

**Original Research Article**

**Effect of Herdsmen and Farmers' Crises on Food Security in Nigeria**

SHOLA E. OJELADE

*University of Ilorin, Nigeria*

**Corresponding Author:** SHOLA E. OJELADE E-mail: ojelade2003@gmail.com

**ARTICLE INFO**

*Article History*

**Received:** June 05, 2019

**Accepted:** August 10, 2019

**Volume:** 1

**Issue:** 1

**KEYWORDS**

Herdsmen, Farmer, Frustration-Aggression, Grazing, Ranching Zone.

**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the effects of herdsmen and farmers' crisis on food security in Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the factors influencing herdsmen and farmers crisis in Nigeria. The study also determined the effects of herdsmen and farmers crisis on food security in Nigeria. Lastly, the study analyzed the socio-economic implications of herder/farmers clashes on Nigeria. Qualitative data and secondary source of data was adopted to gather data for the study. The movements of herdsmen to new grazing area where culture, language, belief, religion, land tenure system etc. are not familiar to them are seen as one of the source of the clash between the herdsmen and farmers. The study also revealed that the unfriendly and conflictual relationship between the two parties in the conflict has greatly impacted on food security especially food for immediate consumption. Based on the findings, it was recommended that tackling desertification through reforestation and irrigation farming should be encouraged. It was also recommended that a large expanse of land set aside primarily for grazing should be declared as ranching zone. This should be made available across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

**1. Introduction**

One of the goals of Nigeria's agricultural development policy is to ensure that the nation produces enough food and less dependent on importation so as to ensure adequate and affordable food for all. However, food security in Nigeria has come under threats since the emergence of series of attacks by terrorist sects in the country.

Since the uprising of an Islamic terrorist's sect called the Boko Haram, the Herdsmen attacks and the Niger-delta militant group, their activities have been collectively and strongly condemned in Nigeria and by the international community for the mindless and dreadful attacks on innocent citizen which have left many dead, traumatized, many properties destroyed and mass displacement of residents (Eyekpimi, 2016).

Nigeria was yet to recover from the dreadful attack caused by the Niger-delta militant group when Boko-Haram struck in 2009. While still struggling to abate the bad omen caused by this sect, the herders surfaced with a more terrifying attacks. The last decade in Nigeria has witnessed the death of thousands, displacement of hundreds of thousands and destruction of enormous amount of property owing to improper management of societal differences. Conflict is inevitable owing to human nature and particularly in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state like Nigeria. But what determines a rational and people oriented state is the modality installed by authorities to calm the nation-state when tensions boiling from ethno-religious intolerance surfaces without allowing its degenerate into violence and armed conflict.

The menace posed by herdsmen in the different communities they migrate to for purposes of grazing their cattle is becoming very frightening. They are constitute major security challenges to their host communities. The tendency towards engaging the land and farm owners of the sites they graze their cattle is increasing by the day as they update their armory with highly sophisticated weapons. This is the prevailing security challenge in some communities and states in Nigeria. The herdsmen have become an imminent danger which Nigeria cannot continue to ignore. The disastrous consequence of their activities is

not only on national security but equally a major bane to food availability and sustainability. However, discourse on herdsmen and farmers conflict in contemporary Nigeria has largely been done without emphasis on its implication to food security. The major crises that may escalate in the near future as a result of these conflicts are shortage in food production and the insecurity of lives and property.

The Fula people also known as Fulani in Hausa language, are a mass population widely distributed and culturally different in all of Africa, but can be found largely in West Africa. The primary language of the Fulanis' is the Fula language. A vast number of them are pastoralists in, they herd cattle, goats and sheep across the enormous grasslands of their environment, they isolate themselves from local communities especially the farming communities, and these has made them the largest pastoral/nomadic group in the world. They spread over many countries especially West Africa and northern parts of Central Africa, but they have a significant population in Sudan and Egypt. The core Fulani sub-groups found in Nigeria are; Fulbe Adamawa, Fulbe Mbororo, Fulbe Sokoto, Fulbe Gombe, and the Fulbe Borgu (Eyekpimi, 2016).

Nigeria has experienced a lot of socio-economic crises which can be traced to the herdsmen and farmers crises in the country. Some of these crises have economic, political, social, and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has affected the country at different times within the last ten years. There have been series of herdsmen and farmers crises which have affected every area and sector of Nigeria especially the economic and political sector. Dambazzu (2007), opined that the herdsmen and farmers crises is not the only major crises the country has experienced, others include ethnic and religious conflicts, insurgency, terrorism etc. Just like every country of the world with one form of crises or the other, the herdsmen and farmers conflict has caused a great disparity between the people. The crises has over the years made the country underdeveloped. As a result of the conflict and other conflicts, Nigeria has been tagged the poverty capital of the world (Emeka, 2016). The tag came about because of the destruction of lives, properties and farmlands. The rate and intensity of the crises has further increased in some parts of the country especially the north central political zone.

Ironically, the herdsmen and farmers crises now has a new dimension to it. The crises now has a religious undertone. The crises has pitched Christianity and Islam against each other. This has affected the age long peaceful coexistence and communal relationship between the predominantly Christian south and predominantly Muslim north. This is more evident in mono-religious settlements like the Agatu people of Benue state. As a result of these clashes, most places that are traditionally peaceful are now hotspot of violence and conflicts. These clashes have had devastating effect on the relationship between the people of the area.

According to a recent study by Emeka (2016) and Ekpeyemi (2016), a huge stretch of farmland has been destroyed by these conflict thereby leading to food insecurity in the country. Also, farmers have refused to go to their farmland because of fear of being attacked by herdsmen, this has also contributed to food shortage across the country. In the last five years, there has been an astronomical increase in the number of reported attacks on farmers by herdsmen in the country. Prominent among the communities' that has suffered series of attacks recently is the Agatu community in Benue state, north-central Nigeria. According to report, over 70 residents were killed and over 20 hectares of farmland destroyed in early 2018 alone. This led to the destruction of farm produce, loss of live and properties (Ilufeye, 2009).

As a way to discontinue the killing, the central government of Nigeria, led by President Muhammadu Buhari, has ordered military enquiry into the incessant killing and to know the root cause of the conflict. The government has also declared a military clampdown on the various groups that have been killing both farmers and herders. Also, the government has declared cattle colonies and cattle ranches across the country in a bid to reduce and ultimately eliminate the clashes between the herders and farmers to increase food production. The farmers has however find it difficult to go to their farm because of fear of attacks by the herders and those who eventually go to their farm, go with different weapons to protected themselves against such attacks.

It is based on the foregoing anomalies that the study is set out to investigate the implications of heinous attacks by the herders on food security in Nigeria. Other objectives of the study are to; examine the factors influencing herdsmen and farmers crisis in Nigeria, determine the effects of herdsmen and farmers crisis on food security in Nigeria, and analyze the socio-economic implications of herder/farmers clashes for Nigeria.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Food Security and Conflict: Conceptual Discourse and Clarification**

According to World Bank (2001), food security can be categorized into three; food availability, food accessibility and food affordability. Food availability generally means that the household have enough food to go round to every member of the

family. Meaning every member of a family have sufficient food at a particular time. The second category is food accessibility. How accessible is the food? Does the family have easy access to food? The third categorization is food affordability which means the household capability to purchase food for immediate consumption. Thereby, food security means having physical and economic access to enough food for every member of the household with access to the means of purchasing the food (Sen, 1981). The idea of food security has gone beyond the requirement of food being a substance for survival. The modern connotation of food security includes eating at a level that is suitable for the mental, physical and biological health and wellbeing of an individual. This connotation also includes the right to eat the food that is culturally acceptable by the individual. This also includes eating the proper ratio that the body need for survival (Robertson, 1990).

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Africa, (1986) defined food security as a situation "When all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life". Food security is dependent on agricultural production, food importation and donations, employment opportunities and income earnings, intra-household decision-making and resource allocation, health care utilization and caring practices (Maxwell and Frankenberger, 1992).

Food security cuts across different dimensions. Food security is a situation whereby an individual have adequate access to food for healthy living and also to promote his or her wellbeing. From the foregoing, we can divide food security into 2 complex concepts; food availability and nutritional value of the food. The food should have sufficient nutrient for a better and sustainable health and living. To set a target for food security is a complex task which might be difficult to achieve. This is so because there are multiple determinant of food security for members of a household. NEPAD (2015) says that food security requires that food is readily available and accessible at any given time. However, there are certain factors that hamper local, regional, national and international level of food supply. Some of these factors are climate and climate changes, trade restrictions and embargos, the agricultural practice etc. At the local level, food security is basically direct access to food. At the national level there are a lots of indices to food security, so also at the international level. The government at the national level plays a significant roles in the availability of food through governmental policies like creating a competitive market for the farmers which will eventually lead to food availability which will ultimately lead to food accessibility and affordability. Food security is directly linked to the social wellbeing of an individual and also the economic needs of the society/community.

On the final note, Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, (2013) defined food insecurity as a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity, poor conditions of health and sanitation and inappropriate care and feeding practices are the major causes of poor nutritional status. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory. The insecurity of food abnormality in Nigeria has been intensified by the occurrence of continuous communal clashes between herders and community farmers. This has not only affected food availability, it has hindered food accessibility and sufficiency.

The concept of conflict is based on individual perception. Some people perceive conflict to be a negative phenomenon while others believe it is positive. The understanding one have of the subject matter is influenced by the way the person perceives conflict, either positive or negative. Also, some scholars see conflict as a necessary condition that will facilitate the individual and societal growth and development. Some believe that conflict is a natural occurrence in every society while others believe conflict is alien and abnormal in the society and should have no place in the social life of individuals. However conflict is part of social life and can be found in every facet of human endeavor and society. Conflict has been a natural phenomenon since time immemorial. History is full of people with various forms of conflicts. In the present age, individuals, villages, nations etc. engage in conflict. Individually, we all have engaged in some form of conflict or another. Either in our houses, workplace, society, etc. Conflict exist in the interaction where one sees his ideals and perception in contradiction with another person and they feel their perception cannot be achieved because of the other party (Beetham, 1994). Where there is conflict, the relations of and interaction between the two warring parties cannot continue the way it had been before the conflict. There is therefore the need to readjust and reconstruct the relationship.

Armed conflict tan be seen as a planned group vicious clash between two or more individual, state or non-state actors. In armed conflicts there are at least two parties, could be individuals, state or non-state actors. Our attention is basically on non-state actors especially as the armed conflict affects communities. Conflicts usually occurs when there is irreconcilable difference of opinions and it can involve armed conflict at local, national and international level. Those involved in these conflicts can either be primary parties (which have formed the incompatibility i.e. those that have difference of opinion) and

secondary supporting parties (individual, corporations or states or international agencies which supports one of the warring parties and influence the conflict development). Furthermore, there are certain acts that can be classified as conflict. Such acts includes acts of violence, riots, terrorist attacks etc. (Glasl, 1999).

Violence can be seen as the illicit and illegal use of force to affect or change the behaviors, decisions or desires of other people in the society (Wolf, 1969). Violence means the imposition of authority to compel a group to behave in a certain manner. Violence will make a people to behave in a way they ordinarily won't. This act of violence is mainly to achieve a purpose.

### **3. Methodology**

The study appraises the implications of herdsmen and farmers clashes on food security in Nigeria. Given the nature of the course under study, the researcher adopts the descriptive analysis and secondary source of data for the study. Our secondary documents will be sourced from brochure on terrorism/violence conflicts, reports from national intelligence units, and report from domestic violence management groups in particular and relevant reports from international groups on terrorism observation/human right watch. Equally, data on food security will be sourced from United Nations Development Program and Nigeria agricultural success analysis handbook. This will be supplemented with newspapers report, editorial and opinion poll on the implications of herders and farmers' crises on food security in Nigeria. Furthermore, these will equally be complemented with published journal articles, books data base, and other relevant documents on food security and factors inhibiting attainment of food security in Nigeria.

However, the systematic content method of data analysis is used for the discussion of the information gathered from various data sources involving newspapers, editorial and articles. Equally, the descriptive statistical survey method of data analysis will be adopted in the execution of the study using simple table to analyse the timeline of Fulani Herders attacks, food production table in Nigeria and finally consequences of violence confrontations on food security in Nigeria. The combination of these methodology helps in giving insight to the catastrophic consequences of violence conflicts on food availability, accessibility and sustainability in Nigeria.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### **Assessment of Factors Inducing Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria**

Empirically, evidences have revealed various reasons for the continued conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. Some of the factors that influence the conflict include;

1. **Damaging or Grazing on Crops:** Sometimes the herdsmen lead their cattle to farmlands and allow their cattle graze intentionally on the crops planted by the farmers (Adebayo & Olaniyi, 2008). This has been identified as the primary reason for the clashes and conflicts between the farmers and herders. In a recent study conducted by Adebayo (2017), indiscriminate bush burning by the herders to clear their path, encroachment on grazing reserves and the deliberate attempt by the herders to graze on the farmlands are some of the reasons for the conflict especially in places like Bornu, Yobe and Kano states of Nigeria. In Oyo state, South-western Nigeria, about 35% of the farmers agreed that this is the cause of the conflict. In addition, 7% of the herders agreed that this constitute the main reason of the conflict (Adelakun, et al, 2015)
2. **Global warming:** The traditional home of the herder is the Sahel region. However, due to the global warming and the changing climatic conditions the world is currently experiencing, the herders have started to move southwards to areas where there are greener pastures for their cattle (Olaniyan et al, 2015). Some of the places they move to are traditionally cultivated by these farmers. The global warming and change in climatic condition made them move southwards. The movement has done nothing but aggravate the already tensed southern farmers which have ultimately led to the crises and clashes. The movement has also made these clashes more frequent (Nwosu, 2017). In Nasarawa state for example, the herders/farmers crises has been aggravated global warming (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).
3. **Long-Standing Disagreements:** Another factor that has been identified by Burton (2016) to be the cause of the clashes between the herders and farmers. This disagreement is historical as herders and farmers have been having disagreement for a long time. This disagreement has found its way to define the current clashes. Preexisting conflicts has sustained the clashes between the farmers and herdsmen. This is especially important because the herdsmen now have a reason to migrate southward as a result of global warming, urbanization and deforestation. This has added to the food insecurity in Nigeria as the clashes keep occurring at an alarming rate. For example, it was

reported in 2016 that the killing of people in Agatu community of Benue state by the Fulanis' was a reprisal attack for the killing of a Fulani man in Agatu community in 2013. This issues must be ironed out for a lasting solution to be achieved in the crises. (Mayah et al, 2016)

4. **Scarcity of Fresh Water:** All around the world there is scarcity of fresh water, and Nigeria is not an exception. This has been another factor inducing farmers and herders conflict in Nigeria. Scarcity of water has been a bane of the agricultural sector of Nigeria especially those into livestock farming. The scarcity of water is creating a cause of concern especially in the semi-arid region of Africa (Audu, 2013). Scarcity of water can be linked to the global warming earlier discussed. The herdsman need water for their cattle while the farmers need water for their plants. In recent times, both have heard series of clash as a result of water and this has added to the impetus of the clash. Furthermore, the contamination of water by herders has also been another issue (Ofem and Inyang, 2014)
5. **Lack of Access to Farm or Grazing Fields:** According to a research conducted by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in conjunction with United Nations Development Program in 2012 (IPCRUNDP, 2012). It was observed that lack of access to farmland and grazing fields was one of the factor inducing the herders and farmers conflict. As both need land for their activities. The farmers need land to farm and the herders needs land to graze. This was observed to be the main reason for herders/farmers conflicts in places like Guma and Makurdi localk government areas of Benue state, North-central Nigeria.
6. **Negligence:** Negligence is another factor that induce the conflict. Yahaya (2008) observed that both farmers and herders neglect to do the basic things to prevent the conflict. Some of the basic things includes; herders allowing their children take the cattle for grazing. These children usual and sometimes unintentionally lead these cattle to the farm to graze without knowing the consequences of such action. On the part of the farmers, they usually leave their harvested crops and farms unprotected which makes it easy for the cattle to invade these farmlands and graze on the crops. It was further observed by yahaya (2008) that some farmers, who for one reason or the other, have low yield intentionally leave their crops for the cattle to consume and then claim compensation from the government. The government have also been indicted in all this negligence allegations. The government unusual silence on the increasing grazing activities of the herders on the farms have also fueled crises (Burton, 2016). There have been calls from the National association of cattle breeders, Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) to resolve the conflict. Also there are calls from various quarters that the government have politicize the clashes.
7. **Disrespect of Traditional Authorities:** In some communities, it is a tradition to pay a certain levy by the local livestock and crop farmers to the traditional authority and rulers (Ofem and Inyang, 2014). However, these herdsman, who only come to such community for the purpose of grazing, refuse to pay such levies. Their refuser to pay these levies have been seen as a disregard for the traditional ruler and authority and a disrespect to the traditions. In such communities, the youths, who serve as the security of the community try as much as possible to enforce these levies from the cattle breeders. This sometimes cause conflict because of the herders' resistance to pay the levy. Disrespect and disregard for traditional authorities have been identified as the main cause of herders and farmers conflict in Delta state, South-south of Nigeria (Ofuoku and Isife, 2009).
8. **Increasing Urbanization:** Nigeria's pursuit of been among the developed countries of the world has continually had a major effect on agricultural activities in the country. As a result of urbanization, lands needed by the farmers and herders for farming and grazing respectively has been affected. This has had adverse effect especially on the herders who now seek to feed their cattle elsewhere (Burton, 2016). Other issues identified were "indiscriminate bush burning, sexual harassment of women by nomads, harassment of nomads by host youth, theft of cattle and indiscriminate defecation by cattle along the road" (Ofem & Inyang, 2014). It is important to note that some of these issues identified have been detrimental to agricultural development in the country. For instance, reduced crop output and poor quality of farmlands are as a result of bush burning. Sexual harassment by the nomad on the host communities can be attributed as a cause of increase in STD and unwanted pregnancies among the locals.

### Timeline of Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria

#### Major Herdsmen-Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria between April 2013 and March 2020.

Date	Place	Death Destruction toll/Casualties/Degree
April 2013	Guma, Benue	10 farmers killed
May 7, 2013	Agatu, Benue	47 people gunned down
May 14, 2013	Agatu, Benue State	40 peopl killed after over 200 herdmen invaded Ekwu-Okpanchenyi

July, 5, 2013	Guma, Benue	20 people killed in conflict between Tiv farmers and Herdsmen
November, 2013	Ikpele and Okpolopolo	7 killed and displacing over 6000
February, 2014	Gwer West, and Makurdi	42 people killed in the month with over 80,000 people displaced
March, 2014	Kwande Ktasina, Logo in Benue, Agatu, Gwer and Guma in Benue	131 people were killed in this month alone
April, 2014	Logo and Agatu LGA in Benue	About 218 people were reportedly killed in these area in the month of April with unknown numbers injured`
September, 2014	Attack on Five villages in Ogbadibo LGA	20 people killed
January, 2015	Agatu and Logo LGA	A total of 22 people were killed in separate attacks
March, 2015	Agatu LG in Benue	Over 90 locals were killed after invasion on Egba village
April, 2015	Guma	28 people were killed on attack on 3 villages in Mbadwem
May, 2015	Refugee camps at Ukura, Gafa, Per and Tse-Gusa, Logo LGA of Benue	100 people were killed by Fulani
November, 2015	Buruku LGA	12 killed and 25 others injured by suspected herdsmen attacker
January, 2016	Gareji village in Taraba State	3 people were killed
February, 2016	Agatu LGA	Over 500 killed on several attacks and later displacement of over 7000
March, 2016	Enugu State	It was a reprisal attack by the Herdsmen after armed farmers killed a Fulani traditional ruler- Ardo of Kardorko- Alhaji Habibu Domo, and four others 2 Soldiers, 18 others were Killed. Thousands were displaced and more than 1000 homesteads were destroyed
April, 2016	Taraba State	Farm land dispute Between 15 and 44 people were killed.
June , 2016	Benue State	At least 59 people killed
January, 2017	Ipiga village in Ohimini LGA	15 killed by herders
May, 2017	Logo community	13 people killed
December 31 and Janury 2, 2018	Logo and Guma LGA of Benue state	73 persons including seven members of Benue state Livestock Guards were killed
February, 2018	Adamawa state	20 people were killed by herders on attack on farmers
March, 2018	Benue State	26 people killed as herders sack Benue village in fresh attack
February 11, 2019	Ungwar Bardi, kajuru LGA, Kaduna state	141 people killed with 65 missing

July 2020	Doka Avong, southern Kaduna	At least 6 killed and hundreds displaced
August 5-6, 2020	Zangon Kataf LGA, Kaduna state	At least 19 people killed

Source: Collation by researcher through assessment of Senate Plenary of May, 2017 as cited in Vanguard Newspaper, 2017 and Naijnews May, 2018.

Importantly, other attacks occurred which are not captured by the table due to its minimal casualties or conflictual report by news medium. Attacks on communities have not ceased and has become a daily routine since the kick of this incessant attacks by the herders. Equally important to note is that farmers are not the only target in attacks as youths, elders; women and children have been massacred and displaced over the years.

### Socio-Economic Effects of Herdsmen-Farmers Conflicts In Nigeria

Clashes between cattle herders and crop farmers have been a major cause of increasing violence and general insecurity in Nigeria recently. There has been increasing adverse economic effects and social or relational implications such as;

1. **Loss of Human and Animal Lives:** The most important socio-economic effect of every conflict is the loss of lives and properties. In the case of the herdsmen and farmers conflict, there have been several reports of the loss of human and animal lives (Aliyu, 2015). On April 5, 2015, there were reports that four individuals were killed in Benue state by the herders. In the same month, between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 17 people were reportedly killed in Taraba state with over 40 people severely injured. Enugu state had its own share in the same month, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, over 40 lives were reportedly lost. Likewise, between 2014 and 2016, 853 lives were lost in a rivalry between the Tiv people and Fulani ethnic group in Benue state. The herdsmen claimed to have lost over 3200 cows in the attack, in addition to over 200 people reportedly killed (Burton, 2016), While the Tiv people gave an estimate of 633 deaths which excluded women and children in 2014 alone. Apart from the civilians who are reportedly killed in the crises, there have been several reports that the military lost some of their personnel. Six soldiers attached to the 72 battalion in Makurdi, the Benue state capital, were said to have lost their lives in a crossfire with the herdsmen and farmers. The military also gave a report in January of 2015 that they lost five of their men in Agatu community of Benue state while a captain beheaded in Guma community also in Benue state (Abdulbarkindo & Alupse, 2015). As many as 350 communities have been ransacked by the herdsmen in 2 states of the country with over 458 deaths were reported in Guma and Agatu communities in Benue state. Majority of the displaced people now live in various internally displaced peoples' (IDP) camps across the country.
2. **Destruction of Crops:** According to a research conducted in 2009, it was discovered that over 40 million dollars' worth of farm produce are lost yearly to the invasion of cattle in the south-south region of Nigeria alone with particular emphasis on Edo and Delta states (Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). This has made farming less lucrative in this region. It has also made most of the farmers in the region abandon their lifelong occupation, farming, for other less lucrative occupations like petty trading etc. In Kastina state, north-eastern Nigeria, Aliyu (2015) argued that the herdsmen and farmers conflict has led to the destruction of lives and properties especially farmlands and farm produce. This has had a direct link with the growing number of poor families in the state especially in the rural communities as farming is their primary occupation. The destruction of crops has had adverse effect on Nigeria thereby creating food insecurity in the country. In Calabar, south-south Nigeria, the prices of foods went up shortly after herdsmen and farmers conflict in Yakurr, a rural community not far from the city (Ofem & Inyang, 2014). The economic implication and destruction of the crises is massive for both parties (Umeh and Chukwu, 2016). However, the damages seem lesser on the herdsmen as they claim more monetary compensation. The farmers on their part lost a lot of their farmland and farm produce while the herders lost a lot of their cattle and sheep. Oyo state, south western Nigeria also has a share in the destruction of crops as it was reported that crops worth millions were destroyed as a result of the clashes in the state (Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile, 2015).
3. **Reprisal Attacks:** Due to security agencies inability and lack of political will to put an end to the incessant killing and clash between farmers and herdsmen, the youths in various communities have gone on reprisal attacks which have been more devastating than the initial attacks (Olugbenga, 2013).. For instance, the youths in several communities' in Ekiti state launched reprisal attacks on the herders abode where they sacked and looted the belongings of the herders. Reports like this are not uncommon in Nigeria as there have been series of reprisal attacks. Both farmers and herders have gone on these reprisal attacks across the country.

4. **Displacement of Persons and Animals:** There have been various reports of farmers and herders who have been displaced from their place of abode as a result of the herders and farmers conflict. In farming communities where the women and children stay, they hardly go to distance farms for fear of attacks (Ofuoku & Isife, 2009). The displaced farmers have become a liability to their family and friends as they have to beg for food for survival. The herders have also had a number of displaced people but because of their nomadic nature, there are little or no data of internally displaced herder. The herders and farmers crises has created a social problem of internally displaced people across the country (Ofem and Inyang, 2014).
5. **Distrust between Herdsmen and Farmers:** Burton (2016) opined that a large number of the Fulani ethnic group are mainly nomadic in nature without link to violent confrontations. Even these nonviolent ones are generally looked at suspiciously and with anger by the host communities on whose land they take their cattle, largely as a result of the actions of the violent group. This has made the once peace and mutual coexistence almost impossible.

### **General Challenges to Sustainable Food Security in Nigeria**

The survival of humans depends partly on feeding sufficiently. The unavailability of sufficient food for consumption will cause unnecessary rapture in the society as the individual will reel in hunger. This explains the importance of food, especially for human. The food must not only be available, it must also be accessible and affordable. The importance of food for human survival, growth and development cannot be overstated. This is so because, food is a necessity for the proper functioning of the human body. In Nigeria, there are certain factors that have acts as impediment to food security, some of these factors are discussed below;

1. **Agricultural Practices:** The traditional subsistent farming system is still the predominantly adopted farming system in Nigeria even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The system has as characteristics the usage of simple farm tools and small farm house. Other features of Nigeria agricultural practice are restricted access to credit facilities, low agricultural input, inadequate storage facilities, and market insecurity especially in the post-harvest period and lastly, exploitation of farmers by the middlemen. Technologically, Nigeria is behind other countries of the world. Poverty and illiteracy are two major reason why Nigeria is still practicing traditional subsistence farming. Other reasons are; the fact that there is little or no access to modern communication tools which has made it difficult to procure new farming equipment. Nigeria's dependence on importation of agricultural produce is another reason as the locally produced goods cannot compete with the imported ones.
2. **Population Increase:** The growth rate and increase in population is another reason. The demand for food, as a result of increasing population, is higher than the supply of food in the country. This can be attributed to the increasing population. Also, the reduction in the rural population as a result of rural dwellers migrating to urban areas in search of blue and white collar jobs. This has made it difficult for food to be produced at a reasonable rate that will meet the demand for food by the growing population.
3. **Environmental Issues:** Environmental issues like famine, flood, desertification etc. are currently upsetting the availability of food in Nigeria. Global warming has been a bane on food security in Nigeria. Global warming have accounted for the loss of farmland and also cased the fluctuation of food crises across the country (GCF, 2016). It has also caused food borne illness and diseases. The current environmental ruins occasioned by flooding and deforestation has had a great negative impact on food production and distribution in Nigeria. For instance, in 2012, there was a great downpour which cost an unprecedented amount of flood in the country. The flood caused the death of thousands of livestock like cattle, pigs, cows, chickens etc. Metu, Kalu and Ezenekwe (2015) opines that the country lost an estimated N2.6 trillion of the GDP due to flooding. In the same vain, the agricultural share value added to the GDP decline by a little below 24% in 2010 to a little above 22% in 2012 (WDI, 2014). Another environmental issue is air and water pollution caused by man and some natural resources which has also caused a great threat to food security in Nigeria.
4. **Corruption:** Corruption has been in Nigeria since independence and it has continued to increase and intensify. This has led to the decay ad destruction of basic infrastructures in the country. Corruption has directly and indirectly affected the agricultural sector with, millions allegedly diverted for private and individual use. There was also a report where the money budgeted for the procurement of fertilizer was siphoned by individuals. This has really affected then agricultural sector thereby leading to over reliance on food importation. Which is one of the cause of food insecurity in the country.
5. **Government Policies:** Prior to the oil boom of the 1970s, agriculture use to be the main source of revenue for Nigeria. But with the advent of oil exploration and commercial production in Nigeria, the agricultural sector was



neglected for the oil sector. Other sectors too were abandoned. With this, there was a drastic reduction of the attention given to farmers and the agricultural industry as a whole. Not only was that, the research and development of agriculture also neglected as there have not been any known research or development in the sector for a long time. This has caused the stagnation of the sector especially as it concerns the production of food. On the part of the government, there was drastic reduction in policies concerning agriculture. The little policies that the government came up with were hastily and horridly put together with little or no governmental and political backing to enforce such policies. The policies that increased incentives for local farmers' were also neglected by the government. The government also encouraged rural-urban migration thereby reducing the man power for food production. All this policies put together have in no small way contributed to the food insecurity in the country.

## **5. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Findings**

The relationship between the herders and farmers has been nothing but conflictual in recent years as oppose to the peaceful relationship that use to characterize their relationship. The conflictual relationship has ben as a result of some of the findings of this research. However, from the forgoing analyses of the factors inducing herdsman-farmers conflicts and the pattern of conflicts between herdsman and farmers in Nigeria, the following findings were made:

1. The first discovery made by this research is that the movement of the herdsman where the customs, traditions, norm, values, land tenure system etc. is alien to them is a big reason for the conflict. More often than not when these herdsman move from a place to another, they rarely respect the customs and traditions of the new host community, this often cause conflict between the herdsman and others in the community most especially the farmers. Secondly, the farmers, in southern Nigeria, mostly believe in communal ownership or individual ownership of land through the purchase of such land or by virtues of ancestral claims. The herders on the other hand believe that land is given divinely by God and thus can have or to put more appropriately, graze on any land as long as they can take it.
2. Another finding was that the herdsman show extreme anxiety to compete for grazing lands. The herdsman are frantically searching for a new grazing land for their cattle because their traditional home, northern Nigeria, is currently not conducive for cattle rearing because of global warming, scarcity of fresh water, lack of access to grazing land, increasing urbanization, desert encroachment etc. which has caused a massive reduction in the grazing lands in the north. Thus, they need new grazing land so they migrate southwards. In their bid to search for greener pastures for their cattle, they directly or indirectly encroach on the farms thereby destroying the hard labor of the farmers. This eventually leads to conflict between them.
3. We also found out that the traditional leaders are a cause of the conflict. We found out that some traditional leaders collect bribe from some herdsman and then go ahead to report to the police and also the farmers. Some traditional leaders also connive withy police and law enforcement agencies to arrest these herdsman after they have collected bribe for them to graze. This has deteriorated the conditions of the herdsman and also enhanced the hostility between the herders and farmers.
4. The general breakdown of law and order and ease of access to guns and other sophisticated weapons was also found to be one of the reason for the herdsman and farmers conflict. It was also discovered that politicians and security agents also help in fueling the embers of the conflict because of the security votes and other allowances tied with the conflict. The spread of weapons has been reported severally but the government hasn't taken any action to sort the spread.
5. The hostile and unfriendly coexistence of the herders' and farmers have had adverse effect on food security and sustainability in Nigeria, especially food for immediate consumption. This has led to a massive increase in importation of food in the country which has further threatened the agricultural revitalization programs of the central and regional governments.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

Resource control and resource acquirement has been revealed to be at the base of the current and recurrent conflict between the herdsman and farmers. This has been aggravated by global warming which have made the herders migrate from their traditional homes in northern Nigeria to the southern parts of the country in search of grazing reserves and fresh water for their cattle. Also, the persistence of this conflict has led to uncountable loss of live and destruction of properties worth millions, perhaps billions, of dollars. If the conflict is not resolved in a peaceful manner and the warring parties return to the peaceful coexistence then food security in Nigeria will only be a mirage. This is so because, the conflict has threatened and continue to threaten food security and food sustainability in the country.

The practice of corrupt political and political figures, traditional leaders, desperation of both herders and framers etc. are some of the factors revealed to be behind the recent surge in the amount of violent conflict between herders and farmers. Furthermore, gun availability has also been a reason for the violence in recent times.as guns are readily available to both warring parties to kill, loot and destroy properties. Also the activities of cattle rustlers always lead to reprisal attacks on farmers of such an area. Be that at it may, one of the most fundamental objective of policy makers is to ensure the creation of welfare packages, overall safe modality and restructure clashes among its various groups making up the state.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

It is unquantifiable the total number of lives lost and the amount of properties destroyed in the herdsmen/farmers conflict in Nigeria. This calls for an urgent attention by the government and stakeholders to exterminate the causes of the crises. Below are the recommendations made based on the findings of this research. The recommendations are for the government, the host communities, the stakeholders and all involved in the conflict.

1. Grazing reserves should be made public and traditional owners of land should adequately compensated to avoid land issues.
2. International best practice should be encouraged for the herders' using grazing reserves and ranches that the government will provide. The government need to also do away with unpleasant words that might instigate one against another. The government also need to come up with laws and policies against open grazing and also provide for the development of ranches in the country. The support of international organizations are also needed especially in the provision of basic infrastructures like electricity, schools, veterinary clinics, market etc.
3. There should be laws against hate speech and both parties to the conflict should stop using derogatory words to describe each other. Those found to be using such words should be brought to book.
4. The government should work on disarming both parties to the conflict. A drastic reduction in the arms and ammunitions at the disposal of the warring parties will eventually lead to the total eradication of the conflict. In the same vain, the number of security personnel should be increased. There should be massive recruitment of policemen to fill the space.
5. In addition, the borders need to be tighten to reduce the proliferation of weapons into the country. This can be done by strengthening the governmental institutions saddled with the responsibility of securing the borders
6. There should be a ranching zone in each of the six geo-political zones of the country. This will enable the herdsmen to stay within a particular environment thereby reducing and eliminating the conflict.
7. Furthermore, the issue of desert encroachment should be addressed through replanting of trees and irrigation farming should also be encouraged. A large chunk of land has been lost to desert encroachment in places such as Yobe, Bornu, Kebbi, Bauchi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Taraba and Adamawa states. This has made a lot of herdsmen migrate southward especially toward the middle-belt. To stop this southward migration, the stakeholders at different levels of government, local, state and central governments, should be encouraged to replant trees and also encourage the farmers to engage in irrigation farming especially in the desert prone areas.
8. The issue of indigenes and settlers dichotomy should also be addressed. The farmers mostly see themselves as indigenes and the herders' settlers, hence they feel they can dispose the herdsmen as they wish. This can be addressed through regular meeting of both parties, through attending social gathering and organizing sporting events between themselves.
9. Lastly, there should be a thorough and rigorous fight against corruption. Both the traditional leaders and political office holder who engage in corrupt practices to get financial and monetary benefits should be dealt with. And there should be a total war against insecurity especially as it affects food security in Nigeria.

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