PASTORALISM AND NATIONAL SECURITY, A CASE STUDY OF HERDERs-FARMERS CONFLICT IN sNIGERIA

BY

A.S MODIBBO (Ph.D)

Department of political science, Nasarawa State University,Keffi

modibbo01@gmail.com

Abstract

Contributing to instability in Nigeria today are conflicts arising from competition by various resource users, including movements of herds for pasture across the country.

Before now, trans-humane has served these regions over the centuries, it now presents enormous security and development challenges in Nigeria. Climate change leading to the shrinking of the lake-chad and rapid urbanization across grazing fields has triggered a cycle of violence. The occasional herders farmer's conflict has exacerbate and other forms of conflict continue to evolve across this fault line. The character of this conflict in Nigeria now includes cattle rustling arson, inter-ethnic and religious killing which has led to loss of lives and whole community sacked.

In the prevailing security situation there is the concern that violent extremist groups and insurgents may try to leverage on the conflict involving pastoralist.

This work, seeks to study the major causes of herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria with a view to proffering solutions to the problem. In doing this, I will employ a qualitative method of research. We are using conflict theory as our theoretical frame work. Our findings will be critically analyzed and solutions will be suggested on how to mitigate the incessant conflict between herders-farmers in Nigeria.

Keywords: Pastoralism, National Security & Conflict

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a country has a population of over 200 million people out of this figure over75%-70% are pastoralists and farmers. The land-mass is 923,768km² which remained static. Nigerian population is increasing of geometrical speed; the rate of urbanization is growing fast; the emergence of an agrarian Bourgeoisie class among the retiree's army officers and their civilian partners has added to the pressure on land use. In addition, climate change which led to the shrinking of lake-chad basin has its own negative impact on the herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria.

In the last decade, Nigeria experienced incessant conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria most especially in the North Central region. This conflict becomes more intense with the coming of MuhammaduBuhari- a Fulani man into power in 2015. This ugly development, generated some political interest with politicians politicizing the whole issue.

From 2015 to date, thousands of lives were lost, properties worth millions destroyed. Thousands household were displayed; hundreds of IDPs scattered all over the country-in our schools and make shift camps (Ahmed, 2020).

All the aforementioned, translate to socio-economic stagnation of the country.

Historically in Nigeria, right from the colonial era, the colonial government in Nigeria made adequate provision for grazing reserves, well gazette cattle route for ease of movement by nomads.

These can be found mostly in the Northern Nigeria and some selected southern states. Today, such provisions are not in place as a result of urbanization and bad governance. All these years no effort was made to introduce modern method of rearing cattle'se.g through ranching. Pastoralists move from one end of the country to another in search of postures leads to farm land encroachment, cattle rustling and conflicts between herders and farmers.

This ugly development leads to socio-economic problems which tends to increase insecurity especially food insecurity in Nigeria.

To properly address this topic, we will start with conceptual clarification, causes of herders-farmers Conflict in Nigeria, Effect of the Conflict in Socio-Economic development of Nigeria and lastly, recommendation will be proffered.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINATION/CLARIFICATION

PASTORALISM:This is a kind of occupation of movement of heads for posture from one area to another. The people engage in this trade are called pastoralist. Headers are those involved in rearing of herds from one location to another for greener pastures, particularly in West and Central Africa. For instance in Nigeria, this movements contributed to instability in Nigeria. This is due to conflict arising from competition by various resource users, such as farmers, herders, e.t.c.

Transhumance has served regions of Nigeria over the centuries, but today, it represents enormous security and development challenges. The nature of movement by the herders is from the far North during dry season to the North Central Nigeria towards Benue &Lokoja for greener pasture and water.

NATIONAL SECURITY: This connotes safety and stability of the country. It entails lack of insecurity in the Socio-Economic system of a nation. Stability in the economic system and growth, food security of the nation and safety of lives and properties of a nation. In a nutshell, National Security means Socio-Economic Security of the Nation which involves absent conflict or social disequilibrium. It also connotes general stability of the nation.

CONFLICT: Simply put disagreement, between persons or states. Conflict can be seen as misunderstanding with resultant to destruction of lives and properties. It was observed by Tona(2001). That the desire for preservation of Secured Economic resources of humans appears to be a factor for continued conflict between herdsmen and farmers in different part of Nigeria. Particularly in Northern region. One of these resources is land which appearto be the most significant that support human activities, farming, mining, trading, hunting e.t.c.

Conflict can also be define as the Fight, battle, war, an armed conflict.

Competitive or opposing action of incompatibles, antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interest, or person) a conflict of principles. Retrieved from: https://www.merriam.com.

A Conflict is a struggle or opposition. Conflict comes from Latin word for striking. Conflict can arise from opposing ideas...

Conflict is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests. Conflict arises when two or more parties, with perceived incompatible goals seek to undermine each other's goal-seeking capability. Conflict arises in the situations of competition or cooperation. Retrieved from: https://www.bussiness-managementtides.com.

CAUSES OF FARMERS – HERDERS CONFLICT

Since the fourth Republic in Nigeria in 1999, Farmers Herders Violence has killed more than 19,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more.

Farmer-Herders Conflict was caused by the following factors:

1. Expansion of Agriculturist Population and Cultivated land at the expense of pasture lands;
2. Deteriorating Environmental Conditions;
3. Desertification and soil degradation;
4. Population growth;
5. Breakdown in traditional conflict resolution mechanism of land and water disputes;
6. Proliferation of small arms and crime in rural area e.t.c.

Insecurity and Violence have led many population to create self-defense forces and ethnic and tribal militias, which have engaged in further violence. They majority of farmer – herder clashes have occurred between Muslim Fulani herder's man and Christian farmers, exacerbating ethno-religious hostilities.

CLIMATIC CRISES

Deteriorating environmental conditions, such as desertification and soil degradation have led Fulani herdsman from Northern Nigeria to change their transhumance routes. Access to pastureland and watering point in the middle belt became essential for herders travelling from the north of the country. It is often assumed that climate change is the driver of the conflict, but recentstudy suggest that climate change does not automatically cause the conflict, but it has however, changes the herders migration pattern.

It was observed, that regions vulnerable to climate change (Northern Region) experience less farmer herder conflict and less intense farmer-herder fighting. It is argued that identity differentials between farming and herding groups need to be considered in the explanation of the mechanism of the climate change- farmer- herder conflict nexus.

Adisa, (2012), notes that the socio-economic lives of both crop farmers and herders within a particular geographical setting revolve round land.

Therefore, competition between crop farmers and animal rearers over access and control of fertile land within a particular area is unavoidable and hence can easily extend into violent conflict.

FACTORS THAT PROPELLED FARMERS-HERDERS CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

Scholars has identified Deteriorating Environmental Conditions, such as, intense desertification and soil degradation have led Fulani herdsmen from outside and inside Nigeria to change their transhumance routes, (Aku,2020). Obi (2009), identified the following factors that propelled farmer-herders' conflict in Nigeria;

- Urbanization; this led to tempering of cattle routes and grazing field.
- Proliferation of weapons; which led to easy acquisition of weapons by the herders and farmers especially after the Libya crises and other internal crises.
- Destruction of crops by herders.
- Cattle rustling;
- Harassment of nomads; by local communities.
- Women Harassment by the Herders particularly the Bororos.
- Disregard for local traditional institutions/culture by the Herders; e.t.c.

All the aforementioned factors contributed to Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria.

(Nnamani, et'al. 2018), opined that this conflict remains a major phenomenon in Nigeria. It has assumed very dangerous dimension with unimaginable consequences for agricultural productivity.

Effects of Farmers-Herders Conflict on Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria.

The deadly conflicts between herdsmen and crop farmers have become one of the major in security problem in Nigeria-only second to Boko-Haram imperil (Okoro,2018). The violent conflict between the two groups have been manifesting in form of bloody clashes (attacks and counter attacks). These bloody attacks and counter attacks have created social or relational implications and economic adverse effects such as;

- Loss of Human lives
- Displacement of persons
- Destruction of houses and properties
- Destruction of farmlands and crops
- Distrust between the two groups

- Unemployment
- Threat to National Security
- Threat to food security

IMPLICATION OF FARMER-HERDERS CONFLICT IN NIGERIA.

Farmers-Herders conflict has a socio-economic implication on the development on our country.

One of the major implication of farmers-herders conflict is its impact on economic activities including the production of food often threatened and result in widespread hunger and malnutrition (Okoli&Atelhe, 2014). According to Eje, et.al (2017), Farmer-Herdsmen Conflict has constituted severe threats to means of survival and livelihoods of both the farmers and herdsmen. They opined that the conflict have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate insecurity and food crises particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized.

Farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria has serious threat to national food security, livestock production and eradication of poverty with farmers often regarded as the most vulnerable (Dimelu et.al, 2017).

Farmers-herders conflict result to high rate of poverty between both the Fulani herders and farmers. This is due to reduction in output and income of farmers and nomads, loss of produce in storage, displacement of farmers and nomads, scarcity of agricultural produce, loss of properties and infrastructural damages and loss of lives.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: For a clear analytical perception in this work, we are going to adopt the conflict theory as our theoretical paradigm. The major thesis in conflict theory focuses on the competition between groups within society over limitedresources. Conflict theory views social dominance of the ruling class. Retrieved from: htpp://www.Investopedia.com.

The basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups in society struggle to maximize their share of the limited resources that exist and are desired by humans. Given that there are limited resources, the struggle leads to conflict and competition.

The conflict theory is typified into simplicity categories. The theories explaining causes of conflict, Marxist theory and Psychological theory of conflict (https//eprints.convenantuniversity.edu.ng)

Seven types of conflict are identified:

- Person vs Person Conflict. Also known as Man vs Man conflict.
- Person vs Nature Conflict
- Person vs Society Conflict
- Person vs Technology Conflict
- Person vs Supernatural Conflict
- Person vs Self Conflict
- Person vs Destiny (fate, luck/God) Retrieved from: http://Prowritingaid.com.

This theory is relevant to our topic of herder-farmers conflict in Nigeria. The conflict can best be situated or seen on competition over limited resources-land.

CONCLUSION

Fulani herdsmen and farmers violent conflict have created humanitarian toll across many communities in Nigeria. Lives and properties were lost, farmlands, crops, cattlese.t.c.

The socio-economic effect of this conflicts are; loss of human lives, displacement of persons, destruction of houses, farmland and crops, destruct, unemployment, threat to National Security threat to food security in Nigeria. This conflict also resulted in breakdown of law and order. All the aforementioned breads poverty, hunger, and societal stagnation.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made

1. Federal and States Government should engage peace and conflict resolution experts in dealing with issues concerning herdsmen farmers crises. This will enable effective

dialogues, negotiation and of course a win-win resolutions, while encouraging early warning mechanism;

2. Government should adopt community policing model to forestall peace in the rural arrears.
3. Government at all levels should promulgate legislations outlawing open grazing and encouraging herders to establish ranches for their cattle's.
4. Government should designate some areas as grazing fields for nomads and make them pay tax to the state. Social amenities to be provided such as schools, health centers among others, for the comfort of herders.

References

Abdul Barkindo, A.&Alupse, B. (2015); Migration and Violent Conflict in devided societies; Non- Boko Haram Violence against Christian Security in the Middle Belt Region in Nigeria. Nigeria Conflict Security Analysis Network (NCSAN), working Paper No:1, Abuja, Nigeria, Pg 149.

Adelakun, O.E and Aduraogbangba,B (2015); Socio-Economic effects of Farmers-Pastoralist Conflict on Agricultural extension service delivering in Oyo State, Nigeria. Journal of Agricultural Extension, 19 (2), 59-70.

Aliyu, A.S. (2015); Causes and Resolution of Conflict between cattle herders and crop farmers in Katsina State. A published M.sc Desertation by the school of Post-Graduate Studies, ABU, Zaria PP1-74.

A. Suleiman & M.R Ja'afar (2010); Economic Effects of Farmers-Grazier Conflicts in Nigeria: A case study of Bauchi State. Trends in Agricultural Economics, 3:147-157.

Aku, YunanaYakubu (2020); Farmers-Herdsmen Conflict and Agricultural Productivity in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Ph.D Thesis Submitted to the Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi.

Berkwowitz, Leonard (1996); Roots of aggression: A re-examination of the Frustration-Aggression hypothesis, New York: Atherton Press.

Blench, R. (1996); Natural Resources Conflicts in North Central Nigeria. London, Mandaras.

Dumelu, M.U, Salifu, D.E, Enwelu, A.L and Ibokwe, E.M (2017); Challenges of Herdsmen- Farmers Conflict in Livestock Production in Nigeria: Experience of

Pastoralist in KogiState, Nigeria. African Journal of Agricultural Research 12 (8), 642-650.

Eje ,T.I, Angai, I.A, Abdullahi, Y.B (2017); Pattern and Impact of Conflicts Between Farmers and Herders in Riyom L.G.A of Plateau State, Nigeria. The International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 5 (10), 256-271.

Obi, Nnamani (2018); Factors that propelled farmers and herders conflict in Nigeria. Journal of Social and Management Sciences of Departmentof PoliticalSciences, Kebbi State University, Vol 2.Issues and Practices, ndl.ethernet.edu.et, 99-118.

Okoli, A.C and Atelhi, A.G (2014); Nomads Against Natives: A Political Ecology of Herder/Farmer Conflicts in Nasarawa State. American Journal of Contemporary Research 4 (2), 76-88.

Okoro, J.P (2018); Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict: Implication on National Development (Nigeria in Perspective). 1st International Conference of Social Sciences (ICOSS) held at National Open University of Nigeria.

Obi, S.E, Odikpa, S. Edegbo, S.J and Abubakar, S.E (2021); The Implication of Farmers-Herders Conflicts on the Socio-Economic Developmentof Omala LGA, Kogi State, North Central, Nigeria. International Journal of Qualitative Research 1 (1), 61-72.

R.S Adisa (2012); Land Use Conflict between Farmers and Herdsmen Implication For Agricultural And Rural Development In Nigeria. Rural Development Contemporary