

A STUDY OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF HERDERS-FARMERS CRISIS IN AGADAMA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Herders-Farmers violent clashes in Nigeria, have gotten worse in the last six years. Violence has progressed tremendously, from sporadic outbursts and small squabbles to meticulously planned attacks in which an army of trained citizens wipes out entire village. The forced movement of herders to the central and southern regions has resulted in a competition for few environmental resources with farmers already existing in those areas, which has resulted in bloodshed. This study therefore, examines the Causes and Effects of Herders-Farmers Crisis in Agadama, Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopted the frustration aggression theory to explain the causes of herders-farmers crisis and its effect. The study adopts the descriptive research design approach. Primary and secondary data were gathered concurrently to provide answers to the research questions in a quantitative manner. A total of 400 questionnaire were administered on herders and farmers; 200 for herders and 200 for farmers respectively; however, only 345 questionnaires were returned completed. The study revealed that destruction of crops (4.06), stealing of farm produce (3.84), and killing of herders (3.79) are among the most predominant causes of herders-farmers crisis in Agadama. The study also established reduction in farm output (4.15), displacement of farmers/herders (3.78), and reduction in farmers' income as the major socioeconomic impact of herders-farmers crisis in Agadama, Delta State. The study concludes that the causes of herders-farmers crisis are mainly as a result of economic issues. Therefore, adequate conflict prevention and resolution mechanism should be put in place to refrain from further crisis between the herders and farmers.

Keywords: *Herders, Farmers, Crisis, Agadama, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Farmers-herders disputes in Nigeria are one of the primary concerns that have posed serious concern to the country's security and unity, with the number of incidents related with natural resource conflicts in Nigeria increasing significantly in the last six years. Conflict arises when there are differences in a social environment over substantive matters or when emotional antagonisms cause friction between individuals or organizations (Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu, 2020:699). Land, water, trees, crops, crude oil,

diamonds, gold, reserves, and rights - grazing rights, farming rights, and hunting rights – are all examples of substance concerns. The majority of disputes arising from the above-mentioned difficulties, however, are referred to as resource disputes. Farmers' and pastoralists' confrontations have grown particularly in the wetland areas of northern Nigeria's middle belt, west, and central regions. The so-called farmer-herder conflict has resulted in significant setbacks in the development of peace and security in communal cooperation between host communities and herdsmen (Keghku & Alom, 2019: 44).

Conflict between herders and farmers appears to be triggered by the battle for survival and the defense of economic livelihood (including farmlands, crops, and animals) in many Nigerian communities. And, in most cases, official inactivity leads to assaults and counter-attacks between these vulnerable populations in rural regions (Okoro, 2020:809; Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu, 2020:699). In many places in Nigeria, the increased rivalry for arable land has resulted in major manifestations of hostility and social tension between herders and farmers. The hostilities have not only increased instability, but have shown a significant potential to aggravate the food crisis in Nigeria and other impacted nations owing to farmer deaths, animal slaughter, and other related factors. According to Idowu (2017:188), “Violence between herders and farmers has displaced over 100,000 people in the states of Benue and Enugu, leaving them in dire straits in the care of relatives or in temporary IDP camps, while many are still striving to reconstruct their lives” (Okoro, 2018:3; Keghku & Alom, 2019: 45).

The Fulani herders of Nigeria were recently named the world's fourth deadliest militant organization, with 1,229 killings in 2014 (Buchanan, 2015). Also, the United Nations revealed that Fulani herders kill 1,400 people in 2019 (Nwachukwu, 2019). While according to Amnesty International cited in Okoro (2018:2) (as reported by the New Telegraph) on January 29th, 2018, Fulani herdsmen killed 168 individuals in January alone. In their words, “The Nigerian government's response to community violence is woefully inadequate, too slow and inefficient, and in some circumstances illegal.” Hundreds of people have died as a result of these violence in 2017 alone, and the government is still not doing enough to safeguard communities. In 2017, for example, 549 people died in 14 states, resulting in thousands more people being displaced (Okoro, 2018:3; Keghku & Alom, 2019: 45). In 2017, 549 people were killed and hundreds more were displaced in the states of Delta, Zamfara, Ekiti Benue, Adamawa, Enugu, Taraba, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Katsina, and Cross Rivers as a result of violence between nomadic herders and local farmers” (Okoro, 2020:809). There has been a severe economic implication as a result of this violence, which is causing food shortages and costing the Nigerian economy up to \$13 billion per year (OECD, 2018:53). Conflicts of various magnitudes have caused cost the local, state, and

federal governments a significant amount of money. Consequently, the aim of this study is to examine the causes and effects of Herders-Farmers Crisis in Agadama, Delta State where the conflict between herders and farmers have also taken place.

Statement of Research Problem

In Nigeria, the struggle between herders and farmers has become a recurrent theme. Control of land for grazing and farming, severe desertification of vegetative areas, and droughts in Northern Nigeria are all forcing herders to relocate to the middle belt and southern Nigeria in search of greener pasture and water for their animals (Keghku & Alom, 2019). The nomadic herders dwell in farming towns where there is green foliage and water, such as the Benue valley/tough, throughout their migration. Farmers sometimes accuse ranchers of intruding on their property, ruining their crops, and polluting their major source of water supplies. Farmers, on the other hand, are accused by herders of poisoning, murdering, or even stealing their animals, particularly cattle. The farmers are also accused of impeding the herdsman's grazing paths, which were allegedly created in the early 1960s.

With the employment of modern weaponry such as the AK47 by herders who were previously known for grazing with sticks and cutlasses, the herders-farmers conflict has taken on a frightening new dimension. Unfortunately, the war has resisted the Nigerian government's security measures. Several people have died as a result of these attacks in Delta State communities. The assaults have demolished villages and damaged houses, displacing nearly 25,000 people. Constant resource-based disputes between farmers and herders, if not resolved, would surely jeopardize the economy. It's on this note, this study will examine the causes and effects of Herders-farmers conflict in Agadama, Delta State with the following objectives:

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the causes and effects of herder's farmer's crisis in Agadama, Delta State, Nigeria.

1. To analyze the causes of herders-farmers crisis in Agadama, Delta State.
2. To determine the effect of herder-famer crisis in Agadama, Delta State

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of herders-farmers crisis in Agadama, Delta State?
2. What is the extent of the effect of herder-famer crisis in Agadama, Delta State?

Herdsmen

Herders or semi-nomadic herders raise livestock as their primary vocation. Fulani herders took part in both haphazard and planned transhumance excursions. The fundamental reason for the herdsmen's nomadic tendency is to seek regions with enough of pasture and water for the cattle. The Fulani originated in Senegambia before expanding over West Africa, the Sahel, western Sudan, and the Central African Republic, to form around 20 states (Iro, 1994:22; Idowu, 2017:198). Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Benin, Niger, Guinea, Senegal, Nigeria, Mauritania, Mali, and are among the nations where herders are found. In Nigeria, herdsmen's cattle provide the majority of the country's beef consumption (Iro, 1994:22).

The people are found in huge numbers throughout Nigeria, although some have gone to the cities, many remain semi-nomadic herders. Herdsmen, on the other hand, are a group of people who own and nurture herds of animals such as cattle for commercial purposes. In Nigeria, it is mostly the Fulani ethnic group's occupation (Okoro, 2019:4). To safeguard their animals, they are frequently armed and walk around with weapons (such as daggers, machetes, and arrows). The Herdsmen are also known for blocking roadways with their animals, robbing and kidnapping individuals, holding them hostage in the wilderness, and demanding ransom (Okoro, 2019:4).

Farmers

Farmers who are also known as agricultures are those who work on farms, growing raw materials, or producing living organisms for food. As a result, those who raise field orchards, poultry, crops, vineyards, or other livestock fall under this category (Aliyu, Ikedinma, Akinwande, 2018:120) cited in Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu (2020:700). Producers include both herdsmen who herd or keep livestock such as cattle, goats, and sheep, as well as crop farmers. Farmers, however, are solely crop farmers (those who cultivate field crops), often known as peasant farmers/subsistence cultivators, for the purposes of this work. (Oghuvbu & Oghuvbu, 2020:700).

Herdsmen Farmers Crisis in Nigeria

The need of promoting agriculture as an alternative to oil as a key source of national wealth is being emphasized all throughout Nigeria. Governmental and non-governmental organizations utilize a range of agricultural programs. Many individuals are entering farming as a result of the increased emphasis on agricultural output; similarly, more individuals are entering livestock and cow breeding in particular (Ajibo, et al., 2018:158). Farmers and herders compete for available land resources as a result of the agricultural boom. As cattle graze on farmers' lands, farmers retaliate by

attacking herdsmen's cows, a multi-dimensional issue emerges (Ajibo, et al., 2018:158). Herdsmen assault farmers as a form of retaliation because they cherish their cows so highly. As a result, attacks and retaliation by farmers and herders result in the loss of lives and property, as well as national disintegration (Ajibo, et al., 2018:158).

Aljazeera (2018) compiled a timeline of Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria, which revealed that the herders murdered 3,780 Nigerians in assaults across the nation, omitting the injured and abducted. Farmers, on the other side, have slaughtered dozens of cows and Fulani herders in retaliation for cows destroying crops and agricultural products. According to Aljazeera (2018) “herders stormed two communities in Ughelli Local Government Area in Delta state, murdering eight residents in reprisal for the slaughter of 112 cows.”

The Effect of Herders-Farmers Crisis in Nigeria

Political Effect

The widely and most intriguing acknowledged factor influencing crisis in Nigeria politics, and the role of political elites who use ethnic and religious mobilization to gain political power, are undeniably important (Ojo, 2010). The failure of Nigerian leaders to establish good governance, foster national unity and integration, and demonstrate a willingness to promote real economic growth through just and well-articulated policies has undoubtedly resulted in widespread poverty and high unemployment. This failure and indifference culminated in the communal, religious, and ethnic strife that currently characterizes Nigerian politics. People have little or no option but to engage in criminal activity due to idleness, despair, lack of hope, and a high percentage of unemployment. (Akinwale, 2010). During the lengthy years of military rule, the use of force and violence against any organization, tribe, or its affiliates was encouraged and permitted in order to achieve so-called social reform and meet defined goals and demands. And, sadly, the restoration to democracy did not improve the problem; rather, it exacerbated it through power sharing and electoral fraud. Some Nigerians believe that the issue is not one of religion, but rather one of power and a credible system of power sharing (Ojo, 2010).

Social Effect

The appearance of the hostile Udawa and Bokoloji pastoralists is linked to the rise and introduction of rifles and other modern weapons, as well as the usage of mobile phones, accompanied by banditry, in the wars. All of this has resulted in the devastation of villages, settlements, crops, and irrigation facilities, as well as the loss of human and

animal lives. The occurrence of significant examples of survival conflicts between pastoralists and farmers resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of property, as well as the formation of insecurity owing to the desire for vengeance by pastoralists and farmers (Nwachukwu, 2019).

National Security

The instruction of sophisticated weapons and guns was as a result of increased the crisis and violence between farmers and cattle herders for grasses and forages in agricultural land (Abbas, 2009) which might lead to security threat in such area. Example is the case of militant versus Mambila herdsmen in Sardauna local government of Taraba State in June 2017. The introduction of modern weapons into the conflict and communication devices and the use of terrorist bandits exacerbated chronic insecurity which has encouraged the conflicting parties to take ownership and defense, a threat to the federal sustainability. (Okoro, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The theory for the study is anchored on Frustration-Aggression. The proponents of the theory are John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert Sears in 1939 and was further developed by Neal Miller in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1961(Friedman Schustack, 2014:5) cited in Okoro (2018:5). The theory states that the outcome of a person's attempts to achieve a goal being blocked or frustrated. When it was initially proposed, the hypothesis asserted that frustration always comes before aggressiveness, and that aggressiveness is an unavoidable result of frustration. Miller and Sears reformulated the concept two years later, claiming that although frustration causes a drive to act, aggressiveness is one possible result. As a consequence, the reformulated hypothesis claimed that while frustration may or may not trigger violent conduct, any violent action is the product of frustration, making frustration a required but not sufficient condition for aggressiveness (Zillmann & Dolf, 1979:127). It makes an attempt to explain the origins of violence. Aggression is described as "an act whose goal-response is damage to an organism," while frustration is described as "a state that emerges when a goal-response is interfered with". According to the hypothesis, frustration leads to violence, but when the root of the frustration isn't addressed, the aggressiveness is directed toward an innocent target (scapegoat). This hypothesis is also used to explain riots and revolutions, both of which are seen to be the result of bottled-up frustration and anger being expressed via violence by the poorer and more underprivileged parts of society (Friedman Schustack, 2014).

According to Olu-Adeyemi (2017:6) variety of other factors, such as “culture, society, and the political climate, have an impact on the use of violence. Violent action as a means to an aim must be accepted, if not approved, by the culture. If the existing leadership and/or the socio-economic/political system are perceived as unresponsive, violence is more likely.” The basic idea of the theory, according to Olu-Adeyemi (2017) is that scarcity is the consequence of insufficient supply (effect of climatic population increase) or unequal resource allocation as a result of deprivation, which leads to violence. When it comes to frustration, it indicates that one's access to a source of income (farming or grazing, as the case may be) is being obstructed by someone or something, and that one's reaction to this thwarting is displeasure. Deprivation, is based on the desires and needs that we believe we should have or deserve, rather than on our actual desires and needs. The Herdsmen are frequently irritated as a result of desertification; as a result, they are compelled to move, and as they travel, they confront a number of problems, which leads to irritation. Farmers who have worked hard to cultivate farmlands are similarly frustrated when herds of animals damage their crops. The Fulani Herdsmen terror is a conflict over values and claims to finite resources, with the goal of neutralizing, injuring, or eliminating host people in order to protect their livestock. Fulani herdsmen engage in violent behaviour as a result of the build-up of residual instigator consequences of frustration. Herdsmen's terrorist acts may be traced back to desertification, which has resulted in a reduction in grazing options or a lack of fodder for their animals, affecting their economic well-being in the long run. A herdsman who loses his flock due to drought and water shortage may be disappointed by the loss of income. He may become hostile as a result of this reality, and because he is unable to channel his aggression to natural reasons, he may channel it to any individual or group that obstructs his migration to a safe place in the long term. Farmers and host communities in Nigeria are likewise angry when herdsmen's animals trample on their farmlands and consume their crops. They grow enraged and direct their rage onto the herders and their cows because they are also frustrated. Conflict and confrontation are unavoidable as a result of this reality.

Research Methodology, Population and Sample Size

Primary and secondary data was consulted during this study. Structured questionnaires and focused group were used to collect quantitative data in the field to generate data for the study. The questionnaire focused mainly on the causes and effects of the crisis. While secondary data were collected using books, academic journals, conference papers etc....

The Fulani herdsmen and crop farmers were the target population within Agadama. In selecting farmers or herdsmen the respondents were selected randomly through a multi-stage sampling process. The first stage was to identify the farmers and herdsmen affected. The second phase involved the deliberate sampling of nearby villages in the field, based on the commonly used farmers' and herdsmen's properties. For the herders their grazing places, markets and extended family settlements (Rugage) are identified due to the nature of their settlement pattern and economic activities. A total of 200 farmers and 200 livestock herders were selected using the random method of selection. However, only 345 questionnaires were returned completed.

The snowball method is used when one person is identified, which helps the researcher to identify the other, etc. A total of 400 respondents were selected with structured questionnaires for interrogation.

Analytical Techniques

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically, the mean, rating, frequency counts, ranking method and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender of Respondents

Table 1 illustrates the gender distribution of the study participants. The results showed that the majority of respondents for the study were males, representing 79.9% of respondents and 20.1% of respondents were females. The broad margin in the distribution of men and women participants could be ascribed to the cultural and religious association of the individual, which did not allow their women to interact directly with strangers, men specifically.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	276	79.9
Female	69	20.1
Total	345	100

Table 4.5: Cause of Herdsmen and Farmers Clash in Agadama

Causes	Very Low	Low	Fair	High	Very High	Mean	Rank
Crops Destruction	0	25	62	118	140	4.08	1st
Killing of cattle	5	47	79	100	114	3.79	3rd
Domestic violence	30	49	73	87	106	3.55	7th
Ethnicity motivated by Politics	27	36	88	93	101	3.59	6th
Inadequate Grazing Reserves	55	86	100	59	45	2.86	9th
Religion	16	56	64	101	108	3.66	5th
Pollution of water Point	95	83	75	65	27	2.55	10th
Farm Produce/Cattle stealing	32	51	46	79	137	3.69	4th
Indiscriminate Bush Burning	15	34	69	100	127	3.84	2nd
	45	69	120	57	54	3.02	8th

Causes of Herdsmen and Farmers Clash in Agadama

Factors that influence clashes between herdsmen and farmers were gathered from extant review of literature. The respondents were then asked to assess these causes on a 5-scale Likert review. Table 5 above shows the results of the analysis. The findings show how the factors identified influenced or caused clashes in Agadama community between farmers and herdsmen. The most prevalent cause of the crisis between herders and farmers is the destruction of the crops and agricultural products (4, 08). This variable was the first of all identified causes; followed by cattle/farms robbing (3.84) and cattle killing (3.79) respectively, in 2nd and 3rd places. The lowest classified causes with a

10th and a 9th rank (2.55) and the political influences (2.86) respectively. The result also suggests that all identified causes have a strong influence on the crisis between herders and farmers, with the exception of political and religious factors with fair effect.

Table 6: The Effects of Herdsmen-Farmers Crisis

Causes	Total Scores	Mean	Rank	Remark
Farm output reduction	1432	4.15	1 st	Major effect
Displacement of farmer and herdsmen	1305	3.78	2 nd	Major
Loss of lives	1185	3.45	5 th	Major effect
Reduce job opportunity	1240	3.59	4 th	Major effect
Crime rate Increase	988	2.86	6 th	Minor effect
Income Reduction	1254	3.63	3 rd	Major effect
Distrust Encouragement	952	2.76	7 th	Minor effect

Effect of the Conflict between Herdsmen-Farmers Clashes in Agadama

The socioeconomic effects of herdsmen and farmers' conflicts affect different aspects of the socioeconomic life of herdsmen and farmers. Table 6 above shows how respondents have identified the impacts and how the first major socio-economic effect of respondents is a reduction in farm output (4.15). Another large-scale effect is the displacement of farmers/herdsmen (3.78), as the latter is among other effects. The main effects of the crisis includes reduction in income generation (3.63), reduced employment opportunities (3.59) and loss of lives (3.43). Other effects are increased crime rate (2, 86) and lack of confidence (2.76). This is in line with the report published in the Premium Times of 5 July 2017 by Governor Ortom of Benue, where at least 62,000 people had been displaced from January 2015 until February 2017 in Kaduna, Benue and Plateau states due to the herdsmen and farmers' crises.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings established that the root causes of the crisis between farmers and herders is primarily as a result of the absence of tenure security on land on which most small-scale producers depend for their livelihood. The corrupt elite have exploited political shortcomings and contradictions at the expense of poor farmers and herders. The effects of state-backed agricultural land collection in particular have helped shape the herders from traditional pastureland through large-scale agricultural investment and corrupt practices at the village and state level. In farmer communities, the effects of such misplacement have been felt in the form of conflicts on resource use. It is also concluded that conflicts with farmers become unavoidable in the absence of land use plans for most villages in the country combined with a lack of coordination to re-establish migrant herders. Therefore, the conflicts between them will continue if security of tenures is not restored for land used by smallholders (both farmers and herder owners). This is necessary to avoid conflicts taking on a political dimension, an uncontrollable situation. From the issues raised on the causes and effects of herders and farmers conflict in Agadama, Delta State the study recommends the following:

- The paper recommends the need for deliberate, planned and sustained relationship between herders and farmers which should be promoted by all relevant authorities in Nigeria
- Adequate conflict prevention and resolution measures should be put in place to forestall frequent clashes between the herders and farmers.
- The government should also ensure that it establishes boundaries for land use in each village in order to prevent such conflicts.
- Designated government officials and political leaders should be on the front line, in order to manage the land conflict avoiding corruption and self-interest.
- Host communities and Fulani herdsmen should be communicated to the public forum and should be involved in the decision-making process to allow the majority of affected communities to participate effectively in a planning process to restore peace.
- Government policies should not be formulated and implemented to favour a group of individuals or tribe against others. As with the federal governments support of the Fulani herdsmen. When policies are made, all parties involved should rather be put into consideration.
- In order for Nigerians to recognize the values which bind them more than those which divide them, the strategy on value reorientation should be strongly promoted. Tolerance should be encouraged for other ethnic groups.

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