to maintain the status quo at all cost the other i.e. proletariat relentlessly seeks to change it. According to Boule (1996) This account for class struggles, which in the end may bring about change, progress or development involved in progressive changes that involve sharing of the products of an economy that go to bring about quality in the basic needs that accrue to the majority of the people within a historically-determined economic System.

Methods

Research Design

Descriptive research design was used for this study because the researcher's intention was to collect raw data and create data structures and information that will allow the researcher to model the socio-economic implication of herders-farmers conflicts in Benue State. Also, the study made use of quantitative methods.

Study Population

The population for this study included the people (adults of 18years and above) across the conflict affected local government areas in Benue State. The population included the people across the five (5) random selected Local Government Areas include; *Guma, LGA, Ipiga LGA, Logo LGA, Mkgovur LGA, and Tse-Akaa LGA* in Benue State.

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample of four hundred and seventy (470) respondents were selected for this study. The study adopted a simple random sampling method in selecting respondents across the five selected Local Government Areas in the State. The simple random sampling techniques in which five (5) Local Government Areas were selected from the twenty-two (22) Local Government Areas in the State. These random selected Local Government Areas include; *Guma, LGA, Ipiga LGA, Logo LGA, Mkgovur LGA, and Tse-Akaa LGA* in Benue State. These methods were used so as to ensure adequate representation of all the elements in the population.

Methods of Data Collection

This part focus on the account of the instrument and methods that was adopted in the study to obtain the information required. The main purpose of the study is the socio-economic implication of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Benue State. Therefore, both primary and secondary sources of data collection were adopted in the study. The primary source includes quantitative method in which questionnaire were used to gather data from respondents. Here, quantitative method was adopted in which four hundred and seventy (470) copies of questionnaires was administered to respondents in the State.

Method of Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the quantitative data for this study. Frequency distribution table were used to present the data collected from the questionnaire and percentages were used to represent the data on the frequency tables.

Results

Analysis of Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section of the results discusses the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents captured by the study.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Sex

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male	242	51.5
2.	Female	228	48.5
	Total	470	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 presents the respondents distribution by sex. From the table, slightly more than half (51.5%) of the respondents were male while the female respondents represent 48.5 percent. However, the result shows that more male was captured than the female respondents. More so, the data indicate that both men and women in the selected study area were involved in the conflict situation of the area.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age

S/N	Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less than 21	110	23.4
2.	21 – 30	116	24.7
3.	31 – 40	88	18.7
4.	41 – 50	110	23.4
5.	Above 50years	46	9.8
	Total	470	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 presents the respondents distribution by age. From the table, 24.7 percent of the respondents were between 21 and 30 years of age, 23.4 percent of the respondents were between 41 and 50 years of age, 23.4 percent of the respondents were also below 21 years of age while 18.7 percent of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age and the remaining 9.8% of the respondents were above 50 years of age. However, the result shows that a significant number (90.2%) of the respondents captured by the study were youth, and were not more than 50 years of age. This also indicates that most of the respondents covered by the study were agile and willing to work so as to contribute to the socio-economic development of the State.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

S/N	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Single	122	26.0
2.	Married	266	56.6
3.	Others	82	17.4
	Total	470	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 presents the respondent's distribution by their marital status. From the table, slightly more than half, that is, (57%) of the respondents were married while twenty-six percent of the respondents were single and the remaining seventeen percent of the respondents claimed others (like widowed(er), divorced and separated). The result shows that some of the residents of Benue state were married while some were widowed, particularly, those that lost their loved ones to the conflict.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Religion

S/N	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Christianity	358	76.2
2.	Islamic	83	17.6
3.	Traditional	29	6.2
	Total	470	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

From the above Table 4, it is clear that majority (76.2%) of the respondents were Christian while 17.6 percent of the respondents were practiced Islamic religion and the remaining 2 (6.2%) of the respondents practice traditional religion. It can be observed that Christians have a higher proportion of the total respondents captured by the study when compared with Islamic and traditional religious practice.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Educational Level

S/N	Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
1.	No formal education	82	17.4
2.	Primary	86	18.3
3.	Secondary	199	42.3
4.	Post-secondary	103	22.0
	Total	470	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 5 presents the respondent’s distribution by their educational level. From the Table (5), 42.3percent of the respondents have secondary school education, 22 percent of the respondents have post-secondary education (such like NCE, OND, HND, A ‘Level Certificate, B.Sc. (etc.) while 18.3 percent of the respondents have primary education and the remaining 17.4 percent of the respondents have no formal education. The finding implies that most of the respondents covered by this study were literates with primary, secondary and post-secondary education.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Ethnic Group

S/N	Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hausa	60	12.7
2.	Igbo	29	6.2
3.	Yoruba	23	4.9
4.	Others like Tiv, Idoma, Igede, etc	358	76.2
	Total	470	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 6 presents the respondents distribution by ethnic group. From the table, more than three-fourth, that is, at least 7 out of 10, (76.2%) of the respondents claimed others like Tiv, Idoma, Igede among others, 12.7 percent of the respondents claimed to be Hausa ethnic group while 6.2 percent of the respondents were of the Igbo ethnic group and the remaining 4.9 percent of the respondents were Yoruba ethnic group. The result shows that a large proportion of the respondents covered by the study were Tiv, Idoma, Igede and Hausa ethnic groups and this was because the study area is a state in the middle belt of the country.

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

S/N	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Unemployed/Students	45	9.6
2.	Civil Servant	21	4.5
3.	Trading	30	6.4
4.	Teaching	18	3.8
5.	Artisan	51	10.8
6.	Farming	224	47.7
7.	Self-employed/Business	34	7.2
8.	Professional like Engineer, etc	18	3.8
9.	Others	29	6.2

	Total	470	100.0
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Field Survey, 2019

Table 7 presents the respondents distribution by their occupation. From the Table (7), 48% of the respondents were farmers, 11% of the respondents were artisans, 10% of the respondents were unemployed/students, 7% of the respondents were self-employed/businessmen & women, 6% of them engaged in trading, 6% of them claimed others like carpentry, and among others, 5% of the respondents were civil servants, 4% of the respondents were teachers, while the remaining 4% of the respondents were professionals like Engineer, etc.

Factors Responsible for Farmers – Herders’ Conflict in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by the Factors Responsible for Farmers-Herders’ Conflict in Benue State, Nigeria

SN	ITEMS		SA	A	UD	SD	D	Total
1.	Farmers-herders’ conflict in Benue State, is due to overlap of farmlands with cattle routes	f	268	104	33	34	31	470
		%	57.1	22.1	7.0	7.2	6.6	100
2.	Farmers-herders’ conflict have been associated with the conflict of land resource use exacerbated by dwelling resources in Benue State, Nigeria.	f	214	209	11	18	18	470
		%	45.6	44.5	2.3	3.8	3.8	100
3.	Farmers’ encroachment on cattle routes is the real cause of Farmers-herders’ conflict in Benue State, Nigeria.	f	84	69	34	114	169	470
		%	17.9	14.7	7.2	24.2	36.0	100
4.	Crisis of resource control, particularly land, often times results into Farmers-herders’ conflict in Benue State, Nigeria.	f	164	139	21	84	62	470
		%	34.9	29.6	4.5	17.9	13.2	100
5.	It is believed that environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources leads to conflict and violence between the farmers and herdsman in Benue State, Nigeria.	f	181	169	29	46	45	470
		%	38.5	36.0	6.2	9.8	9.6	100
6.	A major factor that contributes to Farmers-herders’ conflict in Benue State is global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity.	f	196	189	22	33	30	470
		%	41.7	40.2	4.7	7.0	6.4	100
7.	It is believed that land acquisition by capitalist farmers exacerbates the upsurge of conflict between farmers and herdsman.	f	184	138	24	53	71	470
		%	39.1	29.4	5.1	11.3	15.1	100
8.	Another cause of Farmers-herders’ conflict includes gradual decline of social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers and conflict of cultures.	f	181	100	66	41	82	470
		%	38.5	21.3	14.1	8.7	17.4	100

Field Survey, 2019

Table 8 illustrated the responses on the factors for farmers – herders’ conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. Item 1 in Table 8 shows that a significant number and majority, that is, at least 7 out of ten, (79.2%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that the cause of farmers-herders’ conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is due to overlap of farmlands with cattle routes, where farmers grow crops on the routes while about 13.8 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and only 7 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that the cause of farmers-herders’ conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is due to overlap of farmlands with cattle routes, where farmers grow crops on the routes.

Item 2 in Table 8 indicates that an overwhelming proportion (90.1%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict have been associated with the conflict of land resource use exacerbated by dwelling resources in Benue State, Nigeria while about 7.6 percent of them disagree with the statement and the remaining 2.3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict have been associated with the conflict of land resource use exacerbated by dwindling resources in Benue State, Nigeria.

Item 3 in Table 8 indicates that slightly three-fifth, that is, (60.2%) of the respondents disagree in both strong and mild terms that farmer's encroachment on cattle routes is the real cause of Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria while 32.6 percent of them affirmed the statement and the remaining 7.2 percent of the respondents claimed neither. What this implies is that farmers' encroachment on cattle routes is not the real cause of Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria.

Also, Item 4 on the Table (8) indicates that almost two-thirds, that is, (64.5%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that crisis of resource control, particularly land, often times results into Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria while 31.1 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and the remaining 4.5 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The implication of this finding is that crisis of resource control, particularly land, often times results into Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria.

Item 5 in Table 8 portrays that a significant number (74.5%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources leads to conflict and violence between the farmers and herdsmen in Benue State, Nigeria while 19.4 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the remaining 6.2 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources leads to conflict and violence between the farmers and herdsmen in Benue State, Nigeria.

Item 6 in Table 8 depicts that majority and a significant number, at least 8 out of 10, that is, (81.9%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that a major factor that contributes to Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands, forcing pastoral to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock while just few, that is, (13.4%) of the respondents disagree with the statement and the remaining 4.7 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that a major factor that contributes to Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands, forcing pastoralist to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock.

Item 7 in Table 8 portrays that slightly more than two-thirds, that is, at least 6 out of 10, (68.5%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that land acquisition by capitalist's farmers exacerbates the upsurge of conflict between farmers and herdsmen as pastoralists can no longer find where to pass not to talk of where to stay while 26.4 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and the remaining 5.1 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that land acquisition by capitalist farmers exacerbates the upsurge of conflict between farmers and herdsmen as pastoralist can no longer find where to pass not to talk of where to stay.

Item 8 in Table 8 shows that more than half, (at least 5 out of 10), that is, (59.8%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that another cause of Farmers-herders' conflict includes gradual decline of social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers and conflict of cultures while 26.1 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and the remaining 14.1 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that another cause of Farmers-herders' conflict includes gradual decline of social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers and conflict of cultures.

Socio-economic Implications of Farmers-Herders' Conflict in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 9 explained the responses on the socio-economic implications of Farmers-Herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. Item 1 in Table 9 shows that a significant number and majority, that is, at least 8 out of ten,

(84.4%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders’ conflict affects investment and foreign earnings in Benue State, Nigeria while about 14.9 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and only 2.8 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders’ conflict affects investment and foreign earnings in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 4.4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by the Socio-economic Implications of Farmers-Herders’ Conflict in Benue State, Nigeria

SN	ITEMS		SA	A	UD	SD	D	Total
1.	Farmers-herders’ conflict affects investment and foreign earnings in Benue State, Nigeria.	F	214	183	13	30	40	470
		%	45.5	38.9	2.8	6.4	8.5	100
2.	Farmers-herders’ conflict leads to relocation of people from Benue State, Nigeria.	F	220	185	14	30	21	470
		%	46.8	39.4	3.0	6.4	4.4	100
3.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has resulted into closing down/relocation of many companies to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and properties.	F	199	182	19	36	34	470
		%	42.3	38.7	4.1	7.7	7.2	100
4.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has resulted into loss of huge amount of money by the government of Benue State.	F	206	180	14	33	37	470
		%	43.8	38.3	3.0	7.0	7.9	100
5.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has retarded development in Benue State, Nigeria.	F	222	184	14	25	25	470
		%	47.2	39.2	3.0	5.3	5.3	100
6.	Education of children have been affected due to the conflict.	F	199	187	19	36	29	470
		%	42.3	39.8	4.1	7.6	6.2	100
7.	The conflict has resulted into loss of family relationship among family members in the State.	F	206	188	14	33	29	470
		%	43.8	40.0	3.0	7.0	6.2	100
8.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has affected the state of health of the affected people negatively in Benue State.	F	184	199	16	28	43	470
		%	39.2	42.3	3.4	6.0	9.1	100
9.	Religion practices and freedom of the people have been affected due to farmers-herders’ conflict. in the State.	F	189	196	22	30	33	470
		%	40.2	41.7	4.7	6.4	7.0	100
10.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has taken people away from their original settlement.	F	188	206	14	29	33	470
		%	40.0	43.8	3.0	6.2	7.0	100
11.	The conflict has affected the livelihood of the affected communities.	F	199	187	29	19	36	470
		%	42.3	39.8	6.2	4.1	7.6	100
12.	The conflict has affected the agricultural practices of the affected communities in Benue State.	F	184	222	14	25	25	470
		%	39.2	47.2	3.0	5.3	5.3	100
13.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has resulted into change of trade among traders.	F	201	226	8	14	21	470
		%	42.8	40.1	1.7	3.0	4.5	100
14.	Farmers-herders’ conflict has made transportation difficult and expensive in Benue State.	F	130	126	43	81	90	470
		%	27.6	26.8	9.2	17.2	19.2	100

Field Survey, 2019

Item 2 in Table 9 indicates that a large proportion, at least 8 out of 10, (86.2%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders’ conflict leads to relocation of people from Benue State,

Nigeria while about 10.8 percent of them disagree with the statement and the remaining 3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that Farmers-herders' conflict leads to relocation of people from Benue State, Nigeria.

Item 3 in Table 9 indicates that majority and a significant proportion of the respondents, that is, (81%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into closing down/relocation of many companies to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and properties while 14.9 percent of them disagree with the statement and the remaining 4.1 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into closing down/relocation of many companies to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and properties.

Also, Item 4 in Table 9 indicates that a significant proportion, that is, (82.1%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into loss of huge amount of money by the government of Benue State while 14.9 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and the remaining 3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into loss of huge amount of money by the government of Benue State.

Item 5 in Table 9 portrays that a significant number, that is, at least 8 out of 10, (86.4%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict have retarded development in Benue State, Nigeria while 10.6 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and the remaining 3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict have retarded development in Benue State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, Item 6 in Table 9 shows that a significant number and majority, that is, at least 8 out of ten, (82.1%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict affects the education of children in the affected towns and villages in Benue State, Nigeria while about 13.8 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement and only 4.1 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict affects the education of children in the affected towns and villages in Benue State, Nigeria.

Item 7 in Table 9 indicates that a large proportion, at least 8 out of 10, (83.3%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into loss of family relationship among family members in the affected communities in Benue State, Nigeria while about 13.2 percent of them disagree with the statement and the remaining 3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that Farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into loss of family relationship among family members in the affected communities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Item 8 in Table 9 indicates that majority and a significant proportion of the respondents, that is, (81.5%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has affected the state of health of the affected people negatively in Benue State while 15.1 percent of them disagreed with the statement and the remaining 3.4 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has affected the state of health of the affected people negatively in Benue State.

Also, Item 9 on the Table (9) indicates that a significant proportion, that is, (81.9%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has reduced the freedom of people in the affected areas in practicing their religion effectively in Benue State while 13.4 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the remaining 4.7 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has reduced the freedom of people in the affected areas in practicing their religion effectively in Benue State.

Item 10 in Table 9 portrays that a significant number, that is, at least 8 out of 10, (83.8%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has taken people away from their original settlement and become aliens in other places in Benue State while 13.2 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the remaining 3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has taken people away from their original settlement and become aliens in other places in Benue State.

Item 11 in Table 9 indicates that a large proportion, at least 8 out of 10, (82.1%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has affected the livelihood of the affected communities in Benue State while about 11.7 percent of them disagreed with the statement and the remaining 6.2 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has affected the livelihood of the affected communities in Benue State.

Item 12 in Table 9 indicates that majority and a significant proportion of the respondents, that is, (86.4%) of the respondents agreed in both strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has affected the agricultural practices of the affected communities in Benue State while 10.6 percent of them disagree with the statement and the remaining 3 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has affected the agricultural practices of the affected communities in the State.

Also, Item 13 on the Table (9) indicates that a significant proportion, that is, (82.9%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into change of trade of many traders in Benue State while 7.5 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the remaining 1.7 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into change of trade of many traders in the State.

Lastly, Item 14 in Table 9 portrayed that slightly more than half, that is, at least 5 out of 10, (54.4%) of the respondents agreed in strong and mild terms that farmers-herders' conflict has made transportation difficult and expensive in Benue State while 36.4 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the remaining 9.2 percent of the respondents claimed neither. The finding implies that farmers-herders' conflict has made transportation difficult and expensive in the State.

Discussion

This research study examined the socio-economic implications of farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. The result showed that farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State is due to overlap of farmlands with cattle routes, where farmers grow crops on the routes. The study corroborates the research finding of Ibrahim, Abdulrahman and Umar (2015) who claimed that the conflicts between the farmers and herders were solely due to overlap of farmlands with the cattle routes, where farmers grow crops on the routes. Furthermore, contrary to the submission of Nformi, Mary-Juliet, Engwali and Nji (2014), this study found that farmers' encroachment on cattle routes is not the real cause of farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. In the previous study, it was revealed that farmers' encroachment on cattle routes is the real cause of farmers-herders' conflict in Nigeria. Nformi, et. al., (2014) further claimed that these mystify who is wrong and how these conflicts can be addressed. Ethnic jingoists and politicians have been benefiting in these strives and without any doubt have succeeded in creating a divide between the herdsmen and farmers, especially in communities that are less educated. Leaders at the Federal, State, and Local Governments and even at community levels become perplexed and wondered on how these issues can be resolved. Again, the study found that conflict of land resource use exacerbated by dwindling resources in Benue State, Nigeria, which corresponds with the submission of Blench (2004). Okoli & Atelhe, (2014) herders-farmers' conflicts have been associated with the conflict of land resource use exacerbated by dwindling resources. He further revealed that some researchers have linked the crisis to the theory of eco-violence where environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources lead to conflict and violence between the herdsmen and farmers. The study also revealed that crisis of resource control, particularly land, often times results into farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria and that environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources lead to conflict and violence between the farmers and herdsmen in Benue State, Nigeria. More so, the research study revealed that land acquisition by capitalist farmers exacerbates the upsurge of conflict between farmers and herdsmen as pastoralist can no longer find where to pass not to talk of where to stay. This research finding corroborate the submission of scholars like Blench (2004); Odoh and Chigozie (2012); Abbass (2012); Okoli, et. al. (2014) and Ibrahim, Abdulrahman and Umar (2015). In addition, the study revealed that a major factor that contributes to Farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands,

forcing pastoralists to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock. The finding is in agreement with the submissions of Blench (2005); Okoli, *et. al.* (2014); Odoh and Chigozie (2012) and Abbass (2012). According to these scholars, the climate change-induced rainfall shifting patterns/amount and desertification reduces crop lands, and farmers have to follow these patterns leading to overlap on grazing lands. The research also found that another cause of Farmers-herders' conflict includes gradual decline of social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers and conflict of cultures. The finding is in agreement with the submission of Abbass (2012) and Bello (2013). On the socio-economic implication of farmers-herders conflict, the study found that farmers-herders' conflict affects investment and foreign earnings in Benue State, Nigeria and that it leads to relocation of people from Benue State, Nigeria. The study also revealed that farmers-herders' conflict leads to relocation of people from Benue State, Nigeria and that the conflict has resulted into closing down/relocation of many companies to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and properties. Lastly, the study revealed that farmers-herders' conflict have retarded development in Benue State, Nigeria. According to Moritz (2010) the conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria have direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of those involved. They also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of pastoral production and agriculture in West Africa.

Conclusion

Following the research findings, it was revealed that the cause of farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State, Nigeria is due to environmental factors and exploitation of scarce resources lead to conflict and violence between the farmers and herdsman in Benue State, Nigeria. The study also revealed that farmers-herders' conflict has reduced the population of people in Benue State and farmers-herders' conflict in Benue State brings fear and anxiety to the people, thereby affecting socio-economic development of the zone. The study also showed that farmers-herders' conflict affects investment and foreign earnings in Benue State, Nigeria and farmers-herders' conflict leads to relocation of people from Benue State, Nigeria.

More so, it was revealed by the study that farmers-herders' conflict has resulted into closing down/relocation of many companies to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and properties; and that the conflict has resulted into loss of huge amount of money by the government of Benue State. Therefore, the study concludes that the government should utilize all available means to curb and control farmers-herders' conflicts in Benue State that affect the socio-economic growth and development of the state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research study, the following recommendations are made;

- i. That government at all levels (local, state and federal) should put machinery in place to reduce and curb the conflicts between farmers and herders in Benue State, Nigeria.
- ii. Also, residents should be sensitized and educated to always report any suspicious activities of the herdsman to the security agencies in Benue State, Nigeria.
- iii. Government and relevant stakeholders should embrace ranching as a way forward for livestock production in Benue State and Nigeria at large.

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