

Critical Analysis of Fulani Herdsmen Crisis and its Impact on National Development as Perceived by Literate Citizens

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Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ijrssmt.v7.i1.10

Abstract

The study focused on Critical analysis of Fulani herdsmen crisis and its impact on national development as perceived by literate citizens. A descriptive survey design was adopted which enabled the researchers to collect and analyze data from a sample of the entire population without any manipulations. The target population for this study was made up of Universities and College of Education Lecturers in Rivers State. A sample size of one hundred (100) Lecturers was used for the study, which was selected through purposive and random sampling techniques. The Instrument was validated and it was subjected to content reliability using test-retest method with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The reliability coefficient obtained 0.87. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analyzed using t-test. Findings showed that there was a significant difference in the perception of University of College of Education lecturers on the causes, economics effects and impact of Fulani herdsmen and Farmers crisis on national development in Nigeria. It was recommended that Federal government should engage peace and conflict resolution experts in dealing with issues concerning Fulani herdsmen and Farmers crises and that ranching method of cattle rearing location across the country while the herdsmen should be given needed training for effective and efficient management of the ranching.

Keywords: *Critical Analysis, Fulani Herdsmen, Crisis, National Development, Perceived Literate Citizens*

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Background to the Study

Insecurity exerts a heavy toll on national development. The activities of Fulani herdsmen are a threat to the economic, Political and Social Security of the nation and the major factor associated with underdevelopment. Therefore, it discourages both local and foreign investments, reduces the quality of life, and destroys human and social capital, damages relationship between citizen and the states, thus undermining democracy, rule of law and the ability of the country to promote the development (Davidson, 2019). The Fulani are traditionally a nomadic, pastoralist, trading people, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry hinterland of their domains. The Fulani were the first group of people in West Africa to convert to Islam through Jihad, or holy wars, and were able to take over much of West Africa and established themselves not only as a religious group but also as a political and economic force. According to Eniola (2017), the Fulani constitute the major breeders of cattle, the main source of meat, the most available and cheap source of animal proteins consumed by Nigerians. This 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.

The Fulani herdsmen in most cases settled in fertile areas to rear their cattle and when the migration continued to be dictated by economic and socio-political factors, increase trends of conflicts between the herders and their host communities (farmers escalated. Many Nigerians lost their lives, properties/ farmlands or crops every year to Fulani herders. The conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers came into existence as a result of encroachment of farmlands by the Fulani herders (Ajibefun, 2017). Furthermore, the killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash has rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer's crops (Ajibefun, 2017).

The deadly crises between herdsmen and crop farmers have become one of the major insecurity problems in Nigeria. It was stressed that it is second to BokoHaram imperil (Okoro, 2018). The bloody attacks and counter attacks have created social and relational implications and economic adverse effects. According to Olakiitan (2016), the failure of government to address the situation of herdsmen attacks decisively has several implications for Nigeria. The fact that herdsmen now carry sophisticated ammunition with which they kill and main perceived opponents at will constitutes graves danger to national security. This is because security personnel including the police have not been able to withstand weapon-wielding herdsmen's boldness and firepower. Based on Okoro (2018), submission, the herdsmen have sacked whole communities, abducted elder statesmen, burnt churches, killed church priests and other worshipers, killed police officers, raped, looted and perpetrated heinous crimes while the government has done less to arrest the situation, which is a serious threat to national security and national development.

Farmers displacement from the affected communities has drastically reduced agricultural production in Nigeria. This has been amply demonstrated by relative shortage of farm produce in the rural and urban market of central Nigeria (Chukwuma, 2016). The socio-economic implications of the Fulani herdsmen are likened to the end consequences of BokoHaram insurgents because of its emergence terrorism activities. The Fulani herdsmen have adversely affected the economy of Nigeria generally (Abdullahi, 2019). Every Sector of the economy is disrupted in one way or the other by the continued violence and insecurity in the country. Dauda (2019) stressed that the gains in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production, may suffer a serious setback as a result of the negative effect of the activities on farmers in area where Fulani herdsmen crises is pervasive. Socio-economic life in those states is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed.

Crisis is inevitable as long as we live together, especially in a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious community life Nigeria. However, violence leaves us with various form of retardation and underdevelopment resulting from the destruction of lives, farmland and property. The crises have had devastating effects on intergroup relationship in Nigeria. Olukunle (2018) stressed that crisis is an event that lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, community, or whole society. Crisis also refers to an unexpected unplanned situation or rather threat that suddenly dawns upon an area out of nowhere. It means an event that threatens the stability of a society or country. Titilope (2016), opined that crises is any event that may lead to an individual, group, community, or whole society. It is deemed to be negative changes in the security, economic, political, societal, or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no warning.

Environmental conflict is conflicts caused by unfavourable environmental factors such as; degradation, scarcity, resources, demands and so on. Environmental scarcity occurs as a result of degradation and pressure on renewable and non-renewable natural resources which is very common in developing countries. It is due to inadequate availability of natural resources like water, arable lands, oil etc. This limited availability of resources push people living in such areas to leave in order to have access to resources (Agboola, 2020). Nigeria far north is arid and semi-arid, with a long dry season from October to May and low rainfall (600 to 900mm) from June to September. The national meteorological Agency reported that over the preceding 30 years the annual rainy season dropped from an average of 150 to 120 days. In the last six decades, over 350,00sq km of the already arid region turned to desert or desert-like conditions, a phenomenon progressing southward at the rate of 0.6km per year. In Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara states, estimates suggest that 50-75 percent of the land area is becoming desert. These environmental changes have wrecked agriculture and human livelihoods, forcing millions of pastoralist and others to migrate south, in search of productive land. Migration initially was seasonal, with herders spending December to May in the central zone before returning north. Over the last two decades, however, as available pastures shrank in the far north, herders have been staying in the central zone longer-from December to June or June or July. More recently, some have chosen to graze their herds there permanently. This has triggered increasing disputes over land and water use with central Nigeria's growing populations of sedentary crop farmers (Agboola, 2020).

Herders attacks on farming communities have spawned dangerous political, economic and religious conspiracy. One is that the attacks are part of a longer- term Fulani plot to displace indigenous populations and seize their lands. Among Christian community's herder's attacks are widely seen as a subtle form of Jihad. In March 2016, the prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria Dr Samuel Uche, said: “We are aware there is a game plan to Islamize Nigeria, and they are using the Fulani herdsmen to initiate it” In the south east, Biafra separatist groups describe the attacks as part of a northern plot to over when in the peoples of the south and forcefully convert them to Islam. Some southerner accuses President Buhari of deliberately failing to stop herder's aggression, pointing to his pastoral Fulani background and his position as life patron of the cattle breeders' association (MACBAN) to buttress their charges. Though, these charges are not supported by any solid evidence, but they are aggravating interfaith distrust and undermining the country's fragile unity.

In his own opinion, Richards (2019) affirm that serious attacks being perpetrated by arm bandit makes people took to arms either to defend themselves or a form of reprisal attack. This in turn will eventually be a breakdown of law and order, prevailing anarchy. The sounds of arms in the process of attack, the spilling of blood, burning of houses and farmlands during a violent conflict and host of others are all threat to a nation. (Akanji, Badmus and Kolade, 2017). For safety, people leave such environment to a well secured environment which is also another threat to the new environment due to its over population and also the shortage of food, water and shelter. Recurring violence between herdsmen and farmers, as well as related cattle theft and banditry in many states in Nigeria posed serious threats to peace and security. Although, the crisis is increasingly describing in religious terms, completing claims to land and other resources are at its cores.

Table 1: Some of the recent Fulani/herders and farmer's crisis in Nigeria

Date	Location	Deaths	Perpetrator	Notes
25-06-2018	Plateau State	58	Christian farmers and Muslim herders	Riots in Nigeria herders and Muslim farmers Total 86 dead
28-01-2019	Zamfara State	7 herders	Vigilantes	Seven herders were burnt by a team of vigilantes alongside their cows.
04-02-2019	Zamfara State	26	Herders (suspected)	7 villages in zamfara state were attacked and 26 killed in suspected revenge for killing of seven herders a week before.
10,11-02- 2019	Kajuru, Kaduna State	141(130 Fulani and 11 Adara)	Fulani Herdsmen and Adara militia	Part of the communal violence leading up to the 2019 election.
20-02-2019	Ebute, Agatu, Benue State	17	Fulani herdsman	17 people were killed in an attack by Fulani herdsman on Ebete in Agatu LGA, Benue state
26-02-2019	Karamai, kajuru Kaduna State	40	Fulani herdsman	The attack was suspected to be from Fulani herdsman.
02-03-2019	Bassa, kogi State	20	EgburraMozum militia	20 Bassakwomu were killed
10-03-2019	AungwanBarde, Kajuru, Kaduna State	16-35	Fulani herdsman	Suspected Fulani herdsman
16-03-2019	Nandu-Gbok, Sanga LGA, Kaduna State	10	Fulani herdsman	10 people killed by suspected Fulani herdsman
19-03-19	Guma, Beune State	5-10	Fulani herdsman	Suspected herdsman attack
12-04-2020	Tegina, kabata, shiroro county	12	Fulani herdsman	12 Christians killed during wedding with five people capture including the bride and groom.

Source: Wikipedia, 2020

Herdsman attacks on unprotected farmers and villages in Nigeria have mainly involved disputes over land resources between herders and farmers across Nigeria but more devastating in the Middle Belt (North central) since the return of democracy in 1999. Often, misrepresented as ethnic and/or religious conflicts, they are the result of economic, political and environmental tensions in the country which is a threat to national development. Thousands of people have died since the conflict began. Secondary farming rural communities are often target of attacks because of their vulnerability. Brown and Jude (2019) affirms that deteriorating environmental conditions, desertification and soil degradation have led Fulani herdsman from Northern Nigeria to change their transhumance routes. Moreover, climate change does not automatically cause the crisis but it has change herder's migration pattern. Also, regions vulnerable to climate change (Northern Regions) experience less farmer-herder crisis and less intense farmer-herder fighting.

Development is a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well being of people are generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society (Dirisu, 2018). National therefore, can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation (Brenth, 2017). The outcomes of violent confrontations are hardly advantageous when the well-being and safety of the generality of the people are considered, as well as its implications on the growth and development of the nation. Adetola (2018) stressed

that armed conflict often leads to forced migration, long-term refuge problem, and the destruction of infrastructure. Social, political, and economic institutions are greatly damaged. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in farm outputs, a development that has heightened the fear of hunger. Agricultural and development experts are unanimous in their predictions, that the gains recorded in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production and national development may suffer a serious setback as a result of the negative effects of the activities on farmers in area where Fulani herdsmen operates and Nigeria as a whole. Hence, the overall implication for national development is that the farming, economic, social and political activities seem to be fast deteriorating and seem to have become a major problem to the security and development of Nigeria. These observations have attracted the attention of researchers to investigate the Fulani herdsmen crisis and its impact on national development as expressed by literate citizens in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The overall implication for national development is that the farming, economic and social activities seen to be fast deteriorating. Nigeria is seriously threatened by Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis no doubt has negative impact on national development in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the usual resultant effects of the crisis are loss of lives, crops, destruction of houses, displacement of persons, decline in income, distrust; as well as threat to food and national security. Every sector of the economy is disrupted in one way or the other by the continued crisis and insecurity in the country. Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis have created humanitarian toll across many communities in Nigeria which is affecting national development that is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation. This research, therefore, examined critical analysis of Fulani herdsmen crisis and its impact on national development as expressed by literate citizens in Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

- Ho₁:** There is no significant difference between University and College of education Lecturers' perception of the causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis in Nigeria.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant difference between University and College of education lecturers' perception on the economic effects of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis in Nigeria.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant difference between University and College of education lecturers' perception of the impact of Fulani herdsmen Farmers crisis on national development in Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted which enabled the researchers to collect and analyze data from a sample of the entire population without any manipulations. The target populations for this study consist of all Universities and Colleges of education lecturers in Rivers State. A sample size of one hundred (100) lecturers was used for the study, which was selected through purposive and random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was "Fulani Herdsmen Crisis and its Impact on National Development (FHCIND)" which was designed by the researchers. A modified Likert four-point scale

questionnaire items was provided to elicit responses from participants. The instrument was given to two experts in the department of Social Studies and one in Measurement and Evaluation who vetted the questionnaire independently to establish its face and content validity. Their corrections led to the modifications of the instrument to suit the intended respondents. For the purpose of the instrument reliability analysis, the instrument was administered twice within an interval of two weeks and the scores obtained were used to establish the stability of the instrument reliability coefficient using test-retest method with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis which stood at 0.87 and this value was considered as an acceptable reliability value for the study. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analyzed using t-test.

Results

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between University and College of education lecturer's perception of the causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis in Nigeria

Table 2: t-test Analyses of University and College of Education Lecturers perception of the causes of Fulani herdsmen and Farmers Crisis.

Respondents	N	Mean	Std	t-cal	t-crit	Df	p-value	Sign	remark
University Lectures	50	9.36	1.882	15.062	1.96	98	0.000	0.05	Significant
College of Education Lecturers	50	10.15	2.701						

Significant at $P < 0.05$

From the table above the calculated p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom 98. Therefore, it can be observed that there was a significant difference in the perception of University and College of education lecturers on the causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between University and College of education lecturers' perception on the economic effects of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis in Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of University and College of Education Lecturers' perception on the Economic Effects of Fulani herdsmen and Farmers crisis.

Respondents	N	Mean	Std	t-cal	t-crit	df	p-value	Sign	Remark
University Lecturers	50	13.33	3.66	18.049	1.96	98	0.036	0.05	significant
College of Education Lecturers	50	14.53	3.105						

Significant at $P < 0.05$

From table 3 above, shown the calculated p-value of 0.036 which is less than 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom 98. Therefore, it can be observed that there was a significant difference between the University and College of education lecturers' perception

on the economic effects of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between University and College of education lecturers' perception of the impact of Fulani herdsmen and Farmers crisis on national development.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of University and College of education Lecturers' perception of the Impact of Fulani herdsmen and Farmers Crisis on National Development.

Respondents	N	Mean	Std	t-cal	t-crit	df	p-value	Sign	Remark
University Lecturers	50	15.8	2.876	26.206	1.96	98	0.002	0.05	Significant
College of Education Lecturers	50	15.18	3.758						

Significant at $P < 0.05$

From the table 4 above, the calculated p-value of 0.002 is less than 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom 98. Therefore, there was significant difference between University and College of education lecturers' perception of the impact of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis on national development. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study shown in table 1 shows that there was a significant difference in the perception of University and College of education lecturers on the causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis. The result of this study gives further empirical support to the previous findings of researchers on causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis in Nigeria. Folaranmi and Ayilara (2018) revealed that there was significant difference in perception of Christians and Muslims on the causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes in Northern part of the country. They stressed further that immediate causes are the causes that are more easily prone to violence when there is a disagreement between the two groups. This must be differentiated from remote causes which are more or less 'inborn' and appear to be embedded in the farmers or and the cattle Fulani. Amutajero (2019) affirms that there is difference in the thought of people on the causes of clashes between farmers and Fulani herdsmen. He stressed further that some believed that land is identified as the critical factor at the epicenter of the conflicts or clashes between the cattle herdsmen and the farmers. Farming and herding are basic traditional livelihoods of most Nigerians, and both require land for their practice. Whereas the farmers require arable land to cultivate their crops, the herdsmen depend on land for healthy foliage for their animals. In her own opinion Akinkunmi (2017) opined that violation of rights regarding use of land is also responsible for the crisis between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers. The conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers usually arise when the former invade community farmland with their cattle and let them graze unrestricted both on cultivated and uncultivated land thereby destroying valuable food and cash crops which are the mainstay of the host communities. Agboluaje (2016) observed that the present crises between herdsmen and farmers are economic and environmental. Some politicians and few gullible Nigerians have turned it to a political one.

The findings from table 3 shows that there was a significant difference between the University and College of education lecturer's perception on the economic effects or Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis. The findings of this study confirmed what Ayomide and Kareem (2017) found out that the opinion of people towards the economic effects of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis are not the same. Lawal (2018) opines that the people displaced have become peasant farmers they now depend on others to give them land to plant crops on a smaller scale than what they have cultivated before. This is leading to low agricultural yield mainly to support their existence at a subsistence level. Their economic well-being is thus tempered with because of this conflict. Abdulraheem (2019) observed that the menace of Fulani herdsmen appears to have dire implication for socio- economic development in Nigeria. Beside the socio-economic life in the affected states is usually grounded to halt as people could not freely go about their farming and therefore have negative effects on economy of the country. Amutajero (2019) reported that crisis has serious economic consequences which usually affect other facets of the lost of lives and the overall scale of human suffering that crisis create, it also destroys institutions. Nigeria's strive towards economic development has remained unachievable largely because of the recurrent crisis befuddling the country, and the inability of the state to contain it and its attendant effects.

The findings from table 4 shows that there was significant difference between University and College of education lecturer perception of the impact of Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis on has impact on national development .The results of this research is supported by Abdulraheem (2019) who observed that the overall implication of Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis has impact on national development like farming, economic and social activities seem to be fast deteriorating but perceived by citizens in different ways. The national development of the country is seriously affected to the extent that a substantial part of the country's budget has been spent on the compensation of families who lost their relations to the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis. Again, huge amount of money is being spent on weapons and ammunition acquisition so as to equip the military to handle the situation on ground. All these seem to have affected Nigeria's national development. In his own opinion, Collins (2020) affirmed that the recent wave of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis in Nigeria has disrupted socio-economic, religious and educational activities, political instability and threatened the national development generally in Nigeria. Daniel (2015) concluded that Fulani herdsmen and farmer's clashes has serious negative impact on the national development of the country. He stressed further that there can never be development where the citizens have no peace and killing is the other of the day throughout the country. Anything that affects the social, economic, political and well-being of the citizens must have negatives effect on the country's national development.

Conclusions

Based on the finding of the study, it is hereby concluded that:

1. There was significant difference in the perception of University and College of education lecturers on the causes of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis.
2. There was a significant difference between the University and College of education lecturer's perception on the economics effects of Fulani herdsmen and farmer crisis.

3. There was a significant difference between the University and College of education lecturer's perception of the impact of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis on national development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Federal government should engage peace and conflict resolution experts in dealing with issues concerning Fulani herdsmen and farmers' crisis. This will enable effective dialogue, negotiations and of course win-win resolution, while encouraging early warning mechanism.
2. The security in the affected regions should be improved on actively. The federal government and its security agencies should intensify operations against cattle rustlers, improving systems to track livestock movement and trade, arresting individuals who carry illegal firearms and prosecuting suspected assailant.
3. Government should adopt community policing model to forestall peace in the rural areas as it will enable the police and community members detect when the herdsmen gain access into the communities to attack residents. Community policing seeks the effective community engagement in the provision of solution to policing issues and also developing in the maintenance of safety and security in the society.
4. Ranching method of cattle rearing should be adopted at rearing location across the country while the herdsmen should be given needed training for effective and efficient management of the ranching.
5. Participatory planning process that involves all stakeholders (herdsmen and farmers) in the dispute resolution mechanism should be adopted.
6. Representatives of the host communities and Fulani herdsmen should be conveyed under a public forum and involved in the decision making and permitted to take part actively in the planning procedure of restoring peace to most of the affected communities.
7. State governments should designate some areas for grazing fields for the nomadic herdsmen and make them pay tax to the state, whilst warning that any crime involving a Fulani herdsman would attract severe penalties. Therefore, all Fulani herdsmen operating in all Local Government should be registered to enable monitoring of their activities and co-existence.

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