

The Impact of Herdsmen/Farmers Clashes on Food Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

The interaction of farmers and herders has for many years not led to happy tales due to the conflict of interest over land resources which is valued by both parties for the sustenance and advancement of their trade. This appalling situation has generated heated discourses in many circles with various suggestions and strategies advanced to end this imbroglio to no avail. Such had also attracted the researcher to engage in a scholarly voyage of interrogating the consequences of these incessant conflicts between farmers and herders on agricultural production with further implications on the security conditions of farmlands. To achieve the above, the documentary evidence method of gathering data was employed while the intractable conflict theory was employed to dissect the study. The finding of the study revealed that farmers/herders crises in the country which has led to the wanton destruction of human lives and properties including livestock and farmland assets, has been the major cause of low agricultural production in the country. It was also discovered that the displacement of farmers was due to the high level of insecurity of the farmlands due to the activities of the warring parties to the conflicts which made those places unsafe for habitation. In line with the findings of the study, it was recommended, amongst others, that improved and modern ways of livestock management should be employed by the government as an agricultural policy for the entire country to encourage new ways of doing this business.

Keywords: Conflict; Farmers; Food Security; Herders; Nomads

1 Introduction

One of the major threats to global and national peace today is the growth of multi-dimensional conflicts. From Europe to America, Africa to Asia, conflicts abound (Jeony, 2008). Since the return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has faced widespread violent conflicts of terrible proportions across numerous groups, communities, religions, and political elites. These long-standing conflicts have varying dimensions, procedures, and parties.

Momale (2003) observed the existence of conflicts between resource users such as agricultural communities, herders and farmers, and foresters and farmers. However, farmers/herders clashes remain Nigeria's most common resource conflict (Adisa, 2012). Land disputes, especially over grazing areas, account for the majority of disputes between the two groups. Agricultural groups, as well as herders and crop growers, are increasingly tensed and aggressive as they compete for commercially valuable resources. Not surprisingly, given that land is one of the most vital commodities required for human survival.

To begin with, all human activities and lives are dependent on land, directly or indirectly. It means different things to different tribes. Land is not the same for house builders, fishermen, farmers, herders, miners, and manufacturers. They all have unique land use needs for their diverse production services. Crop production and other agricultural and related activities may be the most skilled in land resource management. Rashid (2002: 65) used the following argument to justify the high acreage needs for agricultural production:

...Soil temperature, structure, texture, and PH levels are inextricably linked to the selection of land for agricultural production operations.

According to him, land is a limited resource with man-made and natural barriers to access and utilisation. These factors, along with the land's varied uses and rarity, necessitates varying degrees of competitiveness across the state. Thus, competition for land resources has existed since the dawn of time. Other user groups compete with agricultural users, and there is intra-user group competition at several levels. Indeed, increased human and animal populations are increasing competition for land resources (Haruna, 2011).

The rate of population growth has continued to put pressure on available land resources, with various environmental and social repercussions (Fiki & Lee, 2004). Despite other natural resources, food and agricultural production remains the backbone of most northern states' economies. This requires balancing ecological, social, and political efforts. Disputes between farmers and herders have occurred annually since the 13th century, but recently took on a new dimension.

2 Statement of the Problem

Farmers and herders' dispute continues to endanger human and economic life. The fierce fight for scarce resources has resulted in many deaths and herd destruction. In majority of these exchanges, people are slain and property damaged or lost, leaving an already vulnerable populace poorer. As a result of the frequency and intensity of these clashes, towns and villages have been destroyed; crops have been squandered as well as human and animal life.

Several state administrations have approved anti-grazing legislation to ease tensions between herders and farmers. To try and improve relations between the two parties, all of this was done. The Mambilla Plateau in Sarduma Local Government Area, Taraba State, was assaulted by armed herders from June 17th to 20th, 2017. On January 30, 2018, a number of herders were killed in Leme Community, Taraba State (Solomon, 2021).

On January 17, 2018, in Gareji Village, the same thing happened on April 10 in Dori, Mesuma, Gashaka Local Government Area, Taraba State. In Taraba, herder-farmer conflict has spanned many land resource factors. Farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria, particularly Taraba, face reduced access to land resources. There is a lot of violence when farmers and grazing pastures are competing (Solomon, 2021). Local government districts including Ibi, Bali, Wukari, and Takun in Taraba State have been hit the hardest, says Abbas (2012).

Nigerians rely heavily on agricultural produce for their livelihood and economic security. Farmers and herders are crucial in meeting the country's nutritional needs and ensuring family food security (Onuoha, & Ezirim, 2015). To achieve food security for all, people must have continual physical and economic access to adequate, safe, and nutrient-rich food to meet their dietary needs and lead active and healthy lives. A people are hungry if they lack physical or economic access to food (Food and Agricultural Organisation-FAO, 2015). Recent reports have sparked fears of a food crisis in various countries, including Nigeria. Food security is defined as ensuring that individuals have access to enough food at all times to meet their nutritional needs. According to the World Bank research, the primary elements affecting food security are access to enough nourishment for everybody and ability to use it (FAO, 2015). Herders' constant migrations in search of water and rich pastures have caused several deadly communal clashes in Nigeria in recent years (Suleiman, 2015). As a result, many farmers and herders have died, and their harvests and herds have suffered (Suleiman, 2015). These conflicts threaten the national peace.

Conflict is defined as a big disagreement over an important issue that disrupts law and order (Collins, 2016). Conflict occurs when opposing wants, views, values, and ambitions collide

(Dietz and Albert, 2016). According to Oyetade, farmer-herder conflict has risen due to rivalry for water and pastureland (2017). Both have coexisted happily for years, sharing farming and grazing land with some tolerance and understanding. This worrying development may portend future trouble.

Farmers and herders have always had issues in Nigeria, but it increased as the population grew, leading to more cultivation of grassland and livestock paths. As a result of the paucity of pasture area in the north, the herdsmen migrate south. Conflicts impair food security, putting participants and the country at risk. Conflicts disrupt and imperil Nigeria's ethnic harmony and agricultural output (Moritz, 2016), resulting in agricultural damage, cow assaults, property devastation, and cattle rustling in most states.

Climate change, population growth, environmental degradation, government policy, and armed insurgency have all been connected to farmer-herder conflicts (Suleiman, 2015). Insufficient data currently accessible to make informed decisions. Farmers-herder conflicts may undermine the country's food security. The increasing frequency of conflicts in the country needs a careful analysis of the implications for food security. The country's management of farmer-herder disputes is also unclear, except for some governors' efforts to prohibit open grazing of cattle in the south and central belt.

Historically, farmers and cattle raisers have coexisted amicably, benefiting both groups. To enhance the environment, ranchers typically pay cattle raisers to graze on their land after harvest or in exchange for cow milk and dairy products. As a result of rising human and animal preparation, crop and grazing land have become scarce. As a result, land resources are scarce. Due to increased competition for land, farmland has encroached on grazing areas and animal corridors.

Crops have been damaged or destroyed completely due to livestock farmers' incompetence or misconduct. As a result, tensions have arisen between cattle ranchers and farmers. The slow-burning battle, which was regularly handled by local officials, changed the way farmers and cattle herders used to resolve disputes. This happens when two groups become distrustful of each other.

Today, the violence has consumed most of Africa and Nigeria. Every week for almost a decade, reports of farmer-herder conflicts in the country have been submitted. These wars usually result in widespread destruction of human lives and property. These disputes pose a grave threat to life and livelihood. In this context, the study is relevant.

3 Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine the impact of herders/farmers crises on the level of food production in the country.
- ii. To determine the effects that herders/farmers crises pose to the security of farm settlements.

4 Review of Related Literature

4.1.1 Nomadic Pastoralism

Nigerian pastoralism and farming have developed over time, resulting in a never-ending resource war. Nomadic pastoralism is a traditional way of life where nomadic people keep large numbers of animals roaming around looking for food and water. Climate change and population growth have disrupted water and pasture supply, leading to conflicts as farmers compete for the same resources (Akerjiir, 2018).

Throughout history and the evolution of the planet, several civilizations have specialised on cattle production. Some live in South America, like the llama and alpaca herders, while others live in West Africa's savanna, like the Fulani cattle breeders (Salzman, 2002). Unlike land, water, orchards, and mineral resources, cattle may migrate. As a result of this, livestock must be moved from locations where there is no pasture to areas where there is pasture. Herders and their flocks migrate because their cattle's survival depends on pasture, which is affected by temperature, sickness, and climate change (Salzman, 2002).

4.1.2 The magnitude of Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria

Pastoralists and farmers have been at odds since the dawn of agriculture. Scarcity of resources, notably land, causes conflict. The battle has recently become more unstable due to an increase in deaths and displaced persons across the afflicted nations. Animals, crops, and other valuable goods will be lost if the war continues (Ikezue and Ezeah, 2017).

Contrary to popular belief, there were not as many violent clashes between herders and farmers in the past. Between 1997 and 2011, conflict between herders and farmers was more common in particular middle belt states (Plateau, Nassarawa, and Benue), with isolated events in other states. Historically, the Fulani and Berom tribes of Jos in Plateau State have fought for land. This explains why on March 7, 2010, suspected Fulani herders slaughtered around 500 people in three villages in Plateau State's Jos South and Barakin Ladi local governments (Higazi, 2016).

4.1.3 Climate Change, Migration, and Population Growth

The dry and semi-arid north of Nigeria receives less rainfall than the rest of the country. The National Meteorological Agency (NMA) said in 2008 that the annual rainy season has dropped from 150 to 120 days. The study also found that over 350,000 km² of semi-desert land has gradually been turned into desert over the last six decades, at a rate of 0.6 km per year. It is estimated that between 50 and 75 percent of the land in places like Bauchi and Borno has dried up. These environmental changes have impacted human livelihoods and prompted pastoralists to migrate south in search of pastures for their cattle.

Herders used to travel seasonally, from December to May in the centre zone, then north (International Crisis Group, 2017). From December to June or July, herders were observed lingering in the middle zone longer due to a lack of available pastures in the far north. The International Crisis Group (2017) analysis revealed that some herders have recently chosen to permanently graze their herds in Nigeria's Central and South zones. This forced migration has resulted in a massive influx of herders in the south, increasing violent clashes between herders and local residents, notably farmers (Isola, 2018).

4.1.4 Existence of Gangs and Community Vigilantes

In an attempt to provide a factual argument on the concept of "ungoverned space" in the Mali-Sahel periphery, Boas (2015) stated that there is no such thing. It is not an ungoverned territory, he argues, because there is some degree of government and order even when the state is gone. He claims the region is overlapping with "big men" with unofficial/illicit business networks, resistance, and government networks. Actions that advance one from common herds to a clique of loyal men are built on reaching the position of giant man. Power in this zone determines the ability to use force and create resources. A research of the Mali-Sahel periphery found groups of "dig men" in Tuareg networks who engaged in crime, resistance, and coping.

In his work on "farmer-pastoralist conflicts on Jos Plateau Central Nigeria, Higazi (2016) discusses how "big men" outside the government arm ethnic groups, organise and fund crimes and attacks. Mali's circumstances prompted a host of rebel groups battling both each other and

the state. The 1992 National Pact to end the national conflict resulted in a broad problem as numerous organisations, including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which exploited the situation to commit crimes in northern Mali.

4.1.5 Land Tenure/Land Act in Nigeria

According to the Land Use Act of 1978, the Governor may manage and keep land for the benefit of the people. The 1910 Ordinance protects any native or native population legitimately occupying land in line with native law and custom, and no rent is charged. For everyone else, Mabogunje (2009) states that no title is valid unless it is granted by the Governor, who has the power to grant or revoke possession rights, impose limits, and collect rent. Mabogunje (2009) cited the following seven reasons for the 1978 Land Use Decree:

- i. Each state's governor owns all of the land in their state. In southern Nigeria, the state seizes land without compensation from people and communities, except for economic crops and other improvements.
- ii. A state's governor is in charge of land control and distribution in urban areas, while local governments are in charge of land distribution in rural areas. Only the Governor can declare portions of the state territory he administers as urban.
- iii. The Land Use and Allocation Committee will oversee all urban land and advise the Governor on its administration. A Land Allocation Advisory Committee will assist municipal governments in the same way.
- iv. Prior to the Act taking effect, any developed land remained the property of the person entrusted with it.
- v. To all purposes and rights of access to land under his control, the Governor may issue a statutory certificate of occupancy (C of O).
- vi. The Governor must provide permission for an individual to own more than half a hectare of undeveloped land in a state's urban area.
- vii. The Governor must approve the mortgage or assignment of a statutory right of possession. The authorization of the local administration or, in some cases, the Governor is required. To maintain its validity, the order was later inserted into the 1979 and 1999 constitutions.

4.1.6 Policies in Relation to Farmer-Herder Conflict

i. Grazing Area/ Cattle Routes

The necessity for regulations to govern daily interactions between these two classes evolved as the farmer-herder conflict intensified. In 2008, federal politicians proposed establishing a Grazing Commission Bill to remedy the vexing matter. The law allowed the commission to buy land in any section of the country for grazing reserves and livestock routes, but it would violate the existing Land Use Act and customary landholding norms (Guilbert 2016).

According to the International Crisis Group (2017), Afenifere (a Pan-Yoruba social movement) strongly opposed the bill, stating it privileged Fulani herders over farmers whose properties were frequently devastated by Fulani cows. They also found the bill insulting. This group claimed it is trying to take citizens' rightful assets and distribute them to others who don't possess them, which is against natural law principles.

ii. Ineffective Role of the State

The Nigerian government's approach to the conflict tends to swing between military deployment and mediation by people with a good reputation, according to the International Crisis Group (2017). Using military soldiers to quell individual outbreaks of violence has become a major political and security concern (Hoffman 2014). Extrajudicial executions and other human rights abuses cannot be underlined. Despite simultaneous efforts, conflicts have continued.

Between 2002 and 2010, the federal government organised four committees to investigate violent conflicts (primarily between herders and farmers) in Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States. Commissions of Inquiry into Community Conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States headed by Justice Okpene in 2002 and 2004 respectively. Solomon Lar served on the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos Crisis in 2010, as did Major General Emmanuel Abisoye. But there has not been much political will to implement the multiple commissions' findings (Aluko, 2017).

iii. Security Agencies

The International Crisis Group (2017) studied Nigeria's security forces and courts to examine how they addressed the farmer-herder conflict that threatened to overwhelm the country. Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and Nigerian Police Force (NPF) are understaffed in rural areas and lack early warning systems when violence breaks out. We could claim that the lack of technology and the challenging physical surroundings prevent these security organisations from responding swiftly.

Disputes were often so irritated that they sought self-help through violence. After the fights, the army and police are frequently called in. In rare cases, police have detained and convicted both ranchers and vigilantes. Sadly, the country's dysfunctional law enforcement and criminal justice institutions frequently fail to apprehend or punish the murderers. Authorities claim that prosecuting suspects will lead to additional killings and conflagrations. However, when they do exist, they are usually used to soothe tensions rather than pursue justice. These responses establish a climate of impunity for the abusers.

A few weeks from now, we will start to witness the impact of it," said Lai Mohammed, Minister of Information and Culture on April 24, 2016. No follow-up this time. Operation Accord was initiated on July 15, 2016 by Defense Secretary General Gabriel Olonisakin. That campaign was forgotten. After rioting in southern Kaduna in late 2016, the army sent soldiers, murdering 200-800 people (International Crisis Group, 2017). Even nevertheless, the attacks continue.

4.2 Food Security

Food security means various things to different individuals. Food security is a well-known concept globally. It was initially discovered as a concept of food supply, in which food shortages created fears of global political instability (Simmons and Saundry, 2012). Food availability was recognised as a key component of understanding food security at the time, but was also believed to be insufficient for household food access (Jones et al., 2013).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (1996) and Patel (1996) define food security as "physical and economic availability to adequate, safe, and nutritious food at all times" (2013). Household food security is achieved when all members of the household have enough food to be active and healthy (USDA, 2008). Food security was defined as "equal access to nutritious food at all times" by the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) in Rome. On the other side, food insecurity refers to a lack of access to nutritious and safe food in a timely manner (Gray, 2003).

4.3 Empirical Review

Tersoo (2016) studied farmer-herder conflict in Taraba State, Nigeria. It accepted the tragedy of the commons theory, which states that when a resource is shared by a group, it will be destroyed. Using descriptive statistics, the data revealed many human deaths, damage to farm fields, houses, and schools, and loss of human capital. A rigorous pastoralist localisation policy in line with international best practises will help avoid such disputes.

Dimelu and Audu (2017) investigated livelihood concerns in herdsman-farmers conflict in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study looked into the causes and effects of herdsman-farmer conflict in Kogi State. Crop farmers were largely men (85.2%), married (84.9%), and 51 years old on average. They were small-scale farmers with an average farm size of 2.9 hectares, predominantly cultivating yam (97.8%), cassava (92.6%), and maize (92.6%) for income and household nutrition. According to the farmers, the main causes of conflict were violations of laws/traditions, livelihood interference, and cultural difficulties. Farmers' livelihoods are harmed as a result of poor socio-economic conditions, poor agricultural yields, and poor settlement. The study suggested that governments and non-governmental organisations should foster multi-stakeholder activities exploring grass-root participation in policies and methods for conflict resolution, among other things.

Ahynetel (2018) examined the impact of farmer-herder conflict on Nigerian national integration. The study investigated the farmers-herdsmen dispute in the South-West, North-Central North-East, North-West, South-East, and South-South using historical descriptive research. The study concluded that not addressing the farmers' herdsman issue will have far-reaching implications for Nigeria's national cohesion.

4.4 Democratic and Ethno Political Constraints

Farmers/herders disputes in Nigeria have democratic and ethno-political implications. For instance, "The President, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, seems not to understand the idea of presidential democracy in Nigeria." To achieve Nigeria's unity, the President should lose his nepotism, provincialism, and narrow-mindedness. The unity of Nigeria cannot be negotiable while Fulani herders slaughter, maim, rape and perpetrate other crimes across Nigeria (ThisDay, June 2, 2021). The above came from allegations that President Buhari criticised anti-open grazing regulations and slammed governors of Southern states for outlawing open grazing. The AGF's opinion, attacking anti-grazing is another example what portrays the Federal government as being unaware of the risks of open grazing in the country. Abolition of open grazing is necessary in the current situation due to the aforementioned reasons.

In another incident, the Cross River State Governor Prof. Ben Ayade took a seemingly opposing position to the South-South States' mandate to legislate against open grazing in the region. In a Channels Television feature, the governor posited in part thus: ...

“you cannot by law make illegitimate a legitimate trade of a people, the nomadic herdsman. So, if I have a brother from Yobe State, in his semi-arid condition, who has no grass or money to do irrigation to be able to sustain his pasture and I would close his business and shut him down from survival, that is really insensitive. That is inviting the nation to anarchy. So what I think is a deliberate recalibration of the equation and ask myself if open grazing is coming with its attendant consequence, the sociology and anthropology not acceptable, we must find a way to” create a mix and balance between the herders and farmers, and that's the essence of being a leader. That's why we are coming with open grazing management law not prohibition (Channels Television Series, December 2, 2021 at 1920/hrs).

Having regards to democratic principles in federal setting like Nigeria, the governor has the right to determine what happens in his area of responsibility. However, the point of convergence has to be adhered to which in this case, is the control over livestock grazing to avoid conflicts and its attendant consequences.

4.4.1 Gap in the literature

Previous studies by a number of scholars targeted on segment, region or locality and findings portrayed the effects of the conflict on those locations. The current research focuses on the influence of Nigeria's herders and farmers' crises on food security, taking into account food production. As a result, the research looked into the tactics used by the government and all other stakeholders to combat this threat in our country. This is because a close examination of past research revealed that considerable emphasis has been placed on the repercussions of these ongoing wars inside states, rather than a broader view of the consequences for the entire country. This is the academic gap that the current research aims to fill.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework was the Intractable Conflict Theory. Northrup popularized the theory in a 1989 essay titled, "The Dynamics of Identity in Personal and Social Contract" (Onuoha, 2008). Intractable conflicts persist despite repeated attempts to resolve them (Burgess and Burgess, 2006). Each side regards the other's resolute stance as a threat to its own survival. They all involve interests or ideas that the disputants see as vital to their survival. In this context, intractable conflicts usually include competing factions over resources.

According to Maiese (2006):

Conflicts that go unsolved for a long time and then become entrenched at a high degree of intensity and destructiveness are known as intractable. Many parties are usually involved, and they deal with a complex combination of historical, religious, cultural, political, and economic problems. These issues are fundamental to human social existence and are notoriously difficult to resolve. In reality, parties frequently refuse to discuss or compromise on such matters. As a result, each side sees the other's uncompromising stance as a danger to its own existence. They may acquire a mutual fear of each other as well as a strong desire to do each other as much bodily and psychological pain as possible. This sense of fear and animosity typically penetrates the participants' daily lives, obstructing their capacity to perceive whatever shared issues they may have. Any physical concerns may become buried inside a wider set of values, beliefs, identities, and cultures as conflict intensifies. Land, money, and other resource disputes may take on more symbolic significance.

Three main characteristics of intractable disputes may be studied in depth. For starters, intractable confrontations are prolonged, meaning they last a long time. These regions are characterised by long-standing conflicts that recur, with periods of relative quiet between violent flare-ups (Putnam and Wondolleck, 2003; Coleman, 2000). They usually persist a long time, with varying severity. Second, they are waged in ways that opponents or third parties deem detrimental, such as incurring debilitating financial and emotional costs. They may develop a mutual fear of each other and a strong desire to damage each other physically and psychologically (Coleman, 2000). Others persist despite repeated attempts to change or resolve problems. Involved parties, complex issues, and a history of violent conflict make them difficult to resolve (Onuoha, 2008).

The notion of "intractable conflict" better describes the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria since it reveals that arable land is at jeopardy, which is "vital for both farmers and herdsman's life." Herein lies the reason for people's stubborn convictions and hostility. In certain circumstances, one side has caused inconceivable harm to the other. As a way to win a war, the disputants have

often condoned deaths without remorse, damage of property and farm crops, livestock raids, and the use of deadly weapons like AK-47 rifles and machetes, along with IEDs and locally built weaponry. Despite all efforts to prevent farmer-herder conflict, violence between different factions has continued. This is arguably more vital. If that's the case, the issues may resurface regardless of who uses what strategy to resolve them in the future. For example, a farmer's land is threatened by his own values, while a herdsman has little control over it. Also, if the farmer's group rules, the herders will obey. As a result, while compromise is theoretically possible, it is usually seen as a failure. For example, if herders and farmers have such deep-seated animosity and natural dread, it is impossible to imagine them coexisting or working together. As a result, they're usually ready to take whatever steps are necessary to protect their way of life and the group's existence.

6. Method of Data collection

This study was descriptive and primarily reliant on secondary sources. The researcher was unable to visit the key conflict zones where access to parties to these conflicts would be possible due to scheduling constraints. However, only credible sources were employed to collect data for unbiased research and study conclusion: The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSN), Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), SBM Intelligence, and PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) among others.

7. Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

It was used to display and analyse qualitative data acquired for this investigation. To use this strategy, you must first conduct a thorough literature review. Until now, this study's goal was to assess the impact of herders/farmers crises on food production, farm settlement security, and to proffer solution to the country's herders/farmers crises.

i. How has the Herders/farmers Crises Impacted on the Level of Food Production in the Country

Seasonal and chronic food insecurity persists throughout Nigeria, exacerbated by high food prices, as an impact of conflict-related insurgency (particularly in the northeast), armed banditry, community crises, pastoralist/farmer crises and kidnappings (FEWS NET, 2020). Northeast, north central, and south-south geopolitical zones are the most affected in Nigeria. Figure 1 shows that terrorism (73 percent) occurs most frequently in the Northeast, land or resource access (55 percent) occurs most frequently in the North Central, and cultism/criminality (36 percent) occur most frequently in the South-South.

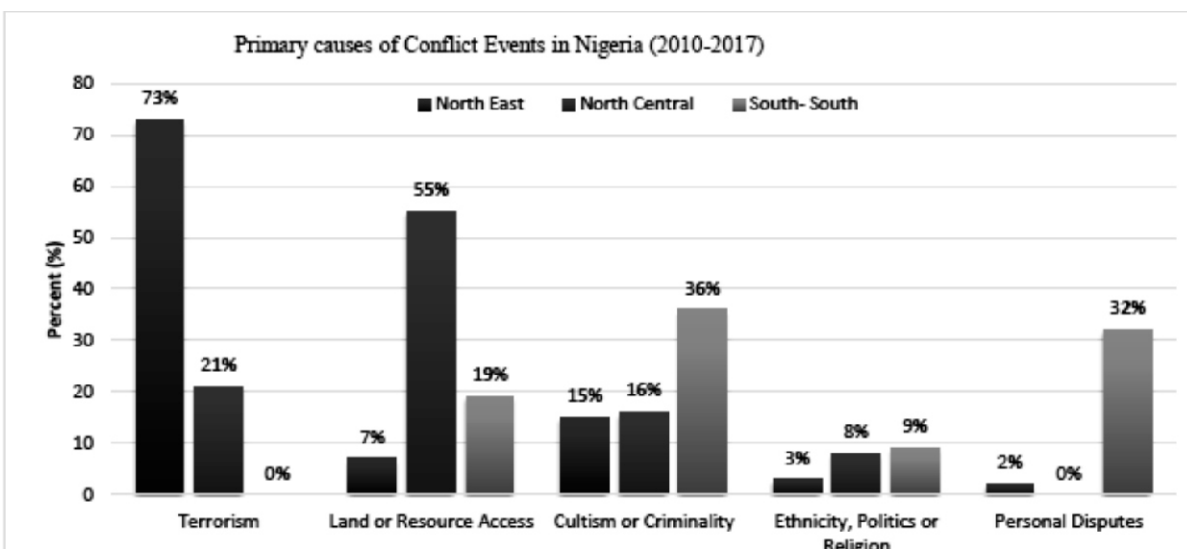


Figure 1: Primary cause of conflicts in three Geo-political zones (2010-2017)
 Source: Otegunrin *et. al.*, 2019 (using NBS/World Bank, 2018 data) in Ayinde *et. al.*, 2020

In October 2018, the IOM estimated that over 1.8 million people were internally displaced in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, with Borno housing over 1.4 million IDPs (FEWS NET, 2019). According to a Global Rights study, 3,188 people were killed in 2019 (2,707 civilians and 481 security personnel) (FEWS NET, 2020). According to IOM-DTM, approximately 2 million people were displaced between August and October 2019, while the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data-ACLED reported 507 deaths nationwide in January 2020 (FEWS NET, 2020; ACLED, 2020). Agriculture and other money-generating activities were disrupted, resulting in diminished household income and food access (USAID, 2017).

Despite being the world's largest producer of cassava, yam, and cowpea in 2012 and being the world's largest producer of cassava and yam, Nigeria remains food insecure and significantly import-dependent. Nigeria has plenty of arable land (75%), yet only 40% is utilised for farming. The vast majority of rural households still practise subsistence farming, barely feeding their own families. Lack of infrastructure, such as decent roads, has exacerbated rural poverty, separating farmers from critical inputs and markets for their produce (IFAD, 2012; FAOSTAT, 2019; Otegunrin and Sawicka, 2019).

Figure 2 displays the expected food security outcomes (June-September 2020) for the country, whereas Figure 3 illustrates the condition in the north-eastern section of Nigeria. FEWS NET (2019) reports increased displacement of people with food needs due to insurgency attacks in northeast Nigeria. Farmers/herders conflict also affects many homes in Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Taraba, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, and Adamawa states in the north. The fighting prevents typical livelihood activities like as farming, as well as access to markets and economic prospects (FEWS NET, 2019; 2020).

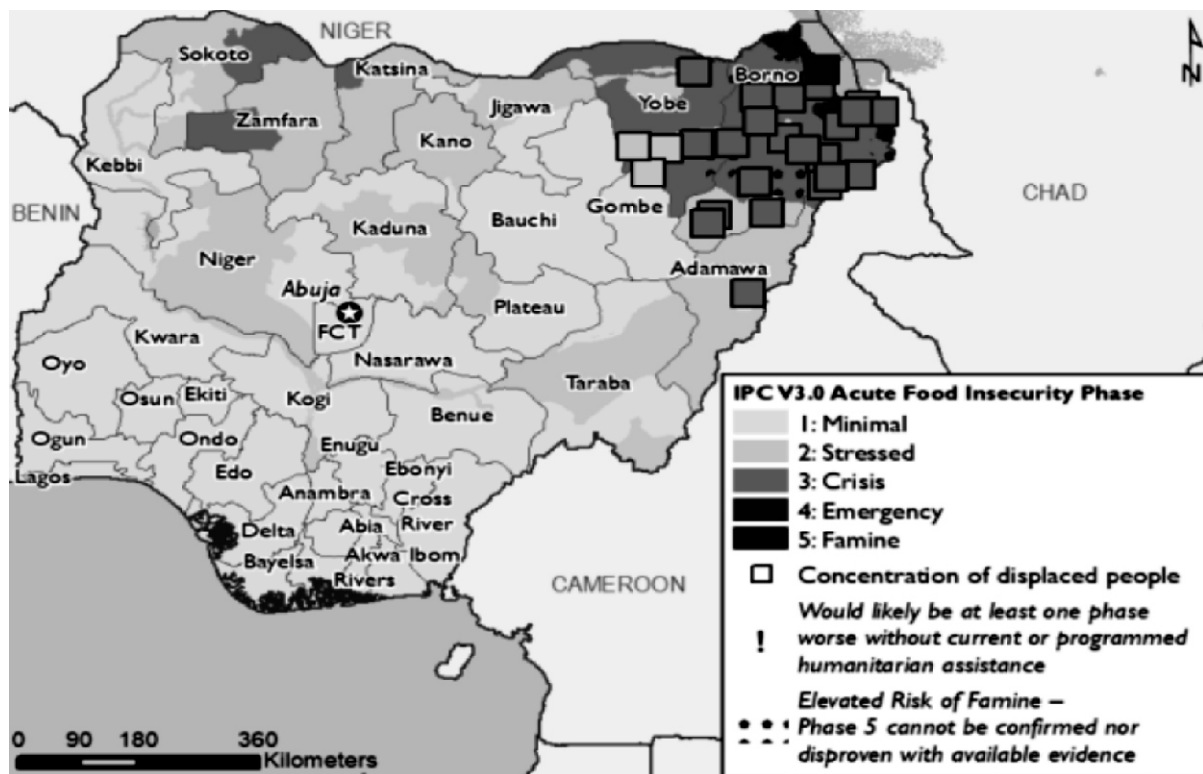


Figure 2: Projected food security
 Source: FEWS NET, 2020

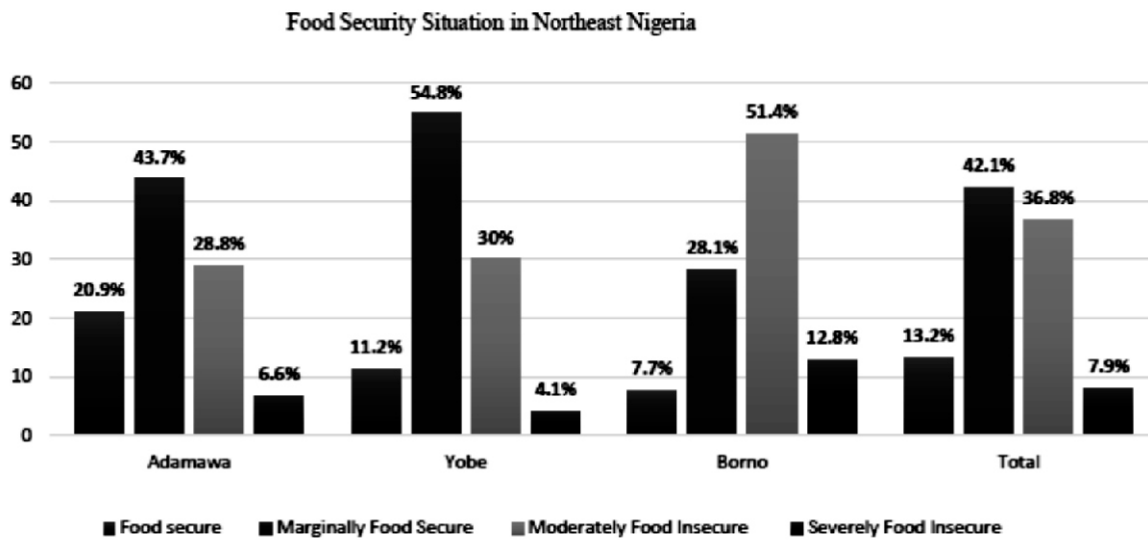


Figure 3: Food Security Situation in North East Nigeria

Source: WFP *et al.* 2017 in Ayinde, *et al.*, 2020.

Moreover, conflicts have become more common and intense in locations in 2021 than in recent years (as seen in Figure 4 below). Cattle rustling, banditry, and kidnapping are rampant in the Northwest. Nine hundred thirty-one pupils have been kidnapped since December 2020 in Niger and Zamfara states. Armed bandits and kidnappers operating in the Northwest and Niger State are blamed for these incidents. The bandits demand ransom for the abducted, and the money motivates them to abduct more. States affected include Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kaduna. Conflict in the Northwest and northcentral states displaced almost 700,000 people by late February, with over 15,000 relocated in Kebbi State alone by mid-June. Because some areas of the Northwest are inaccessible and war continues, the actual displaced population is likely greater (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data-ACLED, 2021; FEWS NET, 2021).

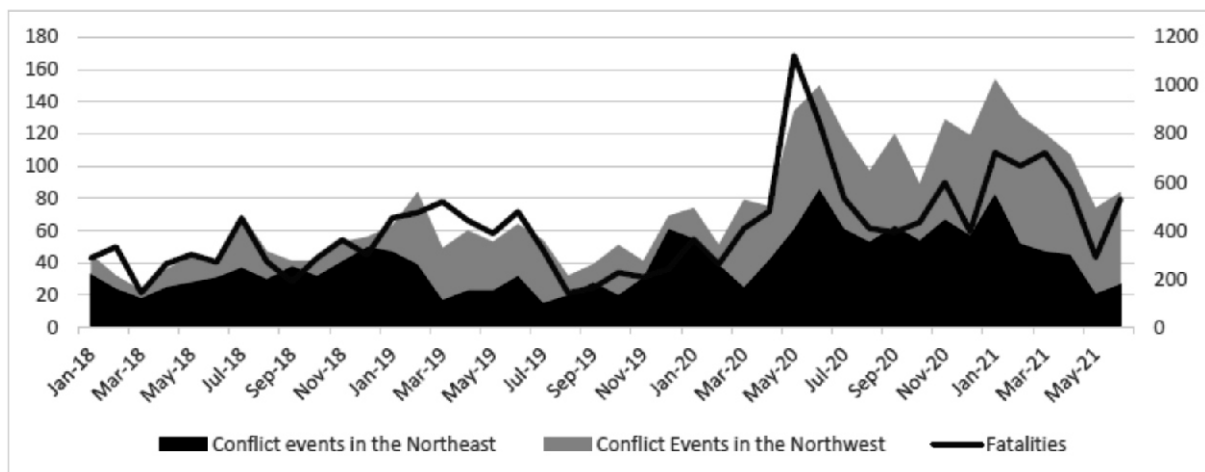


Figure 4: Conflict event and fatalities in the Northwest from January 2018 to June 2021

Source: ACLED, 2021.

Terrorist-designated Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) separatist group has upped attacks on and killing of security forces in southern areas. The ESN has escalated its campaign against open grazing for animals, threatening state governments with violence if they do not implement regional pastoralism rules. To combat ESN and IPOB, the police launched Operation Restore

Peace. Some pastoralists lost animals due to attacks. Similarly, some farming communities were forced to relocate due to pastoralist retaliation. The pastoralists razed some farms (ACLED, 2021; FEWS NET, 2021).

ii. How the Herders/farmers Crisis Pose a Security Threat to Farming Business in Nigeria

In line with the Nigeria Food Security Outlook up to May 2021 and projections for January 2022, households in the Northwest, particularly in Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina States, will remain displaced and face challenges in normal livelihood activities, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network-FEWS NET (2021). Moreover, many households are unable to cultivate typical crops due to displacement and rely on limited community and market support. During the lean season, when staple costs are very high, they have restricted economic alternatives. As a result, the most vulnerable households in Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina would continue to confront food shortages and catastrophe in the coming year.

In 2020, some households with low or no food reserves and who are fully reliant on market and community help probably suffered huge food consumption gaps indicative of emergency or catastrophe. The impact was likely less severe in places less affected by violence like Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina, where households can engage in crop production and have access to markets and income-generating opportunities (FEWS NET, 2021). As a result, intermittent attacks and abductions continue in Anka and Maru LGAs of Zamfara State and the Northwest. These attacks displaced people and disrupted agricultural activities. Increasing conflict has forced 2,500 households from communities like Kanoma, Dan Gulbi, Maiyanti, Dansadau, Daraji, and Kaduauri in Maru LGAs (FEWS NET, 2021).

Markets in affected areas perform below average. Bagega Central Market in Anka LGA closed in January 2020. Despite reopening in late March, it is still performing below average. Bandits, cattle rustlers, and kidnappers still operate in Dansadau, Dan Kurmi, and Magami districts of Maru LGA. The Zamfara State government ordered the immediate closure of four marketplaces in late May to restore peace and order. Both in Birnin Magaji and Maru LGAs and in Zamfara state. Thus, this would continue to harm regional trade (FEWS NET, 2021).

Bandits and fear of attack have hampered food production and farming operations in most areas in Maru LGA. Agriculture labour is scarce due to land restrictions, particularly for large-scale producers. Due to limited land access, low income, and the high cost of agricultural supplies, people only cultivate small areas. As a result, crop production this season is below average (FEWS NET, 2021).

Cattle rustling and kidnapping have forced most pastoralists to flee. To flee the ongoing turmoil, many pastoralist families have relocated. Some pastoralists sold their stock to buy food or pay ransom. Others cut stock levels to avoid bandit attacks. So the herd sizes are below average. Low food production, market interruptions, and an increasing number of IDPs relying on the market for food have kept staple food prices in the region above average. Farming operations and labour in general have declined significantly, limiting income-generating alternatives. Daily earnings also fell due to a glut of workers and a lack of demand. Some impacted households have turned to labour migration; others to minor trading, water hawking, and crafts for revenue (FEWS NET, 2021).

8. Discussion of Findings

The Fulani herdsman and farmer issues result in low food production in the country, according to the research questions. This conclusion was founded on the belief that conflicts in various sections of the country killed and maimed both herders and farmers. As a result, many people

have been displaced; most of them are farmers who no longer have access to agricultural settlements to cultivate their land. According to USAID (2017), FEWS NET (2019, 2020) and ACLED (2020), over 1.8 million people were displaced in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, with Borno hosting over 1.4 million IDPs (IDPs). According to a Global Rights report, 3,188 people were slain in 2019, including 2,707 civilians and 481 security personnel. On the other hand, between August and October 2019, the IOM-DTM recorded approximately 2 million displaced individuals in Adamawa and Bauchi states and 507 deaths in January 2020 in Nigeria's Armed Conflict Location and Event Data-ACLED. Agriculture and other money-generating activities were disrupted, resulting in diminished household income and food access.

This study is in line with that of Ahynetal (2018) who concluded that farmers' herdsman crises have far-reaching implications on Nigerian national integration. The study also found that each region affected by crises suffers food crises. This study was significant since it confirmed that disputes between the two groups impacted food production, distribution, and availability. Devastated farmland, houses, and schools caused a drop in agriculture output (producing food insecurity) and human capital loss, according to Tersoo (2016).

Aside from the farmer deaths, the paper found evidence of herders' deaths. The killing of cow herds and ranchers is under-reported, proving that the reports are biased. Moreover, the prevailing pattern of reporting attacks on Fulani herders and their cattle invariably hides the identity of the attackers and classifies them as bandits. While the biased reportage on Fulani herders did not absolve the Fulani herdsman of responsibility for increasing the hostilities, the vast majority of Nigerian media sources implied that the Fulani people are nothing but criminals. This statistic accords with Abubakar and Dano's (2018) assessment of the media coverage of the December 2017 massacre in Taraba, where over 800 Fulani herders and their families were massacred, compared to the overall media eruption on the killings of 73 non-Fulani in Benue state. This reflects the media's blatant prejudice in covering the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria.

Observation of the various events surrounding the conflicts between farmers and herdsman has revealed that criminal elements have come to hide under the label of 'bandits', a term unknown to our law, to perpetrate all sorts of heinous activities like attacking farmers, rustling cattle, and kidnapping for ransom. This finding accord with Higazi's (2016) who stated that on January 31, 2018, the headline "Bandits kill, burn seven passengers to ashes" was all over the media. It takes a lot of reading to realise that the victims were Fulani and the killers were native Tiv militia. Despite all the measures and policy stances taken to prevent farmers-herdsman confrontations in the country, the opposing sides have continued to clash.

9. Summary and Conclusion

The study was undertaken to examine the impact of farmers/herders crises on agricultural productivity in the country. Based on solid evidence, the researcher concluded that the country's farmers/herders crises has caused wanton devastation of human lives and property, including livestock and farmland assets. Also, farmers were displaced due to the high level of insecurity of farmlands, owing largely to the activities of the warring parties that make those regions unfit for habitation.

10. Recommendations

The study's findings led to the following recommendations:

- i. With the advancement of science and technology in our daily lives, it is only natural to use the same in agriculture. The government should use improved and modern livestock management as an agricultural policy for the entire country to stimulate new methods of

- conducting business. One of such methods is the establishment of cattle ranches at strategic locations in the country.
- ii. Following up on the above, the government should work with traditional rulers, state and local governments, as well as the organised private sector to encourage warring parties, especially herders, to accept new methods of cattle management for increased productivity, such as ranching, which will help reduce land and water conflicts. This can be achieved by vigorously promoting the advantages of ranching over open grazing.
 - iii. Just as the government provides loans to farmers, there should be an incentive for all cattle ranchers ready to adopt new management practices. Lip service in addressing such policy measures will only exacerbate the problem. This would motivate the herders and thus assist reduce the constant crises that have destroyed both human life and property for many years.
 - iv. Anti-open grazing legislation should be established as a national law with rigorous enforcement for compliance. This is because terrible consequences will always occur, leading to crises, as long as cattle continue to roam for food and water.
 - v. There is need to carry out massive enlightenment campaigns for farmers and herders on the need to embrace peace and the imperatives of modernization in methods of doing their business. Seminars, radio and print media outreaches and other localized campaigns are recommended.
 - vi. there should be an upgrade of response procedures to farmer/herders conflicts, especially in the most vulnerable areas. This should be done within a larger framework that emphasizes proactive rather than reactive response to disasters. Above all, offenders should be made to face the law by timely prosecutions and punishments.

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