

FULANI HERDSMEN AND FARMERS CONFLICT, AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA AND THE WAY FORWARD

ABIDEEN MUHAMMED ABEEB
Department Of General Studies
Federal Polytechnic Damaturu,
P.M.B 1006 Yobe State
(+27785522589) +2348063500214
abeebabideen42@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria has over the years have to deal with incessant conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the North-East and other parts of the country, which is basically tied to natural resources control, land for rearing of animals and for cultivation of crops. This has been an age long issue which is getting worst as a result of climate change and desertification, government has over the years made several attempts at resolving the issues but instead of it been resolved it is getting worse day by day as cases of herdsmen and farmers clashes are on the increase as being reported times without number. It is therefore important to take a second look at the issue so as to find better ways of resolving the conflict, Content analysis is the method adopted in the collection of data with heavy reliance on documents, journals articles, textbooks and internet materials. It is the belief of this paper that much needed to be done in term of finding durable solution to the conflict rather than sweeping it under the carpet for it to resurface in the nearby future.

Key words: Nigeria, Fulani herdsmen, Farmers, Conflict and Natural Resources Control

Introduction

The necessity to provide food crops and livestock, as well as raw materials for industry and export to meet ever-growing demands, has led to extensive use of land. This study describes the traditional relationship between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the incessant resource conflicts witnessed in North-Eastern States of Nigeria and how it affects livelihood and security of those involved and resource sustainability for the local communities. Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have existed since the beginning of agriculture and has increased or decreased in intensity and frequency depending on economic, environmental and other factors. For example, increases in the herd sizes, due to improved conditions of the cattle, compelled the pastoralists to seek for more pastures beyond their limited range. Climate change has constituted a great threat by putting great pressures on the land and thus provoking conflicts between them. However, improvements in human health and population have enhanced a much greater pressure on land.

According to (Bello 2013a) the Fulani indisputably represent a significant component of the Nigerian economy. They constitute the major breeders of cattle, the main source of meat, the most available and cheap source of animal proteins consumed by Nigerians. The Fulani own over 90% of the nation's livestock population which accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP and 3.2% of the nation's GDP (Eniola, Adeleke, and Okanlawon 2016) Furthermore, the contribution of the Fulani to the local food chain and national food security cannot be overemphasized. The Fulani, with their dominance in the Sahel region, are the best known and most numerous of all the pastoral groups in Nigeria.

Background to the Study and review of Literature

The issue of the land for grazing and for farming often lead to conflict between herdsmen and farmers. The competition between these two agricultural land user has often turned into serious concealed and unconcealed manifestation of hostilities and social friction in many parts of North-Eastern States of Nigeria. The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity and food crisis particularly in

rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized, with reverberating repercussions nationwide. This incessant resource conflicts witnessed in North-Eastern States affects livelihood and the security of those involved and resource sustainability for the local communities. Not only has it involved the two parties concerned but it has in recent times led to destruction of lives and properties worth millions of naira. (Bello 2013b) opine that Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflicts has remained the most predominantly resource-use conflict in North-eastern Nigeria.

The conflict between the two groups has led to the expulsion of 700 herdsmen from Borno state in the North-East in May 2009 and some 2,000 from Plateau in April 2009. According to local authorities (Isah Mohammed Abbass 2014), these conflicts are mainly attributable to resource control, climate change and divergent value systems in the country, According to Bello,2013 the conflict between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria is an age long conflict which has its root in the economic activities of the people. (Usman Bello 2013) opines that:

“Our herds are our life, because every nomad’s life is worthless without his cattle, what do you expect from us when our source of existence is threatened” (Usman Bello 2013) Alubo (2005), reports that twelve separate events of farmers’-herders’ conflicts between 2001 and 2002 resulted in massive loss of human lives. Dairy cows and property worth tens of millions were destroyed in Taraba State alone. In 2013 alone, more than 300 people lost their lives in Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba and Plateau State due to deadly clashes between herders and farmers.

Similarly (Okoli and Iortyer 2014) posit that effects of natural change have exacerbated the herders' problem. More than 35 percent of Nigeria's land mass is undermined by desertification. The misery of shrinking natural space occasioned by ecological changes and increasing population has forced pastoralists from the far North to seek for grazing fields in the North Central region. This has fueled numerous clashes between Fulani herders and local farmers (Akpor-Robaro & Lanre-Babalola, 2016). The situation is further compounded by the fact that the Fulani man’s personality and status depends upon the number of dairy steers he has, this naturally drives herders to screen and verify their cows and fight any individual who endeavors to hurt them. (Onigu-Otite and Albert 1999) posit that conflict usually are caused by competing parties over an interested environment that may have resources, and thus the desire to exploit and control that valuable resources triggers conflict (Onigu-Otite and Albert 1999). Often, a change in the social environment and discovery of some resources in that environment also exacerbate the quest for physical control of that environment and that causes conflict which usually involves individuals and groups who intend to use the resources to further their goals.

Obioha (2009), posits that in recent times, due to the increasing rate of global warming, the North-East region of Nigeria has been experiencing continuous climatic changes characterized by drastic reduction in rainfall, increase in the rate of dryness and heat, which makes it a fast-growing arid environment, with depletion in the amount of water, flora and fauna. In response to the pastoral and arable farm occupational needs of the people, there has been continuous population drift southward where there are more fauna, flora and water resources. This phenomenon raises important questions that need to be addressed, such as how the pressure over scarce resources and climatic change led to communal civil violent conflict in the area? What have been the patterns over the years? It is against this background, that investigation into the chain of interactions between climate change, population drift and pressure, and conflict over land resources, that (Obioha 2009), using Environmental scarcity and conflict paradigm examines the nature of communal civil violent conflicts in the North-East area of Nigeria. The extent to which continuous climate change has contributed to the scenario, the patterns of the climatically induced violent conflicts, the major actors and the policy implications of the conflict in the sub-region are also examined, it further presents a fair critical overview of the weakness and strength of the theoretical postulation of “eco-violence” put forward by scholars in the field of conflict analysis.

In a study done by Olabode, Ajibade&Ajibade in 2010, a survey was conducted in three farmers’ communities in Odo-Owa, OkeEro Local Government Areas of Kwara State. The communities are Kajola,

Owa, Ikotun, Igbede, Ilofa, Egosi and Imode and three Fulani settlements GaaRore, Atapa and Ajo as a result of the incessant clashes between farmers and herders. It was concluded that the source of the clash was because of stray cows that eat the crops of the farmers, and trample on their farmlands. The study recommended that government at the three levels should construct a grazing reserve for the cows to protect the farmers crops and enhance sustainable agricultural policies.

The farmers concluded that the violation of their customs and livelihood by the herders was the major cause of conflict (Fasona et al., 2016), and this conflict is not only a threat to food security in the country, but an existential threat.

(Imo 2017) in his examination of the demographic implications of nomadic herdsman and farmers clashes in Nigeria observed that conflicts between farmers and nomadic cattle herders have become a common feature of economic livelihood in West Africa. In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed series of violent clashes arising from the activities of the farmers and nomadic herdsman, who move about daily with their cattle in search of water and green pastures. This is in line with (Ofem 2014) in his findings that the clashes between Fulani nomadic pastoralists and farmers owns much to fresh water and greener pasture. In Nigeria, most herdsman do not own land but graze their livestock in host communities (Audu 2014).

Gadzama, Saddiq, Oduehie, & Dariya (2018), assessed the socio-economic functions inducing conflict amongst available resources users in Yunusari Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria. They had used a purposive sampling technique whereby, 115, 46, and 39 candidates doing crop farming, livestock rearing, and fishery, respectively, were carefully chosen through structured discussion fixtures. A notable observation from their investigation is that, sex, age, literacy and the herd size, are relevant indicators influencing conflict within pastoralists and aqua culturist. The outcome of the conflict resolution models applied in the selected area showed that traditional authorities were the most efficient conflict resolution counsel. From this research, it was recommended that routine review of livestock paths, availability of grazing reserves, alerts on campaigns to intensify obedience to rules and regulations over conflicts on natural resources use, and conflict resolution must be established locally.

From the foregoing it is evident that there is and there are problems and issues which demand to be addressed between pastoralist and the farmer over the use of land resources for grazing and for cultivation of crops and raw materials for industrial use and also in order to have a peaceful society which is sine quoina to any meaningful development in the region and Nigeria in general.

Statement of Problem

The increasing wave of violent conflicts between Fulani pastoralist herdsman and farmers which has led to killings of thousands of people, displacement of millions and destruction of properties worth billions of naira is not only worrisome but disturbing. Over the past few years' Nigerian government have had to spend millions of naira on security issues relating to clashes between herdsman and farmers in which lives and property have been destroyed. The used of scarce resources which would have been use for developmental and welfare services kept on increasing without solution in sight. It is as if steps taken by government in attempt at resolving the conflicts such as the delimitation of grazing routes and Ruga encampment is far from being capable of resolving the conflicts .Therefore, more pro-active measures is required in order to curtail the escalation of the crises and to find a durable solution to the crises once and for all. The wanton killings of lives and destruction of property over the years is not only a thing of concern but a blow to the government and inimical to any progress and development

Research Objectives

- i. To examine the nature of violent conflicts between herdsman and farmers
- ii. To examine the extent of violent conflict between herdsman and farmers
- iii. To examine the existing strategies in resolving conflicts between herdsman and farmers
- iv. To identify factors hampering the effectiveness of conflict resolution between herdsman and farmer

- v. To suggest ways through which effective conflict resolution between herdsmen and farmers can be achieved.

Research Questions: Key questions to be asked

This research work attempted to answer the following questions

- i. What is the nature of violent conflict between herdsmen and farmers?
- ii. What is the extent of violent conflict between herdsmen and farmers?
- iii. What are the existing strategies for conflict resolution between herdsmen and farmers?
- iv. What are the factors hindering the effectiveness of conflict resolution between herdsmen and farmers?
- v. What suggestions can be made in order to achieve effective conflict resolution between herdsmen and farmers?

Scope of the study.

The North–Eastern Nigeria is one of the six geo-political zones in the country comprising of six states: Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States. The region has a combined population of 19 million (According to Nigeria National Population Commission census report 2006) which is 13.57% of the entire population of the country. Unfortunately, the region has been under attack by the Boko Haram insurgents and terrorists since 2009 to-date.

NB: Table i. Population of North-Eastern states of Nigeria

Table i. Population of North-Eastern states of Nigeria.

SN	State	Population
1	Adamawa	3.2 million
2	Bauchi	4.7 million
3	Borno	4.2million
4	Gombe	2.3million
5	Taraba	2.3million
6	Yobe	2.3million
	Total	19 million

Source: Nigeria Population Commission (NPC,2006).



Figure 1.1: Map of Nigeria showing states of the federation. Source: Nigerian official website.

Source: NNPC, 2006.



[https://nigerianfact.com/map-of-North-Eastern states](https://nigerianfact.com/map-of-North-Eastern-states)

Figure ii. Map of North-Eastern Region of Nigeria showing the six states in the region

Methodology

Social science methodology largely depends upon survey methods in its research endeavor as it has the advantage of having a great deal of information from a larger population. It can also be adapted to obtain personal and social facts, beliefs and attitudes. This research work uses content analysis which centers on text books, journals periodicals and internet materials, importantly a great deal of scholars work on the subject matter is heavily relied on

Theoretical framework

Theoretical frame work of analysis in any research work is grounded on the fact that it provides plausible explanation for issues and subject matters of discussion and give solid bases for argument and analysis of any given subject under examination and in most cases must have been used or employed by researchers and intellectuals in researches. In this paper Conflict transformation is a theoretical framework which centers on transforming the systems, structures and relationships which encourage violence and injustice in the society (Lederach 2012). According to (Lederach 2012), conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within the society. This involves a new approach where the members of the society are not seen as the problem, while outsiders are the solution, rather, understanding that the long-term goal of transformation is validating and building the members in the society (Lederach 1995). Conflict transformation is best described as a complex process of constructively changing relationships, attitudes, behaviors, interest and discourses in a violence prone environment. It also addresses the underlying structures, cultures and institutions that encourage violent political and social conflicts.

Significance of the Study

This research work is significant in many ways and will contribute to knowledge through re-examining the strategies and mechanisms employed in conflict resolution and peace building and the factors or barriers

hindering the effective resolution of conflicts This research work is significant to the government and people of Nigeria and North-Eastern state who are in search of ways to resolve the lingering herdsman/farmers crises which has been ravaging their communities over the years. This study provides a channel for peace building for the government and the people of the region. It also contributes to the body of knowledge by showing that there could be more than one-way approach to conflict resolution and peace building. The study highlights the need to adopt a new approach such as dialogue, negotiation and reconciliation, and more importantly, to address the issue of conflict resolution from the economic development and structural base of society. Resolving the conflict will also entails improving the living condition of the people by providing them with the basic needs of life such as water, food and clothing has the potential of reducing the widening gap between the poor and the rich which has often been the root cause of conflicts in most societies. After all, no matter the gravity of a war or conflict, it ends up on a round table discussion.

Findings, Presentation and Analysis.

According to (Muhammed and Oladimeji 2017), the consequence of climate change has brought untold hardship and challenges on the Northerners, especially the North-East region where majority of the Fulani herdsman reside and carry on their pastoral activities. They were, however, forced to migrate down from the Sahel savannah to the Guinea savannah because of drought (low rainfall) which hampered the growth of weeds needed for animal consumption (Ubhenin 2012). This movement led to the encroachment on the farmers' land as well as forced cohabitation between the Fulani pastoralists and farmers which resulted in conflicts and crises and the destruction of life and property.

(Olabode, Ajibade, and Ajibade 2010) in their study of Fulani/Farmers conflict in Oke-Ero Local Government Areas of Kwara State (Environment induced conflict and sustainable development) journal of sustainable Development in Africa using survey research method. posited that the frequent causes of farmers /Fulani conflicts arise because of the destruction of crops, grains and other farm produce which are often eaten up by cattle that stray into farmlands and fields due to lack of cattle reserves areas which can restrict the movement of cattle and other animals. They suggested that government and other agencies charged with the responsibility of providing reserves and grazing grounds must as a matter of necessity and urgency provide them to prevent or reduce the conflict which usually arise between the groups.

Fadama agricultural production (riverine and valley-based agriculture practices) has been in practice from time immemorial and have been a great means of food crop production, vegetable and fruits, it has as well being a great means through which water is gotten for animals (Dan-Azumi 2011). It however, received a boost in 1993 with the initiation and introduction of Fadama National Project by the World Bank. The aim of the project was to assist Nigerian farmers, especially the rural ones with the necessary fund needed to improve their agriculture venture. Interestingly the project has gained popularity over the years and it is currently in its third phase. The current Fadama Development Project (Fadama III) provides a funding of \$200 million and the focus is on rice cultivation. However, a couple of other staple foods are included as well. These are cassava and sorghum among others (Dan-Azumi 2011).

It is important to note that since 1990s, when there has been a cheered development of the Fadama (riverine and valley-based farming) territories and government efforts at providing irrigation for farmers both the farmers and pastoralists have engaged in fierce struggles for access to such valuable lands which, often, result in increased conflicts and violence (Audu 2014). The types of conflicts for subsistence between the Fulani pastoralists and farmers in North-Eastern Nigeria differ structurally from one region to another. Social and economic influences continue to incite fierce struggles between the Fulani pastoralists and farmers. These struggles have resulted into great intimidations to the means of subsistence of both the herdsman and farmers. The conflicts, through confrontational entitlements over access rights to farmland and cattle routes, have become pervasive and yet to be resolved (Isah Mohammed Abbass 2014).

For instance, routine competition for the insufficient ecosystem resources has led into fierce conflicts in Yobe State between Fulani pastoralists and agriculturists. These struggles have developed into a strong, prevalent and damaging scenario. Environmental and climate change, as well as government policies on agriculture, especially the all-year Fadama farming, hinders herdsman's access to pasture. As the state could

not normalize the mutual cohabitation of her people in the equitable sharing of the obtainable resources, the citizens may have to resolve to strive amongst themselves ceaselessly for their existence. The inability of the state to sort out the 'settler/ 'indigene' identity and the innate conflicts over the available resources, can be assumed to have resulted into perilous magnitudes of economic and political components in the Fulani pastoralists and agriculturists conflicts (Fiki and Lee 2004).

(Nzeh 2015), examined the effects of migration by nomadic farmers on livelihoods of the rural crop farmers in Enugu State of Nigeria. The objectives are to determine the socio-economic attributes of the rural crop and nomadic farmers; identify the sources of nomadic farmers' conflicts in the rural crop farmers farm fields; assess the socio-economic effects of migration by nomadic farmer on rural development and describe the methods adopted to resolve nomadic farmers conflicts with rural crop farmers in the area. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used. A purposive multi stage sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 60 nomadic farmers and 80 rural farmers, information was elicited using questionnaires. The findings show that both parties identified the following as the causes of conflict; competition over land, cattle trespass, encroachment by farmers and conflict of culture. The results show that 56% of rural crop farmers and 75% of nomadic farmers fall in the age range 21 to 40 years while only a few of the respondents were above forty-one years of age for both respondents. Majority of respondents of both rural crop farmers and nomadic farmers are males; of which they account for 81% for rural farmers and 92% for nomadic farmers. (Odoh and Chigozie 2012) in their research on climate change and conflict in Nigeria: a theoretical and empirical examination of the worsening incidence of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in northern Nigeria. Opined that climate change in recent time has acquired global currency as never before. In fact, its ramifications, as well as its problems and consequences are well known, relatively unknown is its tendency to precipitate violent conflict. They examined, at the theoretical and empirical levels the nexus between climate change and conflict in Nigeria. More fundamentally, it showed how climate change accounts for the worsening incidence of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in northern Nigeria.

Anchoring analysis on the eco-violence theory. They argued that Climate change in Nigeria has over time disrupted the normal functioning of the ecosystem that interacts with humans and affects how they access certain vital resources for their survival. When climate change hazards such as heavy droughts and famine, erratic weather seasons and, in some areas like in the north, prolonged dry spells occur in Nigeria, it is normally viewed in relation to environmental degradation, natural resource scarcity, migration and food shortage. Little or no attention is paid to how climate change can induce conflicts, (Obioha 2009) share this view in his work on climate change, population drift and violent conflict.

They argued that much as it is believed that the immediate cause of Fulani herdsmen and farmer conflict in northern Nigeria is natural resource scarcity that the remote cause is climate change which has through drought and desertification led to the worsening incidence of natural resource scarcity and worsen conflict between the two. Their position is that since climate change has come to stay, it is important for government to put more machinery on ground particularly in the north because over 70 percent of the nation's food crop comes from the region by encouraging climate change mitigation and adaptation. Further, climatologic research should be enhanced to combat desert encroachment, and in the long run reduce inherent conflicts. Ezirim and Onuoha observed this when they noted that: Climate change does not fit into the mode of traditional threats to national security such as war, terrorism, insurgency, espionage or sabotage. Yet its non-violent and gradual dynamics of manifestation serve only to disguise its impact on livelihoods, social order, peace and stability.

(Waters-Bayer and Bayer 1994) traced the origin of the Fulani's from Senegambia region of West Africa to what is now northern Nigeria earlier in the 13th century. These migrations were accompanied by a gradual adoption of Islam. By the 15th century, several Fulani had become scholars or judges in Islamic centers, or counsellors in the courts of Hausa rulers. Some of the settled "town Fulani" abandoned herding completely, although many still owned cattle tended by kinsmen or hired herders (Moritz 2006) However, most Fulani in Hausa land continued to move seasonally with their herds, often using "town Fulani" as mediators with local rulers to ensure rights to pasture or passage, usually in return for tribute paid in kind. (Agbibo 2013)

At the beginning of the 19th century, Usman danFodio led a group of Muslim Fulani scholars in a holy war (jihad) against the Hausa rulers. Some cattle-keepers gave their support in establishing Fulani supremacy. The findings presented was said to be derived from several years of joint field- work in central Nigeria in the 1980s, within the framework of the Sub-humid Zone Programme of the International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA), as well as from observations made during subsequent brief visits. Sources of historical information, besides those listed in the bibliography, were the National Archives in Kaduna (Nigeria), and oral historiography in the Abet case-study area of spontaneous Fulani settlement. The simultaneous investigations into land use in the grazing reserve case-study area were made.

(Yekinni, Adeniyi, and Adebisi 2017) in their workcrop farmers' adaptation strategies to mitigate conflicts with nomads in Oyo state posits that conflicts on the use of resources are not uncommon in human systems. However, when they degenerate to violence, threatening progress, peace and development of the society; it would be necessary to address the problem. This study focused on adaptation strategies employed by crop farmers to manage conflicts with nomads in Oyo state. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 120 respondents for the study. Data were collected with the use of interview schedule on crop farmers' socioeconomic characteristics, causes of conflicts, effect of conflicts and coping strategies. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (Chi-square and PPMC) statistics. Results show that most of the respondents were Yoruba (89.2%), male (86.7%), married (98.3%), had farming (87.5%) as their primary occupation with mean age of 55 years. Mostly identified causes of conflicts were crop damage (weighted mean=194.9), indiscriminate bush burning (188.3) and blockage of water (174.2).

Effects of conflicts mostly experienced by farmers were reduction in output and income of farmers (197.4), destruction of crops (193.4), anger/anxiety/emotional exhaustion (180.0). Coping strategies mostly employed were prayer for peace (184.9), early harvesting (181.6) and appease of other party (166.6). More than half (55.8%) of the respondents used low level of coping strategies. Significant relationship existed between coping strategies employed and ethnicity ($\chi^2=11.609$), other forms of education ($\chi^2=19.164$; $p=0.001$) as well as effect of conflicts ($r=0.400$). Adaptation strategies employed by the respondents should be investigated, validated and adopted by appropriate authorities in order to mitigate the regular conflicts among farmers and nomads in Nigeria, this view is also expressed by (Awoyelu and Idowu 2019) on resource use conflict between herdsmen and farmers on the need for seeking ways for peaceful co-existence among them. Periodical struggle for scarce ecosystem resources has degenerated into violent conflicts in Yobe State between Fulani herdsmen and farmers. These conflicts have become more intense, widespread and destructive. Since most of the Fulani herdsmen do not own or possess the rights to land, they therefore depend absolutely on open land to feed their cattle. The climax in intense pressure on land and incidence of conflicts. Ecological, climate change and of course government policies on agriculture, especially the all-year fadama farming, are threats to herdsmen's access to pasture. However, additional farms acquired, and encroachments of traditional cattle routes have drastically reduced the grazing space for the livestock to access pasture areas and water points. As the state cannot regulate the mutual coexistence of its citizens in the harmonious sharing of the available resources, the parties may have to resolve to struggle among themselves with no retreat, no surrender and for the survival of the fittest. The failure of the state, for example to resolve the 'settler/ 'indigene' identity and the inherent struggles over resources can be adduced to have brought dangerous dimensions of economic and political elements in the Fulani pastoralists and farmers' conflicts (Fiki and Lee 2004)

Close to 2012 as harvest season, Yobe State government organized an interactive stakeholders' forum between the leadership of Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the State in order to prevent the repeated annual conflicts between the two parties. The meeting, according to reports, was necessitated by the looming conflict between herdsmen and farmers over complaints that some migrant Fulani herdsmen were going into farms with their cattle thereby destroying the crops (Nigerian Pilot, 22 November, 2012) (Dauda 2014). It was in the interest of the State to end the rhetoric on the demarcation of grazing land and take concrete steps to address the genuine needs of herdsmen for availability of grazing land, resolve the re-occurring conflicts in the agricultural sector which currently provides employment to over 80 % of the country's population.

Furthermore, the use of police and courts to resolve conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers by government has been ineffective. This has contributed to the frequency of the clashes especially since the early 1980s. All these have exacerbated chronic insecurity that has encouraged the conflicting parties to take responsibility for their own security and to defend themselves, which is a threat to the sustainability of the federation (Dauda 2014)

Dan-Azumi (2018), investigated the link between socio-economic expansion and insecurity in Nigeria, plus the spread of conflict, particularly in the Northeast. The research reveals a connection between insecurity issues, poverty and unemployment rates in the zone. From the investigation, it was observed that despite improved expenditure by the government, the scores of onslaughts and resulting fatalities continued to increase between 2009 and 2017. It was maintained that for the planned long-term resolutions to the insecurity situation in Nigeria to be operative, they must be established on the rule of law, protecting individual and political freedoms, responsible and open and more importantly, in service to the betterment of her citizenry.

The Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict has over the years been of great concern and subject of discussion, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria and North-East states. These states been one of agricultural production (cultivation of crops and rearing of animals) which also serves as the major occupation of the people. The states which are situated in Guinea and Sahei savannah vegetation enjoys relative moderate rainfall which gives the opportunity to cultivate and grow crops such as corn, millet, maize, beans cashew, among others. The northern part of these states falls into the Sahel-savanna which gives the opportunity of large-scale livestock rearing of different species ranging from cow, sheep, donkey and hence the existence of large cattle and in fact, the largest cattle market in Africa is found in this region.

Under such scenario, there is the likelihood of trespass and infringement on land by one group or the other. Research finding shows there had been several incidence and cases of trespass leading to conflict between the groups. The conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers has led to destruction of life and properties, many scholars have written on this such as (Isah Mohammed Abbass 2014), (Dimelu, Salifu, and Igbokwe 2016)(Waters-Bayer and Bayer 1994) among others. Through their research works, the historical relationship between Fulani herdsmen and farmers and how eventually the issue of land for grazing and cultivation of crops became a bone of contention leading to indigene and settler crisis in Plateau State and other parts. This has resulted into reprisal attacks in parts of Northern states on the allegation of trespass on land by Fulani herdsmen by farmers.

This is, however, in connection with the issue of climate change in which Fulani herdsmen have to move from Sahel savanna into the Guinea savannah and co-habit with the farmers due to low rainfall and dry vegetation thereby forcing them to move inward into the cultivated farmland area and leading to trespass on the farmers land in search of water and food for their livestock , this often resulted into conflict between the two groups and sometimes violent in nature (killing and destruction of properties).

Research finding shows this conflict has been on for years and government at all levels have always provide temporary solutions to the problem wherever and whenever it crept up, for example, the Yobe state government according to (Bello 2013) has over the years constituted committees to look in to the issue with lots of recommendations which are not implemented.

Of recent, the federal government must take a giant step to resolve the lingering crisis between Fulani herdsmen and farmers by proposing the creation of *ruga* settlements in all the stats of the federation. This however, was not welcomed by majority of the states in the South-East and South-Western states and consequently the plan is halted except for the few cattle ranches and grazing land earlier demarcated by provisions of governments which still serve as home to the Fulani herdsmen in their grazing activities. The Fulani herdsmen who by nature are nomadic still continue to move from place to place with their cattle and animals and will continue with time, it can therefore, be inferred that the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers is not over yet, it has just began except something drastic is done about it (Olabode, Ajibade, and Ajibade 2010).

One can concur with most scholars and authors that the conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers are triggered or caused as a result of resource control over land usage and climate occasioned by the need for green vegetation to feed the animals and water to feed their means of livelihood as posited by (Muhammed and Oladimeji 2017) “Our Herds Our Life”.

Contribution

This paper has its central focus on the possible ways and strategies that could be employed in resolving the lingering herdsmen/farmers conflict in North-Eastern Nigeria which has over the year defy solution as the crises has been on the increase with wanton destruction of lives and property. It is on record that government has made tremendous efforts in attempts at resolving the crises. It is however important to know that the methods and strategies are always top down approaches with template designed solutions without the involvement of the real stakeholders (Herdsmen and Farmers) this is why most of the prescribed and designed solutions to the issue has continuously fail and may continue to fail except and unless the actual stakeholders are brought in the initiation, design and implementation of policies and programs which are aimed at addressing the issue. In this prelude it is advisable that any attempt at resolving conflict of any kind, the root cause of the conflict must first be identify and the solution sought among the disputing parties especially on issues and conflict between groups such as this, which involves two groups the herdsmen and farmers. The Nigerian government should have learnt her lesson from previous policies initiated, designed and implemented for Fulani herdsmen such as the Nomadic education, School on the Wheel and erection of permanent structures for the ever moving herdsmen which were abandoned by the group because it does not take cognizance of their life style and their occupational mobility occasioned by their means of livelihood. Although this not to say that government has not at sometimes call the two parties for meetings and dialogue but these are often done when there is dispute between the groups.

This again point to the fact that government always employ post conflict or post war approach to conflict resolution rather than conflict prevention methods, more worrisome is the fact that where conflicts are assumed or presumed to have been resolved through adhoc committees the recommendations of the committee are in most cases not been implemented as the white paper on such issues remains in the files long after their draft and in some cases are never implemented, references are always made to such reports when similar crises erupts. It is therefore, advisable that government pursue conflict prevention policies and programs rather than waiting till there is eruption of conflicts before attempting to resolve conflicts. More so that it is easier and cost effective to prevent conflicts than manage or resolve conflicts. No wonder why nations over the world are embracing conflict prevention policies and programs aimed at curtailing crises before they erupt, Nigeria government must take a cue from this development and move fast to curtail her lingering conflicts and crises before they get out of hand, in this respect her peace making institution and conflict management bodies and organization must wake up to their responsibilities in ensuring that issues most likely leading to conflicts are nipped in the bud before it reupts.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the Fulani herdsmen/ farmer's conflict is not only affecting the people of Nigeria but also shaking the fabric upon which Nigeria as a nation is built. Government must, therefore, take more pro-active measures to resolve the conflict to enhance peace. Arguments has been made pertaining the various approaches that have been made in order to resolve the conflicts. Alternative strategies to resolve the conflict such as Ruga encampment, mediation between the herdsmen and farmers and reconciliation among the warring parties as well employing African traditional conflict resolution and peace building strategies should be pursued alongside the creation of more cattle routes It is hoped that if these recommendations are taken into consideration and adhered it will go a long way in resolving the lingering herdsmen/farmers conflicts in North-East Nigeria and other parts of the world currently facing similar problems.

Recommendation

Conflict resolution strategies must address local, root causes of conflicts and hostilities; build local capacity for change and enhance good governance, alluding to this (Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse 2011) argues that in conflict transformation what is required is to view the prevailing conflicts and see which theory and approach is more applicable to the situation at hand, also attention must be given to local and international environmental factors. In this prelude;

1. Societies and governments at national and international levels need to put more resources and efforts in peace building which is conflict prevention mechanism rather than waiting for conflict to erupt before putting huge resources in attempt to curtail or resolve conflict. The United Nations Charter 1 on World Peace and Security emphasize this, but more need to be done in this direction by government in their domestic policy.
2. Government should look at the root cause of conflict or crises and address it permanently rather than suppressing it, which often than re-occur
3. In trying to resolve the varied violent conflict in Nigeria, there is the need for good governance, provision of basic needs, and employment for the teeming youth. Peace building initiatives and diplomatic support to Nigeria should have the capacity for the full integration of and engagement with the primary and secondary state holders at all levels of society, strategies must address local root causes of conflict, hostilities and encourage local capacity for change that will sustain peace, efforts must be made to take a holistic approach strategically linking governance, conflict prevention and peace building and to address development deficits resulting from marginalization, mismanagement of public resources, social exclusion and weak sense of national identity. There is the need to ensure that the country enjoins a just democratic, stable society where government is formed through transparent, trusted, regulatory and participatory electoral process to guarantee a just, democratic, accountable and stable government where high institutional performance governed by the rule of law can be achieved.
4. There is the need to strengthen conflict prevention and peace building initiative such as (CPPBI) in Benin City Nigeria. The views of local civil societies on the cause of violent conflict in Northern region and Nigeria in general and the prospect for peace should be encouraged.

References

- Agbibo, Daniel Egiegba. 2013. "No Retreat, No Surrender: Understanding the Religious Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria."
- Akpor-Robaro, M O M, and F O Lanre-Babalola. n.d. "Nomadic Fulani Herdsmen Turn Terrorists? Exploring The Situation And The Security Implications For Nigeria."
- Alubo, Okoh A. 2005. "Governmental Attitudes towards the Protection and Enforcement of Human Rights in Nigeria." In . Centre for Legal Rights Advancement (CLERA).
- Audu, Sunday Didam. 2014. "Freshwater Scarcity: A Threat to Peaceful Co-Existence between Farmers and Pastoralists in Northern Nigeria." *International Journal of Development and Sustainability* 3 (1): 242–51.
- Awoyelu, Festus, and Kayode Idowu. 2019. "Willingness to Pay for Peaceful Co-Existence between Crop Farmer and Sedentary Pastoralist's Households in Oyo and Kwara States, Nigeria." *Scientific Papers: Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture & Rural Development* 19 (1).
- Bello, Alhassan Usman. 2013a. "Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts in North-Eastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 2 (5): 129.
- . 2013b. "Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts in North-Eastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, no. July 2013. <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2013.v2n5p129>.
- Dan-Azumi, Jake. 2011. "African Agriculture at Crossroads: Balancing the Needs of Increased

- Productivity and the Challenges of Sustainability. The Case of Fadama Agriculture in Semi-Arid North-Central Nigeria.” In *Global Food Insecurity*, 73–89. Springer.
- . 2018. “Socio-Economic Development and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Study of Boko Haram,” June.
- Dauda, Mohammed. 2014. “The Effect of Boko Haram Crisis on Socioeconomic Activities in Yobe State.” *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* 1 (4).
- Dimelu, Mabel Ukamaka, Edward Danjuma Salifu, and Edwin M Igbokwe. 2016. “Resource Use Conflict in Agrarian Communities, Management and Challenges: A Case of Farmer-Herdsmen Conflict in Kogi State, Nigeria.” *Journal of Rural Studies* 46: 147–54.
- Eniola, P O, O A Adeleke, and O M Okanlawon. 2016. “Effect of Transhumance Pastoralism on Farming Activities among Crop Farmers in Oke-Ogun Area of Oyo State.” *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology* 16 (2202-2019–1103): 45–50.
- Fiki, O C, and Bill Lee. 2004. “Conflict Generation, Conflict Management and Self-Organizing Capabilities in Drought-Prone Rural Communities in North-Eastern Nigeria: A Case Study.” *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 19 (2).
- Gadzama, I U, N M Saddiq, T C Oduhie, and C J Dariya. 2018. “Appraisal of Rural Banditry in "Kamuku" Forest in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria.” *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology* 18 (2202-2019–1205): 42–49.
- Imo, Chukwuechefulam Kingsley. 2017. “The Demographic Implications of Nomadic Herdsmen and Farmers Clashes in Nigeria.” *International Journal of Development and Management Review* 12 (1): 45–58.
- Isah Mohammed Abbass. 2014. “No Retreat No Surrender Conflict for Survival Between Fulani Pastoralists and Farmers in Northern Nigeria.” *European Scientific Journal* 8 (1): 331–46. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2012.v8n1p%p>.
- Lederach, John Paul. 1995. “Conflict Transformation in Protracted Internal Conflicts: The Case for a Comprehensive Framework.” *Conflict Transformation*, 201–22.
- . 2012. “The Origins and Evolution of Infrastructures for Peace: A Personal Reflection.” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7 (3): 8–13.
- Moritz, Mark. 2006. “The Politics of Permanent Conflict: Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Northern Cameroon.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 40 (1): 101–26.
- Muhammed, Isa Abdullahi, and Lawal Abdullahi Oladimeji. 2017. “State, Governance And Insecurity In Nigeria: A Reflection On The Crisis Of Boko Haram Insurgency In The North-East.” *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies* 4 (4): 44–50.
- Nzeh, EMEKA. 2015. “The Effects of Migration by Nomadic Farmers in the Livelihoods of Rural Crop Farmers in Enugu State, Nigeria.” *Global Journal of Science Frontier Research: D Agriculture and Veterinary*, 21–28.
- Obioha, Emeka E. 2009. “Climate Variability, Environment Change and Food Security Nexus in Nigeria.” *Journal of Human Ecology* 26 (2): 107–21.
- Odoh, SI, and CF Chigozie. 2012. “Empirical Examination of the Worsening Incidence of Conflict Between Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers in Northern Nigeria.” *Arabianjbm.Com* 2 (1): 110–24. [http://arabianjbm.com/pdfs/OM_VOL_2_\(1\)/7.pdf](http://arabianjbm.com/pdfs/OM_VOL_2_(1)/7.pdf).
- Ofem, O. 2014. “Livelihood and Conflict Dimension among Crop Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen in Yakurr Region of Cross River State.” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (8): 512–19. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n8p512>.
- Okoli, Al Chukwuma, and Philip Iortyer. 2014. “Terrorism and Humanitarian Crisis in Nigeria: Insights from Boko Haram Insurgency.” *Global Journal of Human Social Science-GJHSS-F* 14 (1).
- Olabode, Abiodun, Lanre Ajibade, and Olabode A D Ajibade. 2010. “ENVIRONMENT INDUCED CONFLICT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT A CASE OF FULANI-FARMERS’ CONFLICT IN OKE-ERO LGAs, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 12 (5): 259–73. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308078946>.

- Onigu-Otite, Kenneth, and Isaac Olawale Albert. 1999. *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation*. Spectrum Books Limited.
- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Hugh Miall, and Tom Woodhouse. 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Polity.
- Ubhenin, Oscar Edoror. 2012. "Climate Change and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria: Human Needs and Relative Deprivation Theories." In *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict*, 529–42. Springer.
- Usman Bello, Alhassan. 2013. "Herdsman and Farmers Conflicts in North-Eastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, July. <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2013.v2n5p129>.
- Waters-Bayer, Ann, and Wolfgang Bayer. 1994. "Coming to Terms: Interactions between Immigrant Fulani Cattle-Keepers and Indigenous Farmers in Nigeria's Subhumid Zone (Relations Entre Éleveurs Immigrants Peuls et Paysans Autochtones Dans La Zone Subhumide Du Nigeria)." *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 34 (133/135): 213–29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4392520>.
- Yekinni, O T, R T Adeniyi, and S A Adebisi. 2017. "Crop Farmers' Adaptation Strategies To Mitigate Conflicts With Nomads in Oyo State." *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology Vol 17* (1).