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Dynamism in the Farmers-Herders Clashes in Nigeria: An assessment of the Environmental Causes

Mbah Iyua,

Department of Politic and Governance, Kwara State University, Malete,

Abioye Wasiu Olatunji

Department of Politic and Governance, Kwara State University, Malete

&

Dr. Kazeem Aderemi Asiyanbi

Department of Politic and Governance, Kwara State University, Malete

Abstract

The recurrent clashes between the settled farmers and the nomadic herdsmen in the country purportedly the claims of access to land and other resources portray a serious danger to the existing peace and security as well as country's cohesion. The ransacking of farm lands by the herdsmen and rustling of cattle by the village farmers are identify as the major causes alongside climate change and the increase population in recent time. This paper therefore, examined the current clashes between the farmers and the herdsmen in Nigeria with the view of bringing the major factors pushing for the clash. To this extent therefore, the paper adopted two (frustration aggression and conflict) theories as tools of analysis. While frustration aggression argued that frustration push people to result to conflict. On the other hand, conflict theory, argued that in every society there are two opposing group who are always in conflicts. The paper relied heavily on the use of secondary data. It recommended that there should be a synergy and collaborative measures between the federal and state governments in reviewing the grazing reserves, government should embrace the use of ICT in tracking the movement of the herdsmen, the issue of small arms should be put under control and finally, the government should support the community architectures for peace and security.

Key concepts: Conflict, Farmer, Herdsmen Environment and Change

1.0 Introduction

The relationship between herdsmen-farmer in the recent time has been a horrible one. The co-existence of both parties has not been smooth as it is often characterized by co-operation and conflicts (Nwozor, et al, 2021, Richard, 2020). These unsmooth co-existences in the past was measured cordial however, in the recent time, conflict has taken the memories of the past and assumed a dangerous dimension. In Nigeria, one of the most populated country in African, the major violent among herdsmen-farmers involves Fulani herdsmen and settled farming community (Stanly et al, 2017). Violent conflicts between herdsmen from

northern Nigeria and farmers in the central and southern zones have escalated in recent years and are spreading southward, threatening the country's security, stability and peace. With an estimated death toll of approximately 4,500 people between 2016 and 2019, these clashes are becoming as potentially dangerous as the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East (Onah, & Olajide, 2020). Yet to date, response to the crisis at both the federal and state levels have been poor (International Crises Group, 2017). Nigeria has experienced a considerable increase in natural resource conflicts since the early 1990s. The increasing conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have recently become a cause for worry, especially in wetland areas of the middle belt, North Central Nigeria (Leme, 2017). In a particular attack by fulani herdsmen in 2016 on Nimbo residents in Uzo- Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, left about 40 persons dead (Abiodun, 2016).

These conflicts between herdsmen and farmers have exacted a heavy humanitarian toll with thousands killed and tens of thousands displaced. In Benue, one of the hardest-hit states, former Governor, Samuel Ortom claimed more than 1,878 people were killed between 2014 and 2016. Tens of thousands also have been displaced (Ibanga, 2016). From January 2015 to February 2018, at least 62,000 people were displaced in Kaduna, Benue and Plateau states; in the absence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, most seek shelter in other poor, rural communities, straining their already scarce resources. For women and girls, the impact is frequently magnified. The relatives of men killed in the violence often evict widows from their farmland. Moreover, post-conflict economic and social disenfranchisement renders women and girls even more vulnerable to sexual and economic predation (International Crises Group, 2017).

Nigeria is under a severe internal security threat as the conflict between herdsmen and farmers has political, economic and environmental dynamics. Each of these dynamics have critically affected the stability of the nation and can be traced to many factors in which the Fulani-herdsmen appears to be major warlord. Most worrisome in the present situation is the pillaging, raping, killing and kidnapping by the unnoticed Fulani herdsmen. Disheartening stories of this dangerous phenomena live with us and are found in the national dailies on daily basis of how herdsmen strategically attack several communities with the use of sophisticated weapons (Ajibefun, 2017). Arguably, conflict between Fulani herdsmen and settled indigenous farmers have intensified in recent years, with dwindling natural resources and land availability greatly contributing to the ongoing, escalating conflict in the country (Okello *et al.*, 2014.).

2.0 Literature Review on Farmers-Herders Clash in Nigeria

In West Africa, farmer-herder conflicts are not only a common phenomenon over the years but also a common characteristic of their economic livelihood (Moritz, 2012; Tonah, 2006; Turner, Ayantunde, Patterson, & Patterson III, 2011). Ajibefun, (2018)) have argued that in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, farmer-herder conflicts have escalated into widespread violence leading to property destruction, loss of human lives and displacement of people. At the center of farmer-herder conflicts is the controversial issue on the access to and use of land and water resources. The land and water resources are

diminishing or increasing in scarcity due to several factors, Causing intense competition and violent conflicts over their usage (Moritz, 2010; 2012; Oladele & Oladele, 2011).

Regardless of the disagreement between the herders and farmers over the scarce resources of land, the incidents of conflicts that lead to fatalities between the two groups were not as alarming as it is in the present day. According to available statistical data spanning from 2010 to 2021, the conflict between herdsman and farmers has been notably prevalent in distinct geographical regions, particularly within the middle belt of Nigeria, encompassing Plateau, Nassarawa, and Benue states. Furthermore, isolated instances of such conflict have been documented in additional states such as Taraba, Enugu, Ekiti, Oyo, and Zamfara. Both herders and farmer's livelihoods depends on their access to the same resources, any factor that increases competition over the use of these resources also increases the possibility of conflicts between the two groups (Moritz, 2012). An important factor influencing resource availability for agricultural and pastoral production is climate change. Though, the major problem could be access to resources and the climate change, however, one would look at it in another dimension. This is in view of the fact that the attacks of herdsman on the farmer depict that of the Boko Haram which left many no alternative but to consider their activities as terrorist activities. Moritz (2012) and Abbass, (2014) asserted that although climate change is occurring everywhere, the Sahel region of Africa has been particularly volatile over the past decades. Climate change has brought about shrinking of environmental space and an increase in natural resource scarcity. This in turn results in increased competition and pressure on available resources and conflicts among the user groups. Climate change also causes conflicts as pastoralists migrate from areas characterized by drought and lack of feed into new areas in search of water and feed for their livestock. In sub-Saharan Africa, the southward migration of pastoral herds (Fulani herdsman) into the humid and sub-humid zones is among the factors cited for the widespread and increasing farmer-herder conflicts (see Fabusoro & Oyegbami, 2009; Moritz, 2010; Tonah, 2006).

Population growth and expansion of agricultural production are also cited as driving forces of resource scarcity and violent conflicts. Rapid population growth increases competition over available resources (Adebayo, 1997; Mwiturubani & van Wyk, 2010). Nigeria's population according to the last population census shows that Nigeria have a population of about 160 million but these number have increased considerably to over 200 million in the space of 13 years. Muhammed, et al (2015) argued that the incessant clashes between farmers and herdsman were partly caused by increase in population which led to utilization of grazing pathways for agricultural activities and residential purposes. This made land very scarce for herdsman and most often they graze on farmers' crop which leads to clashes. Population growth has also caused a southward migration of many pastoralists from the Sudan-Sahelian zone as a means of avoiding conflicts but in the end create the potentials for conflicts with farmers in the new areas (Moritz, 2012). Williams, Hiernaux and Fernández-Rivera (1999) indicate population growth has raised the demand for food leading to the expansion of farming into previously uncultivated areas used for livestock grazing. Commercial crop production results in encroachment on most of the traditional cattle routes, leaving pastoralists with insufficient passage for livestock to reach drinking points, causing

conflicts (West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP), 2010). Expansion in agricultural production into formerly grazing areas and cattle routes increases the proximity of grazing livestock to cropped fields (Turner et al., 2011), resulting in livestock-induced crop damages. Livestock-induced crop damage, either on the field or in storage on farms, has been found to be the most important trigger of farmer-herder conflicts in most parts of West Africa (Abubakari & Longi, 2014; Ofem & Inyang, 2014; Ofuoku & Isife, 2009; Tonah, 2002).

The farmers-herders conflict has increased over the years (Olayoku 2014) and according to the Global Terrorism Index of 2015, the death toll of 63 associated to Fulani herdsmen killings skyrocketed to 1,229 by the end of 2014. The killings continue without any sign of slowing down with more than 350 death recorded in February and March 2016 (Mikailu, 2016), 15 casualties in May 2016 (Stein, 2016), and 80 fatalities in July 2016 (Akinwotu, 2016). Most villages in Benue state have experience attacks from herders, many villages like Logo, Katsina-Ala, Gwer West, Gunna, Makurdi, and Agatu. In the Shangeev community, 200 people were killed by the Fulani herdsmen (Omoleye and Segun, 2018). Also, on the 25th of April 2016, nine villages in Uzo-Uwani local government area of Enugu state in the Southeast of Nigeria were attacked by Fulani herdsmen, and they left a carnage of destruction of over 11 lives and millions of naira worth of properties destroyed (Vanguard, 2016).

3.0 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts two theories as a tools of analysis. To this end, frustration-aggression and conflict theories are used in this study. The adoption of these theories is predicated on the fact they serve as mirror when talking about the farmers-herders clashes on Nigeria. The theories are suitable, relevant and best explain the phenomenon leading to the dynamics of conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria.

3.1 Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration aggression theory was propounded by Dollard and Miller in 1939 however, the theory was later advanced by Berkowitz in 1969. The theory assumed that aggression is an outcome or result of blockage or frustrating a person's efforts towards a certain goal by another person (Dollard, 1939; as cited in Myers, 2007). The theory further postulated that frustration caused by interference in goal-directed activity produces a 'readiness' for aggression which if 'triggered' can result in aggressive response. To this extent, Rationis (2014) asserted that the trigger could be an insignificant element of behavior, such as a casual joke, gesture or mild criticism which would normally be overlooked, but to the frustrated individual who is already waiting for an opportunity to show his frustration it may provoke aggressive response or reprisal. The frustration-aggression theory, proposed by Dollard et al. (1939), suggests that frustration, stemming from the obstruction of an individual's goals or desires, can lead to aggressive behavior. In the context of farmers-herders clashes in Nigeria, this theory can be applied to understand the underlying dynamics contributing to the violence.

3.2 Conflict Theory

The lead proponent of this theory is Karl Marx (1818-1883). He was a victim of marginalization due to his revolutionary ideas and the misery of his alienation was seen through his two radical most famous works: *The Capital* and *Communist Manifesto* (Charles, 2005). Marx's conflict ideology is "an analysis of inequality under capitalism by the have and the have not and how to change it through confrontation". There is an inherent conflict of interests between two opposing classes under capitalism (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014:43). The basic assumption of the theory is that two opposing groups in the society always struggle for limited or scarce resources. Each group struggles to attain or acquire more resources and because they are scarce, struggle ensues between them. Every group tries to protect its own interest, thus blocking the progress of another in accessing that (Idowu, 2017). The land resources (such as farm lands, crops, grass/pasture, fresh water etc.) are scarce in Nigeria and needed by both farmers and herdsmen for sustenance of their various sources of livelihood. Conflict, however, would not only occur between herders and farmers as both strive with another in pursuit of these resources; but as either of the groups tries to intrude or exploit another's already secured and long acquired resources.

4.0 Factors Responsible for Farmers-Herders Clash in Nigeria

It is on record that the conflicts between cattle herders and farmers have been with Nigeria since the beginning of agriculture and the increased or the decreased in intensity and frequency depending on economic, environmental and other factors. For example, increases in the herd sizes, due to improved conditions of the cattle, compelled the cattle herders to seek for more pastures beyond their limited range. Growing up on the Plateau and other central states, in the 80s up to late 90s, the yearly tradition was to see Herdsmen arrive just before the rains, setting up their huts. They would daily graze their cattle on non-farming areas down the plains. As the rains dried up the Fulanis would demolish those dwellings and move on. There absolutely was no crisis, principally for two reasons: the Fulani dwelled on the rocks, while their cattle grazed on weedy spaces between the mountains, far from the plains being used as farmlands (Rommy 2018).

4.1 Climate change

Many studies have argued that climate change play a significant role in the escalation of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and the farming communities not only in Nigeria but across many countries in Africa (Busby et al, 2014; Jones-Casey and Knox, 2011; Schilling et al., 2010). The result of the climate change is the increase in the competition for resource such as water and arable land which has often led to severe manifestation of hostilities and social friction among farmers and herders (Reuvenry, 2007; Adisa and Adekunle 2010). From the findings, climate change remains one of the major causal factors that led to the increase in hostility between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in Nigeria. Abbas (2009) asserted that Climate change has constituted a great threat by putting great pressures on the land and thus provoking conflicts between herdsmen and farmers. This means that both the farmers and cattle herders have engaged in fierce struggles for access to such valuable lands which, more often than not, result in increased conflicts and violence.

The genesis of conflicts over access, use and management of land resources between nomadic cattle herders and settled indigenous farmers is as diverse as the nature of the conflicts (Abubakar, 2012). Climate change is emerging as a significant factor responsible for the recurrent clashes between herders and farmers in Nigeria. Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperature, precipitation patterns, wind patterns, and other aspects of the Earth's climate system. It is primarily caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrialization, leading to increased greenhouse gas emissions and subsequent global warming.

One of the consequences of climate change is the alteration of natural ecosystems, which directly impacts the availability and distribution of resources. In Nigeria, climate change has led to a decrease in rainfall and the prolonged duration of dry seasons in many regions. This has brought about desertification and the expansion of arid lands, reducing the availability of fertile agricultural lands. Additionally, rising temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns have negatively affected crop yields and reduced grazing lands for herders.

The scarcity of water resources and suitable grazing lands due to climate change has intensified competition between farmers and herders for access to these limited resources. As the land becomes increasingly scarce, both groups are forced to encroach on each other's territories, resulting in clashes and conflicts. The conflict is often aggravated by a lack of clear land tenure systems and disputes over ownership and control of resources.

Climate change also indirectly contributes to the clashes through its impact on socioeconomic factors. The altered climate patterns disrupt traditional farming and herding practices, leading to economic losses for both communities. Reduced agricultural productivity and decreased income from farming and herding exacerbate poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. These socioeconomic challenges further fuel tension between farmers and herders, escalating the likelihood of conflict.

To address the herders-farmers clashes sparked by climate change, a multidimensional approach is required. Firstly, there is a need for effective environmental conservation strategies that combat desertification and promote sustainable land management practices. Reforestation efforts, watershed management, and the implementation of climate-smart agricultural techniques can help restore and protect ecosystems, ensuring the availability of natural resources for both groups.

Further, policy interventions should focus on improving resource access and implementing fair and transparent land tenure systems. Clear demarcation of grazing lands and the establishment of mechanisms for resolving land disputes would reduce conflicts. Additionally, empowering and supporting local communities through capacity building, provision of alternative livelihood options, and conflict resolution mechanisms can promote peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders.

Climate change plays a significant role in the recurring conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria. Its impact on resource availability, coupled with socioeconomic challenges, exacerbates competition and tension between the two groups. Sustainable land management, fair resource allocation, and community empowerment are essential components of addressing this issue and fostering peaceful cohabitation amidst evolving climatic conditions.

4.2 Cattle Rustling

Apart from the competition for natural resources (land for grazing and farming), the interaction with the non-indigenes who resided within the communities affected in Benue State revealed that cattle rustling is one of the major reason why there is increase in the hostility between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers even though allegation of cattle rustling is refuted by the farmers and the majority of the people (Popoola, Brimah, and Shittu, 2020).

Cattle rustling in Nigeria is a longstanding criminal activity involving the theft and illegal trade of cattle. It has emerged as a significant factor responsible for the ongoing farmers-herders clash in the country. Understanding the role of cattle rustling in this conflict requires analyzing its historical, economic, and sociopolitical roots.

Historically, cattle rustling has been prevalent in Nigeria due to the country's large pastoral culture and the economic significance of livestock. Livestock serves as a major source of livelihood for many rural communities, particularly for herder groups who rely on cattle for sustenance and wealth accumulation. The long-standing tradition of cattle rearing has created a complex network of relationships between herders and their livestock, generating a symbolic and cultural importance attached to cattle ownership. Consequently, the loss of cattle due to rustling not only translates into economic implications but also carries grave cultural and social repercussions (Nwakanma, & Boroh, 2019).

Economically, cattle rustling can severely impact both herders and local farming communities. Herders invest significant resources in procuring, breeding, and maintaining their cattle herds, which can serve as their primary means of generating income and social prestige (Muhammad, Hussain, & Ayegb, 2020). The theft of cattle disrupts their livelihoods, leading to financial hardships and even pushing some herders into poverty. On the other hand, farmers often bear the brunt of rustling incidents as stolen cattle can cause severe damage to their crops and land, leading to increased tensions between farmers and herders.

Socio-politically, cattle rustling exacerbates existing conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria. These conflicts are often rooted in competition over scarce resources such as land and water, which are essential for both livestock grazing and crop cultivation. The scarcity of these resources has escalated due to population growth, climate change, and inefficient land management policies. The economic losses from cattle rustling further deepen these resource-based conflicts, as herders may resort to encroaching on farmlands or engaging in retaliatory attacks against suspected rustlers (Kugbega & Aboagye, 2021).

Moreover, the criminal nature of cattle rustling has facilitated the proliferation of armed groups and criminal networks in Nigeria. These groups exploit the porous borders, weak law enforcement, and corruption prevalent in the country to perpetuate cattle rustling activities. The availability of illegal arms in the hands of rustlers has amplified the severity and violence associated with conflicts arising from cattle theft. Cattle rustling in Nigeria is a significant factor responsible for the farmers-herders clash, driven by its historical, economic, and sociopolitical dimensions. To effectively address this issue, comprehensive measures are needed, including improved security, law enforcement, resource management, and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms. Only by tackling the root causes of cattle rustling and its consequences can Nigeria begin to mitigate the farmers-herders conflict and ensure sustainable coexistence between these vital agricultural communities.

4.3 Population growth

Generally speaking, the expansion of population throughout northern Nigeria has led to the expansion of farming activities into areas utilized by cattle herders for the purpose of livestock production. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in Hausa land where the traditional pastoralist grazing area (*hurumai*), stock routes, and water points have been turned into farming areas over the years (Baba, 1987).

Clashes between cattle herders and crop farmers have been a major cause of increasing violence and general insecurity in Nigeria. In view of this fact, citizens are killed and properties destroyed on regular basis and finally, endangered poor populace. The frequency and scale of these communal conflicts have become alarming (Leadership Newspaper, May 17, 2011). In the Nigerian context, Mawoli and Adamu (2020), posits that the predominant catalyst for conflicts between nomadic cattle herders and indigenous farmers revolves around unauthorized encroachments onto farmlands and the consequent devastation of crops by cattle, notably occurring during the planting season and in the immediate aftermath of harvest periods.

Despite the fact that the causes of the clashes between farmers and herders lives and works with us on daily basis, it appears to be no consensus among the Fulanis and the farmers groups. Lending credence to the above, De Haan (2002) opined that the destruction of crops by cattle and other property (irrigation equipment and infrastructure) by the cattle herders are the main direct causes for conflicts cited by the farmers, whereas burning of rangelands and blockage of stock routes and water points by crop encroachment are important direct reasons cited by the cattle herders. He argued further that farmers-herdsmen conflict usually occurred as result of the increasing rate of cattle theft which is often accompanied by violence.

In a more concise manner, Ingawa *et al.* (1999) reported that the fundamental causes of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria includes but not limited to the following:

- i. Changing resource access rights, whereby traditional access rights to communal grazing and water resources are being obstructed by the individual tenure ship of arable farmers. This is

particularly severe on the traditional trek routes, which become favorite cropping sites because of their better soil fertility resulting from the concentration of animal manure from the trekking herds in these areas.

- ii. Inadequacy of grazing resources, as increasing crop cultivation (and increasing commercialization of the crop-residues) and poor management of the existing grazing reserves have resulted in a significant reduction in available livestock feed resources, in particular in the Northern States. Moreover the high value crops introduced by National Fadama Development Programme NFDP (tomatoes and onions) produce almost no crop-residues for livestock feeding.
- iii. Decline in internal discipline and social cohesion, as the adherence to the traditional rules regarding grazing periods, and the authority of the traditional rulers is broken down.

In addition to the above causes, Abubakar (2012) vehemently argued that fundamental cause of farmers-herders clashes in Nigeria is in view of the fact that grazing resources including pasture and water are found in different places at different times of the year, hence the need for constant movement among cattle herders for opportunistic resource use. This brings them into contact with the “landed” settled farmers, and the competition for survival usually result to violence conflicts. Significantly, farmers-herders conflicts is predicated on the fact that both are searching for survival. Tonah (2006) on his part opined that the causes of farmers/herders conflicts include the southward movement of pastoral herds into the humid and sub-humid zones, promoted by the successful control of the menace posed by disease, the widespread and availability of veterinary medicine and the expansion of farming activities into areas that hitherto served as pastureland. As a result, the herdsmen destroy crops of the farmers on their farmland.

5.0 Implications of Farmers-Herders on the Diversification Policy of Buhari Administration

Farmers-herders conflicts are generally considered as a negative phenomenon which usually lead to loss of lives and properties which invariably impacted negatively on the community. This section anchored on the implications of the conflict on the diversification policy of the past administration. The recent past President, Muhammad Buhari introduced a lot of changes in the running of government most especially in the area of agriculture. Among his effort to secure the future of this country, he postulated that relying on oil as the main source of income generation is wrong projection (Oladotun & Emmanuel, 2019). He therefore initiated the policy that the country economy be diversify so the agriculture which is the mainstay of the economy be made functional and attractive for the teeming population. This policy came with a lot of programs starting from anchors borrowing program to assist farmers with free interest loans, N-agro (N-power programme) for the teeming youth between the age blanket of 18 and 35 etc.

With the above programs, young Nigerians have been urged and encourage to take up farming as source of income. The plan and policy sound laudable on paper: large-scale agriculture, or rather agribusiness,

could reverse spiking unemployment and possibly boost exports and foreign exchange earnings. But, as the government continues to fail to deal with a lingering deadly conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria's middle belt the "food basket" of the nation, even the best laid plans are unlikely to deliver on their promise. The conflict between herdsmen and farmers has been in existence since the beginning of the practice of agriculture. This conflict is as a result of scarce resources, i.e., Land. In recent times the conflict has assumed a different form of insecurity with an increase in large numbers of casualties and displaced people across the affected states. If the conflict is allowed to escalate further, the impacts will be on food and animal products because of the grave loss of animals, crops and valuable properties as the country is already ripping in terms of the cost of food in the country (Ikezue and Ezeah 2017).

5. 1 Cattle Colony Verses Ranching

The introduction or better still the mentioning of cattle colonies in Nigeria came as a result of the recent harvest of deaths in rural communities across Benue, Nasarawa, zamfara and Taraba States citing on suspected herdsmen. While a cattle ranch refers to an area of land, including various structures and amenities, given primarily for the practice of raising grazing cattle for meat and or milk. A cattle colony is a magnification of a cattle ranch, whereby many distinct ranches are co-located on a very large land area. According to Ogbah (2018) Colonies and ranches are the same thing in many ways except that a colony is bigger than a ranch; a colony is a biological expression for any species of animals whether by nature or by human design that are found in a large community sharing the same terrain, such as bee colonies in certain areas. He argued further that 20 to 30 ranchers can share the same colony, a ranch is usually owned by an individual or company with few numbers of cows, in a cattle colony you could find 100, 200, 300 cows owned by different individuals

The problem is that the decision of the government has been vehemently resisted by many Nigerians, in particular, the leaders and other ethnic groups in southern Nigeria. Scholars such as Okeke (2014) maintained that the government approach would further exacerbate the conflict between herders and farmers because the government decision to establish grazing reserves will involve the dispossession of farmers and landowners from their land. Regardless of whether the conflict was caused by climate change, southward movement of the herders, the competition over scarce resources, and the deterioration of relationship among farmer-herder among others which according to Moritz (2010) are structural conditions. The problem now is with increasing conflict, the farmer now seeks to protect their farmland, and herdsmen adopt violent mechanisms in safeguarding their cattle during grazing (Genyi, 2014).

6.0 Towards resolving Farmers-Herders Clashes in Nigeria

Though, there is no agreement on the factors influencing farmers-herders clashes in Nigeria however, it's apparent to notes that encroachment and subsequently destruction of farm crops by the herders is the major contributory factor for incessant clashes between farmers and the herdsmen in the country. On the other hand, the encroachment of farmers on the grazing route is the cause of farmers-herders clashes in

Nigeria. This situation therefore require urgent attention as efforts in having a peaceful co-existence of the two group. This section therefore concerns itself with ways in resolving the crisis.

- i. There should be a synergy and collaborative measures between the federal and state governments in reviewing the grazing reserves so the both the farmers and herders would know the demarcation and boundary of their operation. By so doing, both parties will suspend this encroachment factor and accusing finger syndrome.
- ii. The federal, state, and local governments should act fast in addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country. In order to reduce the proliferation, access to, and use of weapons by un-license persons, the government, in collaboration with stakeholders, should design and implement a community-based program on disarmament that anchored on improving community security. This program should focus on the local manufacturers of small arms with a view to ensuring that while they produce weapons permitted by law, their activities do not undermine the security of the country and its citizens.
- iii. The major actors should leverage on Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). Governments at all levels should partner with the civil society, the private sector, constituency-based groups and other stakeholders, in the use of ICT as a critical devise in tracking and monitoring the movements of cattle. The strategy should be anchored on a real-time response system that enables local actors to engage on issues before or as they unfold.
- iv. Government should support community architectures for peace and security. Traditional rulers should accepted and all necessary supports should be given to them with a view to work as peace and security mechanism in the society. The architecture would be inclusive and give room for participatory platforms for dialogue and conflict management, where community leaders can take responsibility to reach agreements, share land resources, and develop dispute resolution techniques and procedures in conjunction with local authorities.
- v. The federal government should provide adequate funding for the Great Green Wall Initiative: The federal government developed the Great Green Wall Initiative to address desertification and environmental challenges affecting the northern states. However, due to lack of funds their activities have been slow. In addition, the climate and environmental issues are increasingly affecting more areas of Nigeria that are not currently provided for under the GGWA's mandate. In order to make it more effective, the federal government should fully fund the GGWA and partner with the state and local governments, the private sector, and communities to build local to buy-in and implement the initiative. The GGWA should also expand their mandate to include desertification and climate-affected states such as Kaduna, Nasarawa, Benue and Plateau as part of the geographic scope for the implementation of the initiative.

7.0 Conclusion

The increase clashes and conflicts among the existing farmers and herders across the country have serious devastative effect on the diversification policy of the current administration. The root cause of these clashes involves nomadic herdsman venturing southwards seeking grazing land for their cattle

given increased desertification in Nigeria's north. But grazing on farmlands has destroyed livelihoods of farmers, triggering a deadly cycle of confrontations and reprisal attacks. In addition, the continued violence in a major food producing region is a bad omen for the agriculture and food industries with wider implications for the productivity of Nigeria's agriculture sector.

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