

The Effects of Farmer/Herder Conflict on Socioeconomic Development of Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examined the herder and farmer conflict on social economic development of Nigeria. The study presented the structural theory and the Frustration-Anger-Aggression Hypothesis to provide possible explanations for the crisis. The causes of farmers/herders clashes in recent times were identified to be a function of several factors not only limited to climate change resulting in drought and desertification soil degradation; growing population size, global terrorism, crime (rural banditry and cattle rustling) amongst others. Previous and present government responses to this crisis have been most disappointing with no clear cut and sustainable policy both by the federal and state government. This crisis has resulted in displacement of people from their communities, women and girls vulnerability to sexual and economic predation, huge economic burden on the government leading to loss of revenues, dwindling food supply and rising cost, increasing division among the Federating states and threat to National Security amongst others. The study recommends that the crisis should be addressed quickly to avert impending food crisis, government should strengthen the mechanism for conflict resolutions, and above all herdsman should know that the imperatives of a modern economy require that pastoralism should be laid to rest, while embracing improved modern methods of animal husbandry with improved high yields and disease resistant species (cattle). When this is done a win-win situation would be achieved for all stakeholders.

Keywords: Crop farmers, food security, herdsman, ranches, husbandry, security.

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INTRODUCTION

It is probably arguable that resources and the utilization thereof have been the reason for most conflict among the farming community, both the crop farmers and the cattle farmer (Adelukurelu & Adisa, 2019). However, the dimension and magnitude of this conflict has assumed an increasing regularity and the killings have left researchers to wonder how this crisis can be solved. The fundamental issue in this crisis is the lack of government to plan productive activities that will guarantee long term investment in the country (Enoma 2019).

Nigeria with an estimated population of about 187 million people, occupying a land area of 923,773 square kilometer needs to plan her agricultural production in order to optimize the land resource. Of this land area, only about 42% of the 82 million hectares of arable land is so far cultivated, both in crops and animal production showing the lack of government neglect of this sector (Eastwood, Kristen & Liptorm,

2007). The decline manifest in the contribution of agriculture to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It contributed 31.2% to 39.2% of total GDP between 1985 and 1995 (Fasoru & Omojola 2005). Agricultural export of Nigeria declined from 60 percent of GDP in the early 1970 to about 28.9 percent in quarter 1 of 2020 (NBS, 2020). Historically relations between herders and crop farmers have been cordial and peaceful. Both lived in a peaceful symbiotic relationship. Herders' cattle fertilizes the farmers land in exchange for grazing right (Ingawa & Irabor, 2011). Recently, these cordial relationships have taking a new dimension with increase violence throughout the country. Records show that at least 25 of the 36 states in the country including Abuja had serious crisis between the herders and the crop farmers as at 2017 (Nuong, 2005). According to report by the Sun newspaper June 2016, the increase in competition for arable land has often time led to serious manifestations of killings, and social friction among the two groups of people. This has led to greater insecurity in human life and food insecurity though statistic currently shows

these effects. In Darfur region in Sudan the conflict transform into a full blow war that claim the lives of over 200,000 people and render over million homeless. Over 3000 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in Benue and Kaduna state alone between 2014 and 2020 alone (Nedozie, 2021).

The objective of this study is to investigate the effects of farmer/herder conflict on socioeconomic development of Nigeria. In an attempt to address this objective, the following questions will be answered.

- (a) What are the causes of the conflict?
- (b) What are the measures employed by government in tackling this problem?
- (c) What are the effects of the conflict on social economic development of Nigeria?
- (d) What are the possible remedies?

Theoretical issues

The structural theory attempts to explain conflict as a product of the tension that arises when groups compete for scarce resources. The central argument in this sociological theory is that conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured or organized. It describes the condition of the society and how such condition or environment can create conflict. Structural conflict theory identifies such conditions as social exclusion, deprivation, class inequalities, injustice, political marginalization, gender imbalances, racial segregation, economic exploitation and the likes, all of which often lead to conflict (Oakland, 2005). Structuralists maintain that conflict occurs because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies or because of domination of one class by another. The theory is however deficient in its one-sidedness of looking at causes of conflict. For instance, it does not see the bright sides of racial or ethnic diversity and the strength that a society may derive from pluralism. It only sees the flaws. The structural theory thus makes sense only when conflicts are viewed from the broadest possible perspective and only if the observer opts to ignore alternate causes of the conflict.

However, Frustration-Anger-Aggression Hypothesis of conflict posits that it is natural for man to react to unpleasant situations. The hypothesis is drawn from the frustration-aggression theory propounded by Dollard and Doob, *et al.* (1939), and further developed by Miller (1948) and Berkowitz (1969) as cited in Fason and Omogola (2015). The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal. Frustration is described as the feeling we get when we do not get what we want, or when something interferes with our gaining a desired goal (as shown in the case of Niger Delta, IPOB and MASOP agitations). Anger implies feeling made in response to frustration or injury; while aggression refers to flashes of temper (Tucker-Lad, 2013). The frustration aggression theory states that aggression is caused by frustration. When someone is prevented from reaching

his target, he becomes frustrated. This frustration can then turn into anger and then aggression when something triggers it. When expectation fails to meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront others they can hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions or someone on whom they can take out their frustrations. Furthermore, when aggression cannot be expressed against the real source of frustration, displaced hostilities can be targeted to substitute objects that is, aggression is transferred to alternate objects, persons or agents.

Be that as it may, models exist on conflict resolutions. However, according to Nneka, Ibekwe and Nwankwo (2018) the models are still in their infancy. A clear cut body of knowledge establishing the methods, measure to resolve conflict and the variables to consider are not clearly defined. However, there are some formulation, model and thought that could be used to explain conflict resolution. These theories or model are explained below.

The Dual Concern Model (DCM) of conflict resolution is based on the perception of individual method of dealing with conflict. The framework is based on two underlying concerns from the point of view of the individual. These are: concern for self (assertiveness) and concern for other (empathy). Accordingly group members balance the concern for themselves and concern for other. The exhibition of these concerns by group of individuals will ultimately lead to effective conflict resolution. The dual concerns model identifies five conflict resolution strategies that individuals may use to resolve conflict (Langton, James and Young, 2019). The strategies are avoidance conflict style, yielding conflict style, competitive conflict style, conciliation conflict style and cooperation conflict style.

Another model is the Political conflict resolution model. It usually involves two or more warring parties with conflict value or issue that are not compatible. The nature of this incompatibility could be territorial or governmental. A warring party could be government of a state or any opposing party that uses armed force to promote its position. This war will eventually be concluded with a peace agreement by both parties. There is a formal agreement which addresses the dispute either by settling all or part of it or outlines the process on how to resolve the incompatibility. At time it could be a ceasefire agreement (Langton *et al.*, 2019). Political model of conflict could use peacekeeping measure to resolve aspect of the incompatibilities. Over the last century political theorists have developed a theory of global peace system that relies upon social and political measures to avoid war in the interest of achieving world peace.

The Education Conflict Model believes in resolving conflict through counseling. It usually involve

training individual to resolve conflict in any department of life. Given that both word and verbal action can insult, injure and/or exalt. Better communication process is emphasised in education management. The major point in education conflict resolution is communication and guidance towards conflict resolution. It equally involves a non-directive counseling or listening with understanding. It entails clarity and focusing on problems.

Causes of Herdsmen/Farmers Conflict in Nigeria

A lot of factors have been identified in the literature as causes of farmers/herdsmen clashes amongst them, though not exhaustive, are:

- i) **Effects of Climatic Changes:** Nigeria over the year has witnessed changes in climatic condition which has resulted in the long dry season and low rainfall. In 2015, the National Meteorological Agency reported that over the preceding 30 years annual rainfall has dropped from an average of 150 to 120 days of rain fall season and that in the last six decades over 350,000 sq km of the already arid region turned to desert and semi-desert conditions, an occurrence of this, progresses south world at the rate of 0.6 km per years (Federal Ministry of Environment National Policy on Desertification and Drought 2018). According to the National Policy, states such a Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigama, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara had been estimated to have about 50 – 70 percent of the their land area is being threatened by desertification thus pushing millions of the herders to seek grazing land in other communities. Migration of herders initially was seasonal spanning from December each year to May in the middle belt and some parts of the southern state. As a result, the herders have changed this practice of staying between December to May to staying permanently and this has resulted to increasing conflict in the country among crop farmers and herdsmen over the use of land and water (Adisa 2010 & Nte, 2019).
- ii. **Population Growth:** This has mounted pressure on the land resource for crop framer and grazing by herdsmen. For example the growth in the size of population from 33 million in 1950 to 200 million in 2020 has intensified this crisis. About 47.7 percent of the former rural areas turned to urban area with serious consequence for grazing and crop farming (World Statistics, 2021). Population size couple with reduced grazing land has exacerbated this crisis. Most of the 415 grazing reserves established by the northern government in 1960 have since been lost. Only 114 is said to be documented (ADP Report 2021). Resulting from this limited grazing space most herders have moved south in order to increases their access to grazing land. This has serious consequence because their action conflicts with that of the crop farmers. With growing population per land and with increasing farming activities beyond the traditional allocated land especially in the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) for crop farmers, the dwindling land resource has led to clashes between herders and crop farmers. Since herders lost access to abundant wetland, the cattle find their way into farms (Mike Sland/International Crisis Group 2021)
- iii **Breakdown of Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanism:** This has been adjudged as one of the major causes of these clashes among herders and crop farmers (Robert & Gator 2016). Over the last three decades, young men or boys, aged between ten to twenty-five years have been in charge of the cattle. They are not civil and mature to resolve dispute amicably. The federal and state governments on their part have not done much to ensure the protection of both herders and crop farmers (International Conflict Group 2010). The outright legislation to ban cattle grazing in most state has spark up crisis and intensified the killings in most state (Sun Newspaper, 2020).
- iv. **Global Terrorism:** According to the vice chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) 2017 claimed that their members had lost over one million cattle to Boko Haram insurgency in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and so other states in the north. The insurgence of Boko Haram had led to the mass migration of cattle from their original home to most parts of southern Nigeria. It was equally reported by MACBAN (2017) that as a result of the attack on their members, they have been equipped with weapons to protect the survival of the cattle and their business. It has been reported that the increasable prevalence of weapons has amplified the human cost of killing in most parts of the country (Adejumobi, 2019).
- vi **Crime (Rural Banditry and Cattle Rustling):** It has been reported by some researchers that rural banditry and cattle rustling are some of the causes of herders migrating to the southern part of Nigeria (Eyekpini, 2016). By the 1980's bandit groups locally known as "kwarta" attacked traders and other travelers along major highways and recently this group have proliferated in major rural area in the north raiding villages, market and engage in cattle rustling in these communities. Over the last decade, cattle rustling have grown in large scale operations and organizations in several northern states where large group of bandits operate with absolute freedom without law enforcement agencies putting a stop to their operations. Cattle rustling operate in Kawuka forest in Kaduna, Dansadua forest in Zamfara, Falgore forest in Kano and Davin Rugu forest in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara states. It equally operates in some parts of Kogi, Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa (Adejumobi, 2019). It is reported that cattle theft has been a major source of funding

for Boko Haram activities. This led to the government ban of cattle import to Borno state to check Boko Haram funding. The scale of banditry operations has been intense with an estimate of more than 64,750 cattle stolen in 2019 with the number rising in subsequent years (Egwu, 2019).

- vii Technology and Economic Changes: Another major factor cursing the conflict between herder and crop farmers is lack of technological innovation in farming practices by both herders and crop farmers (Uche, 2016). In a study carried by Addisa and Adekunle (2010), they identified poverty and lack of production techniques as factors responsible for crop farmers/herders conflict. Latest cattle farming techniques like Ranches and Agroponetic techniques for crop farming are not feasible to both farmers because of the heavy initial cost. Therefore, farmers still use obsolete method of production (pastoralism) which is characterised by low production and low return on output per man (Fagan, 1999).
- viii Dysfunctional Legal System: Ineffective prosecution of perpetrators of violence and weak legal system has been a major factor of the increasing cause of this conflict (Stieglitz, 2016). Federal security and law enforcement agencies have not established any rapid response mechanism to curb the occurrence of killings in most parts of the country, couple with the fact that state legislation on this issue appear to be one side. (Crisis Group Report 2016). Most state in the south and middle belt of the country have legislated outright ban of cattle rearing in their states. This decision has been opposed by the MACBAN as a threat to their business.
- ix. Lack of Planning Model to Accommodate Farmers/Herdsman Production: From preoccupation on accelerated growth of the economy or Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the objective of every country development effort has been broadened to include improvement in welfare, access to basic need such as shelter, food, clothing, education and health. These goals can only be achieved when there is appropriate planning of production by policy makers or government (Abugre, 2011, Sawin, 2013). Classical economist oppose to planning because they rely on the invisible hands to regulate market activities. With the successes in the growth and long term investment plan in China attention has now shifted from less government regulation of economic activities to state intervention in production.

Measures Employed by Successive Governments in tackling the menace In Nigeria

The government of Nigeria over the years has employed various strategies in tackling this crisis of farmers/herders problem. In 2014, government inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on

grazing reserve. The report of the committee called for the recovery and improvement of all grazing routes encroached upon by farmers and recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) release a sum of N100 billion to the country for ranch construction. The recommendation did not see the light of day because the then government of Goodluck Jonathan was defeated in the 2015 election (Morger, 2017). It was again reported that CBN released 100 billion naira to state governments but not utilized for the purpose it was meant to serve.

By 2016, the government of Buhari administration through the advice of Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) was told to set a short, medium and long term strategies which will encourage the development of grazing areas in all the states in the country. Most states in the central and southern areas rejected this plan. In March 2016 the same year, the FMARD announced the proposal to import grass from Brazil on the grazing reserve in order to increase the consumption of grass by cattle and boost their output. This pronouncement again failed because it was strongly opposed by public opinion. Following recent crisis in Benue the federal government had again proposed the development of cattle colonies in the various states of Nigeria. This proposal is yet to take effect.

Apart from the executive arm of the federal government response to this crisis, the federal legislators equally sponsored a bill to create, National Grazing Reserve Commission (NGRC) in 2011. The Bill did not pass the second reading and eventually was thrown out in 2015. From 2015 to 2016 three new Bills were introduced on creating grazing reserves, livestock routes and ranches across the country. This bill again did not succeed based on the fact that Land Use Act was exclusively state affair.

Some state governments on their part have established herder/farmer conflict resolution committee and some made laws to regulate the activities of herders in their state. For example Gombe state government set up Farmers and Herdsmen Resolution Committee. Ekiti passed a grazing bill prohibiting grazing or movement of cattle at night and stipulate that any herder found with weapon would be charged with terrorism and this law was to be enforced by Ekiti Grazing Enforcement Marshals (EGEM). Benue state in 2016 and Taraba state in 2017 equally passed a bill banning open grazing and rearing of animals and for herders to carry firearms. In Edo state, there was a proposed bill to create free grazing area and watering facilities for herders to feed their cattle. The herders were expected to pay for this service. This failed as it could not pass through the public hearing convoked by the Edo State House of Assembly in 2018.

The United Nation Food and Agricultural Organization (UNFAO) in 2017 formulated a ten year National Ranch Development Plan and suggested how to implement the plan to the federal and state government. The plan entails developing grazing reserves in the northern states. Well it is too early to draw conclusion on this plan.

Effects of the Conflict on Socio Economic Development of Nigeria

Though not enough data are available for empirical analysis of the effect or impact of the conflict on social economic development of Nigeria, however there are relevant discussions and some isolated facts provided in literature to show the effects of the conflict on the social economic development of Nigeria. Summary of the literature and more importantly flowing from the causes earlier presented suggest the effect of the conflict as follows:

- i. **Displacement of People from their Communities:** The conflict exacted heavy humanitarian crisis on people in their various communities. It is estimated that about 2,500 persons were killed in the country by 2016 and this figure is higher than that killed by Boko Haram. According to the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Organization (2016), 2,069 people died in herder-related violence in Benue and Kaduna States. From 2015 to 2019 at least 189,862 people were displaced in Kaduna, Benue, Bornu, Taraba and Plateau states. Most of these people were forced to find shelter in other poor rural communities or in the overcrowded Internally Displaced Camps (IDP) (Daily Times 2020).
- ii. **Psychological Trauma of victims and potential victims:** Arising from a survey conducted on some selected IDPs in Nigeria by Josémaria Escrivá Foundation (2018), a major finding from their survey was that some victims who survived either the Boko Haram invasion or the herdsmen attacks were still finding it very difficult to contend with current realities. Surprisingly, a 10 year old victim has continued to have night mares arising from this. The challenge and the unfortunate situation is that most of these IDP camps do not have the wherewithal to effectively handle such traumas currently being experienced. The exist only one certified trauma treatment centre in Nigeria and it is domiciled in Abuja. The long run impact will be that the people will grow up with a loss of their personal, emotional, psychological and socio-cultural identities.
- iii. **Women and Girls Vulnerability to Sexual and Economic Predation:** The effect of this conflict fell heavily on women and girls. It is recorded that relative of men killed in the violence often evict widows from their husband farm land. After the conflict women economic and social conditions render them more vulnerable to sexual and economic exploitation (Crisis Group 2017). Some of them engage in prostitution and other social crimes.
- iv. **Huge Economic Burden on the Government:** The effect of the conflict on government has been huge. In 2015, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) lost about 13.7 billion dollars in revenue annually because of the herders / farmers conflict in Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Taraba and Plateau states. On the average these states lost 47 percent of their Internally Generated Revenues (IGRs). Benue particular lost about 95 billion naira between 2012 & 2014 (Sun Newspaper 2016). The cost of this conflict is still rising in the current period. The level of poverty in the affected area has been on the rise. The budget on this crisis in all the states have been on the increase (Crisis Group, 2017). Apart from the rise in budget, communities have lost over 65 billion naira in properties due to farmer/herder clashes (Sun Newspaper, 2016).
- v. **Reduced Level of Productive Activities:** Farmer/herder clashes have led to lost in production by both the farmers and the herders. It is reported that the loss of cattle and crops as well as increase in transportation cost in post conflict area have increased poverty and food insecurity. (Crisis Group, 2016). No reliable statistics have been able to show the loss in production as a result herder/farmer clashes but it would imply that in crisis zone farmers and herders will not produce their crops and cattle in those zones.
- vi. **Dwindling food supply and rising cost.** States, traditionally known for farming and abundance food supply, now struggle to meet population demand within their zones and across the country. In, Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Kogi, Enugu, Ebonyi, Ekiti and Taraba states, many now find it difficult to procure foodstuffs from local markets, due to low earnings and exorbitant prices or inadequate distribution within the country. In the last one year, according to media reports, many farm workers are leaving their farm and it has great implication for food supplies. It is becoming almost impossible to rear animals, plant seeds or harvest crops as observed by a crop farmer in Benue.
- vii. **Religious Crisis and Mistrust among the Two Major Religion (Muslim and Christianity):** Some individuals believe that the attack by Fulani's herdsmen is an attempt to islamize the people in the country. These people view the attacks as part of a long term Fulani plot to displace indigenous people and take over their lands. So among Christian communities herder attacks are another form of Jihad (Uche, 2016). Though this assertion is not supported by empirical evident but there are aggravating inter-faith mistrust and undermine the unity of the country. A glance at the new media highly shows this division of the north and the south. There are a lot of provocative statements

- either made by a Christian or a Muslim over this issue (Ilo, 2016).
- viii. **Emergence of Anti-Fulani Sentiments:** It has been observed that the violent disposition of the Fulani herdsmen have given rise to anti-Fulani sentiment in some parts of the country and has also continued to instil hatred against them (Idowu, 2017). Some persons have cited a Fulani expansionist agenda as being behind these attacks. A Twitter hashtag to that effect, #MAFO (Movement against Fulani Occupation) has been launched and there have been allegations of possible government collusion in this perceived expansionist agenda (Nwosu, 2017). In Ebonyi, the conflict was found to have led to loss of peaceful co-existence, breakdown of established friendship, perpetual fear of attack and loss of family means of livelihood (Umeh & Chukwu, 2016).
 - ix. **Increasing Division among the Federating States and threat to National Security:** As the crisis increase in intensity and in geographical scope, the division among the federating states had intensified. Federal government controls the police and military as a result, many states now advocate the need for state policing in order to control this crisis (MASSOB 2020). This division coupled with the fact that federal security and law enforcement agencies have never issued early-warning or responded appropriately to the attacks has made some states government to have less faith in the federal security apparatus. This division is further aggravated by each states or groups in the state forming vigilante self-defence group and some of these groups have threatened a reprisal attack on the herders. Particularly, the Tiv and Ekiti hunters. They warned that, if federal government cannot stop the killing, they would demonstrate that they can equally defend themselves and that they have the capacity to raise a standing army to do so.
 - x. **Arms proliferation and emergence of armed militia.** Another germane consequence of this trend is arms proliferation. So far as some individuals have openly called and advocated for self defence shows that more unregistered arms will be made available. Recall in November 2017, a 30 tonnes caravan was intercepted at the Apapa Port. What happened to the exporter and import is yet unknown. Also, the emergence of armed militia in whatever form or guise will have unprecedented destabilizing effects on national security. This is why the call for self-defence must be treated with all seriousness.
- i. To avert food crisis, government at all levels should ensure peace between the herdsmen and farmers. Other ways of feeding cows has to be devised. There should be ranches. Statistics have shown that in Nigeria, only 141 grazing reserves were gazetted with less than 20 equipped with resources for pastoralists. Other agriculture experts believe that if the proposed National Grazing Route and Reserve Commission is established to engender acquisition and management of lands across Nigeria's 36 states to provide pastures for cattle, farmers will be able to produce what the country can eat and export.
 - ii. Strengthen the mechanism for conflict resolution in the state to regulate and prosecute offenders violating the law set up in the state to regulate farmer/herders interaction.
 - iii. The drought and desertification must be addressed by the federal government and there is need to invest on projects that will stop the desertification. Though this might be a long term project however there should be indication to start the project.
 - iv. Economic growth and development is not a fire brigade approach but a systematic process of planning production. To this end, both crop farming and cattle farming should be planned and both farmers registered by government. There should be soil mapping and gradual development from open grazing to ranches in the country.
 - v. The imperatives of a modern economy require that pastoralism should be laid to rest. The Fulani herdsmen can no longer survive at the mercy of the farmer in a time when the subsistent farmer is struggling for enough arable land. There is no more land to designate as grazing reserves or cattle colonies. The legal framework of land ownership does not allow for forceful seizure of land for cattle rearing or any other private commercial enterprise, even in the guise of public purpose. In the language of business strategy, cattle rearing in the pastoral form have been disrupted by new economic realities. The wise thing to do is to adapt the business to the flow and logic of the disruptive influence. The cattle owners should retool their business proposition. This is a strategic challenge.
 - vi. Herdsmen and farmers should be properly educated or re-oriented on the sanctity of human lives, and taught how to use better channels of communication to convey their grievances than resorting to conflict. Any form of aggression as a result of past issue(s) should be discouraged and anyone found wanting in that respect be prosecuted. The implication of the foregoing is that appropriate authorities need to methodically investigate recent increase in the reprehensible activities of herdsmen.
 - vii. It is vital to emphasise that military or police action alone might not suffice in thoroughly getting rid of the herdsmen's challenge as it is

The Way Forward

In order to mitigate the effects of herders/farmer conflict on socioeconomic development of the country, the way forward may include:

with other such thorny security issues in the country. Sufficient intelligence must be gathered to really understand their motives, sponsors (if any) and grouses. It has been argued that the herdsmen's 'insurgence' is being spearheaded by rascals from neighbouring countries. This claim must be properly verified and appropriate action taken if it is found to be real.

Unfortunately, each of these solutions is zero-sums. If we establish cattle colonies, the community advocate loses. If we mandate private ranches the Fulani advocates loses. But more than being zero sum propositions; the binary interpretation of the bloody conflict misses out on the most important feature of the conflict. The main argument against ranching as a solution is that it is inimical to the lifestyle of the Fulani and unsuited for their specie of cattle. The Fulani is a pastoralist. Pastoralism is a form of feudalism with its resort to violence and conquest. A pastoral lifestyle is unsuitable in a period defined by property rights unhinged from the landlord and vassal relationship. The legal and constitutional order of modern democratic state in Nigeria is incompatible with a pastoral economics. The geography of existence has changed. There is no adequate swathe of grasslands to be reserved for the migratory life of the herdsmen. In the past, there was little confrontation between herders and farmers because land was abundant and colonial authorities could designate free land as grazing reserves and grazing routes. Contacts between herders and farmers were too brief and uncompetitive. This sustained the fabled hospitality between them.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the effects of the herder and farmer conflict on social economic development of Nigeria. The study identified the causes of farmers/herders clashes as climate change resulting in drought and desertification soil degradation, growing population size among others were recognized as the reason for this conflict. Government responses to this crisis have been most disappointing with no clear cut policy on it (both by the federal and state governments). This crisis will continue to have a negative impact on the economy and if not properly managed might degenerate to a full blown war arising from various comments from stakeholders. In order to avoid this amongst others, it is proper for all states in the federation to come together and have a common policy on land use in their states. Most importantly, the herdsmen should embrace modern day style of animal husbandry and also work with government research institutions to produce cattle species that can withstand current situations.

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