

**HERDSMEN – FARMERS’ CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: EMERGING ISSUES AND  
THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines current trends of the herdsmen-farmers’ conflicts in Nigeria, which has heated up academic debate in recent times. It identifies the causes and examined the socio-economic implications to national development which the civil conflicts had wrought. It however finds relevance in the theories of multiculturalism for its theoretical framework. Multiculturalism theories x-rayed the causes of inter-groups conflicts and adduce those between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria to differences in groups’ affiliation to culture, ethnicity and religion to be instrumental to the rivalry, competition and contentions or struggles for available limited resources especially land resource for animal grazing and crop cultivation. While linking this to structural violence as leaders’ failure to equitably appropriate or allocate nation’s scarce land resources to the benefit of the different groups- a characteristic of a failed state, as responsible to the aggrieved groups’ rise in anger and violence against the presumed favoured groups. The current situation of induced wanton killings and destruction are taken unbearable dimensions that are negatively affecting the socio-economic development of the nation and Nigerian people. This study recommends among others that the government as a matter of policy decision should resolve to prohibit open grazing in order to transform the primordial system to a modern system of ranching as applies in civilized climes; a special agency be vested with the responsibility of enforcing peace-keeping agreements with the warring groups and to collaborate with international interventionists group, who should maintain neutrality in their operations to stop the current conflicts and to reduce the chances of recurrence of violence; while integration programmes be put in place for the victims of wars and for the combatants.

**KEY WORDS:** conflicts, herdsmen, farmers, diversities and multiculturalism.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of incessant genocide killings in recent times across Nigeria has attracted scholars' attention and elicited debates in order to proffer possible solution. This paper therefore contributes its quota by way of examining the causes and consequences of conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. However, throughout history, Society has had a tendency to use physical force by all means when desiring an unattainable objective. The use of such physical force, especially killing, has been constrained and forbidden by the laws of society stemming from religion, legislation and behavioural norms adopted by communities. The exception according to Segell (2009) being where man acts collectively for the objective of a clan, tribe, nation or, in modern times, the nation-state. Such collective killing is considered permissible and hence provides the definition that war is an act of collective violence arising out of a conflict between two or more groups. This definition also encompasses the period of such conflict and the techniques and procedures of war.

The causes of conflict have remained constituent over centuries. These include societal environment in which man resides. Groupings of people have become institutionalized collectively with the advent of city states in Greek times, empires in Roman times, feudal fiefdoms in the Middle Ages, and cultural and ideological nation-states in a fashion known as the Westphalian system that persist into the twenty-first century. The shape and texture of the collective society and the nature of governance over society have altered the number of people involved in violent conflicts and the manner in which decisions have been taken by those in governance.

The worries of this paper is that having co-existed through colonial era in the face of diversities, it was the expectation of the nationalists who fought assiduously for the independence of our country that self-governance would smoothen relationship and ensure peaceful co-existence to enhance unity in diversity. However, the dimension Herdsmen-Farmers conflict is tolling in recent time, if not checked may bring the labour of our Heroes past to futility.

This paper therefore aims at identifying the causes of Herdsmen-Farmers' conflicts and to examine its implications to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

### **A Brief Historical Background of Land Conflicts in Nigeria**

The country now called Nigeria was heterogeneous before creation. This is characterized by its diversity in ethnic, religion, culture and indigenous beliefs (Ikhayere and Osawe, 2013). It has a population of about 175 million people, estimates of the number of ethnic groups are generally around 250 to 300; with the main groups of Hausa-Fulani made up of about 29%; Yoruba about 21%; Igbo about 18%; Ijaw about 10%; Kanuri about 4%; Ibibio about 3.5% and Tiv about 2.5% (CIA Fact Book, 2012). Religion wise, the breakdown is about 50% Muslim, 40% Christian and 10% Indigenous beliefs.

Nigeria has been at the throws of centrifugal pressure following series of amalgamation of the diverse peoples and religion starting from the annexation of Lagos in 1861. Although some of the modern land conflicts have their roots in pre-colonization struggles between the various groups for land, most modern issues stem from the establishment of a British protectorate in 1901 and the creation of administrative boundaries that did not reflect cultural and ethnic divisions was significant.

The creation as a country under the name 'Nigeria' was by the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, and the Lagos Colony on January 1, 1914 thereby unified the two distinct protectorates into a single British Colony under the administration of a Governor General, the first of which was Sir Frederick Lord Lugard (British Colonial Report Annual, 1916; Falola and Heaton, 2008). This development led to the experience by the dominant ethnic groups in each region being confronted with influx of people from other areas within the newly formed country. Migration increased noticeably. Blench (2003) in view of the pluralism describes Nigeria as 'the third most ethnically and linguistically diverse country in the World after New Guinea and Indonesia'. With ethnic groups and distinct linguistic units numbering between 248 (Coleman, 1958) and 440 (Crozier and Blench, 1992), scholars argue

that Nigeria is a country in which ethno-linguistic diversity has a very significant effect in almost every area of intergroup relations, national integration and the economy.

In an effort to discourage ethnic clashes in Northern cities, the British and the traditional rulers (Emirs) persuaded the Igbo and Yoruba people to live in separate parts of the city in the North known as *Sabon-gari*, or “stranger quarters”. Similarly, in the South-West and South-East there are Strangers’ Settlement areas like Hausa quarters, Yoruba or Igbo quarters respectively. By cobbling different Nigerian groups into a culturally artificial political entity, the British stimulated intergroup competition and mobilization for power and resources in the new state. The ethnic and political structures imposed by the British set the stage for decades of conflicts in Nigeria (Conroy, 2017).

Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria over operational spaces have been an age long struggle for limited land resource. It is worthy of note here that before the amalgamation in 1914, access to land resources by farmers and herdsmen had been a major issue leading to conflicts in Nigeria (British Colonial Report Annual, 1916; Falola and Heaton, 2008). Access to land has been shown to be important to poverty reduction, economic growth and empowerment of the poor and guarantee of food security. Most prominent of this land resource is for crop production and livestock grazing for domestic consumption and for commercial purposes; clothing, housing and other uses and for seasonal or permanent wage labour.

It is a statement of fact that management of natural resources ensures that livelihoods are secure and sustainable in the long term. Farmers whether subsistence or commercial and pastoralists depend on the use of available land for crops cultivation and pasture for their livestock (Rennie and Singh, 1996). It is unfortunate that weak understanding of the nature of livelihoods in Africa has resulted to many aspects of the rural livelihoods continued conflicts with each other and with the natural ecosystem. Ownership and the right of access to natural resources have become more critical in the densely settled rural landscapes where livelihoods and food security are substantially tied to these resources.

In the face of current emerging issues, existing resource governance and frameworks should be seen critical to the effective management of resources in order to prevent worsening the conflicts or increasing human insecurity. Many factors have been observed according to Ikhayere (2016), to have exerted influences on the land resource thereby making it of scarce supply for socio-economic purposes by the peoples of Nigeria including the farmers and herdsmen.

This paper is particular about the causes of herdsmen – farmers’ conflicts in Nigeria and the effects of these conflicts on the Nigerian peoples.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Various theories abound by which this topic could be discussed. However, theories of Multiculturalism are of particular relevance to the theoretical framework of this paper. The term multiculturalism has gained wide currency in both academic and popular debate and its application transcends social sciences to humanities and even natural sciences. Hoffman and Graham (2009) perceive the imperativeness to demarcate the concept of multiculturalism with some distinctions:

- a. ***Multiculturalism as an attitude:*** This refers to either a positive or open attitude to different cultures or at least, respect for people, where such respect means recognizing their rights to make choices about how they live their lives.
- b. ***Multiculturalism as a tool of public policy:*** This relates to policies focused particularly on social inclusion and identifying the special needs of particular cultural groups.
- c. ***Multiculturalism as an aspect of institutional design:*** This concept attempts to answer policy questions as to what kind of institutions that is desirable. The institutional design that makes explicit the concern with cultural diversity including power-sharing.
- d. ***Multiculturalism and moral justification:*** This dimension is mostly concerned with how political institutions are justified. ‘Justificatory multiculturalism’ is concerned with reasons that all reasonable people can accept (Hoffman and Graham, 2009).

Theories of Multiculturalism place emphasis on culture, race, ethnicity and religion.

*Culture:* While opening lines of his book ‘Multicultural Citizenship’ Kymlicka (1995) makes following claim:

Most counties are culturally diverse. According to recent estimates, the world’s 184 independent states contain over 600 living language groups and 5,000 ethnic groups. In very few countries can the citizens be said to share the same language, or belong to the same ethno-national group (Kymlicka, 1995).

Culture equates to a language group, an ethnic group and an ethno-national group. Culture as an intergenerational community, occupying a given state territory, sharing a distinct language and history (Kymlicka, 1995) and provides meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities. Ruth in Tully (1995) maintained that a culture is an integrated pattern of intelligent, albeit often unconscious behaviour. Culture is a complexity of signs, whose meaning is dependent upon perspective, not in the sense that an ‘outsider’ cannot understand the signs, but rather that such understanding – interpretation – must make reference to the context of the participants. Culture, a shorthand of multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another which are at once strange, irregular and inexplicit (Geertz, 1993).

Structural violence has its largest proponents from intelligentsia proponents amongst them are Galtung (1969) and Burton (1997), who posit that some violence is avoidable but becomes inevitable due to deprivation of some basic human needs in the areas of political, socio-economic and cultural structures. Structural violence may occur as a result of lack of human agencies which may make an action of a person to result to unequal distribution of resources. This form of violence exists when some groups, classes, genders and nationalities are assumed to have and in fact do have, more access to goods, resources and opportunities than other groups, classes, genders and nationalities. These unequal advantages are built into the very social, political and economic systems that govern societies, states and the world (Galtung, 1969).

The conflict between traditional liberalism and identity politics would be less severe were it not for the fact that the demand for equal recognition extends beyond an

acknowledgement of equal value of all humans potentially, and comes to include the equal value of what they have made of this potential (Taylor, 1994). What is interesting about this presentation of multiculturalism is that culture is conceptualised not as an imposition or constraint, but as something we identify with, and in the process, it becomes our identity. Ironically, the inability of government to meet up with its responsibilities makes societies to be susceptible to violence such as that of the farmers' and pastoralists. One of the schools of thought which blame socio-economic conditions for the violent activities such as those of farmers' and pastoralists experienced in recent times in Nigeria is premised on the increasing human needs in relation to structural violence. This theory argues that human beings have some basic needs to achieve and when the failure to do this is caused by somebody or a system, it then leads to violent activities and in turn leads to poor socio-economic activities especially agricultural production (Rosati, Manacrorda, Kovrova, Koseleci and Lyon, 2010).

### **Causes of Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflicts in Nigeria**

The causes of herdsmen-farmers' conflicts in Nigeria can be classified into a number of factors. One is according to levels of analysis (Levy and Becker, 2001), that is, whether the causes relate to the characteristics of individuals, groups, country as a whole, or the entire world. Another is according to disciplinary focus; that is whether they focus on psychological, social, political, geographical, environmental, economic or other factors. Although causes related to different levels of analysis interact with each other, and disciplinary boundaries are rather blurred (Dutt, 2009), these can form the basis of classification of the causes of conflicts in this discourse.

### **Social and Political Factors**

Sociological approaches focus on groups with shared ethnic, linguistic or religious identities and causes of crisis have been located in the characteristics of these groups as well as the propensity of individuals to identify with them (Dutt, 2009). Examples of conflicts in which group identities have been important include those arising from ethnic divisions in Rwanda, Burundi, the Darfur region of Sudan and Zimbabwe; clan divisions of Somalia and

Afghanistan; religious divisions in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Sudan. Since 1945 the proportion of conflicts involving ethnic violence has increased steadily (Stewart and Brown, 2008). However, it is often the social characteristics of countries rather than of groups which are the major determinants of conflicts. It has been found that the probability of civil wars first rises and then falls with the degree of ethno-linguistic fractionalization. Moreover, international factors such as globalization can also reduce national cohesiveness as groups find closer culture and ethnic ties with those across their borders, thereby creating conditions for eruption of conflicts (Dutt, 2009).

Political explanations of civil wars can lie in the propensity of groups to monopolize political power. As other groups feel left out from political process and access to government resources, they become aggrieved, and such grievances can lead to crisis or conflicts. They can also relate to characteristics of counties, that is, of ‘failed states’ which lack legitimacy because are unable to govern effectively and are too weak to contain opposition (Ayoob, 2001).

### **Environmental Factor**

A geographical characteristic of a country that is often argued to make it susceptible to conflicts is the existence of natural resources (Klare, 2001). Natural resources can provide funding for rebel groups, especially if they are ‘loot able’ in the sense that they can be appropriated or cultivated by small groups of unskilled workers and fund government efforts if they are non-lootable. Land resource though non-lootable has been the major resource in Nigeria, captured by some groups that lead to secessionist struggles by local groups.

Environmental problems have been identified to cause conflicts (Homer-Dixon, 1999) especially in Nigeria. Environmental scarcities which manifest in the inadequate available land for pastoralism and farming have been exacerbated by the effects of climate change, resulting in desertification, land degradation, air and water pollution, water scarcity (Ikhayere, 2017) and decline in animal stocks as well as crop production. In a related vein, over grazing of land, population explosion, effects of migration and improper planning by statutory agencies reduce

the overall amount of land resources available thereby intensifying competition over them. The powerful groups recognizing such scarcity use their power and influence desperately to maximize the use of the scarce land resource to the detriment of the vulnerable. A culture of selfishness according to Dutt (2009) often emerges as groups try to compete for their share of the diminished resources rather than try to conserve the total, exacerbating the scarcity. The competitive contentions for the said diminished available land resources breed conflicts which have aggravated to killings of lives in thousands by the day, as currently experienced in Nigeria.

### **Economic Factor**

The neoclassical individual optimizing approach has gained patronage in economics in relation to individuals' choice between violence and other activities in order to maximize utility (Becker, 1968). Optimizing individuals according to Becker (1968), are less likely to participate in civil wars if they obtain higher income from normal economic activities like employment, and more likely to be involved in war if they can make more money out of it. The emphasis here is that armed conflicts are mostly driven by greed and lootings which make rebel leaders, their followers and others feel doing well even when they do not emerge victorious, which is why they start and continue wars and do not wish to end them. The general absence of law and order in an environment of crises makes it possible for leaders and sponsors of armed conflicts to make money by producing and selling small arms; smuggling activities; stealing and pillaging cattle, land and other assets; obtaining ransom money by kidnapping and extortion; and by getting access to force labour, including child labour. Moreover, others who are not directly involved with the rebellion can also engage in these activities, and they are also helped by the disruption of markets which result in scarcities and inflation. These ideas have often led to the notion that armed conflicts are largely caused by greed.

Another economic factor that could influence the herdsmen farmers' conflicts in Nigeria is poverty and illiteracy. This assertion agrees with Maleckova and Kruger (2003) findings in their work on Palestinians and the Israeli dissident, that there is a significant relationship

between poverty and lack of education on one hand, and engagement in, or tendency to supportive of terrorist activities. Some economic characteristics like low per capita income, low levels of education and high levels inequality have significant role to play inducing conflicts in a country. Since average incomes are low and levels of education are also low, these can be fertile ground for recruiting militants. Low levels of income are likely to generate more real and perceived grievances. Poor countries are also likely to have poor government and other institutions, and insufficient resources to strengthen these institutions; the sense of a break in the social contract and the inability of the government to control discontent, can result in violence.

Other factors that are of most peculiarity with the herdsmen and farmers' conflicts in Nigeria include long-standing disagreements and disrespect of traditional authorities. Burton (2016) observed that many recent attacks perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen have stemmed from long-standing disagreement with various communities. A Fulani leader alleged that the massacre of Agatu people by their men was a reprisal attack against the killing of their prominent son by the people of Aguta in April 2013 who stole his cows (Mayah, Tukur and Adebayo, 2016). In a more specific term, within the middle-belt region, there has been a history of long feud over farm lands and herding, which pre-existence communal conflicts sustains the violence as herdsmen turned militant in vengeance. In a related vein, the herdsmen had been observed to exhibit deviant behaviours towards the norms and communal services of their areas of operation. These include among others are social works, levies, security or vigilance. This however, is viewed by indigenous communities as a total disrespect and insult to their traditional authorities (Ofem and Inyang, 2014). Similarly, Ofuoku and Isife, (2009) noted that disregard for host traditional authority by the herdsmen is the main cause of the conflict in Delta State communities.

The inability of political leaders and government to provide basic necessities of life to the citizens is another major factor that could instigate crises. Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) posit that when the state fails to achieve almost any political centralization, society sooner or

later descends into chaos, as did Somalia. In Africa, particularly Nigeria, we have problems of hunger, unemployment, diseases, illiteracy, insecurity etc, that result in mass frustration, alienation disorientation of the citizens, repression and exploitation perpetrated by decadent ruling class. Citizens' reaction to such obnoxious conditions of government insensitivity could trigger anger and aggression that any alternative suggestion that may appease their minds may lead to armed conflicts.

### **Implications of Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflicts in Nigeria**

Cattle herdsman and crop farmers' clashes have been a major cause of incessant violence threatening the peace and security of Nigeria. These havens been noted, it is pertinent to state emphatically that the socio-economic consequences of civil armed conflict and violence depend on its duration and severity, the tactics used and whether it is localized or spread over the country. For the purpose of this study, the socio-economic implications of herdsmen-farmers' conflicts in Nigeria will be viewed from the perspectives of social effects and economic effects on the people and as legacy effects - that is effects during and after the conflicts.

#### **i. Social Effect**

**(a) Loss of Human Lives:** There have been adverse social implications as prevalent wanton killings and mass destruction of property as Aliyu (2015) avers that most of the encounters culminate in human and animal lives regularly lost. For instance, in the work of Oli, Ibekwe and Nwankwo, (2018), the Tiv people in Guma, Gwer-West Makurdi and other towns at the border with Taraba State have recorded about 458 deaths and over 350 communities have been sacked and now living in IDP camps. Table 1 represents the total number of death tolls based on the secondary data analysed the death casualties per month and year:

**Table 1: Death Casualties due to Conflicts between Fulani Herders and Tiv Farmers from January 2016 to June 2018**

Month	Year			Total
	2016	2017	2018	
January	101	37	98	<b>2,272</b>
February	569	29	78	
March	37	96	92	
April	132	10	83	
May	64	37	5	
June	19		234	
July	102	33		
August	21			
September	8	19		
October	40	107		
November	8	53		
December	20	140		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>590</b>	

*Source: Author's compilation from reportages of various online weekly Surveys of Nigerian and International media, 2021 & Okoro, J.P., 2018*

It can be deduced from Table 1 that herdsmen-Farmers conflict brought about the death of one thousand, one hundred and twenty one (1,121) persons in 2016, five hundred and sixty one (561) persons in 2017 and five hundred and ninety (590) persons in 2018, which gives the

total of two thousand, two hundred and seventy two (2,272) deaths in less than three years (thirty months to be precise).

As flames of violence and other forms of lives guzzling insecurity flicker in many parts of the country, Nigeria has literally become a killing field. The herdsmen crisis is one of the reasons the country is boiling now following prevailing incidents in many southern states especially Oyo, Ondo and Ogun. In the first six weeks of 2021, lives of no fewer than One thousand, five hundred and twenty-five (1,525) persons have been wasted across the country (Ndujihe, C., 2021). Table 2 presents number of deaths in the 36 States of the country including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja within the first six weeks of 2021.

**Table 2: Nigerians killed in six weeks of 2021 (Jan. 1 to Feb. 16) by States**

S/N	State	No. Of Death	Ratings/Remarks
1	Kaduna	409	The deadliest State and the hotbed of banditry ravaging the North-West zone.
2	Zamfara	267	The deadliest State and the hotbed of banditry ravaging the North-West zone.
3	Borno	257	The deadliest State and the epicentre of the Boko Haram insurgency.
4	Yobe	76	High deaths
5	Niger	73	High deaths
6	Delta	46	High deaths
7	Ebonyi	43	High deaths
8	Kastina	41	High deaths
9	Oyo	37	High deaths
10	Plateau	31	High deaths
11	Lagos	26	High deaths
12	Rivers	24	High deaths
13	Imo	23	High deaths
14	Ogun	20	High deaths
15	Ondo	20	High deaths
16	Nasarawa	16	High deaths
17	Cross River	15	High deaths
18	Benue	12	High deaths
19	Anambra	11	High deaths
20	Akwa Ibom	11	High deaths

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	<i>Contd...</i>		
21	Kogi	11	High deaths
22	Kwara	8	Low deaths
23	Taraba	8	Low deaths
24	Osun	8	Low deaths
25	Abia	7	Low deaths
26	Edo	7	Low deaths
27	Sokoto	5	Low deaths
28	Adamawa	4	Low deaths
29	FCT, Abuja	3	Low deaths
30	Kano	2	Low deaths
31	Gombe	1	Low deaths
32	Enugu	1	Low deaths
33	Jigawa	1	Low deaths
34	Bayelsa	0	Zero reported death
35	Bauchi	0	Zero reported death
36	Kebbi	0	Zero reported death

**Source:** *Vanguard's Investigation and Nigeria Security Tracker, NST, 2021*

The emerging issues as exemplified by the current trends of killings in less than two months (January 1 to February 16, 2021), the 1,525 deaths figure, which is conservative, covers only reported cases arising from the Fulani herdsmen crisis, Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and robbery which activities have been perceived to be same and towards terrorising innocent citizens. Many security breaches are not reported and it is also difficult to tell the number of abducted victims who die in captivity as unconfirmed reports put the number of those in various kidnap dens across the country at over 5,000 (Nigeria Security Tracker, NST, 2021). The 1,525 deaths are about half of the 3,188 lives lost between January and December 2019, according to a report by Global Rights. It is also four times the 348 people killed in the violent attacks across Nigeria in December 2020, as reported by a non-governmental organisation, Nigeria Mourns. Currently, Nigeria is the third country most impacted by terrorism, going by the Global Terrorism Index 2020 after Afghanistan and Libya. The 2020 terrorism index report said though total deaths from terrorism in Nigeria fell to 1,245 in 2019, a 39% decrease from the prior year. Terror –related incidents also fell by 27%,

marking the lowest level of terrorist violence in Nigeria since 2011. However, Boko Haram, Nigeria’s deadliest terrorist group recorded an increase in terrorist activities mainly targeted at civilians by 25% from the prior year. Altruistically, Fulani extremists were responsible for 26% of terror-related deaths in Nigeria at 325 fatalities (Ndujihe, 2021). Table 3 presents how Nigerians were killed in the zones:

**Table 3: Nigerians killed in six weeks of 2021 (Jan. 1 to Feb. 16) by Zones**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>No. Of Deaths</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
South-East	85	300	18.19% of 1,525 total deaths
South-South	103		
South-West	112		
North-Central	155	1,225	81.91% of 1,525 total deaths
North-East	346		
North-West	724		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Author’s computation from reportages of Vanguard’s Investigation and Nigeria Security Tracker, NST, 2021*

The above data presents the South-East zone as the most peaceful zone with 85 reported deaths followed by the South-South, which had 103 deaths, and South-West, which had 112 deaths. Conversely, the North-West as the deadliest zone with 724 deaths, followed by its flanking North-East, which witnessed no fewer than 346 deaths and North-Central that had 155 deaths. However, the three southern zones accounted for 300 or 18.19% of the 1,525 deaths for the first six weeks of 2021. The northern zones recorded 1,225 or 81.91% of the

tallied deaths for the same period. This educated innocent Nigerians to decry the rising waves of insecurity in the country on tasked presidency on urgent action.

**(b) Threat to National Security:** The fact that herdsmen now carry sophisticated ammunition with which they kill and maim perceived opponents at will constitute grave danger to national security. This is because security personnel including the police have not been able to withstand weapon-wielding herdsmen's boldness and firepower. The herdsmen have sacked whole communities, abducted elder statesmen, burnt Churches, killed Church Priests and other worshippers, killed Police officers, raped, looted and perpetrated heinous crimes while the government has done less to arrest the situation, which is a serious threat to national security.

**(c) Displacement of Citizens:** Displacement of persons and animals is yet another implication of herdsmen-farmers' conflicts in Nigeria. Oli, Ibekwe and Nwankwo (2018) noted that farmers and herdsmen are displaced alike. In the host communities, nomadic herdsmen relocate as a result of conflict, while host farmers especially women who stay behind are forbidden from distant farms for fear of being raped or killed by nomads (Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). This also implies that such displaced farmers have become a source of liability to other farmers whom have to beg for food for themselves and their families, thereby creating a vicious cycle of poverty in the society (Ofem and Inyang, 2014).

**(d) Restriction of Movement or Declaration of State of Emergency:** Most times when there is an attack, people's movements are restricted. In some cases, the government may decide to declare hours of curfew or a dawn to dusk curfew. This is an infringement on the statutory freedom of movement of the citizen. In a personal communication on 05 April 2017, Damian Odo and Dr Elias Ngwu stressed the fact that whenever there is any serious attack on citizens by any grieved group, whether it is a religious sect, Fulani herdsmen, an ethnic group or political group, the government usually declares a state of emergency or curfew. When this happens, people's movements are restricted.

**(e) Religious Effects:** The herdsmen's conflict, like other conflicts in Nigeria, such as the Maitatsine religious conflict, OIC conflict, Sharia conflict and Boko-Haram terroristic

activity, have adversely affected religious activities such as night vigils, midweek services, Sunday services and open-field crusade, particularly night vigils, which Ugwuobute believed was one of the most powerful means of attacking Satan, evil spirits, witches and wizards and occult men and women (personal communication with Caleb Ugwuobute, 29 March 2017).

*(f) Other Effects on Individuals:* There is no doubting the fact that effects of herdsmen – farmers’ conflicts wrought detrimental omens to the people of Nigeria as can be seen in death, injuries and dislocation, which obviously undermine their ability to live and lead normal lives. Using entitlements approach in relation to implication of civil conflicts as pioneered by Sen (1981), which refers to the sources from all forms of income and the direct availability of resources from work, assets and transfers that enable people to have command over goods and services of use to them. It is worthy of note that during civil conflicts market entitlements decline because of destruction of labour and other resources like livestock; a decline in the price and marketability of these resources due to labour market disruptions, higher prices and reduced availability of food as well as other essential commodities. Direct entitlements also decline due to destruction of private resources such as infrastructure, so do public entitlements fall especially for the poor. The resultant cuts in government expenditure, the failure of the government to reach remote areas during conflicts and shifts in government entitlements away from the poor to elites who have more power to influence government policies all come to bear. Moreover, civic entitlements which are provided by the community and extra-legal entitlements which are acquired or lost by theft or the use of force all derail (Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2001).

## **ii. Economic effect**

Fulani herdsmen activities against the farmers without doubt have brought a huge economic setback in Nigeria. Some of these setbacks are discussed below:

(a) *Loss of Farmlands:* The nefarious activities of Fulani herdsmen in the Nigerian forests and farmlands include killing or maiming of innocent farmers, raping farmers’ wives

and daughters, kidnapping for ransom, that as this continue unabated farmers have been forced to abandoned their farmland for fear of being victims.

(b) ***Destruction of Farm Crops:*** Destruction of crops is another effect of herdsmen farmers’ conflict. As observed by Ofuoku and Isife (2009), more than Forty Million Naira worth of crops are lost annually due to invasion of cattle in the South-South region of Nigeria, especially Edo and Delta States, yet those of Middle belt area of Benue, Plateau and Jos to mention a few, are worse-off. This however, leads to scarcity of staple food and makes the available few attract too much cost which the ordinary citizens find difficult to procure.

(c) ***Creation of artificial scarcity:*** From what we know, anytime farmers are attacked they will run away from their farmlands and find it difficult to return for fear of being attacked again. This sometimes lasts for a long time, thereby hindering sowing and reaping. This undoubtedly creates an artificial scarcity of goods and services. The Zaki-biam Yam Market attack in Benue State that happened on 20 March 2017, in which over 50 people were killed, and out of fear the traders refused to come back to the market for a long time; created a man-made scarcity, which ordinarily would have been avoided if the Fulani herdsmen's attack on the farmers and villagers had not happened.

(d) ***Occupational change:*** The inhuman activities of Fulani herdsmen on farmers has not only created an impediment to the survival of the host communities but has forced many crop-farmers to abandon their farms while others changed their line of profession from farming to lesser paid occupation like Okada riding (commercial motorcycling). Aliyu (2015) noted that conflicts have continued to lead to destruction or loss of property and crops in Kastina State, leaving an already endangered populace even poorer without alternative source of income.

(e) ***Inflation and devaluation of the naira:*** Inflation, simply put, is a persistent increase in the prices of goods and services over a period of time. Anyanwuocha in Ibenwa (2018) defines it as a persistent rise in the general price level. The artificial scarcity created by the frequent attacks of the herdsmen on citizens as stated earlier leads to inflation, which in turn leads to devaluation of the naira. The implication here is that food security of urban dwellers

has been negatively affected to the extent that the cost of food supply has skyrocketed; as presently experienced by the residents of Calabar that depend on farmers in Yakurr community for food supply (Ofem and Inyang, 2014). Ebele N. Ibenwa and Emmanuel C. Anizoba, in a personal communication with the researcher on 05 March 2017, with this viewpoint, argued that the money is devalued because much money is now chasing few goods and services. The money cannot buy as much quantity as it could before.

(f) ***Discouragement of foreign investment:*** The incessant attacks by the Fulani herdsmen scare away foreigners who have come to Nigeria to do business. In the course of the attacks, lives and property, public companies, film-producing houses and industries are destroyed. When foreigners see these things happen, they get discouraged and withdraw their businesses and go back to their countries (Ibenwa, 2018).

(g) There is a decrease in output per capita, because of restrictions on people's movements as a result of curfews. Moreover, the daily output in goods and services is seriously affected. People can no longer move to their farms, shops and business centres freely as they wish. Lending credence to this view Ebele N. Ibenwa and Emmanuel C. Anizoba, in a personal communication on 05 March 2017, averred that the overall output of the people was decreased because of the check placed on the people.

(h) ***Creation of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs):*** Anytime there is any serious attack on the citizens, houses are burnt down and people are rendered homeless. Consequently, some of them who are not well-to-do cannot easily find themselves a home and, therefore, they are quartered in public buildings as IDPs. Okoli and Eze noted that war creates refugees and large numbers of people are displaced, which are popularly known as IDPs. People are displaced from their houses as a result of arson by the Fulani herdsmen and they camp in public buildings (oral interview with Anuli B. Okoli and Eze Ekene, 07 March 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study has revealed that civil conflicts between the pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria are caused beyond age-long ethnic divisions and their effects are felt also beyond those who are engaged in wars. It is however expedient to argue that instead of taking a docile or lopsided position, much can be done to ameliorate conflicts and there may be the need to involve external interventionist group(s) where the nation lacks the capacity to do so. Moreover, the extent that conflict is caused by potentially changeable factors and consequently having adverse effects on innocent bystanders in the country where civil conflicts wreak havoc on, the need for efforts to preventing them and if possible, bringing an end to existing ones, becomes obvious.

### **Recommendations**

Special actions are required to discourage and if possible, put an end to the herdsmen-farmers' conflict in Nigeria seeing that many factors have been responsible for instigating the crisis standing on the undue advantage of the nation's weak point of its diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion which, if not properly handled can tear it apart.

One of such actions is the enforcement of peaceful agreement between the warring groups. A special agency should be put in place that will be vested with responsibility to enforcing peaceful agreement, while foreign military intervention may be necessary to put an end to the incessant conflict and to facilitate the enforcement of the peaceful agreements. Such forces should be given legitimacy as they put on the appearance of neutrality in their conduct and work in collaboration with the local agency to have a better understanding of local conditions.

Special programmes such as micro-finance, entrepreneurship scheme and other forms human capacity building are necessary; to integrate victims and combatants into economic activities, while demobilization has to be done simultaneously for different protagonists so that the said programmes will be successful and to reduce the chances of recurrence of violence.

The need for government enabling laws to regulate private entrepreneurship on farming and pastoral activities are inevitable. The legislation that enhances a political will to holistically confront the issue to a logistic conclusion rather than foist one-sided support that may further widen the gap of distrust between the different regions and cultures in Nigeria.

There is also the need to transform livestock production system in Nigeria from the current traditional nomadic system to modern system of ranching like what obtains in the civilized climes. The government should not only be interested in creating fields for cattle business for herdsmen if she cannot also indicate relative interest in crop cultivation fields for farmers. As farming activities are considered as individual farmers' business so, cattle rearing activities should also be seen as private business to the herders. Yet the enabling laws to regulate the operations of both farmers and herdsmen should be the role of government and such regulations should not be lopsided. The issue of country's porous borders should be addressed in order to curb influx of small arms and illegal migration which hitherto, are prevalent.

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