

Impact of Farmers-Herders Conflicts on the Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria

Muazu Bukar Ali

Department of Business Administration and Management, Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri. Phone number; 08036007249. Email Address; muazubukaro5@gmail.com

Abstract: *The paper investigates the profound impact of the enduring conflict between farmers and herders on the socioeconomic development of Nigeria. Stemming from resource scarcity, particularly land, tensions between pastoralists and farming communities have escalated into violent confrontations, disrupting livelihoods, displacing populations, and impeding economic progress. Analyzing through the lens of various conflict theories and resolution models, the study reveals that factors such as climate change-induced environmental degradation, population growth, and governmental shortcomings contribute to the persistence of the conflict. The absence of comprehensive policies exacerbates the situation, resulting in heightened insecurity and threatening national stability. Urgent measures are proposed, including policy interventions to address land use conflicts, investment in modern animal husbandry practices, and fostering dialogue among stakeholders to mitigate the conflict's adverse effects and safeguard Nigeria's socioeconomic future. Despite some governmental efforts, the conflict persists, highlighting the necessity for sustained and concerted action from all parties involved to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development.*

Keywords: *Socio-economic impact, farmer-herder conflicts, economic development, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION.

Conflicts, insecurity, rising inflation and the impacts of climate change continue to derive hunger in Nigeria with 26.5 million people across the country projected to face acute food hunger in June to August 2024 lean season. ([wfphttp://www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org) 2024). This is a staggering increase from 18.6 million people food insecure at the end of 2023. Food security has remained an issue of top priority for both developing and developed countries (Mohammed et al.,2021). Although, majority of the food in secured are domiciled in developing countries. Subsistent farmers who live in rural environments are rather poor and are not able to meet their basic daily needs for sufficient food in developing countries (Akukwe, 2020). Food security at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for active and healthy life. Food insecurity exists when people do not have adequate physical and economic access to food, (Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO),2015). The main goal of food security, is for individuals to obtain adequate food needed at all time, and to be able to utilize the food to meet the body needs. The World Bank identified four pillars underpinning food security, as food

availability, food accessibility, food utilization and food stability (FAO, 2015). The 2021 global report on food crises stated that in 2020 almost 100 million people facing serious hunger dwell in areas seriously affected by conflict and the number keeps increasing (GRC, 2021).

The Global Report on Food Crises. (GRFC, 2023). Estimated that over a quarter of a billion people were acutely food-insecure and required urgent food assistance in 58 food-crisis countries/territories in 2022. The findings of the GRFC, 2023 suggested that achieving the goal of ending hunger by 2030 is ever more challenging as the population facing high levels of acute food insecurity has increased for the fourth consecutive year. Nearly 258 million people in 58 countries/territories were in Crisis or worse acute food insecurity in 2022, up from 193 million in 53 countries/territories in 2021. “More than a quarter of a billion people are now facing acute levels of hunger, and some are on the brink of starvation. That’s unconscionable. António Guterres. *Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2023. (FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises, GRFC 2023. Rome).*

The war in Ukraine has had an outsized impact on global food systems due to the major contributions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to the production and trade of fuel, fertilizers and essential food commodities like wheat, maize and sunflower oil. The timing of the war also contributed to this impact as higher international commodity prices in the first half of 2022 compounded the macroeconomic challenges that countries continued to face after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In African countries, Rural communities including Nigeria depend basically on agro-based enterprises for their livelihoods (Olaya, 2019). Crops and livestock farming agro-based enterprises provide the means of livelihood and economic sustenance for the majority of the rural farming population. In recent years, Nigeria have witnessed a series of violent communal clashes arising from the activities of the herders who move about on a daily basis with their cattle in search of water and green pastures (Suleiman, 2015). Consequently, many farmers and herders have lost their lives, while others have experienced declining production in their crops and herds. Recently, there have been a lot of concerns expressed over the looming danger of food crisis in many nations, including Nigeria. In Nigeria, Agricultural production has been cut short by conflict as a result shortened agricultural productivity resulting to high food prices and food insecurity. The alarming rise of food prices in the country necessitates for prompt action. As much as 21.4% of families in Nigeria were experiencing acute food scarcity in 2020 (Osabohien *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, Erokhin and Gao (2020) reported that about 50% of the Nigerian population are living below poverty line of 1.9 United States Dollar (USD). The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) rating shows that Nigeria ranked 94th out of 113 nations in 2019 with a 48.4/100 score, which puts the country below Ethiopia, Niger, and Cameroon (Ayinde *et al.*, 2020). In addition, Nigeria has overtaken India as the world’s most impoverished country (Ayinde *et al.*, 2020). In Nigeria Farmers and herders provide significant contributions in meeting the nutritional needs of the country and thus contributing to food security of households (Onuoha, and Ezirim, 2015). Small-scale farmers in Nigeria constituted 90% of Nigeria’s agricultural output (Ayinde *et al.*, 2020), while the majority of these farmers are not able to feed themselves and other relatives. The low productivity was

mainly as a result of fragmented land holding, over reliance on rain-fed agriculture, climate change, low access to inputs and poor economic base.

Olanrewaju and Balana, (2023). In his study “conflict-related shocks and household food security in Nigeria”. The study examined and summarized the types, geographic scopes, and effects of wars on Nigeria's food security. The study also looked at how conflict-related shocks, like forced migration and fatalities, affected household food security indicators using survey data and econometric models. According to the study, the bulk of Nigeria's violent conflicts includes economic disparity, competition for productive resources, and antagonism between different ethnic and religious groups as their root causes. The primary policy recommendations are based on the findings and include the need for targeted interventions to address conflicts unique to states or regions, policy interventions on property/land rights, and livestock management systems to address herder-farmer conflicts.

Solomon, (2021). Conducted a study to determine the degree to which farmer-herder conflicts affect Taraba state's food production, availability, stability, and consumption. The study used a multi-stage sampling procedure and a survey research methodology to sample 285 respondents. To evaluate the data and assess the hypotheses, p-table and percentage were employed, along with Pearson Correlation. The results of the study showed that the rising number of farmer-herder conflicts has resulted in low productivity, unstable food supplies, low food consumption, inaccessible food, and insufficient food availability in Taraba state.

Yakubu *et al.*, (2021). Investigated the impact of farmer-herder disputes on rural households' access to food in Gombe State, Nigeria. Found that Between 118 farmers and 112 herders, primary data were gathered utilizing a structured questionnaire and focus groups. Regression models based on percentage, Tobit, and logit were employed to analyze the data. According to the research, 59.3% of farmers and 31.3% of herders had moderate hunger and food insecurity, while 43.7% of farmers and 66.1% of herders experienced severe hunger and food insecurity. The farmer-herder conflict was caused by the killing of stray cattle, population expansion, rape, and sexual harassment, all of which had different side consequences.

Nnaji *et al.*, (2022). In his is study Farmers-herder disputes and food insecurity in rural Nigeria: He collected Data from 401 rural households in Nigeria, the study uses a two-stage predictor substitution model. According to the empirical findings, food insecurity in Nigeria is considerably worsened by farmer-herder disputes, both in frequency and severity. From the standpoint of sustainable development, the study suggests that policy interventions be made to alleviate persistent farmer-herder disputes in afflicted nations like Nigeria.

Obioha, (2008). outlined the impact created by crop and cattle farmers who are the main agricultural practitioners, through their efforts in meeting the nutritional needs of the country and thus contributing to food security. However, the dimension and magnitude of this conflict has assumed an increasing regularity and the killings have left researchers to wonder how this crisis can be solved. The fundamental issue in this crisis is the lack of government to plan productive activities that will guarantee long term investment in the country (Enoma, 2019). Agricultural

export of Nigeria declined from 60 percent of GDP in the early 1970 to about 28.9 percent in quarter 1 of 2020 (NBS, 2020). According to report by the Sun newspaper June 2016, the increase in competition for arable land has often time led to serious manifestations of killings, and social friction among the two groups of people. This has led to greater insecurity in human life and food insecurity though statistic currently shows these effects. In Darfur region in Sudan the conflict transforms into a full-blown war that claim the lives of over 200,000 people and render over million homeless. Over 3000 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in Benue and Kaduna state alone between 2014 and 2020 alone (Nedozie, 2021).

The objective of this paper is to investigate the Impact of farmers herder conflicts on socio economic development of Nigeria. In an attempt to address this objective, the following questions will be answered.

- a. What are the current causes of the conflict?
- a. What is the impact of the conflict on the Nigerian socio-economic development?
- b. What are the mitigating strategies employed by government in tackling this problem?
- c. What are the possible solutions to the conflicts?

Theoretical Frame Work.

Karl Marx Conflict Theory. The conflict perspective or conflict theory was derived from the ideas of Karl Marx (1818:1883). The great German theorist and political activist believed that society is a dynamic entity constantly undergoing change driven by conflict notable scholars regarded Karl Marx as a social prophet. According to Marx, men are always in the social production of their will, namely, relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production, the totality of which constitutes the economic structure of society. The fact that the dominant ruling class (the bourgeoisie) controls the social relations of production, the dominant ideology in capitalist society is that of the ruling class. Ideology and social institutions, in turn serve to reproduce and perpetuate the economic class structure. According to Marx, the real foundation upon which the super structure of social, political and intellectual consciousness was built has been the exploitative economic arrangement of capitalism. Marx believes that any social setting based on exploitative economic arrangement generated within it the seed of its own destruction (Marx, 1971).

Climate Change Theory.

The theory postulates that structural factors that put a strain on natural resources push people to stay together. Initially, the phenomenon of climate change arose as an environmental issue and an energy problem before its perception as a security threat. Relate the causes of conflict to the global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands, forcing pastoralist to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock. Climate change-induced rainfall shifting patterns/amount and desertification reduces crop lands, and farmers have to follow these patterns, leading to overlap on grazing lands.

The structural theory.

Structural theory, attempts to explain conflict as a product of the tension that arises when groups compete for scarce resources. The central argument in this sociological theory is that conflict is built into the particular way's societies are structured or organized. It describes the condition of the society and how such condition or environment can create conflict. Structural conflict theory identifies such conditions as social exclusion, deprivation, class inequalities, injustice, political marginalization, gender imbalances, racial segregation, economic exploitation and the likes, all of which often lead to conflict.

Frustration-Anger-Aggression theory argues that the cycle of conflict starts with a party (or the parties) to conflict becoming frustrated in its desire to achieve an objective. This frustration leads parties into aggression against the parties they hold responsible for their woes. The aggression then leads to conflict and violence (Anifowose,2006). The progression from frustration to aggression is the basic driver of violent confrontation between and among groups. The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal. Frustration is described as the feeling we get when we do not get what we want, or when something interferes with our gaining a desired goal (as shown in the case of Niger Delta, IPOB and MASSOP agitations). The frustration aggression theory states that aggression is caused by frustration. When someone is prevented from reaching his target, he becomes frustrated.

Conflict Resolutions Models.

Another model is the Political conflict resolution model. It usually involves two or more warring parties with conflict value or issue that are not compatible. The nature of this incompatibility could be territorial or governmental. A warring party could be government of a state or any opposing party that uses armed force to promote its position. This war will eventually be concluded with a peace agreement by both parties. There is a formal agreement which addresses the dispute either by settling all or part of it or outlines the process on how to resolve the incompatibility. At time it could be a ceasefire agreement (Langton *et al.*,2019).

The Education Conflict Model; The model believes in resolving conflict through counseling. It usually involves training individual to resolve conflict in any department of life. Given that both word and verbal action can insult, injure and/or exalt. Better communication process is emphasized in education management. The major point in education conflict resolution is communication and guidance towards conflict resolution. It equally involves a non-directive counseling or listening with understanding. It entails clarity and focusing on problems.

Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanism.

Causes of Herders Famers Conflicts in Nigeria.

The causes of these conflicts have been traceable to the policy gap and underdevelopment of grazing lands, land ownership and utilization system, increase in production due to the increase in population, climate change, induced competition for resources, poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage and environmental degradation. These conflicts by implication have resulted in internal displacement of people, loss of life's and properties,

destruction of farm crops, cattle rustling. Killings, hunger and insecurity.

- a. **Population Growth:** Generally, population growth and an increase in the number of farmers, environmental degradation, disruption of conditions for resolving land and water disputes, and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria have exacerbated the struggle for the survival and security of economic livelihoods, and in particular negatively affected relationships between herders and farmers in Nigeria. This conflict is not triggered by a single reason, but are driven by a set of multi-causal factors. This has mounted pressure on the land resource for crop farmer and grazing by herdsman. For example, the growth in the size of population from 33 million in 1950 to 200 million in 2020 has intensified this crisis. About 47.7 percent of the former rural areas turned to urban area with serious consequence for grazing and crop farming (World Statistics, 2021). Population size couple with reduced grazing land has exacerbated this crisis. Most of the 415 grazing reserves established by the northern government in 1960 have since been lost. Only 114 is said to be documented (ADP Report 2021). Resulting from this limited grazing space most herders have moved south in order to increase their access to grazing land. This has serious consequence because their action conflicts with that of the crop farmers. With growing population per land and with increasing farming activities beyond the traditional allocated land especially in the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) for crop farmers, the dwindling land resource has led to clashes between herders and crop farmers. Since herders lost access to abundant wetland, the cattle find their way into farms (Mike Sand International Crisis Group, 2021).
- b. **Effects of Climatic Changes:** Nigeria over the year has witnessed changes in climatic condition which has resulted in the long dry season and low rainfall. In 2015, the National Meteorological Agency reported that over the preceding 30 years annual rainfall has dropped from an average of 150 to 120 days of rainfall season and that in the last six decades over 350,000sqkm of the already arid region turned to desert and semi-desert conditions, an occurrence of this, progresses southward at the rate of 0.6km per years (Federal Ministry of Environment National Policy on Desertification and Drought 2018). According to the National Policy, states such as Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara had been estimated to have about 50–70 percent of their land area is being threatened by desertification thus pushing millions of the herders to seek grazing land in other communities. Migration of herders initially was seasonal spanning from December each year to May in the middle belt and some parts of the southern state. As a result, the herders have changed this practice of staying between December to May to staying permanently and this has resulted to increasing conflict in the country among crop farmers and herdsman over the use of land and water (Adisa 2010 and Nte, 2019).
- c. **Breakdown of Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanism:** This has been adjudged as one of the major causes of these clashes among herders and crop farmers (Robert and Gator, 2016). Over the last three decades, young men or boys, aged between ten to twenty-five

years have been in charge of the cattle. They are not civil and mature to resolved is dispute amicably. The federal and state governments on their part have not done much to ensure the protection of both herders and crop farmers (International Conflict Group 2010). The outright legislation to ban cattle grazing in most state has spark up crisis and intensified the killings in most state (SunNewspaper,2020). Global Terrorism: According to the vice chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) 2017 claimed that their member had lost over one million cattle to Boko Haram insurgency in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and so other states in the north. The insurgence of Boko Haram had led to the mass migration of cattle from their original home to most parts of southern Nigeria. It was equally reported by MACBAN (2017), that as a result of the attack on their members, they have been equipped with weapons to protect the survival of the cattle and their business. It has been reported that the increasable prevalence of weapons has amplified the human cost of killing in most parts of the country (Adejumobi,2019).

- d. Crime (Rural Banditry and Cattle Rustling): It has been reported by some researchers that rural banditry and cattle rustling are some of the causes of herders migrating to the southern part of Nigeria (Eyekpini, 2016). By the 1980's bandit groups locally known as "kwarta" attacked traders and other travelers along major highways and recently this group have proliferated in major rural area in the north raiding villages, market and engage in cattle rustling in these communities. Over the last decade, cattle rustling has grown in large scale operations and organizations in several northern states where large group of bandits operate with absolute freedom without law enforcement agencies putting a stop to their operations. Cattle rustling operate in Kawuka forest in Kaduna, Dansadua forest in Zamfara, Falgore forest in Kano and Davin Rugu forest in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara states. It equally operates in some parts of Kogi, Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa (Adejumobi,2019). It is reported that cattle theft has been a major source of funding for Boko Haram activities. This led to the government ban of cattle import to Borno state to check Boko Haram funding.
- e. Technology and Economic Changes: Another major factor causing the conflict between herder and crop farmers is lack of technological innovation in farming practices by both herders and crop farmers (Uche, 2016). In a study carried by Addisa and Adekunle (2010), they identified poverty and lack of production techniques as factors responsible for crop farmers herders' conflict. Latest cattle farming technique like Ranches and Aerodonic techniques for crop farming are not feasible to both farmers because of the heavy initial cost. Therefore, farmers still use obsolete method of production (pastoralism) which is characterized by low production and low return on output per man (Fagan,1999).
- f. Dysfunctional Legal System: Ineffective prosecution of perpetrators of violence and weak legal system has been a major factor of the increasing cause of this conflict (Stieglitz,2016). Federal security and law enforcement agencies have not established any rapid response mechanism to curb the occurrence of killings in most parts of the country, couple with the fact that state legislation on this issue appear to be one side. (Crisis Group Report 2016). Most state in the south and middle belt of the country have legislated outright ban of cattle rearing in their states. This decision has been opposed by the MACBAN as a threat to their

business.

- g. Lack of Planning Model to Accommodate Farmers/Herdsman Production: From preoccupation on accelerated growth of the economy or Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the objective of every country development effort has been broadened to include improvement in welfare, access to basic need such as shelter, food, clothing, education and health. These goals can only be achieved when there is appropriate planning of production by policy makers or government (Abugre, 2011, Sawing, 2013). Classical economist opposes to planning because they rely on the invisible hands to regulate market activities. With the successes in the growth and long-term investment plan in China attention has now shifted from less government regulation of economic activities to state intervention in production.

Measures Employed by Successive Governments in tackling the Issues of farmers herders' conflicts In Nigeria.

The government of Nigeria over the years has employed various strategies in tackling this crisis of farmers herder's conflict. In 2014, government inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserve. The report of the committee called for the recovery and improvement to fall grazing routes encroached upon by farmers and recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) release a sum of N100 billion to the country for ranch construction. It was again reported that CBN released 100 billion naira to state governments but not utilized for the purpose it was might to serve. By 2016, the government of Buhari administration through the advice of Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) was told to set a short, medium- and long-term strategies which will encourage the development of grazing areas in all the states in the country. Most states in the central and southern areas rejected this plan. In March 2016 the same year, the FMARD announced the proposal to import grass from Brazil on the grazing reserve in order to increase the consumption of grass by cattle and boost their output. This pronouncement again failed because it was strongly opposed by public opinion. Following recent crisis in Benue the federal government had again proposed the development of cattle colonies in the various states of Nigeria. This proposal is yet to take effect.

Apart from the executive arm of the federal government response to this crisis, the federal legislators equally sponsored a bill to create, National Grazing Reserve Commission (NGRC) in 2011. The Bill did not pass the second reading and eventually was thrown out in 2015. From 2015 to 2016 three new Bills were introduced on creating grazing reserves, livestock routes and ranches across the country. This bill again did not succeed based on the fact that Land Use Act was exclusively state affair. Some state governments on their part have established herder/farmer conflict resolution committee and some made laws to regulate the activities of herders in their state. For example, Gombe state government set up Farmers and Herdsmen Resolution Committee. Ekiti passed a grazing bill prohibiting grazing or movement of cattle at night and stipulate that any herder found with weapon would be charged with terrorism and this law was been forced by Ekiti Grazing Enforcement Marshals (EGEM). Benue state in 2016 and Taraba state in 2017 equally passed a bill banning open grazing and rearing of animals and for herders

to carry firearms. In Edo state, there was a proposed bill to create free grazing area and watering facilities for herders to feed their cattle. The herders were expected to pay for this service. This failed as it could not pass through the public hearing convoked by the Edo State House of Assembly in 2018.

Effects of the farmers herders Conflict on Nigeria Socio-Economic Development.

There are inadequate data that available for empirical analysis on the Impact of farmers herders' conflict on social economic development of Nigeria, however, there are valuable discussions and some isolated facts provided in literature to showcase the effects of the conflict on the social economic development of Nigeria. The effects of the conflicts on socio-economic development of Nigeria are presented as follows:

- a. Displacement of People from their Communities: The conflict exacted heavy humanitarian crisis on people in their various communities. It is estimated that about 2,500 persons were killed in the country by 2016 and this figure is higher than that killed by Boko Haram. According to the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Organization (2016), 2,069 people died in herder-related violence in Benue and Kaduna States. From 2015 to 2019 at least 189,862 people were displaced in Kaduna, Benue, Bornu, Taraba and Plateau states. Most of these people were forced to find shelter in other poor rural communities or in the overcrowded Internally Displaced Camps (IDP) (DailyTimes2020).
- b. Psychological Trauma of victims and potential victims: Arising from a survey conducted on some selected IDPs in Nigeria by Josémaria Escrivá Foundation (2018). A major finding from their survey was that some victims who survived either the Boko Haram invasion or the herdsmen attacks were still finding it very difficult to contend with current realities. Surprisingly, a 10-year-old victim has continued to have nightmares arising from this. The challenge and the unfortunate situation are that most of these IDP camps do not have the wherewithal to effectively handle such traumas currently being experienced. There exists only one certified trauma treatment center in Nigeria and it is domiciled in Abuja. The long-run impact will be that the people will grow up with a loss of their personal, emotional, psychological and socio-cultural identities.
- c. Women and Girls vulnerability to Sexual and Economic Predation: The effect of this conflict fell heavily on women and girls. It is recorded that relative of men killed in the violence often evict widows from their husband farmland. After the conflict women economic and social conditions render them more vulnerable to sexual and economic exploitation (Crisis Group 2017). Some of them engage in prostitution and other social crimes.
- d. Huge Economic Burden on the Government: The effect of the conflict on government has been huge. In 2015, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) lost about 13.7 billion dollars in revenue annually because of the herders/farmers conflict in Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Taraba and Plateau States. On the average these states lost 47 percent of their Internally Generated Revenues (IGRs). Benue particular lost about 95 billion naira between 2012 and 2014 (Sun Newspaper, 2016). The cost of this conflict is still rising in the current

period. The level of poverty in the affected area has been on the rise. The budget on this crisis in all the states have been on the increase (Crisis Group, 2017). Apart from the rise in budget, communities have lost over 65 billion naira in properties due to farmer/herder clashes (Sun Newspaper, 2016).

e. **Reduced Level of Productive Activities:** Farmer/herder clashes have led to lost in production by both the farmers and the herders. It is reported that the loss of cattle and crops as well as increase in transportation cost in post conflict area have increased poverty and food insecurity. (Crisis Group, 2016). No reliable statistics have been able to show the loss in production as a result herder/farmer clashes but it would imply that in crisis zone farmers and herders will not produce their crops and cattle in those zones.

f. **widening food supply and rising cost.** States, traditionally known for farming and abundance food supply, now struggle to meet population demand within their zones and across the country. In, Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Kogi, Enugu, Ebonyi, Ekiti and Taraba states, many now find it difficult to procure food stuffs from local markets, due to low earnings and exorbitant prices or inadequate distribution within the country. In the last one year, according to media reports, many farm workers are leaving their farm and it has great implication for food supplies. It is becoming almost impossible to rear animals, plant seeds or harvest crops as observed by a crop farmer in Benue.

g. **Crisis and Mistrust among the Two Major Religions (Muslim and Christianity):** Some individuals believe that the attack by Fulani's herdsman is an attempt to Islamize the people in the Religious country. These people view the attacks as part of a long-term Fulani plot to displace indigenous people and takeover their lands. So, among Christian Community's herder attacks are another form of Jihad (Uche, 2016). Though this assertion is not supported by empirical evidence but there are aggravating inter-faith mistrust and undermine the unity of the country.

h. **Emergence of Anti-Fulani Sentiments:** It has been observed that the violent disposition of the Fulani herdsman has given rise to anti-Fulani sentiment in some parts of the country and has also continued to instill hatred against them (Idowu, 2017). Some persons have cited a Fulani expansionist agenda as being behind these attacks. A twitter hash-tag to that effect MAFO (Movement against Fulani Occupation) has been launched and there have been allegations of possible government collusion in this perceived expansionist agenda (Nwosu, 2017). In Ebonyi, the conflict was found to have led to loss of peaceful co-existence, breakdown of established friendship, perpetual fear of attack and loss of family means of livelihood (Umeh and Chukwu, 2016).

I. **Increasing Division among the Federating States and threat to National Security:** As the crisis increase in intensity and in geographical scope, the division among the federating states had intensified. Federal government controls the police and military as a result, many states now advocate the need for state policing in order to control this crisis (MASSOB, 2020). This division coupled with the fact that federal security and law enforcement agencies have never issued early-warning or responded appropriately to the attacks has made some states government to have less faith in the federal security apparatus. This division is further aggravated by each states or groups in the state forming vigilante self-defense group and

some of these groups have threatened a reprisal attack on the herders. Particularly, the Tiv and Ekiti hunters.

j. Arms proliferation and emergence of armed militia. Another germane consequence of this trend is arms proliferation. So far as some individuals have openly called and advocated for self-defense shows that more unregistered arms will be made available. Recalling November 2017, A 30 tones car a van was intercepted at the A papa Port. What happened to the exporter and import is yet unknown. Also, the emergence of armed militia in whatever form organize will have unprecedented destabilizing effects on national security. This is why the call for self-defense must be treated with all seriousness.

CONCLUSION.

This paper has examined the socio-economic impact of herders and farmer conflicts on social economic development of Nigeria. It is clear that the conflicts in Nigeria are centered on the cattle owners and crop farmers. The periodical struggle for scarce resources has degenerated into violent conflicts in Nigeria. Since most of the cattle herders do not own or possess the land rights, they therefore depend absolutely on open land to feed their cattle. Government policies on agriculture, especially the all-year Fadama (dry season farming), are threats to cattle herders' access to pasture. Acquisition of, additional farms has encroached traditional cattle routes thus drastically reducing the grazing for herder's livestock and access to pasture areas and water points. Furthermore, the use of police and courts to resolve conflicts between cattle herders and crop farmers by the government has been ineffective as this approach had further contributed to the occurrence of the conflicts. All these have instigated 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. This conflict will continue to have a negative impact on the economy and if not properly managed might degenerate to a full-blown war arising from various comments from stakeholders. Therefore, it is in the interest of the Nation to end the land encroachment and take concrete steps to address the genuine needs of cattle herders for the availability of grazing land, resolve the re-occurring conflicts in the agricultural sector, which currently provides employment to the large population of the country. Efforts made by the stakeholders to prevent the conflict have been minimal or ineffective, which may have led to a perception by some states that they should take responsibility for their own security. These have increased the conflicts in Nigeria. However, the government involvement of all the stakeholders has reduced the conflict, but the conflict is still ongoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

In order to mitigate the detrimental externalities due, to the farmers herders' conflict on the socio economy-development in Nigeria, it is Recommended that all States in the federation to come together and have a common policy on land use in their states. Most importantly, the herdsmen

should embrace modern day style of animal husbandry and also work in collaboration with Government Research Institutions to produce cattle species that can withstand the current test of times.

To avert food security conflicts, government at all levels should ensure peace between the herdsmen and farmers.

There is the need Strengthen the mechanism for conflict resolution Mechanisms in the states to regulate and prosecute offenders violating the law set up in the state to regulate farmer herder's interaction.

The Drought and Desertification must be addressed by the Federal Government and there is need to invest on projects that will stop the desertification. Though this might be a long-term project however there should be indication to start the project.

Economic growth and development are not a fire brigade approach but a systematic process of planning production. To this end, both crop farming and cattle farming should be planned and both farmers registered by government.

There should be soil mapping and gradual development from open grazing ranches in the country.

Herdsmen and farmers should be properly educated or re-oriented on the Sensitivity of human lives, and taught how to use better channels of communication to convey their grievances, than resorting to conflict. Any form of aggression as a result of past issue(s) should be discouraged and anyone found wanting in that respect be prosecuted. The implication of the foregoing is that appropriate authorities need to investigate recent increase in the reprehensible activities of herdsmen.

The need for fostering value reorientation and restoring earlier interactive ties between herdsmen and farmers which seems vital today, so that Nigerians can learn to appreciate the values that unite them more than those that separate the society, and tolerance for other ethnic groups should be encouraged. There is a need for resignification of lawful cattle routes for the pastoralist to avoid farmlands encroachments.

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