

FULANI HERDSMEN-FARMERS CONFLICTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The incidents of Fulani herdsmen/farmer conflicts are not new in Nigeria and even globally. It is on record that herdsmen/farmer conflicts accounted for 35 percent of conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades. The objective of this paper is to examine the effect of herder/farmer conflicts on socio-economic development with the hope of curbing the menace in Nigeria. It is situated within the context of relative deprivation theory. As a theoretical paper, grounded in published research literature, it used secondary sources in the form of a desk survey. It observes that the herdsmen/farmers conflict has received little attention from researchers, scholars, government, etc. and this development has consequences on socio-economic development in Nigeria. On the average, a household affected by the conflict could experience about 60 percent income increases and potentially over 200 percent or higher if conflicts were resolved. Also, the perennial conflict between farmers and herdsmen in different parts of Nigeria is costing Nigeria several billions of dollars in a period of economic recession when the government is committed to reliance on agriculture as an alternative source of revenue following the crash in the price of crude oil in the international market. The paper, therefore, concludes that though herdsmen need land for grazing purpose, however they are too aggressive and usually not totally obeying pastoral routes and land that had been assigned for them. The paper recommends among others that to prevent conflict; the government should provide clearly demarcated grazing reserves, and cattle routes accompanied with necessary infrastructural facilities such as water, nomadic schools, veterinary and human medical services. Moreover, federal and state governments should come up with anti-grazing bills to curb the menace of herdsmen conflicts as it is applicable in different parts of the world.

Keywords: Conflict, Crop Farmers, Herdsmen, Grazing Reserve and Socio-economic development

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Background to the Study

The 21st Century marked the beginning of violent conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria. Conflicts over access to and control of natural resources are a common phenomenon in areas where farming and pastoralism co-exist (Yagana, 2016). While farmers accused the herdsmen of the destruction of their crops and contamination of community water points, they accuse the crop farmers of denying them access to grazing areas and occasionally rustling their cattle (Uhembe, 2015). It is instructive to note that over the years, the presence of the herdsmen and their cattle has provoked violent clashes in several communities in Nigeria (Emeka, 2015). Initially, a symbiotic relationship existed between the herdsmen and the farmers whenever they stopped over to take a rest along the grazing route. The host communities usually farmers derived organic manure from cow dungs and protein from the beef and dairy products while the nomads relied on the farm produce for food (Ofem & Inyang, 2014). Thus, Fulani herdsmen and the crop farmers have a symbiotic relationship, in the sense that the former often exchange dairy products for grain harvested by the latter on their farms. Besides, there was a market for the animals being reared by herders that must be periodically sold to provide cash for domestic purposes, such as food, cloth or marriage payments.

In the past ten years, the conflict resulting from cattle rearing accounted for over 600 deaths out of a total of more than 60,000 fatalities Nigeria. This conflict is a feature of the derived savannah agro-ecological zone of the nation such as Adamawa, Gombe, Enugu, Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti states of Nigeria. The manifestation of hostilities and conflicts between the farmers and herders in these states has become a major concern to all relevant stakeholders in the affected areas. Also, because it has a potential of increasing the level of insecurity and engender disunity among the different ethnic groups, it may have implications on food security and agricultural development which is very crucial for the nation.

The nomadic Fulani herdsmen commonly embark on seasonal migrations from the North to the South, but in recent time this movement goes on throughout the year. The reason has been that over-grazing in the far north has resulted in desertification and thereby forcing the pastoralists to move towards the South. Moreover, an increase in the level of insecurity in the North has led to massive influx of nomads southward. This movement has had consequences for both pastoralists and land cultivators. It occurs during the dry season when herders depended on unhindered access to riverbanks, where grass could be found. Increasingly, however, pastoralists have come to realise that the rivers where they grazed their cattle are now blocked off by gardens and farms (Blench, 2010).

It is important to note that Nigeria's situation on food security is highly precarious and pernicious as a larger percentage of the Nigerian population has been subjected to poverty (Attah, 2013) especially due the menace of herdsmen-farmers conflicts in Nigeria. Over the years, food security has assumed a prominent position in the development agenda for developing nations. In Nigeria, the state of food security has assumed a bothersome dimension, as the nation has moved from a position of relative food self-sufficiency in the 1960s to one of extreme dependence on food imports in recent times.

This paper has become necessary given the persistent conflict between farmers and the herdsmen which have led to wanton destruction of lives and properties. More importantly is the new dimension in which herdsmen operate through the use of dangerous weapons and the possibility of joining forces with Boko Haramist elements. In recent times, the herdsmen have kidnapped innocent citizens and farmers on their farms for ransom. It has been argued that if peaceful settlement with herders in Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Ghana and Niger is possible, why is situation different in Nigeria?

Available literature tends to concentrate on arid zone pastoralists in West Africa (e.g. Gallais 1972). Apart from Frantz (1981), whose work is limited to the reanalysis of previously collected data, there has been little published on the sub-humid zone, partly because its colonization by cattle pastoralists is very recent. Comparative materials must, therefore, be sourced from descriptive ethnography. Kaberry (1960) for the Cameroun grasslands, Hurault (1964) for Northern Cameroun, Prioul (1971) for the Central African Republic, Boutrais (1974) and Frantz (1980) discuss examples of such conflict, mostly from the point of view of the aggrieved farmer, but no attempt was made to fit these into a theoretical framework.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to examine the effect of herder/farmer conflicts on socio-economic development with the hope of curbing the menace in Nigeria. Specifically it seeks to:

1. Determine the effect of herdsmen-farmer conflicts on food security in Nigeria.
2. Assess the impact of herdsmen-farmer conflicts on agricultural development and how this menace can be curbed.

Methodology

As a theoretical paper, grounded in published research literature, it used secondary sources in the form of a desk survey. Relevant materials were collected from journals, newspapers, internet material, text books and other publications on the subject matter.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In this section, attempt is made to conceptualize herdsmen, conflict and socio-economic development which are the main concepts central to this paper.

Herdsmen

The Fulani or Fulbe people are mostly nomadic herdsmen. They live in Western and Central Africa stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia and from the Sahel to the Sudan zone and today even in the forest areas. It is estimated that more than 10 million of this group are living in Burkina Faso, Cameroon Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, and Senegal. The Hausa term Fulani is widely used, but also the Wolof term Peul, or Fulbe (sing. Pullo), are common. (de Bruijn, van Oostrum, Obono, Oumarou, & Boureima, 2011). The Fulani are divided into various clans which have different lifestyles, and sometimes in the case of the nomadic groups with typical cattle or sheep. They also share an itinerary for their pastoral activities. The Fulbe share a common language, though with various dialects. In this study, we focus on the pastoralist and nomadic Fulbe in Niger and Nigeria (Moutari, 2008).

Conflict: The term '*conflict*' has been defined in different ways. However, the multiplicity of definitions has always pointed at one fact: that conflict is an enduring aspect of social existence. It is a widely accepted fact that wherever a community of individuals is, conflict is part of their experiences. Thus, most conflicts are social in character and usually arise as human beings pursue their different survival and security needs.

Gardiner & Simmons (1992) defined conflict as any divergence of interests, objectives or priorities between individual, groups, or organizations or non-conformity to requirements of a task; activity or process. Conflict arises where there is a difference of opinion between group leaders or in circumstances where one group tends to be exploiting the other (Ekong, 2003). In the view of Ejiogu (1990), conflict is seen as mutual hostility and any kind of opposition or antagonistic interaction including disagreements or controversies about ideas, values, and ways of life. Thus, there is conflict in a situation where there is disagreement between two parties (Amusan, 1996). From the above definitions, it shows that element of all conflict is the existence of resource scarcity where the wants of all parties cannot be fully satisfied and which consequently result in conflict behavior.

Socio-Economic Development

Another important concept relevant within the context of this paper is socio-economic development. Development is usually defined in terms of economic and social welfare. For instance, Drewnowski (1966) states that economic development is supportive in the standard of living of people, and it involves increased per capita income and creation of new opportunities in education, healthcare, employment sectors of the economy. Thus, development is not important if it does not bring about economic and social welfare. This means that for any society to experience economic development, it requires some social factors. Bilance (1997) argues that social development is the promotion of a sustainable society that will promote human dignity by empowering marginalized groups, women, and men, to undertake their own development, to improve their social and economic position and to acquire their rightful place in society. The Copenhagen Social Summit of 1995 defined social development based on three basic criteria: Poverty Eradication, Employment Generation and Social Harmony (i.e. devoid of conflict). Economist like McGranahan has described social factors as an important phenomenon in the process of economic development.

Schumpeter (1961) observes that economic development entails a fundamental transformation of an economy which includes changing the industrial structure, the educational and occupational characteristics of the population, and of course the entire social and institutional fabric. Based on the available literature, socio-economic development is the development of capacities that expand social and economic capabilities of individuals, firms, or industries which are actors in the society.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the frustration-aggressive theory postulated by Dollard, Dooh, Muller and Moower in 1939. This theory assume that aggressive behavior is always caused by frustration and that people always respond to stressful events by striking out at others with aggressive or violent behavior. The theory is based on the premise that aggression is always a function of frustration and the occurrences of aggressive behavior always presuppose the existence of frustration.

The theory suggests that conflict will not be settled for as long as groups (in this case, farmers and herdsmen) are deprived of resources from the others actions or even presence on the land. Since both groups draw from a limited available resources and the assumed differences (cultural, linguistic, practices, and traditions) will disallow them to form any common ground. The theory believes that the aggressive behavior of contemporary herders and farmers in the wetland areas are due to high level of frustration.

However, Walker & Pettigrew (2011) have criticized this theory claiming that correctional research has demonstrated that feeling of illegitimacy, negative intergroup attitudes, and a predisposition to engage in social action were generated by fraternal deprivation resulting from intergroup comparisons and not by egoistic or individual deprivation deriving from interpersonal comparisons.

Competition for Resources and Violent Conflicts between Fulani Herdsmen & Crop Farmers in Nigeria

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed series of violent communal clashes arising from the activities of the herdsmen who move about on a daily basis with their cattle in search of water and green pastures (Emeka, 2015). It is important to note that farmer-herder conflicts have existed since the early beginning of agriculture in Africa (Fratkin, 1997). According to Hussien (1998) and Shettima & Tar (2008), its continued manifestation into violence against the backdrop of resource scarcity, increase in the population of resource users, lack of adequate grazing reserves and poor state of the existing ones as well as unequal resource distribution and the consequent failure of patrimonial states, has made the Nigerian state to be susceptible to antecedents of what Robert Kaplan described as the “coming anarchy. Farmer-herder conflicts are among the manifestations of this, and it is associated with the region's socio-economic and political ecology (Kaplan, 1994).

Conflicts between farmers and herders have become a recurring decimal since the beginning of the year 2000, and this development has consequences on peace, orderliness, and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria (Azeez & Ufo, 2015). Fasona & Omojola (2005) found that conflicts over agricultural land use between farmers and herdsmen accounted for 35 percent of all reported crises.

The situation in Nigeria unlike other West African countries is unique for two reasons; most importantly the ambiguous prestige of pastoral culture particular to Fulani pastoralists but also because of its large and comparatively wealthy population. Nigeria has a restricted inventory of pastoral peoples, the Fulani, the Kanuri-related groups, the Shuwa, the Yedina and the Uled Suleiman. The most numerous and widespread are the Fulani who have expanded eastwards from the Gambia river over the last thousand years and probably entered Nigeria in the fourteenth century. The cattle-based pastoralism of the Fulani has thus been the most significant focus of herder/farmer conflict in Nigeria (Odoh & Chilaka, 2012).

The various conflicts that ensued between Fulani herdsmen and farmers arose from the destruction of farm lands by herds of cattle. Government at various levels (federal, state and local) have not addressed the issue of adequate provision of grazing reserves to accommodate

the interest of herdsman that moves from one location to the other to secure food and water for their herds. It is instructive to note that the socio-economic lives of both the farmers and the herdsman revolve around land and therefore, land matters become easily conflictual (Tenuche & Ifatimehin, 2009).

Farmer-herdsman conflict has remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria (Ajuwon, 2004; Fasona & Omojola, 2005). In the last few decades, the number of farmers has increased because many of those who have been retrenched or retired from service have relocated from urban to rural areas. Many of these retirees embark on agriculture thus increasing the demand for farm land. The competition between the farmers and herdsman, however, has often times turned into serious overt and covert manifestation of hostilities and social friction in many parts of Nigeria. The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to aggravate the insecurity and food crisis most especially in rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide (Emeka, 2015).

Areola (1992) and Gbehe (2007) observed that economically viable land have been the cause of conflict between communities in Nigeria. The land tenure system being practiced in Nigeria is a precipitation of conflicts. It has created an acute shortage of arable land thereby causing disputes over the little that is available. Also, Nigerian Constitution is deficient in the provisions dealing with indigeneship/settler phenomenon.

Another major challenge is lack of institutions for proper communication between the pastoralists and crop farmers to work together to settle issues of concern that can lead to conflict in open and fair manner. This unresolved crisis has grievous dimensions in its effect on the food security in particular and socio-economic development in general in Nigeria. Also, if these conflicts are not settled, sustainability of both the economy and environment will become a problem. Thus, in the view of Van't Hooft, Millar & Django (2005), these conflicts will the people and rural development negatively because no project can be executed during chaos or conflict.

Conflicts Resulting from Cattle Grazing Problem in Nigeria

Many reasons have been attributed to farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria. However, there appears to be no consensus among both groups on the causes of their mutual conflict. While farmers cite destruction of crops by cattle and other property by the herdsman as the main direct causes for conflicts, burning of rangelands and blockage of stock routes and water points by crop encroachment are direct reasons from the point of view of the herdsman (de-Haan, 2002). These conflicts have become pervasive to the extent that most states in Nigeria have an unresolved conflict associated with cattle grazing.

Transhumance is practiced by the nomadic farmers in Nigeria to avoid over grazing the limited available land or reduce the herd size during the dry season when there is a scarcity of pasture and water on the highlands. So, the animals are reared in the river valleys, and farmer-herder conflicts become intensified during this period because the farmers cultivate vegetables in such areas where the herders also intend to graze. Furthermore, the expansion of riverine and valley-bottom cultivation beginning from the 1980s has made the herders and farmers to be

competing directly for access to river banks which has resulted in incessant conflict between the two groups.

In the view of Abass (2012) & McGregor (2014), violent attacks by Fulani herdsmen on farmers and innocent citizens in Nigeria in the recent past has taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. Fasona & Omojola quoted in Adekunle & Adisa (2010) also opine that conflicts resulting from grazing problem accounted for more than 35% of reported clashes from 1990s to date in the country. Thus, the destruction of several lives and properties has further aggravated the violence. In consequence, the agrarian communities have resorted to self-defense through local vigilante groups. The table below shows samples of recent cases of clashes between pastoralists and crop farmer in Nigeria.

Table 1.1: Samples of cases of clashes between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria

S/N	Nature of the Incidence	When	Where
1	Fulani herdsmen attacked Ukpabi Nimbo in Uzo – Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State and about 40 people were killed	April 25 th , 2016	Enugu State
2	Twenty-five Local Government Areas in Delta State protested on the Benin-Asaba Expressway, the alleged killing of about 23 persons by herdsmen.	April 19 th , 2016	Delta State
3	15 people were killed as the Fulani herdsmen attacked two villages in Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba State	April 12 th , 2016	Taraba State
4	5 days to the end of Governor Suswam’s administration in May 2015 over 100 farmers and their family members were killed in villages and refugee camps located in Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa LGAs of the State	May 24 th 2015	Benue
5	Farmer’s hand was cut off; his sibling was raped and farmland destroyed.	March 2015	Oyo State
6	Clashes between Gbagyi farmers and Fulani nomads near Abuja left two people dead, five injured, and over 1,500 people displaced from about 27 settlements that were destroyed.	December 2012	Plateau State
7	About 200 persons, including a serving federal senator, Gyang Dantong, were killed in Matse and Kakuru villages during a funeral for some people killed earlier by suspected Fulani herdsmen.	July 2012	Plateau State
8	At least six people were killed, houses burnt, and several farmlands were destroyed in Ngandum Village, Adamawa State as pastoralists and farmers engaged in a fierce battle. These occurred after Herdsmen led their cattle into rice fields resulting in the death of a farmer.	June 2012	Adamawa State
9	A clash between farmers and herders in Gwer West area in Benue State left five people dead, and many others displaced	May 2012	Benue State
10	April 2012 One person was killed, and several others were injured in a Fulani-Hausa Clash in Sokoto.	April 2012	Sokoto
11	Sixteen people were killed in a clash between Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Kadarko community, Giza Local Council of Nasarawa State. About 5,000 residents fled to safer areas in nearby towns.	March 2012	Nasarawa State

12	The conflict between Fulani pastoralists and sedentary farmers in Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State left over 30 people dead.	March 2012	Benue State
13	Fulani/ farmers clash in Kirikasamma Local Government area of Borno State left one person was killed and over 17 people from the farmers' side seriously injured. This was triggered when farmers in the area took measures to protect the perennial destruction of their yet-to-be-harvested farm produce and frequent attacks on them by the Fulani pastoralists. Conflicts between farmers and Fulani pastoralists in Benue State, left two soldiers, some 50 men, women, and children dead.	November 2011	Borno State & Benue State
14	Fulani herders invaded three villages of Dogo Na Hauwa, Ratsat and Jeji in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State killing many people including mostly children and women in a barbaric manner.	March 2010	Plateau State
15	32 people were killed, scores of houses burned, and several farms destroyed following clashes between pastoralists and farmers in Nassarawa State. About 700 pastoralists were sent away from Borno State and another 2,000 from Plateau State after attacks on local farmers.	December 2009	Nassarawa State & Borno State
16	Dozens of people were killed in Adamawa state when Fulani herdsmen alleged to come from Chad and Niger attacked farming communities in a dispute over grazing land.	February 2005	Adamawa State
17	49 farmers were killed as they flee nomad attacks by Nomads in the farming town of Yelwa, Plateau State.	February 2004	Plateau State
18	Herdsmen attacked and burned 34 farming villages in Adamawa and Gombe States which resulted in 63 dead and over 500 people were injured.	May 2003	Adamawa/ Gombe States
19	About 100 people were killed in clashes over the past days between Fulani and the Yungar ethnic groups in Adamawa State.	February 2003	Adamawa State
20	About 30 people were killed in conflicts between farmers and herders over grazing land in BarkinLadi local council area of Plateau State.	January 2002	Plateau State

Source: Adapted from Agbedo, (2016)

However, some measures are being taken to mitigate these seemingly intractable conflicts by the government at various levels over the years. For instance, Nigeria has 415 designated grazing reserves throughout the country, while farmer-herdsmen reconciliatory committees in most conflict-prone states have been set up to control resource-based conflicts among farmers and pastoralists. The Nigerian government also continues to carve out new stock routes for herdsmen. The Government is also demarcating a 1,400km livestock route from Sokoto State in the northwest to Oyo State in the southwest. Similarly, another 2400km route from Adamawa State to Cross River State in the Delta region is being demarcated. In addition, 175,000 hectares was demarcated for grazing land, building veterinary service centres and constructing settlements for nomads to use en route at a cost of US\$247 million (Adelakun, Aderogbangba & Akinbile, 2016). Notwithstanding all these, the conflict continued unabated, and is on the rise and it is fast spreading to different parts of the country.

Herder/Farmer Conflicts and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: An Appraisal

The herder/farmer conflict has serious implications for the progress of Nigeria. Social and economic factors continue to provoke violent conflicts among the Fulani herdsmen and farmers. The intensity and variations of the conflicts depend on the nature and type of the user groups where the herders graze. These conflicts have constituted serious threats to the means livelihoods of both the farmers and herdsmen (Isah, 2014). As noted by Tonah (2006), conflicts between farmers and herders have been a feature of economic livelihood in Nigeria.

It is instructive to note that the socio-economic consequences of herdsmen-farmer conflicts are felt at three levels viz: social, cultural and economic. At the social level for instance, misunderstanding between the crop farmers and herdsmen creates some mistrust, tension and open confrontations between the opposing groups (Nzeh, 2015). As a result of these conflicts, Nigeria has recorded loss of over 700 lives and properties worth of billions in the year 2016 only. It is even difficult estimate accurately the loss regarding lives lost. To be sure, Agbedo (2016) contends that the implications of such conflicts have been disturbing and yet the conflicts continued unabated in the recent time in Nigeria. Today, an average household affected by herders-farmer's conflicts could see income increase by at least 64 percent, and potentially 210 percent or higher if these conflicts were settled.

The socio-economic implication of the conflicts has been catastrophic for Nigeria. Nweze (2005) stated that many farmers and herders had lost their lives and herds, while others have experienced dwindling productivity in their herds. The frequent conflict between farmers and herders across the country is costing the nation not less than \$14b in potential revenues annually (Agbedo, 2016). Thus, the perennial conflict between farmers and herdsmen in different parts of Nigeria is costing Nigeria several billions of dollars in a period of economic recession when the government is committed to reliance on agriculture as an alternative source of revenue following the crash in the price of crude oil in the international market.

Therefore, farmer-herder conflicts pose a serious problem to the socio-economic development as no such can be achieved during chaos or conflict. Though today in Nigeria, Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Northeast attract the majority of media attention, but it is important to note that the ever increasing level of herder-farmer conflicts in many parts of the country is thwarting the country's socio-economic development to an enormous extent.

The escalations of violent conflicts have created social, economic and political tensions which have raised fundamental national questions for the survival of the Nigerian State. The failure of the state to manage and find lasting solution to such conflicts has put a question mark on the suitability or relevance of the federal structure to the Nigerian reality. The herdsmen-farmer conflicts have tended to increase the rate of poverty and human insecurity in the country. This does not augur well for sustainable socio-economic and livelihood wellbeing of the people (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).

The conflicts have created a wide gap among the different ethnic nationalities in the country to the extent that these conflicts have now been subsumed into a broader dichotomy of religion and disputes over access to resources are now framed in religious terms. The increasing

availability of modern weapons has increased the intensity and violence of these disputes. It is often said that pastoral organizations, such as Miyetti Allah, can play a role in conflict mediation. But their record in this area is not very good because they are in reality highly dispersed and their ability to lobby correspondingly limited (Blench, 2010).

The implication of the herdsmen and farmers conflict on Nigeria's national security cannot be over emphasized. Its socio economic, and humanitarian consequences are manifold. The attendant security and livelihood crises also threaten the collective subsistence and survival of the affected population. Both parties suffer from material damages when the crop farmers inflict physical injuries on the cattle by using cutlasses, spears or guns or by poisoning the cattle (Haman, 2002). Open confrontation among them also results in rural insecurity and out migration (Ngoufo, 1992). Thus, the loss of human lives, land, animals, plants, and crops as well as livestock production has many security, social, political, and economic implication on Nigeria's development (Bello, 2013; Adekunle & Adisa, 2010; Folami, 2009).

The widely held belief by the crop farmers in Nigeria is that the nomadic herdsmen exchange their cattle in return for cash to bribe government officials and some traditional rulers to twist judgments in their favor. As a result, conflicts have contributed in depleting the primary assets of crop farmers and the nomadic farmers since they use their scarce resources to hire the services of solicitors instead of using these resources to send their children to school. The nomadic farmers even blame the crop farmers for the encroachment of grazing land over the years and placement of crop farms along access routes to watering points and transhumance tracks across the country.

Implications of Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts on Agricultural Development and Food Security

There have been clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in several parts of Nigeria for over three decades. These conflicts have resulted in the destruction of agricultural farms of the farmers by the cattle of the Fulani's. Between the year 2000 and 2015, there has been recorded cases of conflicts and confrontation between the Fulani's and the indigenes of the areas they migrated to. It is important to note that these conflicts have posed serious threat to food security and agricultural development in Nigeria.

There is no doubt that agriculture has remained an important aspect of any economy. The gains recorded in the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy, especially in the area of food production, may suffer a serious setback as a result of the negative effects of herdsmen-farmers conflicts (Awogbade, 1987). While a few have adopted the more sedentary type of animal husbandry, the increasing clashes between farmers and herdsmen presupposes that grazing is a major means of animal rearing in Nigeria. The sedentary type of animal husbandry also proves to be more expensive, difficult to manage and inefficient for the rapid growing market of an ever increasing population like Nigeria. Hence, it is important to note that these conflicts have direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of those involved. They also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of pastoral production and agriculture in Nigeria (Moritz, 2010). These conflicts reinforce circles of extreme poverty and hunger, food security and agricultural development.

As a result of the growing fears of insecurity over the past few months in the country fuelled by lack of stable supply and rising food prices. Prices of essential commodities and food products have skyrocketed making them unaffordable to the common man. Nowadays, soaring food prices in major cities across the Nigerian states are being reported with adverse impact on household budgets. As noted by Mimiko (2016) herdsman/farmer's conflict is a challenge to food security. Food security has become an issue of global concern. It has become an especially prominent issue in the governance context in recent years. Nigeria, with her huge endowed natural and human resources is not spared (Attah, 2010). It is an indispensable prerequisite for the survival of mankind and his economic activities including food production. Not only that, it has remains one of the defining challenges of our time. The food situation in Nigeria remains fragile, which is reflected through a high proportion of underfed population and worrying levels in the prevalence of acute malnutrition.

Thus, the recurring issue of clashes between Fulani herdsman and farmers in some parts of Nigeria remains one of the major threats to food security in the country. This perennial feud could have serious implication for food security in the country. Farmer-herdsman conflict has remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria (Ajuwon, 2004). The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity and food insecurity in Nigeria.

Conclusion

We have argued in this paper that harmonious relationship between farmers and herdsman is a critical element for food security and agricultural development. This is because conflict between farmers and herdsman over the use of agricultural land is still pervasive, and portends grave consequences for Nigeria.

The frustration and aggression from the farmers and herdsman respectively has escalated the conflicts in Nigeria, and this has made frustration-aggression theory more relevant to this study. It is important to note that the conflicts had far reaching social and economic effects on the development of Nigeria. The herdsman need land for grazing purpose but they are too aggressive and usually not totally obeying pastoral routes and land that had been designated for them.

Nigeria possesses the capacity to be food secured if the enabling environment is created for the peasant farmers to operate. In Nigeria, farmer-herdsman conflicts have persisted for far too long and the various strategies adopted by both groups have brought little or no progress in dousing the tide and impacts of the conflict is having considerable effects on food security and agricultural development (Tenuche & Ifatimehin, 2009). As noted by Isah (2014), the use of police and courts to resolve conflicts between herdsman and farmers by government has been ineffective. This has contributed to the frequency of the clashes especially since the 1980s to date sequel to the democratic dispensation. These perennial conflicts have been the bane of sustainable peace, and socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Recommendation

This paper therefore recommends as follows:

- 1) The government should provide clearly demarcated grazing reserves and cattle routes accompanied with necessary infrastructural facilities such as water, nomadic schools, veterinary and human medical services.

- 2) Federal and state governments should come up with anti-grazing bills to curb the menace of herdsmen conflicts as it is applicable in different parts of the world.
- 3) The government can also work on desert encroachment as a phenomenon that has pose serious threat especially in the core North thereby forcing most herdsmen to move to southwards. This situation has been made worse by global warming.
- 4) The government should embark on enlightenment campaign by exposing the people to dangers of herdsmen-farmer conflicts in Nigeria. There is also the need for viable NGOs on farmer-herdsmen conflict management, especially in the areas of awareness, education, prevention, and amelioration.
- 5) Traditional methods of conflict resolution can be combined with government's efforts at addressing the problem because people mostly affected by conflict reside in the rural areas.
- 6) There is a need for an alternative proposal for managing the farmer-herder conflict in a plural society like Nigeria, which emphasizes prevention strategies through good governance.

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