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Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria: Reality and Way Forward

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Abstract:

This paper examined Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria. The renewed crises have resulted in the loss of lives and properties. The study adopted historical and content analysis method. It argued that the struggle for land resource is the major cause of farmers-herders' conflict in the country. Though, the Fulani herders in the past largely enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with sedentary agriculturalists in Nigeria, this relationship has been distorted in recent years by environmental changes that have driven the herders further south, massive growth in the size of Fulani herds, the growth of practices such as agro-pastoralism and the expansion of farmland into traditional corridors used by the herders. The crisis is further complicated by the acquisition and use of small arms and light weapons by parties to the conflicts. This paper recommended that government should intensify her peace building mechanism by ensuring security agencies engage and collaborate with stakeholders in the conflicts. A minimum jail term of 21 years with no option of fine for illegal possession of firearms by individual(s) be instituted. Government must move away from the rhetoric of extending condolences to the victims and promises to arrest the perpetrators of attacks after the deed has been committed. The world over, the best approach to security is prevention — Government must always move ahead of the so-called attackers to stop them before they carry out any dastardly act in our communities. It also recommended for the establishment of ranches to stop the roaming of herders and cattle in search of pastures — this should be explored as a matter of necessity in view of the growing population and climate change in the world. In addition, government should revisit the National Afforestation Initiative of 2010 and Great Green Wall Project of 2013 where a total of N15 billions earmarked from the National Ecological Funds to tackle desertification. Government should establish a clear and effective land-use planning system that will mitigate the conflicts that usually arise from land accessibility and usage especially for extensive land demanding agricultural activities. An intense sensitization and orientation of the nomadic Fulani herdsmen should be embarked upon to educate them on the rational and merit behind modern livestock management which has been misrepresented in some quota as an attempt to undermine their cultural and traditional transhumance system. Suitable incentive for change should be provided by government to fast-track the transition to modern livestock management. This could be monetary or technical incentives to motivate subscribers and to weaken the conservative tendencies of target groups.

Keywords: *Farmers-herders, conflict, Nigeria*

1. Introduction

One of the responsibilities of every nation is to preserve the human, material and natural resources for the benefit of all within its domain irrespective of their origin or background. This explain why most government world over are concerned and have made efforts in providing a conducive environment for the exploration of national resources for the overall development of the entire state. A secured state is one that is reasonably free from danger, fear, uncertainty or anxiety, but nations are often confronted with occasional threats. These threats are usually manifestations of prevalent social, political, economic or cultural factors that may create conflicts among the people.

Scholars aver that these conflicts emanate from a struggle for limited environmental resources among different groups in the society (Abbass, 2012). A clear source of such conflict is the struggle for the use of land resources for crop farming and animal husbandry. In a bid to increase production, farmers seek arable land to cultivate crops, while herdsmen also desire extensive grassland and water sources for their animals to graze. This conflict of interest between farmers and herders has consequently resulted in the recently heightened "farmers-herders conflict" and has impacted negatively on the security of the country.

Herders-farmers' conflicts in more recent times have become recurring in the West African sub-region. While countries such as Ghana, Mali, Niger and Mauritania have made significant progress in addressing these conflicts, Nigeria has continued to grapple with the ugly development. Expectedly, government responded to these conflicts by applying the use of

force from various security agencies including the military to restore order, as well as applying various measures and strategies to resolve these conflicts (Olayoku,2014). Some of these measures include the establishment of grazing reserves and the institution of mediatory panels, as well as payment of compensation to aggrieved persons. Despite these measures, farmers-herdsmen conflict still rages in several states around the Country. Existing conflict resolution mechanisms have been deficient in bringing a comprehensive end to the crises, which has continued unabated in some states. Indeed, more states could experience these conflicts which will inevitably lead to loss of lives and properties, thereby undermining Nigeria security.

The government of Nigeria at various levels — the Local, State and Federal Governments have proposed and employed different measures including the designation and gazetting of grazing reserves, prohibition of open grazing, the deployment of security agents to forestall emerging crises and a recent proposal to create ranching and cattle colonies. These measures have not been totally effective — the end result is further degeneration of these conflicts resulting to increasing deaths and destruction of properties with a high potential to exacerbate the insecurity, food crisis and unity of the country. The task here is to examine the underlying factors responsible for the conflicts and recommend workable solutions that will address the looming conflicts that await the nation.

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1. Farmers-Herdsmen Conflict

Oladele and Oladele (2011) defined farmers-herdsmen conflict as a competition between two agricultural land users, comprising farmers and herdsmen, which often times turn into serious overt and covert hostilities and social friction. This definition views farmers-herdsmen conflict as a struggle over scarce resources, such as land and water. It underlines the importance of resources in farmers-herdsmen conflict. Audu (2013) in his submission posited that farmers-herdsmen conflicts are a struggle between crop farming and pastoral groups for land or other resources that are critical for the sustainability and/or development of pastoral and agricultural production systems, such as watering areas, wet lands and fertile lands which can assume violent or non-violent dimensions. This view outlines the importance of land and water resources to the development of pastoral and agricultural production, as well as emphasizing the influence of resource scarcity in farmers-herdsmen conflict. Other scholars who support this view include Udoh and Chilaka (2012) who believe that resource scarcity is the primary cause of farmers-herdsmen conflict.

King (2013) on the other hand defines farmers-herdsmen conflicts as conflicts involving farming communities and pastoralist occasioned by the struggle for land resources and socio-cultural dominance in a given environment. He postulates that management and resolution of farmers-herdsmen conflict could be enhanced through an indepth understanding of the socio-cultural behavioural patterns of herdsmen and farmers. This definition highlights the importance of socio-cultural perspective as vital to understanding farmers-herdsmen conflict. King's view is supported by scholars such as Moritz (2012) who believed that farmers-herdsmen conflicts are influenced by socio-cultural factors such as religion, livelihood practices and other cultural practices.

Conflicts between herders and farmers have received clarification from different scholars. Bello (2013) maintained that the competition between these two agricultural land user-groups, however, has often times turned into serious hostilities and social friction. Writing on conflicts between herders – farmers Karim, Sumberg and Seddon (1999) distinguish between conflicts of interest, competition, and violent conflict. Conflicts of interest to them refer to the fundamental relationship between actors who permanently or temporarily co-habit an area, have different objectives and interests, and use similar local resources such as land, vegetation and water. Conflicts of interest over the ownership and use of resources may therefore exist between any resource users (farmers and farmers, herders and herders, herders and farmers), and may be intra-household, inter-personal, intragroup, inter-group or in some cases between local users and outside interests such as corporations and the state.

Toulmin in Karim, Sumberg & Seddon (1999) presents an image of competitive demand for pastoral resources in contemporary semi-arid Africa as originating from three classes of users: cultivators, other pastoral groups, and new livestock owners. According to her, there has been an increase in competition between herders and farmers owing to factors such as the encroachment of agriculture or pastoralists' lack of influence on the decision-making apparatus of the post-colonial state. However, the degree of competition depends on seasonal and regional factors. For example, there is more competition in the cultivation season and less during the dry season, when it is to the advantage of both parties that livestock graze on post-harvest stubble so that fields are manured. Competition among herders for access to the stubble may, of course, be intense, and there is also competition among herders and farmers and between herding groups for permanent water resources. Conflicts of interest and the resulting competition for resources can lead to a variety of either non-violent or violent outcomes.

While conflicts of interest and competition must exist for violent conflict to develop, the latter should be treated as only one of an array of possible outcomes. Some non-violent outcomes are associated with indigenous institutions for local-level natural resource management, in particular the management of common property resources. Such institutions are based on the exclusion of some users, the definition of rights of access to resources for different types of user, and the development of rules over natural resource use in a defined area. Gefu (1986) gave examples of their development and functioning. Non-violent outcomes also result from avoidance strategies. These would include herder groups migrating or retreating from areas

of high competition with farmers; the diversification of livelihoods to cope with increasing pressure (e.g. sedentarisation of herders, adoption of mixed farming); adaptation of customary institutions to manage local natural resource use; or alliances between local herders and farmers to counter resource use and extraction by actors external to the local area. Indeed, actors with conflicting interests over natural resources can work their way through multiple levels of compromise and negotiation before violent conflict develops.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. *The Environmental Scarcity Theory*

This theory is built on complex causes which could move 'from the most local to the most global' types of causes of conflict. Thomas Homer-Dixon is one of the proponents of this theory, which proposes that environmental scarcity could produce violent conflicts. Such conflicts range from local environmental degradation, to ethnic clashes, to civil strife (insurgencies), scarcity induced wars out of a loss of sources of livelihoods and the negligent behaviour of the state and elite class (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Lending support to the environment and conflict argument, Brunborg and Urdal (2005) specified that "demographic factors may, however, also be potential causes of conflict", with factors like "high population pressure" making negative impact on scarce resources such as arable land and fresh waters which could lead to violent conflicts.

Environmental scarcity has "a variety of critical social effects, including declining food production, general economic stagnation or decline, displacement of population, and the disruption of institutions and traditional social relations among people and groups" (Homer-Dixon, 1998:346). In his own contribution, Benjaminsen (2008) argues that "scarcity is believed to be rapidly increasing in many marginal environments, in particular, owing to ongoing processes of environmental degradation primarily by escalating population growth". Arguing differently but within the environmental scarcity debate, Gleditsch's critique of the literature on armed conflict and the environment claims that "all conflicts of interest derive from scarcity. However, not all resource conflicts lead to overt conflict behaviour, and even fewer to the use of force. Environmental degradation may exacerbate resource conflicts because it reduces the quantity or quality of the resource in question" (Gleditsch 1998, P.387). Implicitly, environmental degradation and resultant conflict may not at onset take physical violent approach, but rather a structural violent approach such as environmental violence, before becoming an armed and violent conflict.

Consequently, the environmental scarcity theory has three main dimensions: Supply-induced scarcity, demand-induced scarcity, and structural scarcity (Homer-Dixon, 1994). Supply-induced scarcity emerges when resources are reduced and degraded faster than they are replenished. Demand-induced scarcity arises out of population growth as against its source of livelihood, while structural scarcity exists because of inequitable distribution of resources due to their concentration in the hands of a few, while the rest of the population suffers from resource inadequacy (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Hauge and Ellingsen (1998) agreed that "increased environmental scarcity caused by one or more of these factors is assumed to have several consequences, which in turn may lead to domestic armed conflict," with intervening variables such as decreased agricultural production, decreased economic activity, migration and a weakened state helping to build up the environmental scarcity and violent conflict. As people's quality of life diminishes due to decrease in environmental resources such as fertile land, there is the tendency that competition may ensue over the scarce resources, such competition if unchecked could turn fierce, may result into violent conflict.

This theory is adopted in this study to provide support to structural conflict theory because of diverse meanings and explanations it brings to environmentally linked- resource conflicts. Unlike ecological balance which is linked directly to ecological degradation, resulting to human degradation as structural violence. Environmental scarcity in this case connotes the limited supply of grazing land, farmland and water. Such environmental scarcity generates 'severe social stresses within countries, helping to stimulate sub national insurgencies, ethnic clashes and urban unrest' (Homer-Dixon, 1999, P.12). This assumption helps the research to demonstrate how and why farming communities who depend mainly on these environmental resources such as fishing water and farming land fight to control the farming land. It also provides explanation on the structural violent nature of environmental scarcity, as the social crises it causes consequently fuels non-state conflict among affected oil communities.

However, this theory was criticized for ignoring the more direct linkage between economic and political factors and domestic armed conflict, thereby reducing the understanding of the causal pathway to domestic armed conflict. For instance, 'Structural scarcity, which concerns unequal distribution of resources (especially land), is mainly a consequence of politics' (Hauge and Ellingsen, 1998). Again, notwithstanding the initial acceptance given to the theory and its findings, but like other environmental security literature, its 'environmental and resource related issues are connected to conflict in a state-centric sense' (O'lear, 2003, P.129). Furthermore, Salau (1992) argues that 'while environmental degradation or climate change is certainly not a necessary condition for armed conflicts, neither is it a sufficient one, since states play a key role in containing or aggravating violence'. This flaw in the theory has been noted and is complemented by structural conflict theory, in order to build a direct linkage between economic and political factors, and domestic armed conflict. This is one of the reasons why this theory is not adopted as a single theory but as a component of the structural conflict theory.

The adoption of the environmental scarcity theory in explaining the herders-farmers conflicts in Nigeria is predicated on the fact that the conflicts are primarily viewed as a structural violence. Like every structural conflict, structural violence

creates 'structural conditions for the emergence of serious social conflicts' and fuels conditions such as environmental scarcity, struggle for limited resources, and unhealthy competition within communities. Homer-Dixon and Blitt (1998) argued that large populations in many developing countries are highly dependent on four key environmental resources that are very fundamental to crop production: fresh water, cropland, forests and fish. Scarcity or shrinking of these resources as a result of misuse, over-use or degradation under certain circumstances will trigger off conflicts. To Homer-Dixon: Decreases in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth, and unequal resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2003).

The fundamental theoretical assumption of the theory is that resource scarcity is the product of an insufficient supply, too much demand or an unequal distribution of a resource as a result of environmental hazards that forces some sector of a society into a condition of deprivation and violence. These four sources of scarcity are in turn caused by variables such as population growth, economic development, pollution and obviously climate change. Thus, environmental resource scarcity will constrain agricultural and economic productivity, further inducing the disruption of economic livelihoods, poverty and migration. Migration can occur either because the environmental quality of a habitat has become unlivable or, more commonly, because the migrant's economic outcome is likely to be better in areas with greater resource availability. Both constrained productivity and migration are likely to strengthen the segmentation around already existing religious, class, ethnic or linguistic cleavages in a society and thus precipitate conflicts (Gleditsch & Urdal, 2002).

It is fundamental to state that one basic feature of Fulani herdsman is migration and at the heart of migration is climate change. Within the context of Fulani herdsman and farmer conflict, the eco-violence theory is analytically apt to capture, and explicate the intricate linkages that can develop between climate change and conflict. This is because the four environmental resources (fresh water, cropland, forests and fish) are resources that climate change affects. As a result of climate change, seas have dried up leading to shortage of fish and fresh water. Drought and desertification have also eaten up crop lands and forest thereby making these environmental resources that trigger violence in short supply. To avert these situations, individuals especially herdsman stray to where they will get moderate weather, market opportunity, green – vegetation, forage and food, thereby threatening the means of production and reproduction of some other people who would not brook such encroachment. This in itself engenders conflict. And when they are accepted, the long run effect will be pressure on land, food shortage, conflict of interests, cultural differences, over population, social disorganization, religious, social, and cultural intolerance which are in themselves conflict triggers. Further, most of the impact of climate change is directly on agriculture, the theory helps us to explain the link between environmental resources scarcity and conflict. This situation has worsened considerably over the years as a result of government insensitivity to climate adaptation and mitigation and puts more pressure on the populace who suffer more as a result of environmental resources scarcity. As a result of low yield farmers cultivate more land now than they hitherto do, living little land for grazing of cattle. It is within this context that the link between environmental resources scarcity and herders –farmers' conflict in Nigeria can be understood.

4. Overview of Farmers-Herdsman Conflict in Nigeria

The introduction of Cattle Tax (Jangali) by some native authorities in Northern Nigeria in 1923 triggered widespread migration of Fulani herdsman towards the middle belts regions where such taxes were not in force (Ali, 2013). In the process, herdsman clashed with farmers in communities along their migration routes, as their livestock strayed into farms causing destruction to crops. These conflicts between farmers and herdsman were witnessed in several communities including Mambila, Benue/Plateau, Kaduna and Jalingo among others, up to the early post independence era (Abbass, 2012). This necessitated measures to forestall the conflicts in order to enhance security of lives and properties. Accordingly, the government of the Northern Region enacted the Northern Nigeria Grazing Law in 1965 (Iro, 2015). The law provided for the establishment of grazing lands in order to encourage the nomadic Fulani herdsman to adopt sedentary practices. In 1975, the Federal Government initiated the National Livestock Development Plan (NLDP) with the aim of enhancing livestock productivity, through effective and efficient management of livestock and grazing resources (Turkur, 2013). These policies, however, did not comprehensively address the peculiar needs of the herdsman whose major concern was the elimination of multiple tax regimes. Thus, these policies did not attract the necessary cooperation for effective implementation.

Efforts to implement the Northern Nigeria Grazing Law led to the acquisition of 6.4 million hectares of forest reserve for the grazing reserve scheme (Iro, 2015). Land was earmarked for the establishment of grazing reserves at Sokoto, Bauchi, Zaria, Ilorin, Katsina, Wase, Zamfara and Udubo. The NLDP further necessitated the establishment and demarcation of about 4,125 grazing reserves across Nigeria, covering about 4.3 million hectares, as well as grazing routes (Turkur, 2013). The well demarcated grazing reserves and grazing routes were designed to prevent contact between farmers and herdsman during the seasonal migration of herdsman. However, most of the reserves have been encroached upon, while insufficient information on the stock routes has contributed to herdsman straying away from demarcated routes into farming areas. This has further promoted farmers-herdsman conflicts, thereby undermining security of the country.

Incidents of conflicts between farmers and herdsman emerged again in 1991, when farmers and herdsman clashed in Kaduna (Olayoku, 2014). Thereafter, intense conflicts were witnessed in Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Niger States (Olayoku,

2014). Between 1991 and 2005, farmers-herdsmen conflicts accounted for over 35 per cent of all reported conflicts in Nigeria (Turkur,2013). This period also witnessed the increase and use of firearms and automatic rifles in farmers-herdsmen conflicts. As such many states today in the country including Adamawa, Zamfara, Ekiti, Enugu, Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Kaduna, Niger, and Kogi states have experienced these conflicts with varying degree of devastation. In Southern Kaduna for example, particularly in the local government areas of Jama'a, Kachia, Kagarko, Kaura and Sanga, Kaduna States have been subjected to a series of attacks from suspected Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen since 2011. For example, Ibanga & Adekunle (2016) reported that attacks by Fulani in Benue in 2016 has led to invasion of 14 local government areas out of the 23 local government areas in the state. Haruna (2014) also noted that in Gassol local government of Taraba State for instance, villages such as Borno-Kurukuru, Nyamtsav, Orga, Igbough, Tyougese, Orshio, Ukuusu, among many others have been ransacked by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen, destroying farms, burning homes and churches.

Statistics from Nigeria Watch data base indicate that between 2006 and 2014, the country recorded a total of 615 violent deaths related to cattle grazing, out of 61,314 violent fatalities in Nigeria between June 2006 and May, 2014 (Olayoku, 2014). Ugbudu (2017) observed that in Benue state for instance in May, 2015 before the 2015 general elections, over 100 farmers and their family members were reportedly massacred in villages and refugee camps located in the Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa areas of the state. And in December, 2016 six persons were killed at Idele village in the Oju local government area, while a reprisal attack by youths in the community saw three Fulani herdsmen killed and beheaded (Adetula, 2016). These attacks by Fulani herdsmen are not limited to the middle belt region of the country but cut across the length and breadth of the country. In Yobe state for instance a total of 38 clashes were recorded between Fulani herdsmen- farmers in ten local government areas across the state, Alhassan (cited in Luka and Erunke, 2016:328). Also, in Jigawa State, Fulani herdsmen have had clashes with farmers in places like Miga, Kangama, Birnin Kudu, Garki and Maigatari Local government areas with a lot of losses inhuman and material goods. The year 2018 has witnessed a resurgence of this violence in Benue, Taraba and Adamawa and other part of the country where many people have been killed and properties destroyed, (Ugbudu, 2017, P.67).

5. Causes of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria

The herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria have been interrogated by scholars and analysts from a variety of analytical prisms. Although, there appears to be no consensus among groups as to the causes of the conflicts, yet a good number of scholars have attributed the conflicts to the problems associated with the poor implementation of the grazing reserve policy in Nigeria. This view is supported by Tukur (2015) who opined that there are presently 417 grazing reserves that have failed in terms of the objectives for which they were established. Iro (2014) contends that most grazing reserves are situated on impoverished land, with little agronomic potential (Goldschmidt 1980). An inspection of the sites and edaphic properties shows that the grazing reserves have inferior fodder, consisting of low-protein *Andropogon*, *Brachiaria*, and *Loudetia*. The evolution of grazing reserves in Nigeria, discussed below, shows a history of problems in the grazing land development. The lack of legal validation or legislation on stock routes, for example, makes blocking the routes a non-punishable offence. The absence of enforceable penalties discourages herders from suing farmers who extend farms into the cattle thoroughfare. Also, many reserves are in relatively remote areas, isolated from other economic opportunities and established services such as schools and clinics. Pastoralist communities have been reluctant to abandon their migrations and the related traditional networks and linkages. In addition, there have been difficulties removing agriculturalists already living within some reserves, causing pastoralists to question whether they will have access to some of the best land in the reserve if they settle there

Abbass (2012) contends that the major source of tensions between pastoralists and farmers is basically economic, with land related issues accounting for the majority of the conflicts. This can then be situated within the broader context of the political economy of land struggle, traceable to a burgeoning demography in which there is fierce competition for fixed space to meet the demands of the growing population (Olabode & Ajibade 2010). De Haan (2002) opined that while farmers cite destruction of crops by cattle and other property by the pastoralists as the main direct causes for conflicts, burning of rangelands and Fadama and blockage of stock routes and water points by crop encroachment are major direct reasons cited by the pastoralists. Similarly, inadequate social amenity, like pipe borne water, was also observed to be the cause of nomads/farmers conflicts.

Adekunle, & Adisa (2010) emphasized information gap with respect to the stock routes was a major factor contributing to farmer-herdsmen conflicts. Depleting soil fertility, inadequate supply of fertilizer, and the need to increase scale of operation by both groups were also found to indirectly precipitate conflict, as farmers confirmed that they sought for virgin lands to farm. By so doing they might move into stock routes inadvertently. To Blench (2006) farmers-herders' conflicts can be attributed to competition over natural resources and over access to grazing and water resources and suggests that, because herders now farm and farmers have herds, competition for the same natural resources has increased. The semi-arid zone has always been more populous than the Middle Belt, and the initial expansion of cultivation was in this zone. As the pressure on arable land in the semi-arid zone increased, soil fertility decreased and farmers were obliged to move to regions of uncleared bush or to increase their holding size. As a consequence, more and more farmers began to settle further and further south in the lightly settled sub- humid zone, (Blench, 2004:8).

Nyong, (2010) opined that the expansion of population can be seen as a cause of the herders-farmers conflicts in Nigeria. With the expansion of population, the rate of food production would naturally increase and to meet that increasing demand, it is natural for the farmers to encroach into marginal lands that had been the traditional pasture routes for the cattle.

This has therefore heightened struggle between livestock and agricultural production which, more often than not, result in the escalation of conflicts. Hence, as population grows, more land is being cultivated and less is available for pasture; forcing pastoralists to migrate and tramp on crops cultivated by farmers. The expansion of both fadama and horticulture also had a negative consequence for pastoralists. The southern dry season movement characteristic of Nigerian pastoralism depended on unimpeded access to riverbanks, where grass could be found when the surrounding land was largely devoid of nutrition. Horticulture has expanded rapidly and there has been no process of negotiation with herders over migration routes, drinking and grazing access; indeed, farmers preferentially farm where cattle have grazed, because the land is particularly fertile. As a consequence, there have been increasing numbers of incidents between cultivators and herders in these areas.

Similarly, Blench (2010) have attributed the causes of these conflicts to increased migration from the North to the South. For example, Over the years, the Lake Chad Basin, considered one of Africa's largest, covering an average area of 22,000 square kilometers, today represents the 'diminished remains' and a skeletal shadow of itself. This has pushed many migrants to cross the border from Chad, Niger and Cameroon into northern Nigeria, settling in cities such as Plateau, Benue, Niger, Nasarawa and Kogi. Yahaya, (2011) also view religion as a cause of conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria. While pastoralists were confined to the semi-arid zones, they shared common religious practice with the farming communities among which they moved principally the Hausa and Kanuri. The spread of Islamic hegemony was clearly an important factor in encouraging pastoral settlement. As the Jihad pushed towards the ocean, polities such as Borgu, Shaki, Raba [among the Nupe] and Ilorin were established or converted, thereby providing a non-hostile environment for the herders. The gradual adoption of the Shari'a legal code in many northern states after 1999 has exacerbated the situation still further. This has drawn in several states with a Muslim political elite but a large proportion of non-Muslims in rural areas, such as Kaduna and Borno.

Ingawa, Ega, and Erhabor in Ibe et al (2017) reported that the key underlying causes of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria are:

- Changing resource access rights, whereby traditional access rights to communal grazing and water resources are being obstructed by the individual tenure ship of arable farmers. This is particularly severe on the traditional trek routes, which become favourite cropping sites because of their better soil fertility resulting from the concentration of animal manure from the trekking herds in these areas. Within the fadama areas, this is exacerbated by the fragmented nature of the crop plots, which makes prevention of animals straying in the crop plots difficult;
- Inadequacy of grazing resources, as increasing crop cultivation (and increasing commercialization of the crop-residues) and poor management of the existing grazing reserves have resulted in a significant reduction in available livestock feed resources, in particular in the Northern States. Moreover, the high value crops introduced by National Fadama Development Programme NFD (tomatoes and onions) produce almost no crop-residues for livestock feeding.
- Decline in internal discipline and social cohesion, as the adherence to the traditional rules regarding grazing periods, and the authority of the traditional rulers is broken down. Land tenure system or ownership of land was also regarded as a cause of the conflicts. In most societies in Nigeria, farmers are regarded as those that own the land, and therefore determine how it is used; while the nomadic cattle herders are regarded as the landless group, who do not own land to use and settle on.

Government policies can also be seen as a cause of nomads/farmers conflicts. For example, Hoffman *et al.* (2008) further explained that the conflicts do occur as the size of the existing reserve shrink due to encroachment and government approved expansion of farmlands. This leads to the conversion of water points and stock routes into farmlands. Negligence on the part of both groups was also seen as a cause of the conflicts. For instance, Yahaya (2008) further observed that the cattle herders often left a large number of cattle in the care of children who did not care about the consequences in the event of destruction of farm produce. The farmers also left their harvested crops on their farm unprotected, while others who had poor yield intentionally left their crops on the farm un-harvested for cattle to graze, so that they could claim heavy compensation. As the state cannot regulate the mutual coexistence of its citizens in the harmonious sharing of the competed resources, the parties may have to resolve take laws into their hands. The failure of the state, for example to resolve the settler/ indigene identity and the inherent struggles over resources can be adduced to have brought dangerous dimensions of economic and political elements in the Fulani cattle herders and farmers" conflicts (Egwu 2004:34).

Also, Egwu (2011), Kwaja (2011) Muhammad, (2008) Blench, (2004) and Turner et al. (2008) maintained that cattle rustling contributes in no small measure to the herders –farmers conflicts in Nigeria All these have exacerbated chronic insecurity that has encouraged the conflicting parties to take responsibility for their own security and to defend themselves, which is a threat to the sustainability of the federation. Ingawa, Ega, and Erhabor (1999) reported that the key underlying causes of farmer-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria are: changing resource access rights, whereby traditional access rights to communal grazing and water resources are being obstructed by the individual tenureship of arable farmers. This is particularly severe on the traditional trek routes, which become favourite cropping sites because of their better soil fertility resulting from the concentration of animal manure from the trekking herds in these areas.

Inadequacy of grazing resources, as increasing crop cultivation (and increasing commercialization of the crop-residues) and poor management of the existing grazing reserves have resulted in a significant reduction in available livestock feed resources, in particular in the Northern States. Moreover, the high value crops introduced by NFD (tomatoes and onions)

produce almost no crop-residues for livestock feeding. Also, the regulation that twenty percent of the Fadama would need to be set aside for grazing (National Agricultural Policy, 1988) has not been adhered (De Haan 2002: P.8). Other perceived causes of farmer-herdsmen conflicts include inequitable access to land, diminishing land resources, antagonistic values among user groups, policy contradictions, and non-recognition of rights of indigenous people Adisa (2011). Kwaja & Abdul (2016) further noted that in most parts of the State, violent confrontations between farmers and pastoralists have stemmed from encroachment in farmlands, farming on grazing routes, and struggle over grazing space and cattle rustling. In his account, Ayih (2003) associated the conflicts to what he calls "population explosion", which he attributed to high birth rate and immigration. According to him: People tend to move from Northern and Southern Nigeria into the Middle Belt region where population is relatively low and where there is availability of vast arable land. The consequent rapid growth in population has caused the farmers to struggle for farmland which is becoming scarce by the day. With this development, grazing areas that were hitherto abundant are being taken over by scattered small farms, making grazing in these areas difficult.

6. The Effects of Herders-Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria

The effects of Herders - farmer's conflict in Nigeria is far reaching. To Abba & Usman (2008) food insecurity is one the effects. In all the states that have experienced these conflicts, the majority of those displaced are women and youths who make up substantial part of the farming community. They have thus become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with a far-reaching impact on farming activities. The instability caused by the incessant conflict, will likely lead to food shortages for the communities that depend on subsistence farming. Their economic well-being is thus tempered with because of this conflict. Their cash crops production has reduced; their subsistence level also has dropped. Conflicts resulting from the use of Fadama land may also jeopardize huge financial investment by government, Africa Development Bank and World Bank in the Fadama projects nationwide (Ardo 2004:6).

Abass (2010) maintained that the socio-economic consequences of herders-farmers' conflicts are usually eminent. Conflicts between the crop farmers and nomadic famers or grazers create some mistrust, tension and open confrontations between the opposing groups. Reduction in income and output of crop farmers occur as a result of indiscriminate bush burning and destruction of crops by cattle which lead to either partial or total loss of crops by the farmers. The effect on crop yield therefore has negative impact on the affected farmer's income with its summary impact on the overall agricultural income. This tends to negatively affect farmer's savings, credit repayment ability, as well the food security and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply, thus, farming and rural/agricultural development is discouraged.

Okoli and Atelhe (2014) observed that the effects of herders -farmer's conflict for Nigeria's national security cannot be over emphasized. The humanitarian, economic, and social consequences of conflicts have been manifold and telling. The attendant security and livelihood crises threaten the collective subsistence and survival of the affected populations. There are also other externalities, such as diminution of agricultural productivity and decline in household capital, all of which do not augur well for societal and national sustainability. Herders- farmer's conflicts according to Ibrahim, Abdurrahman, Belel, and Umar (2015) also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of pastoral production and agriculture in West Africa (Moritz, 2010). These conflicts reinforce circles of extreme poverty and hunger, and destroy social status, food security and affect mostly the most marginalised groups that include women and children. This affects education of children leading to obstacles in their development and mass displacement. Consequentially, this debilitates the once mutually existing farmer-pastoralist relationships. This awful situation becomes worst, especially when either the farmer or the pastoralist is categorised into a group relating to religion, tribe or region. Lederach (1997) further identified three different effects of herders-farmers conflict in a deeply divided society: Firstly, cohesion and identity in a contemporary conflict tend to form within increasingly narrower lines than those that encompass national citizenship. In a conflicting society, people seek security by identifying with something close to their experience and over which they have control. In today's settings that unit of identity may be clan, ethnicity, religion, geographic or regional affiliation, or a mixture of these.

Secondly, one of the complexities found in many conflicting societies is the multiplicity of groups and collectivities vying for recognition and power, often in the form of armed movements. Thirdly, conflicts create a long-term nature of the conflicting groups' animosity, perception of enmity, and deep-rooted fear. This is coupled with the immediacy of having the enemy living virtually next door as in many areas of Bosnia, Somalia, Azerbaijan, Rwanda and Colombia (Lederach 1997:12).

Another effect herders-farmers conflict can cause among conflicting communities is a possibility of unnecessary competition such as religious competition, power and so on. Among other effects are destruction of property and environment, loss of lives, displacement of the citizens and migrants in the affected areas. The more visible consequence has been violent clashes in the towns, burnings of churches and mosques and a large-scale migration of southern traders back to their home areas or to places with a more supportive administration. However, in rural areas, the effect has been to draw natural resource conflict into the politico-religious arena (Yahaya 2011:36). Yahaya (2008) further noted that the prevalence of the conflict situation has led to proliferation of small arms. Such arms have often been used to perpetuate violence, armed robbery and other criminality. Lederach (1997) further identified three different effects of herders-farmers conflict in a deeply divided society: Firstly, cohesion and identity in a contemporary conflict tend to form within increasingly narrower lines than those that encompass national citizenship. In a conflicting society, people seek security by identifying with something close to

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The widespread insecurity in the North has caused decline in the development of the country with implication for human, economic, political, security and psychological dimensions. There is symbiotic relationship between development and security. Expenditures on security are essential components of the development process. The use of resources to improve a country's security system could be more beneficial in others areas. Insecurity is a drain on national resources at the expense of people's well-being. The adverse effects of insecurity on the economic growth and development of a nation is quite enormous. Most often when clashes result in loss of human lives and property, the government responds by providing relief materials for the victims of terrorism. The huge amount of money that is released in such circumstances is a drain on the public treasury and the nation's economy. For instance, in the 2012 budget, the federal government allocated 21.91 (US\$5.58) billion to security agencies (Ladan, 2013).

7. Issues Involved in Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria

The issues involved in farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria has its root from conflict management mechanisms and socio-cultural dynamics. The existence of conflict management mechanisms is a consideration in farmers-herdsmen conflicts in Nigeria. Conflict management mechanisms entail the availability of institutional mechanisms designed to provide alternative dispute resolution options for conflicts between farmers and herdsman. The National Policy on Agriculture fosters upon states the responsibility of establishing effective mechanism for conflict management on the use of agricultural resources in their territories (Adisa, 2015). This is aimed at proactively addressing disagreements in the utilization of land resources and preventing their escalation into conflicts that could threaten nation's security. However, most states have no mechanisms to proactively address conflicts between farmers and herdsman. This has created a vital gap in the resolution of farmers-herdsmen conflict, with negative effects on nation's security.

Traditional institutions, however, form a veritable platform for conflict management in most rural areas of Nigeria. Traditional institutions have consistently bridged gaps created by the absence of government presence in many rural areas. They are often looked upon for the allocation of resources, maintenance of law and order, societal development and conflict management, among others. For instance, the Meyatti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association successfully mediated conflict between farmers and herdsman in Bauchi and Gombe states (Ajuwon, 2012). There are concerns, however, that the declining influence of traditional institutions have affected their authority and acceptance. This has hindered their ability to definitively mediate and resolve farmers-herdsmen conflicts, with grave consequences for security of the nation.

Socio-cultural dynamics within farming and herdsman communities is an issue in farmers-herdsmen conflicts, which hinder security of communities. Animal livestock production in Nigeria is essentially the preoccupation of the Fulanis, who own over 90 per cent of the nation's livestock population (Blench, 2010). The Fulani socio-cultural lifestyle is remarkably different from most other ethnic groups they have contact with, which sometimes provide avenues for conflicts. For instance, a typical Fulani herdsman controls between 80 to 120 cows and a family with less than 40 cows is said to be poor (Blench, 2010). Ownership of cattle herds thus constitute a key criteria for the measurement of wealth in Fulani society. Furthermore, the safety and well being of cattle is regarded as a priority consideration in the Fulani society. This could lead to conflict with other socio-cultural groups who regard cattle as merely sources of meat. The community modelling culture of the Fulani is another area of concern. For instance, the Fulani mode of encampment consist essentially of clearing any available area of unoccupied or un-utilized land. The Fulani culture recognises land, air and water as natural resources endowed by the Almighty Creator for everybody's use. The Fulani therefore engage in the use of land on first come basis and could occupy any unused land without deference to anybody. The tendency of the Fulani to occupy areas of unused land which traditionally belong to communities has created a feeling of perceived threat of land grabbing and invoked the fear of Fulani domination.

8. Cases of Resolution of Farmers-Herdsman Conflict in Some Countries and the Lessons Learnt

The resolution of farmers-herdsmen conflicts in Argentina and Tanzania provide platforms of understanding how farmers-herders conflict is handled. Argentina was considered because it depicts a developing country where effective and comprehensive government intervention towards resolving emerging farmers-herdsmen conflict averted long term implications to its economy and security. The choice of Tanzania was being an African country whose herdsman communities

have nomadic characteristics similar to Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. The management of the conflict in these countries could provide useful lessons for the resolution of the conflict in the country.

8.1. Farmers-Herdsmen Conflict in Argentina

Argentina operates a well established agricultural livestock management system. Pastoral livestock contribute significantly to the country's economy. Argentina is a major exporter of beef, milk, wool and hides. These livestock products contribute about 12 per cent to the country's GDP and 25 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings (Lichtenstein, 2012). Pastoralism activities are concentrated in the Andes Region which has fertile grassland that is also suitable for farming. The major livestock include cattle, sheep and guanaco. Between 1990 – 1995, disagreements over access to grassland pastures between the farmers and pastoralist generated conflicts in the Andean regions that disrupted the Argentine economy and threatened its national security. Although human casualty in the conflict was low, the material losses included the destruction of millions of dollars worth of farm produce, as well as the killing of over 100,000 livestock (Lichtenstein, 2012). The effect of the conflict was a reduction in livestock produce export by over 50 per cent, which adversely affected the Argentine economy as well as its food security thereby threatening security. Government therefore took measures to resolve the conflicts for the enhancement of security of the country.

The Argentine Government responded, in the face of dwindling economic resources and national security threats, by instituting new land ownership policies, as well as guanaco conservation laws (Dick-Iruenabere, 2014). The new policies granted permanent land ownership rights to pastoralists which was not available then due to the consideration that pastoralists were nomadic communities who only needed temporary land ownership. This measure delineated land accessibility between farmers and pastoralists which reduced competition for land between them, thus forestalling farmers-herdsmen conflict for the enhancement of Argentina's security of lives and properties. Indeed, the Argentine Government's efforts to implement its new land ownership policies and guanaco conservation laws were confronted with several challenges. The major challenges however, were the dearth of sufficient grazing land for all pastoralist communities and the need for access to water (Adisa, 2015). The Argentine Government addressed both challenges by investing extensively in the construction of irrigation channels to develop new grasslands in semi-arid areas, which also provided water for livestock needs.

8.2. Farmers-Herdsmen Conflict in Tanzania

Farmers-herdsmen conflict was prevalent in the Hai District of the Kilimanjaro Region between 1995 and 2009. During this period, drought conditions in the region forced pastoral Massai tribesmen to migrate southwards to territories occupied by farming tribes such as Chagga and Pare (King, 2013). The ensuing struggle for land resources, compounded by long-standing socio-cultural prejudices generated tribal conflicts between the Massai and various farming tribes. The conflicts led to widespread destruction of farmland and livestock, as well as loss of lives thus threatening Tanzania's peace and security. Conflict Resolution Measures. Between 1996 and 2005, the Tanzanian Government instituted several measures to resolve the conflicts. These measures include the demarcation of grazing land from farming areas and the institution of fines for encroachment by either parties, as well as the establishment of various panels to mediate conflicts (King, 2013). However, these measures only achieved limited success as the conflicts persisted. In 2009, a group of Tanzanian scholars and opinion leaders in collaboration with local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) initiated measures to resolve the conflicts in the Hai District of Tanzania (Ahmadu, 2011). In this regard, the group employed a wholistic approach targeted towards addressing the concerns of all stakeholders in the conflict. The resolution strategy also involved the identification and addressing of socio-cultural prejudices, identification of key conflict mitigation agents, as well as bridging communication gaps among conflicting parties through cooperation initiatives. The implementation of these strategies facilitated the restoration of lasting peace in the Hai District in 2011, thus enhancing Tanzania's peace and security.

Challenges to the Conflict Resolution Strategies. The initiative to resolve farmers-herdsmen conflict in the Hai District was confronted with several challenges. The key challenges were the lack of trust by the various stakeholders and the unwillingness to adhere to resolutions on cessation of encroachment (Shem, 2010). These challenges were mitigated by the inclusion of foreign observers into the group drawn from international NGOs and the strict enforcement of fines for encroachment. Furthermore, community incentives were instituted to reward acceptable conduct such as reporting of encroachment to security agencies rather than confronting encroachers.

8.3. Lessons Learnt

The lessons from the resolution of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Argentina and Tanzania include the wholistic approach to farmers-herdsmen conflicts, strict law enforcement and elimination of socio-cultural barriers. These are discussed subsequently.

Wholistic Approach to Farmers-Herdsmen Conflicts. Farmers-herdsmen conflicts are often the manifestation of numerous immediate and remote grievances, factors and concerns. Addressing the issues wholistically would mitigate their reoccurrence and reduce the possibility of future conflicts. Most farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria are tackled by addressing their immediate causes. The measures taken in Tanzania to address the political, economic, cultural and social issues that fuel conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers is thus a useful lesson for this study.

Strict Law Enforcement. Adherence to conflict resolution measures can only be ensured by the application of strict law enforcement. The enforcement of stipulated fines and penalties will deter encroachment. In Nigeria, farmers and herdsmen wantonly encroach into areas not allocated to them and are not made to face the law. The resolve of Argentina and Tanzania to ensure strict enforcement of laws to deter herdsmen and farmers from taking the law into their own hands is thus a vital lesson for this study.

Elimination of Socio-Cultural Barriers. Farmers-herdsmen conflicts like, other communal conflicts, are compounded by numerous social and cultural prejudices that create barriers in the relationship between farming and pastoralist communities. These barriers exacerbate even trivial conflicts, and their elimination could facilitate resolution of conflict between farmers and fulani herdsmen. The initiative by Tanzania to establish programmes that would foster cooperation and interaction between herdsmen and farmers is also a key lesson for this study.

9. Policy Framework - The Failure of Grazing Reserve Policy

Policy framework is an essential consideration in curbing farmers-herdsmen conflict for the nation's overall development. Policy framework refers to the plan of action guiding the use of resources for agricultural activities. Some policies enacted in Nigeria are designed to facilitate equitable access to resources by farmers and herdsmen. However, these policies have often failed to achieve the desired results. For example, the Land Use Act 1978 vested land ownership and administration on State and Local governments, for equitable utilization and distribution of land resources for national development (Oyewole, 2011). However, land tenure in most rural areas has remained under the control of communities and families. This frustrates Government's efforts to allocate land for grazing reserves in many parts of the country. The land resource needs of herdsmen are, thus, not adequately addressed, providing a catalyst for farmers-herdsmen conflict thereby undermining nation's security.

In 2001, the Federal Government adopted a National Agriculture Policy which developed a framework for the improvement of livestock management. The Policy recommended a minimum of 10 per cent of the country's landmass to be legally acquired and constituted into grazing lands and grazing reserves for lease allocation to livestock grazers (Ahmadu, 2011). Each state was required to set aside 10 per cent of its land area for the establishment of grazing areas. It is to that only 3 states (Kebbi, Zamfara and FCT) have set aside the minimum 10 per cent land area for grazing land development. Significantly also, only Ogun State in the South has set aside land for grazing area. The reluctance by states to implement the policy has hindered efforts to manage resource sharing between farmers and herdsmen, which exacerbates farmers-herdsmen conflicts with grave consequences.

The failure to implement policies on land resource sharing has been attributed to the tendency of government to exclude stakeholders in the formulation of these policies. This has hindered cooperation by some stakeholders and created gaps in policy implementation. Thus, the problem of farmers-herdsmen conflict remain recurrent dismal, with attendant negative effects on our security.

Secondly, the development of grazing reserves is an area of concern in farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria. A grazing reserve is a piece of land that government acquires and develops for pastoralists to graze their livestock. Grazing reserves enable the government to protect pastures for herds, which helps to prevent conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. Thus, as at 1992, the Federal Government had identified and earmarked over 300 areas around the country for establishment of grazing reserves covering about 28 million hectares (Ahmadu, 2011). The issue indicates that only 45 grazing reserves covering about 600,000 hectares had been gazetted. This represents 15 per cent of the proposed grazing reserves around the country. Equally, inability of government to implement the plan for grazing reserves development has hindered efforts to curb farmers-herdsmen conflict in the country.

Furthermore, the poor implementation has led to the abandonment of established grazing reserves. For instance, as at 1998, only 350 of the projected 2000 Fulani families earmarked for the Phase One of the scheme were using the reserves. However, a gradual abandonment of the reserves was witnessed around 2000 and by 2014, less than 50 pastoral families were using the reserves (Ahmadu, 2011). The decline in the usage of the reserves is attributable to declining pastures due to desertification, which is exacerbated by the absence of necessary facilities required for the sustenance of livestock in the reserves. This has induced herdsmen to move out of the reserves for grazing resources, contributing to the persistence of farmers-herdsmen conflict, which threatens nation's security.

10. Policy Options - Ranching and Cattle Colonies

10.1. Ranching

A ranch is an area of land, including various structures, given primarily to the practice of ranching, the practice of raising grazing livestock such as cattle or sheep for meat or wool. People who own or operate a ranch are called ranchers, cattlemen, or stock growers (Sayre, Carlisle Hunt singer, Fisher, Shattuck, (2012, P.2). Ranching according to Barbieri, Mahoney, and Butler (2008) is also a method used to raise less common livestock such as cattle, sheep and goats. Ranches generally consist of large areas but may be of nearly any size. In the western United States, many ranches are a combination of privately owned land supplemented by grazing leases on land under the control of the federal Bureau of Land Management. If the ranch includes arable or irrigated land, the ranch may also engage in a limited amount of farming, raising

crops for feeding the animals, such as hay and feed grains. Ranches that cater exclusively to tourists are called guest ranches or, colloquially, "dude ranches." Most working ranches do not cater to guests, though they may allow private hunters or outfitters on their property to hunt native wildlife. However, in recent years, a few struggling smaller operations have added some dude ranch features, such as horseback rides, cattle drive or guided hunting, in an attempt to bring in additional income (Brunson and Hunt singer, 2008).

Ranching is the commercial alternative to the various types of nomadism, is carried out on large stretches of land. Most ranches cover several thousand hectares, sometimes more than 100 000, and carry large, permanent herds of some 1000 or 10 000 animals. The term ranch is generally used to refer to properties with well-defined boundaries (fenced or unfenced), legally owned, or having a long-term lease, and with certain developments present that were affected by the owner or lessee. Ranching according to Food and Agriculture organization (FAO) (2001) is a modern form of pastoralism which establishes limits of mobility even in arid land. It is an enclosed (usually fenced) system of extensive livestock production. Under this system a piece of land, the ranch, is allocated and owned for livestock grazing, and the owner is granted individual rights of use of the land so allocated.

Ranching according to Webster and Wilson (1967) provides as far as possible, a uniform and year-round supply of herbage for the maximum number of stock, utilizes the herbage at a stage that combines good nutrient quality with high yield, maintain the pasture in its most productive condition, by encouraging its best grass types and protects the soil from direct solar radiation and the beating action of rainfall, thus preventing run-off and erosion. According to Cousins, Jon, Sadler & Evans (2008) ranching is now the dominant system of ruminant livestock production in North America, Australia and parts of South America (FAO, 2001. P4). Although ranching has been criticized by environmentalists for decades, it is probably the most ecologically sustainable segment of the U.S. meat industry (Hinrichs and Welsh 2003, Gwin 2006). Ranching livestock production relies on natural ecological processes of plant and animal (re)production, based on ecosystem services generated and regenerated on site rather than imported, often nonrenewable, inputs (Kremen and Miles, 2012). Ranching is increasingly being used in parts of Africa such as South Africa, Tanzania, Senegal, Botswana, Ethiopia, Uganda etc. as an adaptive strategy to provide livestock fodder in times of stress (Catley et al., 2013).

Ruthenberg (1971) outlined different forms of ranching which include:

10.1.1. Group Ranches

In the majority of the range areas, economic and ecological considerations may make it acceptable for the pastoralists to come together on the basis of clans, families, or other groupings and establish ranching units, which might comprise two to twenty families and a stretch of land of between 600 and 12 000 hectares. So far, the individual generally exercises grazing rights over the entire area recognized as the grazing ground of his clan. He thus has, along with other members of the clan or tribe, freedom to move with his herds over a considerable area but has no specific individual rights to a particular portion of it. The new move would mean the division of the area into self-contained units as far as water is concerned. Only people belonging to a certain group of families would then have the right to graze there. The ownership of the land could go to the group or clan, provided that this could be legalized. Another more realistic approach would be the establishment of group ranches on the land of several individuals. However, in each case the individuals would retain the ownership of their cattle.

10.1.2. Cooperative or Company Ranches

Another possibility is the establishment of cooperative or company ranches. These should be run by a manager and raise their own funds. The individuals concerned might receive or shares the ranch according to their contributions.

10.1.3. Government Ranches

Wherever grassland not claimed by pastoralists and cannot be handed over to private enterprise, the establishment of government ranches is advisable. In order to guarantee efficient management, they should be established and run by autonomous bodies as profit-making enterprises.

10.1.4. Nucleus Ranches

Another possibility to solve the problems of semi-nomadism is the combination of private or state nucleus ranches with the supervision of shifting herding in surrounding schemes. Such an arrangement has the following characteristics: (1) An area newly opened up by watering places is declared a scheme area. (2) Herdsmen are allowed to become scheme participants on condition that they submit their animal-husbandry practices to a clearly defined set of rules, the execution of which is closely supervised. (3) The herdsmen are allowed to join the scheme with a limited number of cattle, the health of which is checked. No other cattle are allowed to graze in the scheme area, and no scheme cattle are allowed to graze elsewhere. (4) The herdsmen remain the owners of their cattle, but grazing, dipping, and castration are organized by the scheme management. All selling and buying of cattle has to be channeled through the scheme management. (5) The scheme management is backed by a neighboring nucleus ranch, which provides the services, the veterinary supervision, and the marketing facilities for the scheme cattle.

In group, cooperative, government, and company ranches, individual subsistence farming may well be incorporated into the enterprise. The allotment of land for cropping to members and workers within a system of shifting cultivation

provides cleared land that can be planted with better grasses at low costs. Arable farming within a ranch may thus contribute to the reduction and control of bush and to the establishment of better grasses. However, two basic requirements must be fulfilled if money is to be invested in pastoral areas, namely: (1) Limitation of the number of stock that attempt to graze any area to the number that area can carry without deterioration over a long period of time. (2) Control of the movement of stock within any given area through rotational grazing systems or other such measures designed to maintain or improve the quality of the pastureland.

It is instructive that Ranching as a policy option in Nigeria has not gained grounds in the country. This clear from some of the prevailing narratives that government at all levels had failed over time to constructively engage stakeholders and persuade them to embrace ranching, which in the long run is cost effective, lucrative, healthier and of course, allows the herdsmen to savour good living like education and access to sound healthcare delivery, through orientation and re-orientation but no necessary integration. This underscore the fact that proper ranching, supported by government and in some cases, backed by the private sector as a form of investment with long time projection, the society stands to gain the most — the production of healthier, better and neater products, provision of employment to the teeming herders, who had been kept out of business by rustlers, an added value to the farm products, promotion of peaceful coexistence amongst the herders, farmers and other villagers and importantly it will would help to sift the criminals amongst them from the real farmers doing their legitimate business. For instance, the Kaduna State Governor, Malam Nasir El-Rufai has been working seriously on ultra-modern ranch, being modeled after the types in countries like Denmark and Britain, following his visit to their ranches and he had sold the idea to herdsmen and their leaders in one of their meetings with him.

10.2. Cattle Colonies

The cattle colony is a recent policy proposal by the Ministry of Agriculture to deal with incessant conflict between farmers and herdsmen. A colony is bigger than a reserve, while a reserve is a defined tract of land usually set apart for animals and plants. Colony is a wide expanse of land measuring 5,000 hectares of land. A hectare is about the size of a standard football field, that is what the initiators of this policy proposal want each state of the federation to provide, so that Fulani herdsmen can have enough grazing land for their cattle and in order to enjoy peace in the country. However, the responses it received from stakeholders and the general public have been on the negative side, perhaps due to the improper communication to the public of its functionality and workability. Curiously, the cattle colony sounds like an idea that was suddenly stumbled upon by the initiators, but with no clear-cut modus operandi, thus giving an impression that a community or communities are being created or carved out of the existing ones solely for the herdsmen, such that it could further avail them access to land that are not theirs in places where they are already dreaded. Factually, the cattle colony does not holistically address the future of animal husbandry as practiced in civilized societies around the world, although, the fundamentals of the crisis are largely about land ownership which, the cattle colony is believed would address, it is still not one to provide the country with the opportunity to distinguished amongst rustlers, terrorists and of course, genuine herdsmen and thereby addressing farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria.

11. Conclusion

The struggle for land resource is the major cause of conflict in the country. Though, the Fulani herdsmen in the past largely enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with sedentary agriculturalists in Nigeria, this relationship has been disturbed in recent years by environmental changes that have driven the herdsmen further south, massive growth in the size of Fulani herds, the growth of practices such as agro-pastoralism and the expansion of farmland into traditional corridors used by the herdsmen. Many Fulani now tend to reach for automatic weapons to resolve disputes with agricultural communities. This has in turn led to the development of "self-defense" forces in the agricultural communities. Farmers routinely accuse the Fulani herdsmen of allowing their animals to feed on still-growing crops and contamination of community watering-places. The herdsmen in turn often accuse the farmers of denying them access to grazing areas when alternatives cannot be found.

No doubt, the resource land-based conflict between herdsmen /farmer's conflict has recently been infused with politics, legal issues, religion and ethnicity. There are genuine concerns that whereas there are noticeable connections between terrorism and Fulani Herdsmen, the current escalation and recurrent violent attacks on various farming communities in the North central Nigeria cannot but be linked to the infiltration of the Fulani herdsmen by Fulani from neighboring countries. These Fulani infiltrators who have been exposed to terrorist ideas and operations, also operated as mercenaries demobilized from various conflicts in the Sahel and are pushing the front of terrorist operations in the North central states and other parts of Nigeria.

Thus, the Nigerian authorities need to take cognizance of them and their level of involvement in fashioning out an acceptable and sustainable solution to all concerned parties in the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers conflict. If the continuing conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists cannot be contained and resolved in the near future, there is every possibility that Nigeria could once more descend into a nation-wide struggle for dominance that will ultimately be of little benefit to anyone other than the extremists. The perceived failure on the part of the government could also lead to an all-out conflict between these two groups of people and this will exacerbate the current insecurity situation and food shortage in the country.

12. Recommendations

It is recommended that: Federal, State, Local governments and stakeholders at all levels should constantly embrace dialogue as part of peace building measures and ensure that security agencies collaborate with MACBAN, farmers and local hunters to help identify intruders and criminals from neighboring countries who masquerade as herdsmen in Nigeria.

Penalties for firearms offences be implemented and enforced as contained in section 17 to 22 of the Firearms Act. A minimum jail term of 21 years with no option of fine for illegal possession of firearms by individual(s) be instituted.

Government must move away from the rhetoric of extending condolences to the victims and promises to arrest the perpetrators of attacks after the deed has been done. The world over, the best approach to security is prevention — Government must always move ahead of the so-called attackers to stop them before they carry out any dastardly act in our communities.

Government should consider the establishment of ranches to stop the roaming of herders and cattle in search of pastures — this should be explored as a matter of necessity in view of the growing population and climate change in the world. In addition, government should revisit the National Afforestation Initiative of 2010 and Great Green Wall Project of 2013 where a total of N15 billions earmarked from the National Ecological Funds to tackle desertification.

Government should establish a clear and effective land-use planning system that will mitigate the conflicts that usually arise from land accessibility and usage especially for extensive land demanding agricultural activities such as ranches.

An intense sensitization and orientation of the nomadic Fulani herdsmen should be embarked upon to bring them into full grasp of the rational and merit behind modern livestock management which has been misrepresented in some quota as an attempt to undermine their cultural and traditional transhumance system. As such, a thorough understanding and appreciation of local traditions and practices of the herders by the orientation agency is needed when trying to change local attitudes and habits.

Suitable incentive for change should be provided by government to fast-track the transition to modern livestock management. This could be monetary or technical incentives to motivate subscribers and to weaken the conservative tendencies of target groups.

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