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The Implication of Farmers - Herders Conflicts on the Socio-Economic Development of Omala L.G.A, Kogi State, North Central Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Famers'- Herders' conflict has become a widespread occurrence spreading to all parts of Nigeria. The study examined how farmers-herdsmen conflict constitutes a threat to rural development, internal security, and socio-economic development in Nigeria about Omala Local Government Area of Kogi State, North Central Nigeria. The study adopted the qualitative method making use of semi-structured interviews and 100 informants were purposively selected. Findings from the study revealed among others that; Crop damage by cattle, land encroachment without permission, inadequate grazing reserves, lack of access to water points, killing of stray cattle, pollution of the water point, cattle routes blockage, Mbororo migrants, ECOWAS treaty, fertile land of the host community, socio-economic, cultural differences, the political economy of cattle herders were major causes and persistence of farmers-pastoralists conflicts. The study among others recommends that; since farmers-pastoralists conflicts were resource-based conflict due to blockage of cattle route by farmers which eventually leads to encroachment of farmers land and thus translate to open violence and animosity, there is a need for resignification of cattle routes for the pastoralist to have a route to avoid farmlands encroachment, regarding the transit route for irregular migrants through Niger, Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Chad, Cameroon, it is suggested that the Minister of Interior should initiate dialogue with the neighboring governments on how to address and curb the rising number of migrants transiting border Nations. Based on the study findings, to end this crisis once and for all, there is a need for the consideration of cattle colonies implementation while implementing former recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is made up of six geo-political zones which are North West, North Central, North East, South West, South East, South-South of which the North-Central Region has six states which include: Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau states. Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory Abuja is also located in the region of the country. And it's central location accounts for part of the reasons why it is often called the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. The region is a combination of two vegetation belts

of which half a portion of the region falls within the Sudan savannah while the remaining half within the Guinea savannah.

According to Aristotle in one of his greatest aphorisms, in Obi, et al (2018) he said; "Man by nature is a political animal". This assertion is hunched on two factors: (i) there is a scarce resource in the society (ii) many people subscribe to this scarce resource, and in the process of allocating or distributing this resource, conflict becomes inevitable in the society because man as a pleasure

seeker and pain avoider tend to encroach the fundamental human rights of others which in turn translate to conflict. That is, resource use constitutes the breeding factor of conflict between man and his fellow man. Nigeria since 2015 has suffered from the socio-economic and political mayhem unleashed by two groups that are necessary to the survival of the Nigeria State (pastoralists; cattle herders and Farmers; agricultural producers) as well as rural underdevelopment caused by the destruction of lives and properties worth millions of Naira, destruction of social facilities like burning of primary health care centers, markets among others which are the aspect of rural industrialization (Obi, Job, Isyaku, Letswa, and Kolawole, 2018).

Farmers-pastoralists conflicts are majorly caused by economic livelihood in West Africa (Tonah, 2006). Subsequently, clashes getting sporadic have spread in many parts of the nation. This view is supported by Kolawole, et al (1993), Kolawole and Bukar, (1994), Blench (2003), Kolawole (1991), Gefu and Kolawole (2002), Ouagadougou (2002). Nigeria has witnessed and is still witnessing a myriad of conflicts that have challenged and threatened rural, socio-economic development, internal security, and unity of the nation. Most of these crises are propelled by socio-economic (resource control agitation)/political affiliation, and the behavioral propensity of ethnic and religious identity by ethnic groups in the Nigeria state. However, the transition from a military regime to civil administration in 1999 seems to have aggravated these crises and have become more pronounced and widespread in almost all parts of the country. The proportional propensity of the dynamic nature of insurgency, kidnappings, armed robbery, terrorism, agitation for secession, and farmers-pastoralists conflict (pastoral vs arable) in Nigeria are threatening overall national development (Gefu & Kolawole, 2002).

Insecurity of lives and property of the citizen challenges to meaningful development. An environment of terror frightens local and overseas investors. It suffices to say that at the heart of these conflictual situations lies disagreement of “who” gets “what” “when” and “how”. These conflicting situations have intensified the environment of tension, division among various groups, and disunity which most times translate to open violence and animosity (Obi, 2019). The conflict

between pastoralists and farmers has been a reoccurring decimal spreading all over the country and has led to the disastrous damage of rural infrastructures such as schools, health care centers, markets, social/business activities, and human capital development of an incredible dimension.

These conflicts in Nigeria started on a mild tune, with few attacks in the northern part of the country, Jos and Benue to be specific, which after, spread to the other regions with different dimensions and varying degrees of damages, both on human and properties (Albert, 2010). As pastoralists continue to wreak havoc on innocent farmers in virtually all parts of the country, and the government appears to do practically little or nothing to stem the tide of this crisis. Equally, the issue of Boko Haram and climate change also posed a threat to the Fulani herdsmen to search for arable land for their cattle to graze. Boko Haram insurgency for instance has ravaged the northeastern region of the nation making the province difficult for nomads and their cattle to grazing (Adeniyi 2016).

Between 1999 and 2015, cases of conflict, confrontation, killings between farmers and herders abound between indigenes of the area they moved to. The print and electronic media have reported cases of clashes between the pastoralist from the North and the inhabitants of the Plateau, Kogi (10 people feared dead in Omi community of Yagbe-East LGA) and Benue in the Northcentral of the country and some states of the southeast geopolitical zone (Vanguard Newspaper, December 17, 2017). The Sun Newspaper of June 30th, 2014 reported of conflict between the pastoralist and the Agatu people of Benue State and this conflict caused the death of many lives/devastation of properties worth millions of Naira. For example, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State which is of the view that the state has suffered from farmers-pastoralists conflict, reports that over 1,878 people were killed between 2014 and 2017, (Obi, 2019).

A significant number of the Fulanis are nomadic in nature, herding cattle, sheep, and goats across the vast dry grasslands of their environs and making them the main pastoral nomadic group in the world. The Fulani are one of the recognized population groups found mainly in the Northern part as well as the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The main Fulani sub-group in Nigeria; Fulbe

Gombe, Fulbe Adamawa, Fulbe Sokoto, Fulbe Mbororo, and Fulbe Borgu (Kasarachi, 2016). Despite the holy war (jihad) and ethnic dominance experienced by the Northern very deep exchange relationship persisted between them and the sedentary farmers. The desert Fulani herdsmen depended on the savanna farmers for calories, exchanging salt for grain. The Fulani herdsmen unarguably represent a significant part of Nigeria's economy. They are the major breeders of sheep, cattle, and goats as those animals are the major source of meat and affordable source of animal protein eaten by Nigerians. Awogbade (1983) opined that the relationship between farmers and Fulani herdsmen was coming under increasing pressure due to fierce competition for resources. Fulbe herds were still welcome by Jos farmers. The Fulani herdsmen keep animals for the village farmers who consider livestock particularly cattle as a form of investment; milk and manure are traded for agricultural produce.

The social link between the farmers' population and the Fulani herdsmen are evident in ceremonial exchange such as complementary interaction and exchanges have also been reported of other agricultural societies (Kanuri, and Songhay, etc.) and the pastoral group (Tuareg, Fulbe) in Niger where all cultivators own livestock, and many nomads practice agriculture (Berinus, 1974). However, Raynaut and Delville (1997) argued that such a co-existence has never been without tension because it demands a conciliation of rival interests. Conflict can erupt when livestock is poorly controlled, and when Fulani herdsmen wander onto cultivated fields. This has always tended to occur at critical periods in the annual cycle, particularly during sowing, when Fulani herdsmen are late in leaving agricultural lands, and during harvests, if they return too early. Hence, clashes occur when agricultural activities hinder the movement of herds and cut off their access to water sources or pasture.

The Fulani own over ninety percent of the livestock population which accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP and 3.2% of the entire GDP in Nigeria (Fabiya & Otunuga, 2016). The Fulani herdsmen mostly move with their cattle from one destination to another in search of grazing land, especially in the dry season. However, the Fulani herdsmen in most cases settled in fertile areas to rear their cattle and when the migration continued to

be dictated by economic and socio-political factors, increased trends of conflicts between the herdsmen and their host communities (farmers) escalated. Many Nigerians lost their lives, properties, and farmland or crops every year to Fulani herdsmen. The conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers came into existence as a result of the encroachment of farmlands by the Fulani herdsmen. This is always prevalent during the dry season when farmers burn grasses preparatory to farming and hunting while the Fulani herdsmen burn grasses to induce the growth of fresh grasses for their cattle. Grass burning by local farmers and water scarcity during this period impels the Fulani herdsmen to graze in the valleys where they can still find grasses and water for their cattle. During the grazing process, they cross the paths of farmers who find fault in the destruction of their crops by these animals. This usually encroaches on farmlands, causing the potential destruction of crops. This often results in serious conflicts or outright bloodletting. It is during the dry season that short-term agreements are entered into between host communities (farmers) and the Fulani herdsmen with an arbitrary fee charged.

Nigeria as a nation-state is under a severe internal socio-economic and security threat. On a more general level, the threat has socio-economic, political, and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the nation and can be traced to the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash, ethnic militant armies, ethnic and religious conflicts, poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage, and environmental degradation. Stories are found in the National Dailies daily of how these shepherds strategically attack several host communities and houses with sophisticated weapons (Obi, 2019).

According to Okereke (2012) and Bello (2013), the conflicts in most parts of Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' clashes are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. The studies conducted by (Okereke, 2012; Kasarachi, 2016) have shown that serious conflict erupts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers leading to loss of lives, valuable properties, and destruction of the vast expanse of arable agricultural farmers thereby posing serious threat to food security since farmer for fear of attack could no longer go to farm and

harvest their farm produce. The attacks by Fulani herdsmen are on the upsurge, especially the attacks in February 2018 happening in Benue state, Taraba state, Nassarawa state, and few cases of attack in other states.

The killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes have rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer crops. The wave of violence in Nigeria as observed by Kasarachi (2016) has disrupted socio-economic, religious, and educational activities, political instability and threatened the national unity in Nigeria. These extra-judicial killings have forced thousands of people to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety. The clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers have had a devastating effect on inter-group relationships especially at the flashpoint areas in Benue state.

With specific reference to the incessant clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria, the ugly phenomenon has been described as the “emerging threat to national security and unity.” In addition, the violent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers had been viewed as “hydra-headed in nature” which poses serious security challenges in the country (Onani, 2017). Hence, this requires proactive and effective strategies to curb the menace. This research work examines the problems and prospects of Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes in different parts of the country which appears to have dire implications for socio-economic development in Benue state and other states attacked and Nigeria in general. In the states where the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes are pervasive, the property destroyed and cases of rapes slog their economic and social opulence backed by several steps. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic life in those states is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed.

Chronicled pressures between Nigeria pastoralist Fulani and settled indigenous ranchers have heightened as of late, with decreasing common asset and land accessibility extraordinarily adding to the progressing raising clash in the nation, (McCarthy, Swallow, Kirk, Hazell, 2000) Conflict for resources is present in our species from ancient past, there is evidence to satisfy such single need as hunger. In Nigeria for instance, the conflict has become a very widespread occurrence, manifesting in all spheres of human endeavors. In research conducted by Iyorwuese (2013). Fulani has continued to clash with sedentary farming communities in Plateau, Ogun, Oyo, Sokoto, Nasarawa, Benue, Rivers, Enugu, Bauchi State, and Federal Capital Territory. Abass, in his investigation of the real wellspring of contention between the Fulani pastoralists and agriculturalists, demonstrated that land-related issues-particularly finished nibbling fields represent the most astounding level of the contention. As it were, battles over control of financially practical grounds cause more pressure and fierce among groups.

The dimension of militancy in the conflict is associated with the advent of the aggressive Udawaand Bokologi pastoralists which further led to the emergence and introduction of guns and other sophisticated weapons in the conflicts as well as the use of mobile phones, accompanied by banditry, all these have produced adverse consequences in the destruction of villages, settlements crops and irrigation facilities, human and animal lives. The incidence of serious cases of conflicts for survival between pastoralists and farmers also led to the loss of lives and destruction of properties with the emergence of insecurity due to the continuous desire for vengeance by the parties involved (Pyramid Trust, 2009).

In today's political realities, there is a strong tendency for bargaining and negotiation policies. In a political, monetary, and social change in West Africa, in reconcile circumstances over regular assets, especially between crops farmers and cattle herders are basic issues and of developing concern. Various cases of conflict in Northern Nigeria involving the Fulani and crop farmers conflict of significant variables in economic, in area of stiff competition for grazing land farmers but the degree of intensity differ from state to state depending on the ecological location and community involved.

Abbass, asserted that in Bauchi State, for example, areas most affected include Jamaare, Gamawa, Misan, Zaki, and Kirfi local government areas among others, (Okello, 2014).

This local government area recorded serious cases of conflict for survival between cattle herders and crop farmers which led to the loss of lives and destruction of property with the emergence of insecurity due to continuous desire for vengeance. The conflict between these two groups has led to the loss of properties worth millions of naira and the death of hundreds of thousands of lives, despite all these, there seems to be no solution in sight. Nigerian communities have lost confidence in the capacity of their leaders to provide justice law and order, for instance in Misau cattle herders and crop farmers seem to have taken the law into their hands. This is supported by the level of murder and arson taking place in the name of fighting for the right which always results in violent conflicts all over the affected areas.

The multiplier implication of insecurity is that it has resulted in the retarded growth of development in Nigeria. Insecurity is an ill wind of social phenomenon which blows no one any good. Nigeria society has now been characterized and manifests in acrimony, incessant cases of Fulani herdsmen attack in several states across the country. Kogi, Benue, Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ibadan, Plateau, Niger State etc. These attacks are increasingly becoming widespread and promoting a climate of fear, impurity, and insecurity in the country. Since herders and farmers groups have altogether different esteems traditions, physical and social abilities, the dispute between them is sometimes described as an ethnic clash. In this light, this investigation tends to discover the effect of farmers-herders conflicts on the social-economic development of Iyade Agbenema community in Omala Local Government Area in Kogi State, North Central Nigeria.

METHODS

The research methodology used during the research work were both primary sources, secondary sources, and also interdisciplinary approaches. Primary sources were majorly on semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion, this was done through asking individuals questions who are from the study area majorly between the

age of 50 and above. Pictures were also taken for a proper understanding of the subject matter. Secondary sources entail the use of both published, unpublished works and textbooks gotten from the school library and the internet. Also, an interdisciplinary approach was used majorly from geography in knowing the location of the study area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Land Use and Socio-Economic Activities

There are numerous socio-economic, cultural, political, and judicial activities going on in the Study Area. These have engaged a significant number of the people to an extent that the population remains an active one throughout the year. Available land uses in the study area are agricultural, commercial, educational, religious, political, and socio-cultural land uses. Agriculture is the most significant economic activity in the study area. The reason for this can be considered from two backgrounds: socio-economic and ecological. The socio-economic background of the region places it as a good beneficiary of a middle belt climate, which hitherto favors substantial farming activities. The ecology of the area has to do with the extent to which the land is capable of providing the required inputs in their right proportion for the growth and development of agriculture. Socio-economically, two pronounced types of farming in the area are plantation agriculture and subsistence farming. About 80% of the population are farmers who engage mostly in subsistence farming. Kogi east is an Industrial virgin land where abundant resources exist but are largely untapped. The economic sector of Omala was organized just like any other Igala kingdom. The people generated revenue from different sources such as Agriculture, trade among others, (Obi, 2019a).

The economic activities of the Omala people are mainly agriculture because of the fertile land of the community, the people engage in farming to generate income. More so, trade is also another economic activity the community involved in, they sell their farm products and products which are gotten from crafts and weaving. (Obi, 2019a) In Omala, there enlisted a lot of social institutions which as highly valued and respected. A social institution such as exclusive men group is organized

for the general entertainment, social reformation, and maintenance of peace and order. In Omala, masquerading has a special place in the life of the people. They have a special interest, regard for this aspect of their cultural heritage. According to the belief of the Omala people, masquerades represent images of dead ancestors coming from the world beyond the earth for one reason or another.

Marriage as an institution in Omala tradition, the parents have to look for wives for their grown-up sons and also decide for the girls whom to marry. Thus, marriage in Omala is patrilineal, meaning that the parent of the boy starts the move in requesting for the girl's hand in marriage with kolanut which is known as *enene* (requesting) or any other question if there is room for any. If the girls' parent gives their consent, an Atogbo-oya (a member) who is experienced must be produced of whom must be known and familiar with both families, through this, all rights concerning marriages are performed. Marriage as a social institution was sacred and scarified as sex was not allowed until the final marriage ceremony was done. Another social aspect of the Omala people worthy of study is the burial ceremony. According to the belief among the Omala people, man is a sojourner on earth. No matter how long man lives on earth, he must die one day. Death is a transition from the physical to the spiritual world. The deceased ruler of Omala for example is usually buried on Abejukolo market day.

The celebration of the Ibegwu festival is another social institution in Omala which is the traditional practice by the traditional worshippers. Ibegwu festival is a common practice among the Omala people. The celebration is usually during the Easter period, that is during March or April. The celebration must be after the consultation with the oracle, thereafter, a day is set aside by the elders of the community and this day must be a market day. The essence is to pay homage to the departed ancestors and heroes. The festival is done with funfairs. This celebration attracts tributes from non-Omala that wish to attend. Igbo tenants in Omala pay with items such as palm oil, goat, yam tubers and wine, etc. their physical presence is obligatory. Also, the festival is meant to usher in peace, good health bumper harvest, and prosperity.

The celebration of the Ibegwu festival has some ritual sacrifices involved. Before the

commencement of the festival, the people must go on hunting in forests that abound in Omala. Animals killed during this expedition would have their liver and kidneys offered as sacrifices to their ancestors. All deities in Omala are appeased during this time. This ritual appeasement is performed by the eldest person in the community who is equally the custodian of Omala cultures and traditions.

Lawrence Kadiri (1982) stated that the ceremony starts with ritual sacrifices to the departed ancestors, kolanuts are presented, goods are slaughtered and the blood spilled on families, Balls of pounded yams were also prepared and placed on the deity. The meat is killed and not fried which will be eating by members of the family and other invited guests that have traveled to Omala to witness the festival. The celebration calls for breaks for all categories of people. youth sing songs during the celebration special drummers and dancers continue to keep the atmosphere going until the following day. The highest celebration continues with folklores centered on the Ibegwu festival, it is the origin, meaning, and significance. At the end of the Ibegwu festival, it must rain heavily to show that the ancestors have accepted the sacrifices. But if it does not rain after three days another sacrifice will have to be performed by the elders to offer appeasement to Ibegwu to allow blessings to come upon them in form of rain.

Causes of Farmers-Pastoralists Conflict in Omala LGA

The most common causes of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Omala LGAs of Kogi State were the destruction of crops by cattle, killing of local farmers, burning of houses, and raping of women and settler-indigenship phenomenon. This is linked to poor attention given to cattle's which eventually encroached into cultivated farmlands destroying crops or most times consume produce stored which is mostly witnessed during the planting season and the post-harvest period. In some localities, the herdsmen graze near to fields set aside for farming thus raising the likelihood of cattle entering cultivated fields, furthermore, growing farming of bushes by migrant farmers has also contributed to the destruction of crops by cattle, (Source: Group Interview respondents, 2021). These findings agree with De Haan (2002) who argued that crops, irrigation equipment, and infrastructure damage by herdsmen were direct

causes of conflicts according to farmers, and the herdsmen claimed blockage of cattle routes, water points by farmers were direct reasons for the conflict. This means that farmers-pastoralist conflicts are the product of environmental changes. Which further tells us that, even if some portion of lands are allocated to herdsmen from the localities that farmers claimed ownership of and were not adequately compensated crisis is bound to continue.

According to the head of the Fulani Alhaji Bature “The causes of the crisis in this area were caused by the damage of crops by the Mbororo migrant pastoralist from neighboring countries and not the Fulani (us) living here. We have lived here for over ten years now, we trade here, our families are here, we have areas of settlement given to us, our chief settles misunderstanding with the traditional ruler of this locality”. We know all the routes here, so we guide our cows and sheep to avoid entering people’s farms. The only time we had some misunderstanding was when we came here new and our cows mistakenly destroy some crops and the indigenes killed some of our cows and we still paid some compensations (Source: Interview respondents, 2021). But the farmers also block our routes during farming seasons making it impossible for us to move and eventually leads to destroying of crops by the cattle’s which also leads to conflict.

However, according to B.U., Musa Onu Ife paramount ruler of Abejukolo, and Bagana district Head: The causes of the crisis in Bagana chiefdom, were as a result of settler-indigeneship phenomenon, leadership tussle, conflict of land ownership between indigenes (ebira-Mozum/Igala’s) and settlers (Tivs, Kakanda, Fullani’s Herdsmen) (Interview with the male informant, 2021).

Cultural reasons such as Cultural differences between pastoralist herdsmen and indigenous farmers have escalated the conflict between the ethnic group is one of the reasons for the conflict between Fulani-herdsmen and farmers with the majority of the total interview respondents attesting to this. Also, the respondents claimed that Lack of respect for the customs and traditions of the host groups by the pastoralist which were considered offensive, provocative, and insulting for the host group and attempt to take away land which is culturally valued and seen as an ancestral gift by the indigenous people and any attempt to be taken away

from them aggravates violence. Furthermore, political reasons with 9% of the causes of conflict persistence are linked to the politicking of initiation of drastic measures in solving this crisis once and for all as vested interest by those in the helm of affairs; president, governors, senators, house of rep members, local government chairmen, who actually own these cattle reared by the local Fulani come to play as they use their power to influence policies for their benefit to favor their herders (interview respondents, 2021). Drastic measures to curb the free movement of pastoralist migrants will definitely affect local Fulani’s movement in the country.

For example, many scholars like Awogbade, Ogunbible, Kolawole, Ayeni, and Gefu (1994) in their report submitted to the federal agricultural coordinating unit went as far as providing practical and workable feasible solutions to the farmers-pastoralist crisis and yet those in the helms of affairs never implement their recommendations. That is why we conclude that the persistence of the farmers-pastoralist conflict has a link not only on economic and cultural reasons but also the bourgeoisie play fundamental role in the conflict.

According to affected victims: Usman Okolo (farmer) Sekinatu peter (farmer) Philip Ogala (sedentary herder), Yusuf Alhaji (sedentary herder) Samuel Amedu (farmer), Muhammed Abimaje (farmer), Yahaya Atumaiyi (farmer), Joshua Dekina (farmer), Friday Amedu (Nomadic), Mathew Odaudu (farmer), Mikairu Salifu (business), Friday Musa (civil servant), Isaac Wada (civil servant), Gabriel Musa (student), Joseph Adah (student), Ida Tokula (farmer) Adebayo Wada (business), Arome Agoli (trader), Andrew Omakoji (Vigilante), Adejoh Drisu (farmer), Yusuf Muhammed (Fulani), Ademu Makolo (farmer), Yahaya Okolo (farmer): The herdsmen are not the real owners of the cattle, rather the politicians in the helms of affairs who influence policy formulation and implementation that will curtail the activities of herdsmen in the country).

According to the interview with the herdsmen: “The conflict in Omala seems to persist because of the good environment, the land is fruitful and there are water points that seem to be attracting other herdsmen from other parts of the country coupled with Boko-Haram insurgency in the far North which caused other herdsmen to come here and

cause trouble, not we living here” (Fulani herdsmen, Interview, 2021).

According to Focus group discussion: Aside from political, economic, cultural, and social reasons that gave birth to persistent conflict, the issue of raping their women, lack of sufficient land to share with pastoralists, eCOWAS treaty that allows free migrants, poor security agencies at the border, corrupt nature of both group leaders (Myetti Allah and traditional rulers). According to affected victims (farmers), the Fulani leaders have not put in enough effort to resolve the incessant attacks because if they have, why is the attack on the increase on daily basis? And have refused to come for dialogue when called for negotiation by the traditional leaders. The Mbororo migrants from neighboring countries like Chad, Mali, Senegal who don't move with family, but are very violent and speak unfamiliar languages who will destroy your crops, and when you complain they bring out AK 47, 49, cutlass, and other sophisticated weapons and start killing innocent farmers unlike the old breed that were peaceful and god loving people with families, and in return, the local farmers avenge by killing their cattle and thus degenerate into conflict (Focus Group Discussion, 2021).

President Muhammadu Buhari upholds the findings of this study on April 30, 2018, in White House, Washington D.C when in response to Trump concern: “We are deeply concerned by the religious violence in Nigeria, including the burning of churches and killing of Christians. We encourage Nigeria and the federal, local, and state governments to do everything to immediately secure the communities and protect innocent civilians, including Muslims and Christians” (Muhammed Buhari in Johnbosco & Charles, 2018).

Buhari said: “The problem of cattle herders is a very long historical problem. What is of concern is that before now the Nigerian herders are known to carry sticks and machetes and cut follies for their animals but these ones are carrying AK 47. So, I don't think we should underrate Libya, 43 years of Gaddafi people were being recruited from the Sahel and people were being killed”. With the demise, they moved from their country and their region with their training and their weapons and that is what aggravated the situation, Johnbosco & Charles, 2018.

The socio-economic effects of farmers-herdsmen conflicts in the study area

Communal clashes between pastoralist herders and host communities generally emerge when cattle are not legitimately controlled and therefore nibble on developed plants like cassava, maize, and so forth in farms of host communities. Host community group now and again un-bottled their anger by restricting grazing of cattle via coercive actions through the community vigilantes who most times kill or capture stray cows and accuse defaulters. At some point when the host groups demand their leave, the pastoralist claims that land is of God and as a creation of God they have the right to enjoy their blessings of Allah. Pastoralist (immigrant Fulani) herders often attack rivals groups when they are most defenseless, for example, at night or during worship, ceaselessly killing of individuals with refined weapons, plundering properties, and consuming houses (Durojaiye, 2014). Fulani Herders are “accepted to have murdered no less than 1,229 individuals in Nigeria in 2014, as indicated by the most recent Worldwide Fear mongering File (GTI)” (Ludovica, 2014). A great part of the extremely vicious and overwhelming loss communal clashes activated by Fulani Herders happen in the North Savannah region of Nigeria, Kogi and Benue State specifically.

According to the focus group discussion: On the 19th of March, 2018, and March 2020 Agbenema-Ife in Kogi State was attacked from 12 am - 2 am by over 100 heavily armed pastoralists who killed over 4 villagers and left many injured, burnt down houses, Markets, stored harvested crops, destroyed infrastructural and social amenities like schools, burning of electricity pools which leave the people in darkness and health care centers, and our traditional leader Musa edibo along with his wife were murdered. (Chief Daniel, Community Leader 2021 in group discussion).

Also, between May 6th 2011, Agojeju-Ikpoba chiefdom experienced her first attack around 7:30pm-11:30pm which left 20 casualties, and 20 burnt down houses raping of women, and destruction of infrastructural facilities. Agojeju-Ikpoba chiefdom experienced her second attack on 1st August 2015 from 10am-3:30pm of which four people died, the third attack took place on November 9th 2015 from 6pm to 12pm leaving 17

people dead, on 18th of April 2018 Iyade Chiefdom was attacked destroying of agro product such as rice, maize, pidgin pea, Ginea corn, Okoro economic trees: plantation, orange, cashew, palm tree among others burnt down, the only senior nursery school teacher primary by name Emmanuel was killed and our houses burnt down of which has a great effect on our development, and economic activities. Our children cannot go to school anymore because of fear of being attacked and it affects our development, corps members no longer come to our communities to impact our children, people from the southeast and west don't come here to trade any longer and it affects our business because we can't sell what we produce. We live in perpetual fear and distrust in our land, our young men and women are running away from our land, and it's affecting our development in all aspects (Group discussion 2021).

These findings are in consonance with Bakam & Owuamanam (2016), who argued that Fulani herdsmen conflict in Agatu, Guma, Logo, and Tarkaa local government area of Benue state of which 11 villagers were killed and two villages bunt down, and attacks refer to vengeance mission of the herdsmen on Godogodo chiefdom in Jema'a local government area in Southern part of Kaduna state has serious implication on rural development and in agreement with Bakam and Owuamanam, findings of a first-class traditional ruler, Sir Lazarus Agai, his driver and policemen were killed on the way from his farm on 17th of October, 2016 in Plateau state, This shows the implication of Fulani's herdsmen and farmers on human security has it has led to the loss of many lives.

On account of Kogi there have been very decimating clashes that have claimed thousands of lives properties valued at millions due to farmers-herders conflict, for example, Agbenema, Iyade, Bagana, Agojeju-Ikpoba in Omala LGA of Kogi east Senatorial district and Agatu, Guma, Gwer West, Makurdi, Kwande, Katsina-Alaand Loggo in Benue State. The common clashes arranged by Fulani herdsmen in Kogi and Benue State witnessed over 400 casualties in 2014-2015 respectively (Vanguard news online). These casualties include women and children and over 100 groups forced out of their homes into Internal Displaced People (IDPs) campground in Makurdi. According to Akeviand Ugbechie before now, more than 200 people have been slaughtered by farmers-herders

conflict Shengev people group in Gwer West Neighborhood LGA with more sophisticated weapons.

Between February to April 2016, over 8 groups in Agatu LGA were ransacked and over 600 people died in what the former Senate President David Mark proposed as "genocide against his people" by Herders. These high losses led the Human Rights Watch in December to argue that the conflicts between the two groups had cost over 3,000 lives since 2010. This development significantly affects development in all spheres be it political, economic, social, and human capital.

According to Goulet there are three core values that constitute development and represents "good life." These core values are sustenance, self-esteem, and freedom. They all relate to fundamental human needs found in all human societies. To him "life-sustenance; refers to the capacity of meeting the basic necessity of life such as food, shelter, health, and protection, and when variables are not found it means absolute development is taken or has taken place. On the other hand, measures like increase in per capita income, employment opportunities, and poverty reduction are vital ingredients for measuring development but not sufficient enough. "Self-esteem: connotes some level of actualization of one's self which is regarded as societal recognition or honor or socially constructed identity which differs from locality to locality. Finally "Freedom from servitude and to be able to choose" means liberty to economic deprivation, marginalization, and exclusion or alienation.

From the above three core values, we can say for sure that development implies both material or physical reality and the condition of the mind of the society via combined social, economic, and institutional processes to protect the means of a better life. Whatever the definite component of this better life, development in all societies must possess these three cardinal values; to increase the accessibility and broaden the circulation of (a) necessary life, (b) food, shelter, health sustainability, and (c) security to all members of the society.

Moreover, this research addresses the link between development and farmers' herder's conflict as it affects rural development at the local government level in Kogi State. It can be understood that conflicts breed under development

and it impoverishes the society to the extent that the basic existence of food, shelter, clothing, healthcare services, and infrastructural facilities such as roads, water supply, schools, markets, and motor parks, etc are threatened and sometimes destroyed.

The Extent to which Farmers-Herdsmen Conflict Constitute threat to Internal Security

The incessant resource conflicts witnessed in Omala L.G. have resulted in the loss of lives, properties, and environmental degradation as also witnessed in a neighboring state like Benue. The persistent conflict over land resources has caused population displacement, which, as a result, changed the fabric of custom and habitual behavior in the Omala LGA of Kogi State. This led to low agricultural output, which resulted in malnutrition and disease; and by inducing people to leave, the economic decline may erode confidence in the national purpose and also upset the traditional balance of economic and political authority between ethnic groups in the area.

Other factors identified were loss of live stocks, displacement of victims, collapsing of social activities such as buying and selling, leads to underdevelopment, leads to underdevelopment, loss of lives and properties, increases the rate of poverty, and leads to tension among occupants of the host community. The majority of the respondents attested that the farmers-pastoralist conflict poses threat to the internal security of the country.

According to the chiefs and affected victims across the four chiefdoms: before now we see the pastoralist herdsman as our brothers, friends we co-exist with, trade with them, and even intermarry because we conceive them to peaceful people that is why we gave the extended hand of friendship by allowing them to live with us from the very beginning, we accepted them for whom they are and lived with them even to our detriments in abuse of our moral laws and traditions. But recent development we see them as death agents, we prefer to live with poisonous and deadly animals than pastoralist” (Source: Interview respondents, 2021).

Finding from the interview shows that there is a high level of acceptability of Fulani herdsman in host communities as normal people who go around doing their daily businesses like the farmers before the advent of a sudden attack by Fulani herdsman in the LGA.

However, according to the interview conducted with the respondents: “Deployment of security personnel like the police and joint security task force, imposition of curfew, cattle colonies as proposed by the federal government and supported by Alhaji Yahaya”. Bello Adoiza will not remedy the herders-farmers conflict in Omala, Kogi state, and the country at large. Because we can't give out our lands when we don't have enough to farm, our lands are ancestral heritage how can they be taken from us? Besides we and these people have no cultural affinity, values, and customs, we cannot cohabit with them.

We need to restructure the Nigeria state back to the first republic where we have regional government and the Fulani herdsman should go back to their homeland because every human formation has a genesis. The restructuring will help in managing our differences because if you are moving to the east who have their own way of administration you have to abide by their rules and if not you will be punished by their laws so applies to other states of the federation because the Nigeria constitution itself is not a true reflection of our identity, ethnic races, and culture which favor one race over another (Hausa-Fulani) (Interview with group respondents, 2021).

In agreement with the above, Adeboye and Olaniyi (2014) indicated that the traditional method of conflict resolution is still preferable in the study area; both farmers and pastoralists prefer alternative dispute resolution. The craving to manage associations may be those central points that enlightened farmers and pastoralists offer inclination for casual power on taking debate should authority in police/courts from collapse relationship might worsens those association between the disputants.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that farmers-pastoralists conflicts in Omala Local Government Area centered on the cattle owners and crop farmers. The causes are seen in terms of competition on land and cattle trespass, land encroachment, Migration of Mbororo migrants among others. The periodical struggle for scarce resources has degenerated into violent conflicts in Omala local government Area between farmers-pastoralists. Since most of the cattle herders do not own or possess the land rights, they therefore

depend absolutely on open land to feed their cattle. Government policies on agriculture, especially the all-year fadama farming, are threats to cattle herders' access to pasture. Acquisition of, additional farms has encroached traditional cattle routes thus drastically reducing the grazing for herders livestock and access to pasture areas and water points. Furthermore, the use of police and courts to resolve conflicts between cattle herders and crop farmers by the government has been ineffective as this approach had further contributed to the occurrence of the clashes.

All these have instigated insecurity that has encouraged the conflicting parties to take responsibility for their own security and to defend themselves, which is a threat to the sustainability of the federation. Therefore, it is in the interest of the State to end the land encroachment and take concrete steps to address the genuine needs of cattle herders for the availability of grazing land, resolve the re-occurring conflicts in the agricultural sector, which currently provides employment to the large population of the country. efforts made by the stakeholders to prevent the conflict have been minimal or ineffective, which may have lead to a perception by some communities that they should take responsibility for their own security. These have increased the conflict in the study area. However, the government involvement of all the stakeholders has reduced the conflict, but the conflict is still ongoing.

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