

The Nigerian Army and Rural Banditry: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Violent conflicts resulting from rural banditry have become a recurring decimal in Nigeria's drive to nationhood. It has assumed a grievous dimension in recent time thereby threatening peaceful coexistence but with dearth of literature on the environmental dimension of the Taraba areas of the country. This study therefore examines the conflict management mechanism put in place to curb the problem of rural banditry and its effect on socio-economic development in Taraba State. The research also adopts the primary source of data collection which is qualitative in character based on the triangulation method. This methodology affords the research the opportunity to generate data from semi-structured interview, focus group discussion and observation of informants and conflict areas. The investigation shows that the nature and causes of the conflict is multifaceted, thereby assuming different dimensions that include ethnic, religious, economic, political and environmental. It has led to change in inter-group relations and mutual mistrust among the peoples between famers and herdsmen taking its toll on people's standard of living, while the vulnerable groups which include women and children have suffered severely as a result of the conflict. The study also shows that the conflict has affected economic activities in the form of trading, markets and agricultural production, and livestock production like meat, dairy products, hides and skin and bones have also been affected. It also shows that the conflicts have led to break down of law and order which culminates in destruction of lives and property and displacement of people which explains the humanitarian effect of the conflict. It recommends that the various responses by the community, government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in finding solutions to the conflict must cooperate to frontally confront the menace of this recurrent rural banditry debacle. And concludes that the conflicts can be resolved only when the most important stakeholders in the conflict, the bandits who are mostly Fulani's and the settlers who are mostly famers, are made to sheath their sword for dialogue and willing to make compromise on areas of conflicting environmental interest.

Keywords: Banditry, Herdsmen, Farmers, Soldiers.

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INTRODUCTION

In many African countries and all over the world, rural banditry resulting from farmer herders' conflict have become a menace so prevalent that state apparatus has begun to intercede [1-4]. This is especially true when images of indiscriminate bloodshed easily flash through the mind when the issue of banditry is mentioned. Rural banditry has resulted in wanton killings and destruction of properties have gained prominence in Nigeria because of different but also joint economic and socio-political interests of groups of people competing for space and survival within the same geographical landscape [5]. Survival instincts and other extraneous factors like ethno-religious differences have also contributed to how peoples who once lived together harmoniously have become warring enemies [6-8]. Herders and farmers have long coexisted in a symbiotic relationship

relatively underlined by both peace and contentious engagements [9]. Clearly, over time, many herding and farming communities in the same area have developed interdependent relationship through reciprocity, through exchange of their products and supports for each other's survival [10]. However, the last one and a half decade has witnessed an unpredictable rise in rural banditry and violent engagements between settlers and bandits in Nigeria. The conflict has now created a situation of panic and fear which has enveloped the whole nation. The conflict between herdsmen and farmers has put the country on an edge, posing formidable threat to the cultivation of crops by farmers, lives of villagers and the law enforcement agents, and overall national security. The urban dwellers too are not completely free from this menace in that they have relatives in the conflict zones, where they are likely to be susceptible to attacks. Above all, the conflict has also reach urban

areas through contingent crimes like ambushing, kidnapping, and armed robbery.

This social conflict has undermined human security whereby protection of people from traditional and non-traditional threat can no longer be guaranteed. Nearly all the paradigms and dimensions of human security such as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security have been breached. But farmers/pastoralists skirmishes have recently grown to the level of high criminality and banditry with heavy human and economic costs; sexual assaults of women and girls; attacks on civilian and law enforcement agents; attacks on villages to pillage and destroy; robbery, kidnapping, looting, cattle rustling among others; all of which constitute breaches of national peace and security [11-13, 2]. This social conflict has traditionally consisted of disputes over natural resources and is often presented as a conflict between settlers and nomadic people [14].

In Nigeria, since 2013, incidents of violence caused by bandits has heightened, causing national pain and concerns. Most of the incidents have taken the form of mostly night raids by unknown bandits, often suspected to be well armed Fulani pastoralists, on sleeping villagers and have led to the sacking of communities in parts of Taraba, Plateau, Benue and Kaduna States [15, 16]. However, states in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, Taraba, Benue and Plateau state in particular, have borne the brunt of the violence arising from banditry. Starting from 2014, nearly all the states of the federation had a share of farmers/herder's crisis which resulted into many killings by bandits, as many states which were hitherto insulated from the crisis have been drawn into it unwittingly [6, 17, 7, 18]. For instance, these clashes have been reported and recorded as far as Anambra, Delta, Ekiti, Enugu, Ogun Oyo, and Rivers States amongst others [19, 6, 20, 17, 7, 18]. The crisis can be described as a national insecurity matter that is fast spreading to almost all states of the federation. The crisis which initially could be termed a northern Nigerian issue as cattle rearing is being predominantly done in the North, has now suddenly become more pronounced across the country than robbery [19, 6, 20, 17].

This reality indicates that the dynamics of the crisis caused as a result of banditry have changed tremendously. Before the clashes escalated recently on a national scale, incidents of clashes between farmers and herdsmen were limited to the core north and the north central areas within the Taraba valley where water is found during dry seasons [19, 6, 21, 20, 17, 22]. Since herders are usually pushed to look for pasture and water for their animals during the dry season, they invariably come into contact with farmers who are also hard-pressed for the same resources. The clashes used to be over sources of water and in some

cases, some of the animals stray into farms and destroy plants [19, 6, 20, 17]. Hence, Ufioku [23] has pointed out that there is an on-going grassroots war in the central and southern states of Nigeria between Fulani herdsmen and farming communities. It is an ancient problem, but it has escalated in the last decade and has assumed a very deadly dimension [1, 24-26].

Reporting on the crisis in Taraba state, north-central Nigeria alone, International Crisis Group of February 6, 2017 chronicled forty-six (46) incidents of farmers/herdsmen crisis in a way that shows both the consistency and wanton nature of the crisis [27]. The protracted nature of the crises and the threat it poses to national peace and security has caused the deployment of security agents in the area. The deployment of security agents has generated accusations and counter-accusations of bias and heavy-handedness from the warring parties regarding the role of the men of these agencies, particularly the Nigerian Army, deployed to contain insecurity, protect lives and properties, and to maintain peace. Thus, this study seeks to assess the challenges facing the Nigeria Army in conflict management of banditry in Taraba state. It shall among others, look at how the welfare of the Nigeria Army personnel deployed has affected their morale as well as their actions and inactions in the crises, and this is because the situation seems to be defying all security measures directed at resolving it. The study also seeks to correlate the complaints and views of the people of these areas in which attacks have taken place, with reference to accusations bordering on whether the absence or ineptitude of security interventions have contributed to lingering nature of the crisis.

Rural banditry seems to be defying all peaceful measures directed at resolving it, thereby casting the country in bad light that her security system is ineptitude. These factors have informed the need to investigate reasons why the conflict continues unabated, and the role of the Nigerian Army in the management of the conflicts as well as the nexus between the welfare of security personnel (i.e. government responsibilities to security agent) and their impact in quelling the conflict. The study will attempt to find answers to the hydra-headed challenges facing Nigeria Army *viz-a-vis* rural banditry and farmers/herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, and how these problems can be tackled successfully.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the challenges facing Nigeria Army in combating rural banditry, with focus on Taraba state. This study on the role of the Nigeria Army in addressing rural banditry due to the spread of the conflicts which has affected large areas of the country, the researcher therefore delimits the scope of the study to Taraba state. Thus, it will discuss the roles of Nigeria Army in managing conflicts caused by banditry with reference to the following security challenges: security

intervention/responses to crime, crime handling styles, inter-agencies co-operation, security welfare as it affects morale in operation. In order to explore the dynamics of the Nigeria Army with reference to whether they are effective as a conflict management mechanism, using Taraba state as a case study, the study will focus on the time frame of three (5) years, which is between 2014 and 2019 because this period witnessed the peak of rural banditry [28]. From the reports and statistics of cases of rural banditry on farming communities recorded, in five (5) years, not less than 512 deaths occurred in Taraba state alone. This situation limits this study to only one state of the federation which is Taraba state. Taraba state is therefore chosen for this study because available data shows that it one of the hardest hits by the crisis. Other factors behind its choice is its geographical location as a buffer between north and south; its agrarian nature; amongst other considerations. The geographical scope of the study is limited to two (2) of the 16 local government areas: Takum, and Wukari, which have experienced one of the most attacks in the country [28].

Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the understanding of the involvement of Nigeria Army in internal security operation and conflict management. It proffers solutions to the some of the challenges facing the Nigerian Army in their intervention in rural banditry in Taraba state and the country in general. The field observations of this study would be of immense assistance to the government, the Nigeria Army, the populace, communities, the traditional leaders, as well as religious leaders not only in Taraba state but in the other states of the country with similar crises. The security outfit will find the findings and recommendations of this study helpful in the following areas: i. inter-agencies co-operations; ii. finding pro-active ways of accessing the conflicts areas; iii. proactive ways of enforcing peace in the conflict areas; iv. putting measures in place that will engender harmonious coexistence of peoples; v. calling government attention to important steps to be taken in order to ensure optimum security welfares

Background Issues on Rural Banditry

The problem of banditry borders on existing crises between peoples who are competing over common economic interests, and is inextricably tied to farmer-herders conflict. In fact, there is a sense in which banditry cannot be discussed outside of Farmer-Herders conflict and vice-versa because of the similar underlying problems that produced the two. These peoples often fight over space, the resources therein and survival within the same geographical landscape. Survival instincts and other extraneous factors like ethno-religious differences have contributed to how peoples who once lived together harmoniously have become sworn enemies and warring communities. It can be safely argued that incidents of farmers-

pastoralists conflict and skirmishes are as old as the evolution of human societies.

It has been argued that the conflicts between farmers and herders are quite pervasive in the West Africa sub-region and conflicts of this nature can be classified as “Low Intensity Conflicts” (LIC) [29]. In West Africa, Ghana for example, the presence of herdsmen dated to the colonial times when the colonial authorities saw the superior skills of the Fulani concerning livestock rearing as an opportunity to develop animal husbandry [29]. Since the colonial era, infractions of all manners have pervaded the atmosphere surrounding farmers and herders, so much that the warring parties started trading blames, accusations upon accusations and skirmishes began to be recorded.

The Agogo traditional area of Ashante region of Ghana witnessed massive migration of herders which later cumulated in conflicts with the farmers and settlers. Four principal factors are responsible for the attraction of the herders to the Agogo area of Gold coast, which are as follows:

1. The establishment of the native administration farms by the colonial administration throughout the Northern Territories and the policy of inviting Fulani pastoralists to take care of cattle which increased their number in the region;
2. The Fulani's' awareness of the favourable pastoral conditions in the Gold coast as a result of their trans-human activities across the borders of the country attracted a lot of herders into the country;
3. The thriving expansion of the cattle trade between the Gold Coast and the Sahelian countries led to the employment of Fulani herdsmen as carriers by livestock traders and the colonial administration; and
4. Finally, the perennial Sahelian drought of the 1960s and 70s forced a number of pastoralists to seek greener pastures along the coastal countries of West Africa [30].

With the passage of time, other herdsmen from Niger, Benin and Nigeria suddenly invaded the Gold Coast African plains area as a result of the aforementioned factors and these nomadic pastoralists are commonly referred to as alien herdsmen [30]. It was against this backdrop that the attendant consequence of the farmers-herders competition for the same resources in the area cumulated into conflicts which were regarded as low intensity conflicts [29]. According to Moritz [10], conflicts between herders and farmers and its attendant banditry have arisen for centuries and herders' farmers conflicts not only have direct impact on the lives of those involved, they also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of agricultural and pastoral production in West Africa. Therefore, ignoring these

clashes is unwise because local conflicts may escalate into 'real wars' [31] who argues that Burkina Faso may well be at the brink of ethnic violence along the "occupational boundaries of farming and herding".

Rural Banditry and in Taraba state, Nigeria

Taraba state was created out of Gongola state in August 1991, as one of the seven new states created by the military administration of General Murtala Mohammed, which made the total number of states in the country to be nineteen. Taraba state has sixteen (16) local government areas, which accommodate different ethnic groups. According to national census figures of 2006, Taraba state population is 4,253,641 with an average population of 99 persons per square kilometer [32]. This makes Taraba the 11th most populous state in Nigeria.

Taraba State is bounded in the west by Nasarawa State and Taraba state, northwest by Benue, north by Bauchi State and Gombe State, northeast by Adamawa State, east and south by Cameroon. Taraba State lies largely within the middle of Nigeria and consists of undulating landscape dotted with a few mountainous features. These include the scenic and prominent Mambilla Plateau. The state lies largely within the tropical zone and has a vegetation of low forest in the southern part and grassland in the northern part. The Mambilla Taraba with an altitude of 1,800 meters (6000 ft) above sea level has a temperate climate all year round. The Taraba, Donga, Taraba and Ibi are the main rivers in the state. They rise from the Cameroonian mountains, straining almost the entire length of the state in the North and South direction to link up with the River Niger.

The major occupation of the people of Taraba State is agriculture. Cash crops produced in the state include coffee, tea, groundnuts and cotton. Crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, and yam are also produced in commercial quantity. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Mambilla Plateau, and along the Taraba and Benue valleys. Similarly, the people undertake other livestock production activities like poultry production, rabbit breeding and pig farming in fairly large scale. Communities living on the banks of River Benue, River Taraba, River Donga and Ibi engage in fishing all year round. Other occupational activities such as pottery, cloth-weaving, dyeing, mat-making, carving, embroidery and blacksmithing are also carried out in various parts of the State.

From field investigation, it is clear that Taraba State has a large population of Christian faithful while other religions adherents are largely converts and visitors. Some commentators even refer to Taraba as a miniature Rome in the north central region of Nigeria owing to the fact of its large Roman Catholic population which confirms that vast majority people of

Taraba state are Christians. According to a primary respondent (an elder statesman), the arrival of opportunistic pastoralists in this area is attributed to be reasons for the practice of Islam and sitting of Mosques in the state. The state comprises various ethnic groups like: Taraba is called "Nature's gift to the nation" as the state is rich and have many ethnic groups, including Jenjo, Jibu, Kuteb Chamba, Yandang, Mumuyes, Mambila, Wurkums, Fulanis, Jukun, Ichen, Tiv, Kaka, Panso, Kambu, Wawa, Vute, Hausa and Ndola.

Taking into cognizance all the natural resources deposited in Taraba state by nature as observed by this study, it is inexcusable that all contenders for these resources meet and scramble for them in Taraba state. It is important to state that livestock production which appeared to command the same economic values with farm product be a key consideration as well. This consideration requires the exploitation of grazing reserves, forest reserves, creation of cattle routes, and access to water for the animals of the pastoralists. Harnessing these key resources by pastoralists often leads to the straying of livestock into people's farms with its attendant consequences. Therefore, according to Williams *et al.*, [33] cited in AAPW 2007, the economic actors in Taraba state, north central Nigeria who are scrambling for the scarce resources of the state are the followings:

1. Pastoralists
2. Agro-pastoralists
3. Farmers
4. Fishermen
5. Wood-Cutters

In the aforementioned dire competition for the resources of Taraba state, the problems of natural resources conflicts arose, and natural resources conflicts cannot be discussed without addressing the particular resources from the point of view of being of the rights of the users, and the recognition of the rights of each user by other users. The livelihood system understudy depends on the utilisation of both the river and the wetland zones of the Taraba coast. The coast is used for the followings:

1. Cropping by farmers
2. Grazing by pastoralists
3. Fishing by fishermen

Judging from the farming activities going on in the flood plains, there seems to be very little land left to be shared. For pastoralists to have reasonable holding in the Taraba coast, nothing short of a government intervention by way of legislation and enforcement could make that possible. The holding on the coast has to be redefined and farming in the encroached forest and grazing reserves must be brought to the barest minimum. It is obvious according to this study that the Taraba coast land has high economic value especially as it is very rich and fertile for all the principal users. It is also obvious that farmers have much easier access to

land and its control, but there is minimal effort to develop other modern methods of alternatives food system for the animals.

Underlying (Root) and Immediate Causes of Rural Banditry

The causes of these conflicts are both natural and man-made. The immediate cause however, is the behaviour and action of the major parties in precipitating these conflicts. Taraba State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources held that the government does not act proactively enough to manage the symptoms of the crisis before it led to bloodletting, loss of lives and properties that the nation is witnessing at present.

The problems of inefficient management of land and water resources, the problem of inadequate grazing area for increasing animal population, the problem of increasing population pressure on natural resources that greatly reduced the availability of grazing and fodder for livestock, and lack of dependable sources of supplementary feed and poor veterinary services for the pastoralists and their animals were already becoming issues of confrontations without government waking up to put in place effective actions to address these issues.

Underlying (Root) Causes Drought

There are recorded cases of drought and erratic rainfall patterns which affected crop production and fodder growth resulting in food shortage for both human and livestock in the conflict zones. Of a fact, the effects of climate change are seriously being felt in many areas of northern Nigeria. It is imperative to state that this study will reveal that the principal actors in the study area rely more on water supplied by the rivers than on rainfall for their sustenance of both crop and livestock production. Due to drought and irregular rainfall, both farmers and herders are forced by existential realities to rely on water from rivers, streams and pools which also have limited water owing to drought. This did not only put pressure on water resources, it has contributed a lot to recurring crises between both parties especially during the dry season.

Management of Water Resources

There is clear ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the management of water resources. This inefficiency is demonstrated by the inadequate monitoring of water resources and in the manner, river banks water is made available through irrigation for agriculturalists alone without consideration for the needs of the pastoralists.

Land Managements and Policy

The management of land resources based on the land tenure system has become a source of conflicts because of deliberate incompetence of the authorities. According to Williams *et al.*, [33], the Land Use Decree

of 1978, the control of the right of occupancy of certain lands is vested in the local/state governments. The 1978 Decree did not specify clear land use rights for pastoralists nor did it guarantee their access to land resources.

Also, lack of coherence and synergy of policies by governmental agencies has constituted a source of conflicts. For instance, where the North East Arid Zone Development Programme (NEAZDP) encouraged farmers to leave their crops residues on the farm, National Fadama Development Project (NFDPP) otherwise known as Agricultural Development Project (ADP) advised against this practice. Instead, the ADP recommends the burning of these crops residues as a means of traditional pest control. This did not go down well with the pastoralists who depended on the residues to feed their animals during the post-harvest and dry season.

Preferential Treatment

The government in a bid to promote crops production has initiated programmes and policies which tend to favour the crop production sector at the detriment of the livestock sector. Also, in the case of disputes between both parties, the pastoralists often get blamed because there is a preconceived idea that there are usually the aggressors instead of the real culprits being fished out. It was also discovered that encroachments on grazing reserves by farmers have been done more often than not with the consents and tacit supports of government officials.

Loss of Traditional Relationship

According to some village heads, there used to be a symbiotic relationship between the pastoralists and the agriculturalists; both had co-existed in a mutual state of interdependence for a long period of time. Feelers from available information and volunteered anecdotes reveal that pastoralist used to recognise this symbiotic relationship and usually steered clear of cropped fields during the rainy seasons. After the crop harvests, the herds returned to graze not only on the natural vegetation but also on the residues as these residues become an important source of dry season feed for livestock while in return, the crop fields benefited from the manure deposited by grazing animals. However, some scholars are of a different opinion to the matter. They argue that there was nothing symbiotic about the relationship between farmers and herders because the pastoralists were traditionally migratory or nomadic and did not spend enough time on farmlands to be able to deposit manure on them. Rather, it was the semi sedentary or agro-pastoralists that enjoyed symbiotic relationship with the farmers.

Interest Groups

Due to the transition from traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to more formalised mechanisms that involves the police and courts, conflict resolution

mechanisms began to take a new form as organisations were formed to represent both the pastoralists and farmers; and this has come with its own inherent complications, widening the gulf between parties to this age-long crisis. According to Williams *et al.*, [33], organisations such as Miyetti Allah and Kautalfore representing the interests of Fulani herders, Alhayal representing the Shuwa Arab herders and the Farmers council representing the farmers have only taken advantage of the pastoralists and the farmers' ignorance and in many cases, instigated conflicts between the groups to satisfy their selfish political or economic needs and agendas.

Bush Burning

This is a conflicting factor in the sense that it allows the two principal actors to trade blames. The farmers, most especially, the cash crops farmers who plant crops like banana/plantain farmers, cocoa farmers, palm tree farmers always blame incidents of destructive bushfires on herdsman by claiming that it is the practice of the pastoralists to set fire on bushes in order to encourage the growth of fresh grasses for the animals. It must be said that incidents of bush burning usually cause serious damage to cash crop farmers as it usually razes farms and farmers' investments to the ground. On the contrary, the pastoralists used to accuse the farmers of nursing deep-seated animosity against them as they have alleged that farmers do burn the bush to prevent their animals from eating crop residues on farmlands after harvest. Apart from bush burning, the pastoralist also complain that wood and grass cutters often collude with cultivators to carryout extensive wood and grass cutting for commercial purposes and that the practice has greatly reduced the availability of pastures for their animals. The pastoralists also seem to be annoyed by the fact that grasses cut from the grazing reserves are sold back to them at very exorbitant prices by farmers and others with commercial interest.

Population Increase

Oral sources have indicated that increase in population of both settled cultivators and pastoralists, as well as that of animals mean that increasing pressure is being put on the limited available natural resources – land and water. This pressure has created a keen contest between the farmers and herders over these resources. In fact, it is underlying competition for available resources that has culminated in open confrontations and violent clashes between both parties. This factor is manifested under both underlying and immediate causes of violent clashes between the pastoralists and the farmers in the study area.

Immediate Causes

Crop Damage

From information gathered from both farmers and herders, it is evident that one of the immediate causes of conflict between the two contending economic actors is crop or field damage by the animals

of the herdsman. These damages have attracted quick reactions from the farmers either in form of litigation or open clashes. According to NEAZDP's studies, most of the clashes take place only during the dry season farming period. At this time, pastures become the only viable grazing resource and most of the traditional cattle routes are already encroached on by the farmers making it difficult for pastoralists to have access to greener pastures and water. For example, Abdullahi [34] indicates that the land area that is supposed to be reserved for grazing purpose in the north east, for instance, is four hundred and thirty thousand acres, but only one hundred and thirty-eight thousand, two hundred and sixty-three acres of such land is actually devoted to grazing. He further submits that out of that total, 30% was already being cultivated and out of the remaining 70%, 33% is also partially encroached on by farmers. Furthermore, as a result of commercialisation of crops production, even the traditional areas for grazing by pastoralists has eventually been taken over by farmers; one of the major reasons why the animals stray into farms and inevitably damaged crops.

Bigol

The skirmishes between farmers and pastoralists can also be based on the violent activities of a group of juvenile Fulani herders known in Fulfude as "Bigol" [rearing cattle without being accompanied by older people]. According to Williams *et al.*, cited in AAPW's [33], this group of young armed herders are known to damage crops intentionally, usually at night, and also have the history of attacking any farmer who tries to prevent them. These immature pastoralists beat, maim and at times kill farmers in the process of their unguarded nomadic activities. The problem usually arises as to how to identify these teenage pastoralists since they usually move away as soon as they commit this atrocity and the older innocent pastoralists became the unfortunate victims of retaliation in the hands of farmers.

Law Enforcement Agencies and the Legal System

From the report of NEAZDP 2007, it is observed that the use of police and the court system to settle banditry has further fuelled the crisis between them. There is a popular saying that no two parties return from court to remain friends. The recourse to court settlement of rural banditry crisis has validated the foregoing traditional belief or proverb. According to the interviews of community leaders in the areas of study, police and court officials usually extort money from the groups especially the pastoralists who are generally believed to more empowered economically, hence a simple case that could be settled internally would be escalated, prolonged and would sometimes result in sanctions and extortion by the police. According to an interview, it was claimed that many pastoralists have become object of victimisation in the hands of police and army. Some pastoralists believe these forces, especially the joint patrol team of the army

and police, victimise them for no just cause and these pastoralists believe it is the farmers who have unleashed these security personnel on them to settle scores. Furthermore, pastoralists believe that they also suffer from judicial discrimination owing to the fact that they do not have any land title or land rights and as a result, the courts often act in favour of the farmers when cases of damage of crops are reported.

Bandits' Lack of Voice and Political Representation

It has become obvious that the bandits have realized that they suffer a major gap, which is lack of access to western education, for their voice to be heard. Because their rugged lifestyle is not in conformity with modern living, pastoralists feel marginalised and discriminated against. Owing to these extant realities, bandits are of the belief that they have little or no voice to drive home their concerns and desires into the hearing of government and those that care to sympathize with them. A broader policy framework, however, needs to be developed with a view to resolving the expansive issues involved in the bandits-farmers-pastoralists conflicts.

Ethno-Religious Factors

With reference to the reports of Open Doors International World Watch Research 2017, rural banditry has added the dimension of ethno-religious element such that their conflicts have left fields as battle ground for churches, mosques and other faith-based organisations. An account of such extraneous factor is the report of Abdulbarkindo and Adamu [35] as cited in an article entitled, "Nigeria: Taraba state under the shadow of "herdsmen" where it was reported that on 12 June, 2001, some suspected assailants in Taraba murdered one Alhaji Musa Ibrahim, who was a Muslim and Chief of Azara town at Ihuman Village, which is dominated by Tiv Christians. In reaction to this assassination, there was widespread violence directed against the Christian Tiv living in Nasarawa State particularly Awe, Doma, Obi and Keana Local Government areas. The chaos according to Africa Conflict and Security Analysis (ACSA) involved "indiscriminate reprisal attacks on the Jukum people and their properties and the corresponding counter attacks by Jukum people." ACSA, 2014 And according to Sylvester Ogoh Alubo 2014, all other ethnic groups including the Chamba, Mada and Migili teamed up against the Jukum in Azara and at the end of the violence, over 74 people had been killed on both sides, with an inestimable property destroyed. Consequently, the killing of the Tiv in Nasarawa State caused tense relations to develop among their fellow kinsmen in Taraba and the neighbouring communities of Nasarawa State. In recent times, the conflicts and attacks involving Christians and Hausa-Fulani Muslims in Taraba state are on the increase and the victims are the vulnerable women, children, old ones, students, farmers and politicians. Large areas of Taraba farmland have

been abandoned with dire consequences for the locals, settlers as well as the nation as a whole.

Hate Speech

Another serious factor that fuels banditry clashes in Taraba state is hate speech. The conflict presents a fertile ground for the construction of dangerous narratives in the media. According to Ibrahim [36] cited in Centre for Democracy and Development journal, "there has been a massive rural banditry in Northern Nigeria over the past decade... and the emergent narratives on rural banditry both in media and popular discourse are becoming drivers of conflicts in Northern Nigeria." He further explains that the character of such 'media speech' is usually inflammatory, freely dispensing hate speeches in the guise of information and analysis. In that way, the media have become the conduit through which the perceived plight and grievances of actors are regularly broadcast.

Typology of rural banditry in Nigeria

Rural banditry can be categorised in different ways, taking cognisance of their course of action and the pattern of conflicts. The dynamics of the kind of resources involved will determine their conflicts typology. Rural banditry can be classified into: resources induced banditry, ethno-regional induced banditry, political induced banditry, nomadic free-range grazing induced banditry.

Resources Induced banditry

This type of conflict ensues between the actors because of the struggle for limited common resources like water, land and pastures.

(i) Water: According to a field account, it is on record that so many farmers fetch water from the stream for basic needs like cooking, drinking, bathing and for laundry but if the herders visit such river to allow their cattle drink ahead of the farmers, the farmers may have to wait till another time for their turn as the whole river may be in a mess. This happens mostly in the dry season and incidence of river poisoning is not unlikely to happen in a situation like that and this may snowball into reprisals by the herdsmen.

(ii) Land: Arable land is what every farmer scramble for and it has always been a point of intersection for herdsmen and farmers. This is simply because it is an area of land that yields good crops that also favours greener pastures. This attracts both farmers and herders, and in the cause of grazing and farming side by side, animals often stray into farms and crops are damaged. Farmers too may take some drastic measures which might result in casualties and loss on both sides.

Ethno-Regional Induced banditry

Some of the neighbouring communities housing certain indigenes and perceived settlers now have reasons not to tolerate themselves anymore. When their tussles go beyond the threshold, they pretend and

dress like herdsmen to carry out clandestine attacks on themselves. These people fight over boundaries, market or arable portions of land and the attacks take the form of ethnic cleansing whereby there will be no respect for gender, age or vulnerability; they simply wipe out all living things they come across on such space.

Political Induced banditry

This is similar in nature to ethno-regional conflicts but it has political undertone. The fight is usually because of political posts and the issue of indigene versus settlers cannot be overruled. The fights also lead to the destruction of lives and properties, but outsiders may not know the real identities of the gladiators and in most cases, they might misinterpret such conflicts as farmers-herders feud.

Nomadic Free-Range Grazing Induced rural banditry

This according to farmers is usually experienced in the dry seasons by those who practise wetland farming. These nomadic free-range herders are foreigners who come from neighbouring African countries like Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Mali and Sudan as gathered in an interview and they may enter into the country through the porous borders and all farms along the wetland area are grazed upon gallantly. The unique thing is that they herd their cattle in the night with flashlights and are usually armed with various degrees of weapons. Be that as it may, some farmers also keep vigil and lay ambush for such pastoralists which can lead to wanton destructions on both sides.

Attendant Consequences of Rural Banditry in Taraba State

According to African Conflict and Security Analysis Network (ACSAN, 2017), several attacks were carried out in many states of the Middle Belt region and 853 people lost their lives between the period of January 2014 and March 2014. Of the 853 deaths mentioned, herdsmen claimed to have lost 214 people (in addition to 3200 cows) and an estimated 633 Jukum people were killed (excluding women and children who later died in camps) and 6 soldiers were also killed. Large areas of Taraba state's farmland have been abandoned; many have been displaced from their comfort zones with consequences for the locals, settlers as well as the nation as a whole.

Internal and External Displacement

Through field accounts in the course of this study, it was observed that villages have been deserted and many displaced. The few people spoken to, even though they are not willing to talk, were interviewed in the school premises where they took refuge. Some of these displaced people comprising indigenes and settlers claimed that they were displaced in hundreds from their primary place of abode, leaving behind their farms, houses, storage to flee into safety in primary school buildings where they have become internally

displaced persons in their own state due to banditry. The deteriorating condition in which they were found is a pointer to what can be called human security dilemma. According to Egwu [37] cited in Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, 2016) 38], Human Security is much broader than national security which tends to focus on the security of the state in military terms, and the protection of the state from external aggression. CDD's position on human security is also the stand of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Central to the idea of human security, as espoused by the 1994 Human Development Report on Human Security are two important concerns: freedom from fear intended to indicate freedom from violence, and freedom from want, which is intended to indicate freedom from poverty. Therefore, in this conception of human security, human beings become the "vital core" with a "fundamental set of functions related to survival, livelihood and dignity" as the basic and non-negotiable requirement for normal human condition of living. However, the issue of farmers-pastoralists conflicts has tampered with these basic conditions of human security such that people now live in fear. Even in IDP's camps, poverty is written all over the faces of the displaced persons.

Social Effects

It is clear that there is no more social relationship among the people as the citizens nowadays keep to themselves; no social interactions, no warm reception of strangers even if such seek help. Farmers, who are still farming at subsistence level, barricade their farms with poisonous cactus plants in order to prevent both human and animals straying into their farms. The old symbiotic relationship between farmers and pastoralists has gone sour to the extent that farmers prefer to burn their farm residues than to give them to pastoralists. The pastoralists too prefer to allow their animals' dung deposits to waste than to allow farmers benefit from them. On interpersonal relationships level, the psychological trauma which banditry have caused on its victims has seriously affected the level of trust among the people. Only a few people still extend the traditional African hospitality to strangers [39]. Most people neither acknowledge nor reciprocate the greetings of strangers again. To even get assistance or ask for direction from people of these affected areas is no longer easy as inhabitants of these areas play deaf and dumb to the enquiries of strangers.

It was gathered that businesses are being relocated from Taraba state to other states in the country. Able bodied young farmers fleeing in large number to neighboring states to take up land on lease or to become farm laborer's in towns and villages of south west Nigeria.

Economic Effects

On account of field's interview, it was gathered that the conflict did not only affect the social

lives of the people, it has resulted in the spread of fear which is equally influencing the decisions of investors who have been taking away their businesses from Taraba state because the atmosphere is unfavorable. Equally, the cost of security is prohibitive to individuals and government at all levels. Inyang and Araham [39] submit that the Federal Government's 2009 budget for Police formations was 195 billion naira, aside the money spent in previous years and since then. Taking into cognizance the huge amount spent on security in conflict areas, it is only wise for any investor to site their business elsewhere where there is relative peace.

All these conflicts have also created a negative image for Taraba state and Nigeria at the international level whereby the nation loses a lot of investment to the detriment of the national economy. According to Tuya [40], the image and prestige of a country are very important in terms of attracting foreign investors and once these cardinal pointers are dented, there is the possibility that such country will find it difficult to make friends and to attract investors. In the narratives of Raheeb [41], in the midst of all these, the Nigerian economy bears the greatest brunt of the conflict which includes poor and negative image on the international scene which culminates in huge loss of revenues, taxes, tourism and other international friendship benefits.

Nigerian Army's Intervention in Taraba state Rural Banditry

It was gathered on the field that the rural banditry festered beyond what the Nigerian Police capability could manage. Series of complaints and excuses were reported to have been coming against and from the Police. The police claim to suffer from insufficient number of personnel to combat the conflict. Giving credence to Police claim, Nigerian Defense Policy 2012, puts the strength of the Nigerian Police Force at about 360,000 men and women in a country with a population of about 200 million. The Police also complained about lack of understanding of the terrain especially during raining season. Above all, Mr. Fatai Owoseni, former Taraba state police boss narrated bitterly about cases of herdsmen who abandon their cows in thousands leaving the Police with no choice than to seek the collaboration of non-radical herdsmen to evacuate those cows to safety.

Some of the issues highlighted above prompted the President to draft the Nigerian Army to the affected areas in Taraba state to manage the conflict. As a result, "Operation Ayema Patuna" which literally translates into "Operation Cat Race" was launched. It was observed that the involvement of the Nigerian Army brought out other challenges in addition to the ones confronted by the Police as falsehood, propaganda, politization, poor knowledge of the terrain, inter-agencies rivalry, welfare issues, commercialist farmers-herders issues, impatience and people's complaints bothering on the political complexity of the

state, and other issues underpin the conflict, with the army caught in the middle.

The Challenges Facing the Nigerian Army in the Management of Rural banditry in Taraba state

Government efforts at finding a lasting solution to rural banditry in the country, particularly in Taraba state is deterred by the degree of conspiracy prevalent in the politics of the Nigeria, fueled by ethno-religious sentiments [42]. The position of Iwara and Ukwenga is reinforced by previous suggestions and policies of government on the way forward with regards to the conflict and its resolution. On the part of government and as a way of resolving the crisis, part of the solution suggested is the recreation of grazing routes, grazing reserve, cattle colony and ranching. However, many Nigerians especially in the south and middle belt regions vehemently opposed almost all the suggested solutions, thus leaving the country with a potent threat to its national security and survival as an entity. Let's consider the view of a respondent who was interviewed in the conflict zone:

From the foregoing as credited to a respondent, it is obvious that some questions concerning security situation of the country are still begging for answers. Interviews granted to some selected people in the conflict areas reflect the myriad of challenges confronted by men of Nigerian Army. Some of the challenges are identified and discussed below.

Lack of truth and the spread of falsehood has assumed an epidemic proportion in the country. This ugly trend poses a major challenge to the Nigerian Army operations with regards to rural banditry in Taraba state. According to an army officer, falsehood is now a very popular syndrome in Nigeria. He further buttressed his argument by maintaining that, falsehood cut across various segments of the society such that politicians especially those in leadership positions use any opportunity to tell and spread egregious lie on any subject matter for political gain. The politicians lie with statistics, and give over bloated narratives of every incident that occurs, and cast aspersion on their opponents.

This situation leaves the political leadership without the moral ground to govern and including the management of security situation. This lack of moral standing on the part of political leaders has affected the civil society too; thus, taking away from them the virtue of being witnesses of truth in the society. The civil societies can no longer challenge the political class over their moral decadence in managing national issues as the civil society is equally implicated in the peddling of falsehood for gains. The civil society which is expected to be apolitical is now getting involved in dirty politics of the country as some of them sometimes give one unsubstantiated narrative or another about

contemporary social issues which tends to be in favor or against either the ruling party or the opposition. There are allegations that some civil society groups have discredited Army operations in conflict zones like Taraba through the presentation of unsubstantiated claims of troops' violation of rules of engagement. Invariably, this situation affects the ability of security agents to deliver as falsehood and a pocket of conspiracy erodes their morale making them not to perform as expected. The dampened morale of the Army in no small way affects the ability and readiness of the rank and file to perform in operations to manage farmers-herders conflict in Taraba state.

Lack of Confidence in Formal Law Enforcement Agency Such as the Army

The ability, capability and readiness of Nigeria security agencies are dwindling according to an observer who used the position of the Nigerian Defence Policy in one of its communiqués to establish his argument. According to Nigeria Defence Policy (NDP), the range of Nigeria security forces is given as follows: the armed forces, that is, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy with approximately 770,000 personnel; the Nigerian Police has 360,000 men and women; the paramilitary forces, that is, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Customs and Excise, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Prisons Service, Department of State Security, and the judiciary, all of them put together are in shortfall considering the population of the country. The shortfall as well as the gap created by the inadequacy of security personnel has led to the emergence of non-state security actors such as Bakassi Boys in the Eastern axis of the nation, the Igbesu Boys in the Niger-Delta area, the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the Western part of the country, the Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC) in the Northern zone and other private security outfits. Most of these organizations' do not like to operate within the ambit of the law of the land. In most cases, their actions normally result in anarchy which further creates problems for government.

Kayode and Olonisakin [43] cited in Iwara [44], submits that two set of issues constitute the central dynamics of discussing the operation of the Nigerian security sector. First is the issue relating to the co-existence of formal security establishment side by side with the non-statutory security providers. Second is the lack of capacity by state security institutions to deliver. The position of Kayode and Olonisakin [43] recognizes the threat that may likely erupt as a result of the informal security sector's practices. But it is because the formal security operatives are not enough that the vulnerable populace started to subscribe to informal security sector players and this to a larger extent is a pointer that people are losing confidence in the formal security sector.

The incapability of government on logistics and welfare of the Armed Forces: According to a military personnel respondent, the logistics and welfare of the Armed forces from operation and duty allowances are not been adequately addressed. He claimed that the government pays only a meager one thousand naira (N1,000) per day per personnel in conflict zone and the allowance usually does not come as and when due. Logistical equipment such as camp tents, camp beds, cooking utensils, first aid boxes and other basic items are never supplied to time, if they are provided at all. Situation like this, he claims, could lead the military into being compromised by syndicates/actors that might pretend to be friendly. And when this happens, the troop is already in the hands of enemy and normally there is no gainsaying, they will continue to suffer unquantifiable set-back in their primary assignments.

Insufficient Number of Personnel

The soldiers also lamented that they are not enough to manage the conflict. The ratio of soldiers to area of space and to people and properties that need to be protected is not adequate. The military personnel dispatched all over the troubled spots appear to be grossly insufficient. As a result of this situation, soldiers usually have to overstay in conflict zones because there are no new troops to relieve tired ones. This unwholesome practice contributes to low troop morale as officers and men are kept away from their family for too long a time and this affects the productivity of these officers to a large extent.

The Issue of Impatience, Insatiable Requests of People and the Complexity of Nigerian's Federal Structure

The soldiers that were interviewed lamented that Nigerians are impatient people who cannot afford to wait to observe achievable goals. They are always complaining and often resort to cheap blackmail by claiming that they cannot see what the military is doing. Nigerians are also insatiable and are not always contented with services rendered to them by the military. Instead of appreciation for their sacrifices, the military are always rewarded with complaints and condemnation in conflict management operations across the country. Yet Nigerians want the military to attend to all security threats that border on internal security, which traditionally are supposed to be handled by the police and other paramilitary agencies.

The complexity of the Nigeria's Federal structure is another issue the military contend with. This issue involves the parallels of a multi-ethnic configuration which in most cases hinders the decision making of government in the provision of security. In Taraba state for example, the citizens of the conflict areas always pick faults in the selection of any batch of military personnel sent there to enforce peace. If they are not saying the deployed troops are from enemy

tribes, they lay complaint that the government has sent to them inept soldiers. These complexities according to officers of the military are further absorbed in conspiracy theories which have political undertone thus bringing about problems of incoherence, ineffective state security coordination and other forms of contradictions which hinder the proper management of conflicts and violence in the state. In view of the assumption that the predominance of falsehood in Nigeria's national life is the precursor and template of national security failures which has affected the mindset of the Nigerian Army officers interviewed, they lamented being trapped in a flow of confused ideological security architecture as far as the national security is concerned.

Tension Between Military, Paramilitary and Other Security Agencies

Unnecessary tussle, superiority struggles, ineffective synergy, poor intelligence gathering and sharing, and unwarranted glory seeking are some of the allegations leveled against the personnel of the Nigerian Army by other sister agencies interviewed. From their analysis, the agencies which are supposed to be busy protecting lives and properties of citizens are always fighting and showing hatred towards one another for reasons that are frivolous. The implication of this professional misdemeanor is of grievous consequences for the country and its people as it further destroys the confidence and respect people have for the agencies. The respondents submit that the unhealthy working relationship of these security agencies erodes the integral co-operation that the agencies need to succeed in combatting the conflicts that have defied all solutions.

Low Technological Advancement of the Nation

The low technological advancement of Nigeria denies the country the production of needed security infrastructure such as arms and ammunition. The absence of technological skills has led the Army to rely on only available foreign military hardware and software with attendant consequences on effectiveness. This issue has constrained the military from carrying out some important security functions such as profiling, taking biometrics for purpose of identification of residents and visitors in order to archive such information into the data base for successful safe-keeping, intelligence production and for future operation in the troubled zones.

The Issue of Arms Proliferation in the Country

Government's inept action and security failures can better be understood in relation to the rate of arms proliferation in the country: an ugly situation which can be partly blamed on politicians and some community members who deal in arms for the purpose of gaining and consolidating power in their strongholds. All efforts put forward by the military to mop up these arms seemed to be proving abortive according to Army

officers who spoke to us under confidentiality. In view of the aforementioned challenges, the Nigerian Army is not finding it easy to put an end to rural banditry in Taraba state. Lack of confidence in the formal law enforcement agencies, especially the military. The incapability of government on Army well-are matters logistics agencies for the Nigerian Armed Forces. Insufficient number of military personnel. The issue of impatient, insatiable requests on the parts of the populace and the complexity of Nigerian's Federal Structure. Lack of technological advancement. Tension between military, paramilitary and other security agencies. The proliferation of arms in the country

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is methodology adopted in conducting the research. The methodology was based on triangulation which involves studying the object from various standpoints and taking advantage of variety of methods and techniques in data generation [45]. The triangulation method afforded me the opportunity to generate data through observation, semi-structured interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The research also gained immensely from secondary sources. The theoretical underpinning of the research was based on the Webber/Parson's theory of structural functionalism which was used to explain the variables under study. This study has relied on the works of Okoli and Atelhe [46], Odoh and Chilaka [18], Abba and Usman [2], Blench and Dendo [47], Abbas [48], among others. They argued that deep rooted conflict should first address structural violence just after peace has been reinforce and enforced. And not engender condition that tends to precipitate violent conflicts with the attendant effect on socioeconomic development. This theoretical argument has been directly applied in this study to explicate the farmer herdsman conflict in Taraba State.

Findings and Conclusion

This research work has examined rural banditry in Wukari, and Takum Local Government Areas of Taraba state, Nigeria. The study concern itself with the role and effect of the involvement of the Nigerian Army in the management of the conflict with socioeconomic effect of the conflict in the lives of the people and the state at large. This study has observed that the conflict situation has been complicated by the rising incidence of livelihood insecurity among the farming and herding communities, because even though the Nigerian Army has been succeeded in enforcing peace, the peace is not sustainable. This scenario has led to desperate, violent struggles for access to and control of scarce ecological space and resources, a situation that has engendered dire humanitarian, social, and economic consequences. The fierce and often virulent nature of this struggles have found expression in a vicious circle of violence and mutual vendetta [46].

Hence, the major findings in this study base on the questions this research intends to answer. The first research questions this study set to answer is understanding the evolution and origin of rural banditry. The study found out that economic hardship on the part of the teeming youth stemmed from rural banditry is responsible for the menace. Second is identifying the challenges confronting Nigeria Army in the management of rural banditry in Taraba State. The study found out that the conflict is basically multifaceted. This is because the conflict took various dimensions. It was gathered that the conflict is due to resources and, Taraba being the most diverse peoples in Nigeria, ethnically motivated because the belligerent actors in the conflict are from different ethnic groups, i.e. the various indigenous tribes in Taraba state and the Fulani ethnic groups. The conflict has seen violent exchanges between the various ethnic groups, and the involvement of the Nigerian Army has had negative and positive effect. Second, the attempt at managing the conflict is made lead to over-militarization of the conflict space. This perception is held because farmers and herdsmen are always at logger head with each other over the fact that the presence of the Nigerian Army is intimidating. This assertion is buttressed by the theory of structural functionalism which explains that society operates in the character of biological organism that cease to function properly when any part of it is ill. The nature and dynamics of the conflict also have religious undertone because the groups involved in the conflict are virtually from different religious divide. The Fulani herdsmen are majorly Muslims while the indigenous peoples of Taraba who are predominantly farmers are majorly Christians.

In similar vein, the study also tried to observe the effects of these challenges on the successful management of the conflicts by the Nigerian Army. Closely related is the prevalent nature of rural banditry. The cause of the conflict is related to the nature of the conflict, especially the issue of resources and the environment. It was gathered that the farmers are pained as a result of the encroachment of the Fulani herdsmen into their sacred sites, there by desecrating them. The encroachment of their farm land and apparent destruction of the farm produce is also another cause of the conflict. While the Fulani herdsmen claim that the *Tiv*, *Jukum* and *Kuteb* are out to sideline them from the scheme of things, especially political positions as they are perceived as settlers and not indigene. Hence it was found that the cause and prevalent nature of the conflict is because of longtime irreconcilable differences between settler and indigene.

The study also provided answers to the general effect of the conflict on socio-economic development. It examined the implications of the conflict on the socioeconomic lives of the Taraba people. From the study, it was gathered that among the social effect of the conflict, there is an apparent changing relationship

pattern between the perceived bandits, farmers and the herdsmen, leading to mutual mistrust. Also, because of the conflict, the living standard of the people has badly degenerated. This has been compounded with the prevailing economic recession in the country. Women and children which make up the vulnerable group are badly affected by the conflict. Economically, it was found out that the conflict has affected general commercial activities like trading, market, agricultural productivity, and the other commercial activities. The conflict has also led to cattle rustling and killing of cows. It was gathered that all these led to reduced livestock productivity like meat, hides and skin, bones, butter, and other by-products of cattle and sheep. As gathered, the implication for these is untold hardship, misery, hunger, poor nutrition and poor human development. The human and psychological impact of the conflict is also enormous. It was found out that the conflict has led to loss of lives and properties, displacement of people from their homes, fear, tension, rejection, isolation and a general lack of development.

The study also answered this very important question which focused on the responses of government, nongovernmental organizations and the community to curb the spate of the conflict. It was gathered that since violent conflict is a bane of the society, measures must be taken to bring an end to the conflict between farmers and herdsmen. It was found out that the government has done a lot to bring an end to the conflict like; encouraging the activities of local vigilante groups, providing additional security to conflict prone areas through the men of the STF, setting up of dialogue committee among farmers and herdsmen. However, from the findings, there is a consensus that the government needs to do more to ensure total peace in the conflict area. Steps the government should take include; resettling displaced persons, rebuilding destroyed properties, provision of additional security and provision of palliatives to those affected by the conflict. As gathered, the community is not left out in the responses to curb the conflict. They have encouraged their youths to be part of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), to compliment the efforts of the government in providing security. They have also embraced the various committee set up by government and nongovernmental organizations like the Search for Common Ground to fast-track dialogue between farmers and herdsmen. The communities are also at an alert for any suspicious movement that could lead to security breach. In conclusion, most of the farming communities believe that through forgiveness, prayers and fasting, the end of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen is near.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The rural banditry debacle in Taraba state has been essentially woeful in terms of its destructive impacts. So far, it has defied all measures at remedying it. In its apparent dynamics of deterioration and

viciousness, the situation has given rise to a sort of pervasive Fulani militancy in the hinterlands of the state. This has been the bane of sustainable peace and progress in most parts of the State. As a panacea to the conflict, this study recommends as follows:

1. The issue of changing relationship which has gone sour between the farmers and herdsmen must be fixed in Taraba State. These serious conflicts in some regions might make it appear that developing community associations and effective resource use planning under these circumstances are difficult. But strangely, elsewhere in Wukari and Takum, Blench and Dendo asserts that relations between farmers and pastoralists are generally good. Indeed, farmers and herders have developed good relations over a period of nearly a century. In many places, regular consultative meetings are held between herders and indigenous farmers to ensure that good relations are maintained.
2. The role of the traditional rulers is key to this type of conflict. In general, the key issues in Taraba State are damage to crops by the herds and encroachment of stock-routes by farmers. It is not uncommon for this to be settled directly between the two parties. They further assert that going to the police is considered a last resort and all the traditional rulers considered this a sign of social collapse. The response to the Taraba crisis is a good example of the system operating. In most areas, once the news reached the Local Government, local rulers, Hausa migrants and pastoralist leaders call meetings and each agreed to tell their communities to keep the peace.
3. Abbas observes that for a sustainable peace to reign, there must be a deliberate design to enlighten and mobilized the parties in conflict to understand the ecology and the resources available in the localities. This opens a window for interdependence and complementariness among groups in the optimal use of the resources for collective benefit and equitable access. Thus, the place and space must be exploited for common interest with effective regulation of activities, behavior and conduct. This scenario can only come about if herders keep to agreed routes and farmers avoid farming across them with stern government policy and strict compliance [49].

In addition, factors associated with the conflicts must be properly appreciated and managed by appropriate institutions involved in the conflict resolutions. Hence, local governance in the conflict must not be over looked. Traditional strategies may be combined with the emerging ones. This relates on how communities create local structures and networks for the purposes of engagement, participation,

inclusiveness, mutual partnership and transformation of the environment through equity in resource utilization. As safety and security generate trust, mutual benefits are automatically derived. However, structures created for and by communities generate networks and feedback by ensuring that people relate to each other amicably for common use of resources and ensure a safety-first principle in cattle grazing movements and pasture as well as crop production. Understanding the peculiarities and exploiting opportunities inherent in the Northern Nigeria can produce greater prospects for effective, efficient and sustainable conflict resolution strategies in enhancing the farmer-nomad relationship [49].

Despite the problems in parts of Taraba State, Blench and Dendo [50] noted that the community solutions that have developed to reduce conflict in many areas are more effective than elsewhere, and if utilized by every part of the state, it will lead to peaceful coexistence. They consist of four major elements:

1. Pre-emptive and post-conflict inter-community meetings to resolve potential problems.
2. Authority of traditional rulers generally respected once decisions are made.
3. Increasing use of passive mechanisms to prevent crop damage.
4. Reduction in period when cattle and growing crops are present together.

In conclusion, to further highlight the recommendations based on the findings gathered in this study, it is important for all stake holders in the conflict to take the following steps as it relates to them:

1. There should be effective regulation of grazing and farming activities in the State through efficient land-use laws/legislations and administration.
2. There is need for vigorous sensitization of stakeholders – farmers and herdsmen alike – on the need for mutual co-existence and peace; this would help to forestall needless provocations and opportunistic violence.
3. Decentralization of grazing through ranching in order to regulate practice and foreclose clashes between herding and farming communities. This as found in the study is the international best practice which is preferred to the policy on grazing reserve.
4. The farming and pastoral groups must learn to respect each other's rights in their interactions. The farmers should avoid encroaching on the stock routes mapped out for the pastoralists, while the pastoralists on the other hand must avoid the indiscriminate destruction of crops in the farms.
5. Conflicts between the two parties must be constructively resolved by the government to

ensure peaceful coexistence and interdependence. Because conflicts between the farmers and pastoralists have a more direct impact on food security.

6. The government must resettle those displaced as a result of the conflict, and rebuild their destroyed settlements. This will help them to gain a new lease of life.
7. There is also need to provide infrastructural facilities like road construction into the conflict area so as to make it difficult for the attackers to attack and go into hiding.
8. Security must also be beefed up in the conflict area so as to reassure the people of the government's interest in their plight.
9. Above all, there is need for farmers and herdsmen to tolerate each other. This can be achieved through forgiveness and avoidance of reprisals. They must avoid taking laws into their hands no matter the magnitude of the provocation.
10. Government should concentrate more on community policing by legalizing it and funding their trainings and mode of operation.

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