

**EXAMINING FARMERS AND HERDERS RELATION AND ITS
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS IN IMO STATE**

¹Iyala, Theodore Obinna, Ph.D

K. O. Mbadiwe University, Ideato
iyalatheodore@yahoo.com; 08037977157

²Duru, Sunday Solomon, Ph.D

08037958517

&

³Anene, Pensive Chidi, Ph.D

anenechidi@gmail.com; 08063414134

^{2&3}Imo State University, Owerri

Abstract

An attempt to examining the farmers and Herders relation in Nigeria Imo State in particular, will consider the origin and content of the relation. Studies carried out by various scholars had shown that, since the pre-colonial era, agriculture, trade and commerce had been major determinants of peaceful and sustainable relationships amongst the diverse ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. Regrettably, since after the Nigeria -Biafra War of 1967-1970, the influx of Fulani Herders in southeast region, especially in Imo State has been on the increase with a humongous socioeconomic implications on the living conditions of the people due to the incessant farmers and Herders clashes, which has eventually metamorphosed into the high level of insecurity that the State is facing today. However, efforts by both the state and Federal Governments to quell the conflicts have indeed proved abortive due to the issues of religion, corruption, climatic changes and desertification, which usually impede on any meaningful efforts geared towards ensuring sustainable relations. Therefore, the paper seeks to critically examine the farmers and Herders relation and its socioeconomic implications in Imo State. The paper adopts a historical research method of analysis to arrive at its logical findings.

Key words: Agriculture, Climatic Change, Trade, Religion, 8 Desertification.



Introduction

Nigeria is located in the tropical zone of West Africa situated between latitudes 4⁰ and 140N and longitudes 30 and 150^E with an estimated land mass of 923,770km² (Adelodu and Choi, 2018; Okorieh,2018; Onime,2017; Aregbeshola,2011 and Falela and Heaton,2008). Historically, it is important to note that, for centuries, herders (Pastoralists) moved their cattles East and West across the Sahel, the semi-arid zone South of the Sahara Desert that includes Nigeria's far Northern Belt for three basic reasons. First, from early 1900, because of the intense drought in the North, some herders started shifting routes farther South. Second, others according to Blench (1994 and Li, 2018), were attracted by heightened security in the Central and Southern Nigeria and for better control of parasitic diseases (such as trypanomaiasis or sleeping sickness) in the Central and Southern zones, while third, the herders in the North were not comfortable with the high cattle tax (jangali) imposed on them by the colonial authority and so they wanted evade it according to Ahmed (2020).

The various constituent ethnic groups, the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa before 1914, existed as separate entities, yet related harmoniously in some ways with one another through long distance trade. Bukari, Sow and Scheffran (2018), in this wise, therefore, stated that, much of Nigerians were under British colonial rule before Nigerian independence. In pre-colonial era, Fulani herders had established friendly relationships with community members, and they shared culture and ideology by sharing resources such as land and water, and indeed, a strong social networks between the Fulani herders and local cattle dealers, colonial authorities,(and later) politicians, and land owners were established.

Generally speaking, throughout history and the spread of the world, many societies have a strong specialization in livestock breeding and are identified as pastoral. Some are in South America in Bolivia and Peru, the Andean herders in llama and alpaca, and some located in the West African Savana, such as the Fulani cattle breeders (Akerjiri, 2018).



This is to say that, in the words of Mbachu(2018), a farmer from "Agulu", in the present day Anambra State, averred that, before 1900 in Igbo land, herdsmen or herders clashes with the people of the present day South Easterners formerly part of the Eastern region was not as it is pronounced today. He further stated that, although, they were not as numerous as they are today in the region, nevertheless, the visible few were found grazing their cattles in the host communities farmlands with few destructions as they trespassed farmlands.

Although, the South East region then had their own local or indigenous cow specie called "Ehi", which they reared and consumed among themselves and also sold outside. They also consume other kinds of meat they sourced from hunting such as "Nchi" (grasscutters), "Ewi" (Bush Rat), "Anu-Mgbada" and "Edi-Abali"(Hynea), Anu-Okwa and "Osa," and "Uze" as well as Okpongbara" (Squirrel), and others. He noted that, the presence of cattles or cows from the North were not as common or prevalent as it is presently. If, however, seen around, they were found to be non-threat as there were few Fulani herdsmen or cattle-rearers around. In some cases, they were either brought home by our people who lived in the North or either came from the Fulani cattle herdsmen from present day Benue State through long distance trade with the Igala, Idoma and Tiv people .The trade relation between the Fulani herdsmen and the local farmers, and movement of cattles across farms were rather peaceful and harmonious then, but as the number of herdsmen increased in population, desertification in the North and scarcity of lands and water. The unforeseen pressure sets the stage for disagreement and conflicts (Ahmed, 2019, Egbuta 2018, Iloanya and Ananti, 2018).

Conceptual Clarifications

Religion

Religion as we all know, is one of the remote factors that has caused several conflicts in Nigeria (Egbuta, 2018). However, ethno- religious conflicts have taken a firm ground on Nigerians; and has been identified



as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002,; Salawu, 2010; Igbuzor, 2011). This kind of conflict arise when the social relations between the members of the one ethnic or religious group (Fulani herdsmen) and other of such group (Farmers) in a multiethnic and multi- religious society is lacking in cordiality. This occasionally led to mutual fear, and anxiety towards violent confrontations. Unfortunately, since Nigeria's independence, conflict related to herders and farmers have resulted to large- scale killings and violence among ethno-religious groups in the country (Okenze, 2024).

Agriculture

Agriculture is as old as man. Man, undoubtedly, took to farming in order to put food on his table and sustain live. Farming is therefore, part of the human existence, and as the population of man began to increase in numbers, so did the demand and search for arable land increased too as people began to either specialize in one form of agriculture or the other, like crop/seed farming and animal farming (cow rearing), at a subsistence level in order to satisfy the needs of the immediate family and the teaming population (Egbuta, 2018; and Chief Ozongbadike, 2020). Agriculture is primarily concerned with the husbandry of crops and animals for food and other purposes, hence, it is the foundation of human development.

Desertification

Desertification according to Cambridge Dictionary, is the process by which land changes into desert because of too much farming activity on it or because a lot of trees have been cut down (dictionary.cambridge.org). In a brief summary, desertification is the process of by which natural or human causes reduce the biological productivity of dry land (arid and Semiarid lands). Declines in productivity may be the result of climatic change, deforestation, overgrazing, poverty and political instability, unstable irrigation practices or combination of these factors(www.Britannica.com). Research has equally indicated that, Northern Nigeria is most affected



by desertification, the region's dry lands are largely uninhabited arid deserts.

Climate Change

This is simply the significant variations of average weather conditions becoming, for example, warmer, wetter, or drier- over several decades or longer. It is the long- term trend that differentiates climate change from natural weather variability as human activity leads to change in the atmospheric composition either directly(through emissions of gases or particles), or indirectly (through atmospheric Chemistry) (eknowledgeportal.worldbank.org).

Insecurity

Beland (2005), opines that, insecurity entails lack of protection from crime(being unsafe)and lack of freedom from psychological harm, that is, emotional stress resulting from paucity of basic needs or lack of the assurance that a person is accepted. Again, Achumba and Ighomereho (2013) noted that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but are also not able to stop it or protect themselves when it happens. Supporting Achumba and Ighomereho's views, Collier equally maintains that, insecurity is concentrated in countries with little education, high population growth and low economic development.

Trade

Trade is primarily defined as the act or processed of buying, selling, or exchange of goods and services. It is a means of contact among communities.

Origin of the Relation

The reasons and factors which brought about the Farmers and Herders conflictual relation in Nigeria and the Southeastern region in particular has been stated, on the ground that, in the earliest period, man had virtually spent all his time searching for food for both himself and livestock or for his domestic animals. Man relied so much on his



livestock either through cattle grazing and seed planting. To this end, it is to be noted that, before the creation of Nigeria in 1914 by the British colonial authority, the various ethnic/tribal groups/entities lived separate/ independent of one another and also had different cultures and traditions that distinguished them from the other ethnic groups. Notwithstanding their socio-cultural differences, they still related to one another through long-distance trade and diplomatic missions, especially among the Southeastern region (Nwozor, Olanrewaju, Oshewolo, Oladoyn Adedire and Okidu, 2021). Buttressing on the relationship further, Amadi (2019), states that, long-distance trade with the Northerners were not as it is today, by 1900, many Igbo traders had reached up north and had related with the north through trading and other social services in order to sell palm oil and buy various goods such as: Kola, hides, beans, groundnuts, Hausa goats, cows and others. Whereas, in regards to the contact or relation with the Fulani Herdsmen in the Southeastern region, he further maintains that, herdsmen were not common but were seen coming in trinkets through Enugu and Ogoja axis from the TIV (in present Benue State) areas, as the middle Belt region were according to him, the only place in the south east region that is close to them and through which the Fulani herders penetrated into the region. So, the long distance trade were not without its misunderstanding and challenges which led to conflict at most times.

Furthermore, as the herders gradually found their way into the southeast region, for the purposes of cattle grazing, they had contact with the indigenous host communities, especially in Imo State. The herders were mainly found in the bushes where they built tents for themselves and leaving their cattles to lay into the open field in the night, and at day, they roam about with their cows in the people's farms. In regards to this, Ozongbadike (2020), averred that, the Fulani herders are rarely found living in the cities in Imo State with their host communities, hence, they stay together with their threats to the communities where they operate. Most times, at the event of confusion between them and the landowners,



they normally claim ownership of the said land which they occupied as their own land having stayed there for a long time unnoticed by the host communities. In the Southeastern region, these practice has since the 1960s been in vogue and causes most of the conflicts in the region, particularly in Imo State. Most sons and daughters of Imo State have been killed by the herders upon demands to leave their farmlands. Sequel to this, Mbah (2021), had adduced that, with the conclusion of the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, most Fulani northerners cattle herders felt that it translated to ownership of lands wherever they took their cattles. This, however, was one of the prevailing erroneous conceptions of the 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria. Ozongbadike (2020) further hinted that, the origin of the relation viz-a-viz the conflict relation began with the surge in population and desertification in the north, which increased the demand and search for arable/fertile land south wards. The herdsman started coming in their large numbers in search of vegetation, and to escape the cattle infectious diseases, which were rampant in the north as well as the scarcity of water for cattle grazing.

Consequently, forced migration of the Fulani herdsman or herders due to climatic and demographic changes southwards, to the north central (Middle Belt region), and south west, then to the Southeastern region over the years, had resulted to undue pressure on farmers in Imo State who feared that, the unexpected and strange occurrence of crops damages due to the herdsman cattle grazing in their farmlands would result to steady conflict because of economic loses they were likely to incur. Although, Imo state since its creation in 1976, has witnessed some flashes of fragile relation between the herders and farmers mainly in the northern senatorial zone of the state (Okigwe zone). For instance, in places like Isuochi, Uturu, Ikwanta and others where the local farmers had encountered series of conflict as a result of the invasion and occupation of their farms by the Fulani herders. These areas and in other parts of the state provide a test case of palpable state of insecurity



where many lives and property running to millions of naira had been lost to Fulani herdsmen attacks. The rise of ethnic bickering championed by various separatists movements, ethnic militia group and militants since the dawn of democracy in 1999, has worsened the already fragile relation existing between local farmers and herders in Imo State. The economic losses incurred in the state cannot be quantified financially. Food production has since then been reduced thereby heightening food insecurity in the state despite the several state government's various agricultural policies geared towards reducing the cost of living in Imo state.

Causes of Herders Attacks on Imo State Food Crop Farmers

The Fulani herders (pastoralists), whose primary occupation is the raising of livestock indulge in random movements across Imo State aimed at reaching areas with abundant grasses and water for their cattle, avoid tax collectors, harmful insects, hostile weather and social environment, are often engaged in intense competition for the limited amount of land with farmers who use their land for agricultural purposes. A number of factors have been identified as the causes of the strained relations between the herders and local farmers in Imo State. Below are the factors:

1. **Scarce Resources:** Ofuoku & Isife, (2009), have asserted that, competition is the main cause of every conflict. Persistent antagonism over scarce resources is the fundamental cause of conflict between economic agents since all conflicts share common qualities. In the words of Manu et al (2014), conflict originates from the insatiable nature of human wants: competition for scarce resources is the foremost causes of common intergroup conflict. Farmers-herders crisis is basically caused by competition since farmers increasingly compete with Fulani herders for farmland, pastures and water. Conflict of value exists among these two contending causes. Fabiyi & Adeleke (2016) estimated that “Nigeria has 22 million cows that consume about 1 billion gallons per day of water and 500 million kilograms of grass and forage crops. The



stock value of Nigeria's cattle population is about N3.4 trillion or \$16.3 billion at N150, 000 per head" (p.1). There is therefore, no iota of doubt that the growth of human and livestock population gives rise to an increased pressure on natural resources and a stiff competition for available resources between farmers and herders. The increasing population of cattle competes with farmers for land. The migration of large number of herds and herders into the fringes of the humid areas has led to a massive increase of the incidence of famers-herders conflict.

2. **Environmental Factors:** Shifting weather patterns attributed to climate change has transformed vast tracks of grassland into desert, driving large number of herders southwards. Nformi et al, (2014) assert that environmental issues like desertification, land degradation and climate change are becoming major factors in conflict. According to the International Regional Information Network (2009), over a third of land that was cultivable 50 years ago is now desert across 11 of Nigeria's Northern states: Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Yobe, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi. Climate change has constituted a great threat by putting great pressure on the land thus provoking conflict. There has been a great increase in the presence of Fulani herders in central and southern Nigeria due to climate change. Again, the International Regional Information Network (2009) posits that in addition to population growth and continued felling of the forest for cooking fuel, northern nomadic communities are increasingly moving southwards as once green pasture becomes desert. Climate change has caused desertification in the far north, and has led to extended drought and an estimated 20% drops in crop yields (Fabiya & Adeleke, 2016). Ojo (2016) maintains that: Desertification in the savannah region of northern Nigeria, due to low rainfall, has substantially reduced the grazing land and water sources for cattle. Thus, the herdsmen in order to feed their animals have to migrate to



where they could get grass to nurture them. In the cause of doing that, the cattle swoop on farmlands and destroy crops planted by farmers. Of course the farmers have to fight back over the destruction of their means of livelihood. In raining season, cattle rearing were mainly prevalent in the far north and this gave the cattle herders access to vast areas of grassland. However, as dry season sets in, herdsman had to move southward where the raining season is longer and the soil retains moisture for long, in search of pasture and water (Ofuoku & Isife, 2009). Another environmental factor that influences their movement has to do with the fear of losing the cattle to rustlers, wild animals and harmful insects (tsetse flies) which cause diseases such as trypanosomiasis. Furthermore, the intensification of Boko Haram terrorist activities over the years has caused nomadic Fulani herdsman to abandon their foraging grounds in the northeast (Fabiya & Adeleke, 2016). More so, the recent rise of large scale cattle rustling may be another factor. These volatile situations have been aggravated by influx of herders escaping deteriorating environmental conditions and causing soil erosion; destroying agricultural crops and overgrazing on farmlands which remains a major contention hence farmers often accuse nomadic Fulani herdsman of destroying their crops and with the herders insisting they have nowhere to graze. This disagreement usually leads to serious conflict that claims many lives and property worth millions of dollars.

3. **Land Grabbing and Occupation** : Most communities in Nigeria, especially in Benue, Plateau, Taraba and Kaduna States are expressing fears that the Fulani herdsman's attacks could possibly have a hidden agenda aimed at taken over their land completely and occupying for their economic purpose. This assertion is in agreement with ideas of Musa *et al* (2017) who argued that conflict between farmers and herdsman have become a common feature of economic livelihood. Similarly, in the 19th century an Ngoni group, Zulu led by shaka, a warrior wanted to expand their territory at the



expense of their other Bantu neighbours since the Boers (African word for farmer, which came to denote the descendants of the Dutch speaking settlers) were seen as no pushover. Encouraged by the attraction of the area (South Africa) because of the favourable climate for living and farming with unrestricted movement into South Africa and the extensive use of land by the whites, land was becoming scarce. The aborigines the San and Hottentots who were not able to confront and resist the invaders into their territory because of slim demographic and poor physical strength were quickly displaced and their lands was taken over by the Boers (Charles, 2011).

The Boers continued to consolidate land hood through their superior weaponry because they introduced new farming techniques and advanced technology to work the land and produce cash crops. More and more space was being acquired for farming and land was becoming scarcer and costlier. The Boers were never satisfied with land they had acquired. Eventually the land meant for grazing of Ngoni cattle was encroached upon and taken over by the Boer farmers and settlers. This negatively affected the chances of the Ngoni speaking South Africans getting sufficient land to tends and graze their cattle as was the tradition before the coming of the whites. It was quite obvious that cattle rearers could not profitably go to war with their stronger white neighbours. The strategy was to wage war of territorial expansion on their immediate black neighbours. The major reason for this war or movement was inadequacy of land due to population increase which was caused by fertile soil for crop production and high quality of posture. Given the rate of the population, people could no longer fit on the land that was available. In order to get land, people started to fight for it. The defeated ones had to migrate to other places (Abanyam, 2016). With much hunger for land to graze their cattle, Shaka the Zulu began a war of land reclamations and restoration from 1820 which lasted for



about 30 years (the war/movement ended in 1850). The period 1820 is always referred to in South African history as the period of trouble rendered in Ngoni language as Mfecane. It was a period in which much havoc and destruction took place in South Africa so that land would be secured by the Zulu nation to accommodate their cattle. The effect of his atrocious war was felt throughout Africa. The war caused many African nations to fight each other in the cause of defending themselves and territories against Shaka. Three powerful groups that rose up at that time and started fighting each other were Sobhuza's Ngwane, Zwide and Ndwande and Dinigiswayo's Mtethwa (Abanyam, 2016). The Sotho people for instance, fought the Tswana of Western Pretoria as well as Bostwana throwing them into great disorder and confusion (Charles, 2011).

4. **Religion and Politics:** Farmers-herders imbroglio in Nigeria is not only seen as resource conflict but assumed both ethno-religious and political dimension. Undoubtedly, Herders and the local farmers have different culture, customs and religion, which makes it difficult for them to coexist. (Ofuoke & Isife, 2009; Tonah, 2006). Herders are therefore united in the sense that they belong to one ethnic group. This strong sense of belongings (in-group feelings against out-group or farmers) among herders is a unifying force that enables them to organize themselves to protect their economic interest and protect their cultural value as an ethnic group. Again, Conflict between farmers and Fulani herders unite Fulani ethnic group who view an attack on a fellow Fulani as an attack on all. Whenever crisis erupted between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria, those from Niger Republic, Chad, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea and other West African countries including those living in Cameroon will find their ways to Nigeria to fight the host communities to protect their interest, thus taking ethnic dimensions. This assumption has been validated by the governors of Benue and Kaduna States respectively and the Nigerian military who argues



that the violent herdsmen that attack and kill rural farmers, burnt their houses, rape and destroy property are not from Nigeria, (Ojo, 2017). The main contention here is that the Fulani herdsmen incessant attacks are viewed by the Christians as an agenda to Islamize the South Easterners nay Imo State.

5. **Porosity of Borders and Immigration Lapses:** The proliferation of arms through the nation's porous borders is one of the factors for the attacks. Many concerns have been raised regarding the true identity of Fulani herdsmen who perpetuate violence across Nigeria with many including the Nigerian military believing that they are herdsmen from other parts of West Africa, while others see them as members of Boko Haram terrorist masquerading as Fulani herdsmen. However, the Nigerian porous border and poor immigration surveillance and West African policy on free movement within its region may have been responsible for the incessant herdsmen attacks on rural farmers across Nigeria. Farmers-Herders conflict in Nigeria is an old phenomenon (Tonah, 2006). However, the conflicts were amicably resolved by the traditional rulers (authorities). Therefore, the Fulani herders and crop farmers were living in peace and their relationship was very cordial and beneficial. However, the clashes have become wide spread in recent times by the arrival of hostile herders from other neighbouring countries that move with sophisticated weapons. The Fulani herders claim there is freedom of movement of men and cattle, interaction and appreciation in the country while the farmers see the farmland invasion as not acceptable and infringement on their personal and communal property (Idowu, 2017).
6. **Overgrazing:** Studies has indicated that, overgrazing is a strong source of conflict between herders and crop farmers. This is so because local farmers often accuse the herdsmen of overgrazing on their lands. This portends the obvious fact that, the issue of overgrazing causes land degradation, soil erosion and lose of useful species. Meanwhile, according to Ofuoku & Isefe (2009), I'm



incessant overgrazing causes erosion on the farmers farm lands and making the lands infertile and difficult for them to cultivate their crops.

7. **Crops Destruction and Cattle killings:** Destruction of crops by the cattle during grazing and cattle theft is one of the major causes of conflict between Fulani herders and crop farmers in Imo State.
8. **Cattles Defecations in host communities Farms:** Herders cattles often defecate on the farms of local farmers, which get them irritated and often generate conflict between the two groups.
9. **Host Community Rivers Contamination:** Farmers in Imo State, especially those from Oguta, Ohaji Egbema and Ngor Okpala communities, etc, have lamented that contamination of their streams, rivers or waters by Fulani-Herders cattle grazing leading to outbreak of cholera, typhoid fever and lever that affect them. Agreeing with the host communities, Ojo (2016) opined in clear terms that when these herdsmen take their cattle to drink at Community Rivers, the water is polluted by the animals and they indiscriminately urinate and defecate in them. Women and children who source for water for household use are put through a lot of stress seeking clean water for drinking and cooking. Some of these Fulani herdsmen even kidnap, beat up, rape and murder some of the women that dare to challenge them about the destruction of their farm land or pollution of their water sources. Clean or drinkable water scarcity has equally been blamed for conflict between the herders and local farmers. Audu (2013) affirmed that, Agriculture provides the means of livelihood and economic sustenance for a majority of the population of the Easterners Imo State inclusive. Farmers and pastoralist, who are the main agricultural practitioners, make significant contributions in meeting the nutritional needs of the region and thus contributing to food security. They are almost wholly dependent on water resources to sustain their vocations. In recent times, access to water and grazing land has become more competitive and has led to the farmers and herders violent conflictual interest on a regular basis.



This is a worrisome trend because both have coexisted inter-dependently for centuries, sharing the same fields for farming and grazing with a manageable level of tolerance and accommodation. Thus, conflict ensues when the community's main source of water is contaminated by the cattle.

An Overview of the Socioeconomic Implications of Fulani Herders/Farmers Relationship in Imo State:

The issue of Fulani herdsman and Farmers conflict relation in Igbo land, especially in Imo State since independence has become a herculean task to policy-makers in the Southeastern region under Sir, M. I. Okpara, the Premier of the region. However, the deteriorating relationship had huge economic, political, social and cultural effects on the host community and to the government at large. The implications of farmers and herders show that, they are all involved in food production for the well-being of the Imo people and the Eastern region of Nigeria at large. Below are the implications of the Farmers/Herders Relation:

Political implication

Studies indicate that, the escalation of the conflictual relation due to the perennial clashes between the herdsman and the local farmers in Imo state has worsened the political situation in the state. Akwara (2018), and others, have explained the fact that, the state of insecurity in Nigeria, especially in Imo State was occasioned by the Fulani herders/Farmers relation is anti-government. They further elaborated that, since independence, the states in southeast, especially Imo State has gone through so many crisis situations, which had assumed frightening dimensions in Nigeria at large. Nigeria, since this period has lost millions of naira to the Fulani herdsman and farmers clashes in Imo State, and this loses are attributed to weakness of political class in rising up to the challenges.

Economic implication

The economic implications of the Farmers-Herders Conflict in the Southeastern Nigeria (Imo State), cannot be undermined or



underestimated. This is because, John (2024), noted that, from what he saw prior to the Nigeria- Biafra war, food supplies were adversely reduced due to the frosty relation between the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen. He also said that, in communities like, Agwa, Ihiagwa, Irete and Ogbaku in Imo State, the story has not been different as the conflicting relation between the parties under study have actually affected the economy of those areas, hence, many farmers crops had been destroyed by the Fulani- herders cows.

Social implication

Since the beginning of the conflict, the inter and intra communal relationship, which had existed between the herders and local farmers/host communities had been adversely affected owing to the incessant crisis, in which the two groups are now seeing themselves as worse enemies, rather than being partners in the building of a United Nigeria. These frosty relationships have birthed ethnic and religious acrimony in the state. In the case of rape and sexual harassment, it has been discovered that, most Fulani herders are confirmed rapists, and in a bid to satisfy that sexual curiosity, they rape our local female farmers both married and the unmarried to death sometimes, and also contaminate their victims with sexually transmitted disease like Syphilis, Gonorea and other forms of diseases. This ugly development oftentimes, triggered -off the males local and indigenous farmers stiff resistance to herders indiscriminate sexual molestations on their women, which resulted to conflict relation. For instance, in 2021 and 2022 in Agwa community in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State, Chief John hinted that, over ten female local farmers were raped and killed by the criminal Fulani herders in their farms (Chief John :2024).

Conclusion

This study leaves no one in doubt of the implications of the herders and farmers conflictual relationship in Imo State. The study has also shown that Fulani- Herders and Farmers conflictual relation in Imo State has unpalatable socioeconomic impacts on the development of the State as



their perennial attacks had led to loss of human lives and unwanted destruction of property. This fragile relation between the herders and farmers had brought about food insecurity, poverty, hunger and famine, disruption of school system and closure of businesses inspite of government efforts to stop the nuances of the herders in the state.

Recommendations

The analysis and critical evaluations of the Fulani herders-Farmers relation in the Southeastern Nigeria, a case of Imo State will help the people to understand the importance of creating cattle ranches/ reserves in order to ensure that both the Fulani herders and the farmers in Imo State can coexist peacefully without rancours. To this end, is expected that the State and Federal Government as well as the local farmers involved in the strained relation can help their people to pursue and also adopt new pragmatic and proactive approach which will anchor on the strategies of mediation so as to prevent, manage and resolve conflict between the herders and farmers. Fulani-Herders and the local farmers should acknowledge the importance that is inherent in learning from their different cultures and traditions in other to stay in harmony. This is because prejudice and conflict cannot be avoided when people of diverse cultural background and political views interact with one another. Both the herders and farmers should also endeavour to abide by the laid down rules of engagement, as the law is indeed no respecter of any person or persons. Finally, the government on the other hand should as a matter of urgency, endeavour to take proactive actions to promptly enhance the standard of living conditions of its citizens by encouraging agriculture and also fighting the menace of Fulani- Herders unwanted killings of farmers in the land. While the Leadership of Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAB) should work in synergy to end the farmers and herders impasse.



References

- Adisa, R. S and Adekunle, O. A (2010), *Farmers- Herdsmen Conflicts: A Factor. Analysis of Socioeconomic Conflict Variables Among Stable Crop Famers*; *Journal of Human Ecology*, Vol. 30, No,1
- Akwara, U.(2018), *The Attack of Herdsmen on Farmers in Nigeria: The Problems and Solutions Inc*, Ningxin, L. Nigeria's Fulani Herdsmen- Farmers Conflict and Peace Building, European Centre for Research Training and Development, Uk. Nova Southern University.
- Egbuta, U. (2018), *Understanding the Herders-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria*. Retrieved from the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes:<https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-the-herder-farmers-conflict-in-nigeria>
- Okwor, D. (2016), *The Political Economy of the Conflict Between the Farmers and Fulani Herders in the Conflict Era of Climate Change in Nigeria*, Hague, Netherlands. MA Thesis.
- Adelodu, B. and Choi, K.A (2018). *A Review of the Evaluation of Irrigation Practice in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future Prospects*, *African Journal of Agricultural Research*, 13 (40).
- Okorieh, J.C (2015). *The Nigerian- Biafran War, Oil and the Political Economy of State induced Social Evolution and History* 17(1).
- Onime,B.E (2018). *Security and Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Diagnostic Review*, *European Scientific Journal*, 14(4), Uniport, PhD Dissertation.
- Aregboshola,R.A (2021). *The Political Economy and Social Dynamics of Nigeria: A Synopsis*, African Institute of South Africa Policy Brief, 39.
- Falola,T.. ad Heaton .M.S(2008). *History of Nigeria*, New York: Cambridge University, Press.



- Blench, R. (2010). *"Conflict between Pastoralist and Cultivators in Nigeria."* A Review Paper Prepared for the British Government's Dept. for international Development of Nigeria.
- Li,Na. (2018). *Nigeria's Fulani-Herders Conflict and Peace- Building: Global Journal of Agricultural Research*, 1-15.
- Ahmed, S. (2020). A Retired Teacher and Trader from Kaduna State, Aged Seventy (70) Years, interview Conducted on 10th May, 2024 at Ama Hausa, Owerri, Imo State.
- Bukari, K. N, Sow, P and Scheffran J,(2018), *Cooperation and Co-existence Between Farmers and Herders in the Midst of Violent Farmers-Herders Conflict in Ghana*, in Ningxin. L, Nigeria's Fulani-Herders-Farmers Conflict and Peace Buiding, European Center for Research Training and Development, Uk. Nova Southern University.
- Akerjiri, A. S (2018), *Increasing Farmers-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria: An Assessment of the Clashes in Between the Fulani-Herdersmen and indigenou Farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo Community, Enugu State*, Wageningen University and Research, M.A Thesis.
- Mbachu, M, (2023), A Farmer from Agwa Community in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State. Interviewed on Feb 10th. 2023
- Mbachu, M (2024). A Farmer from Agwa Community in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State Interviewed on April 15th. 2024
- Ahmed, S. (2020). A Retired Teacher and Trader from Kaduna State, Aged Seventy (70) Years, interview Conducted on 10th May, 2024 at Ama Hausa, Owerri, Imo State.
- Iloanya, K.O.and Ananti .M.(2018). *Marriage of inconvenience Between Herders/ farmers in Nigeria: Can Elephant and Hippo Tango?* Arts and Humanity Open Access Journal.
- Ibrahim, M (2016), *Cattle Farmers Clashes Threaten Nigeria's Agricultural Sector*, Retrieved from: <http://theafricapa.agricultural-sector.com>



- Salawu, B. (2010), *Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies*” *European Journal of Social Sciences* 13 (3): 345-353
- Igbuzor, O. (2011). *Peace and Security Education: A Critical Factor for Sustainable Peace and National Development. International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, 2 (1).
- Okenze, E. (2024): A farmer from Agwa Community in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State. Interviewed on 2nd June, 2024.
- Egbuta,U.(2018). *Understanding the Herders/Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria*, Retrieved from African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes:<http://www.acCORD.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-the-herder-farmer-conflict-in-Nigeria>.
- Ozongbadike, S.A.(2020), A Retired Rural Farmer from Nimbo-Enugu State, Aged, Sixty-Five(65) years, interviewed on January, 2024.
- www.cambridgedictionary.org (meaning of Dissertation). Retrieved on 30th of May, 2024
- www.britannica.com (What is Climate Change?). Retrieved on 20th of May, 2024
- www.eknowledgeportal.worldbank.org
- Beland, D. (2006). *The Political Construction of Collective Insecurity: From Moral Panic to Blame Avoidance and Organized Irresponsibility*. Center For European Studies Working Paper Series 126.
- Achumba, I. C, Igbomerechi. O. S and Akpor-Robaro, M. O (2013). *"Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications on Business Activities and Sustainable Development"*. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, (4), 2.
- Collier, Paul(2006), *Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their implications On Policy, in Omine, E.B(2018), insecurity and Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Diagnostic Review*,



- European Scientific Journal*, 14(4), Uniport, PhD Dissertation.
- Nwozor, Olanrewaju, Oladoyin, Adedire and Okidu (2021). *Herders/Farmers Conflicts: The Politicization of Violence and Evolving Security Measures in Nigeria*.
- Amadi, S(2019), A Farmer From Enugu State, Aged, Eighty-Eight(88),interviewed in his house on 8th, December,2023.
- Mbah, (2021), A Farmer From Ihiagwa, Imo State, Aged Sixty-Five (65) years, interviewed on 20th February, 2024.
- Ozongbadike, S. A (2020), A Retired Rural Farmer From Nimbo-Enugu, Aged Eighty (80)Years, interviews on 15th April, 2024, in his house in Owerri, Imo State.
- Ofuoku, A.U.,and Isiefe, B.I.(200). *Causes, Effects and Resolution of Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Delta State, Nigeria. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. Vol.1 (2), 47-54
- Manu, I. N, Bime M. J, Find, D .E, and Ajana, N. J. I (2014). *Effects of Farmer-Grazer Conflicts in Rural Development: A Socioeconomic Analysis, Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, vol.4. No. 3. 113-120.
- Fabiyi, M. and Adeleke.O.(2016). *Why the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers Fight: How Climate Change and Boko Haram Crisis Created the Crisis and Six(6) Evidence Based Policy Recommendations for its Resolution*. Retrieved from: saharareporers.com
- Nformi, M. I, Bime, M.D.E, and Ajaga, N. (2014). *Effects of Farmer-Grazer Conflicts on Rural Development: A Socioeconomic Analysis. Scholarly Journal of Agricultural Science*, Vol. 4(3), 113-120.
- Ojo, I. (2016), *Resolving the Nigerian Herders and Farmers Conflicts:.* Retrieved from: www.authorityngr.com
- Ofuoku, A. U., and Isiefe, B.I. (200). *Causes, Effects and Resolution of Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Delta State*,



- Nigeria. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. Vol.1 (2), 47-54
- Fabiyi and Adeleke (2016) Why the Fulani-Herdsmen and Farmers fight: How Climate change and Boko-Haram crisis created the crisis and six (6) Evidence Based Policy Recommendation
- Musa, A. O. Shabu, T. and Igbawua, M. I. (2014). *Resource Use Conflicts between Farmers and Fulani Herders in Human Local Government Area of Venue State, Nigeria. Journal of Basic and Applied Research International*. XX(X&X). xx-xx.
- Charles, J.O. (2010). *Ethnography of African Societies: Sub-Saharan Region*. Lagos Serenity Publishers.
- Abanyam, N.L. (2016), *Changing Burial Practices and Socio-Economic among the Tiv People of Benue State, Nigeria*. A PhD Thesis submitted to the Postgraduate School, Benue State University Makurdi.
- Tonah, S. (2006). *Managing Farmer–herder Conflicts in Ghana’s volta basin. Ibadan Journal of Social Sciences* 4 (1): 33-45
- Ofuoku, A.U, and Isiefe, B.I.(2019). *Causes, Effects and Resolution of Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Delta State, Nigeria. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. Vol.1 (2), 47-54
- Idowu,(2017), *Urban Violence dimension in Nigeria: Farmers and Herders onslaught*
- Audu, A.D. (2013), *Conflicts among Farmers and Pastoralist in Northern Nigeria induced By Fresh Water Scarcity. Journal of Developing Countries Studies*, Vol.3.No.12. 25-32.
- Shehu, H. (2018). *The Causes and Consequences of Fulani Pastoralist-Farmers in Nigeria. International Journal of innovation and Research Educational Sciences* 5(3).
- Onime, E. B (2018), *Insecurity and Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Diagnostic Review, European Scientific Journal*, 14 (4). Uniport, Ph.D Dissertation.



- Akwara, U. (2018), *The Attack of Herdsmen on Farmers in Nigeria: The Problems and Solutions*, in Ningxin, L. *Nigeria's Fulani Herdsmen- Farmers Conflict and Peace Building*. European Center for Research Training and Development, UK Nova Southern University.
- John, (2022), Civil Servant from Ubah Agwa in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State, Interviewed on 13th of May, 2024

