

OCCUPATIONAL POLITICS MYTHS AND REALITIES IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF FARMERS-PASTORALISTS CONFLICTS

Yunusa Hassan¹, Ali Alhaji Hassan², Dr. Nazmul Hussain³

E-Mail Id: contactyunusah@gmail.com

¹Research Scholar, ³Assist. Professor, Department of Geography, School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Commerce, NIMS University Rajasthan, (Jaipur), India

²M. A. Student, Department of History, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

Abstract-Nigeria is faced with incessant conflicts largely associated with key common land resource users (farmers and pastoralists). Recently, ceaseless eruption of violent conflicts between farmers-pastoralists is closely associated with common land resource equitable access, especially over farmland trespassing, conversion of grazing reserves and routes. As both farmers and pastoralists have coexisted for a long time, the complexities over the land-use system have dramatically changed. These sorts of conflicts are highly characterized with loss lives, destructions of properties, cattle theft, destructions of farmlands, etc. The present study has attempted to examine some common allegations as well as unveiling the realities regarding these recent occupational conflicts in Nigeria. This is empirical study that is qualitative in nature which depends on both primary and secondary data. However, the primary data collected were collected through focus group discussions whereas the secondary data were generated from both published as well as unpublished governmental, non-governmental, peer reviewed studies, etc. This study revealed that curtailing these conflicts require proper understanding of various common allegations, accusations and realities by both common resource patrons as well as their respective authorities. These misconceptions that needed to be properly understood include; the fear of marginalisation and loss of identity, growing demands for food and shelter, illiteracy, inequitable common resource access, notion of indigenes and settlers, ethno-religious affiliations of these conflicts, cattle rustling, conversion of grazing routes, farmland trespassing, etc. The understanding of these allegations and realities will provide necessary background towards proposing appropriate modalities for curbing these conflicts from key patron perspectives. Lastly, the study suggested the adoption of user inclusive participatory institutional arrangement and provisions by all tiers of Government through heavy fine and sections.

Keywords: Common Land Resource, Conflicts, Farmers, Pastoralists, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the current farmers-pastoralists conflicts are subject of grand concern. This has both economic and political effects not only on the immediate user-groups, but also has confounded impacts to the peace, unity, stability and prosperity of the country as a whole. Nigeria is ethnically and also religiously diverse. Lately, the Middle Belt of the country has experienced recurrent eruptions of violence over the past several decades. Disputes between pastoralists and farmers arises from disagreements over the use of land around farmland, grazing areas, stock routes, and access to water points for both animals and households. A range of interrelated factors underlie these disputes, including increased competition for land (arguably driven by desertification, climate change, and population growth), lack of clarity around the demarcation of pasture and stock routes, and the breakdown of traditional relationships between farmers and pastoralists.

Farmers-pastoralist conflicts have become a major crime in Nigeria recently, with the northern region being the hardest hit. These conflicts undermine both regional as well as national market development and economic growth through demolishes production and resource rent, disrupt social cohesion, destruction of lives and properties, and discourage private investment in these sectors. The livelihood of most Nigerians is closely tied to their respective identities. Therefore, depending on the region, most farmers are local indigenous people, whereas pastoralists are mainly Fulani. Regional access to any basic services and opportunities vary across user-group but most farmer-pastoralist conflicts take on ethnic and religious hues and are exacerbated along identity lines.

With their dominance in the Sahel region of Africa, the Fulani pastoralists are best known for their herding of bunch of cows in Nigeria. Throughout the Nigerian history, the pastoralists arguably contribute significantly to the Nigerian economy. The pastoralists are core breeders of cattle's that provide a major source of proteins consumed by most Nigerians. Being predominantly Fulani, the pastoralists are in control of over 90 percent of the Nigerian livestock population (about one-third of agricultural GDP), which is about 3.2 percent of the Nigerian annual GDP (IRIN, 2009). The Fulani tribe traditionally lives in encampment called "Ruga" consisting of temporary structures made of stalks and closely knit family members. With this scenery, the Northern Nigeria has now become a plural society with the potential for violent conflict. However, the conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and farmers in Northern Nigeria are essentially economic in nature, irrespective of the religious, cultural and political colourations that might be diluted to advance certain objectives.

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However, various studies have attempted to determine several issues regarding these sorts of conflicts, for instances; assessing the primary causes of these violent conflicts (Butler, 2012; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014), cattle rustling (Bashir, 2014; Manu, 2014; Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016), economic implication of violent conflicts (Sulaiman et al., 2011; Kwaja, 2014; McDougal et al., 2015), growing depletion of common resource (Markakis, 1993; Ladan, 2014), Socio-Political implication of these violent conflicts (Mkutu, 2008; Greiner, 2013; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014), security challenges regarding the farmers-pastoralists conflicts (Ofuoku and Isifie, 2009; Higazi, 2013) and the implication of climate change and these violent conflicts (Hendrix and Glaser, 2007; Odoh and Chigozie, 2012; Benjaminsen et al., 2012).

Even with these plentiful contributions of various relative literatures regarding farmers-pastoralists conflicts in Nigeria, there are various misconceptions that need to be efficiently comprehended with possible maximum precision for peaceful coexistence between land resource user-groups. Therefore, the present study aspires to critically analyze some common allegations and relevant crucial realities regarding the modern violent occupational conflicts involving farmers and pastoralist in Nigeria.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study review some common myths and certainties in incessant conflicts between farmers and pastoralist in Nigeria. Based on the empirical nature of this study, a qualitative research design is adopted. However, this study utilizes both primary and secondary data from various sources. The primary data were collected through focus group discussions in which the respondents were partitioned into two major groups; the farmers and pastoralists respectively. The study conducted 12 sets of focus group discussions in various location of Nigeria which were assumed to be the sizzling spots of these conflicts, explicitly; Adamawa, Taraba and Benue State (4 sessions per state). The population of the focus ground are the households and communities representatives from either of pastoral or farming occupation. Subsequently, the study also reviewed data from secondary sources such as Government and Non-Governmental reports, peer reviewed studies and literatures. The secondary data includes various reports, peer reviewed articles from journals, books, and other related literatures on farmers and pastoralists conflict in Nigeria. The results obtained were carefully sorted, arranged, and corded for proper interpretation with the aid of content analysis. The existing approach is different from the “typical accounting-cost approach” that either scrutinizes the cost of conflict or the remuneration of peace.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Recent conflicts associated with farmers and pastoralists can attract violent attacks, depress income, lead to destruction of lives and properties not only in Nigeria but in African continent as a whole (Greiner 2013). Most of these conflicts have some significant economics well as socio-political motives. These conflicts mainly occur in marginal areas with stiff competition for farming as well as grazing. The intensity of these conflicts differs from state to state depending on the ecological location as well as the socio-cultural composition of the communities involved.

Current climatic changes, decreasing annual rainfall and increasing incidence of droughts in Northern Nigerian have degenerate the trends of farmers-pastoralists relationships and also have been accelerating the intensity of pastoralists exodus from the Northern region to the southern region of the country (Odoh and Chigozie. 2012; McDougal *et al.*, 2015). The movement of the pastoralists and their bunch cows in search of virgin pasture land have resulted to widespread conflicts with severe consequences of destructions of lives and properties with adverse implications for both economy and political stability of the nation.

The growing level of literature on the phenomenon indicates a growing problem across Africa, with devastating consequences outside of its locality. Lately, both cattle rustling and raiding was relatively seasonal and localised with various assorted rifles and weapons (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). Some literatures argued that foundation of cattle rustling was based on the notion of either scarcity of pastureland, access to water and incessant struggles of two or more occupations over access to rapidly depleting common resource (Hendrix and Glaser, 2007; Sulaiman, 2011; Olaniyan and Okeke-Uzodike, 2015).

3.1 Notion of Occupational Conflicts

The present study defined occupational conflict as a state of affairs whereby two distinct occupations compete on common resource advantage. In contemporary societies, there are various occupations that depend on a single common resource, but with the growing demands, these occupations were faced with fear of common resource scarcity. As the common resource condition shrink or weaken more quickly, the fear of exhaustions intensified. These increasing competitions among different occupational user-groups consequently crafted the concept of artificial scarcity of the respective common resource.

In a case were the livelihood of two or more user-groups profoundly depends on this common resource, the competition while accessing the common resource consequentially becomes a do or die affair among different occupational user-groups. All existing occupational user-group fear for losing access to their vital livelihood sources (common resource), thereby, any simple misunderstanding can easily be amplified and become violent that will possible result to lose of lives and properties. Both farming and pastoralism are diverse occupations that depend on a single common resource for their livelihood. Most indigenous farmers and pastoralists in

Nigeria depend on their respective occupation solemnly for their livelihood. For both patrons, their access to the common land resource is nonnegotiable at all cost. Therefore, the common resource creates hotspot of violent conflicts between breathing patrons.

3.2 Inception of Farmers and Pastoralists Conflicts in Nigeria

The modern crisis between farmers and pastoralist in Nigeria is as long as the country history (Areola, 1987; Blench, 2003). This sort of conflicts has existed since the inception of crop production and rearing of animals. Both the farmer and the pastoralist start engaging their children into their respective occupation as early as teenagers (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2011). With the contemporary increasing demand for food and shelter for the growing booming population, both famers and pastoralists increased their respective activities' intensity and frequency for better economic return depending on their relative geographic location. The incessant activities of both farmers and pastoralists degrade the land quality and subsequently reduces it productivity. Notably, the pastorals increasing cattle size has compelled the pastoralists to seek for more grazing lands even beyond their limited range. Climate change has constituted a great threat by putting great pressures on the land and thus provoking conflicts between them (Butler, 2012).

However, the improvements in human health and population have enhanced a much greater pressure on land. Since 1980s, there has been significant expansion in cultivation of crops by both rain-fed and irrigation or "fadama" (reverine and valley-bottom) (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2011). This means that both the farmers and pastoralists have engaged in fierce struggles in gaining greater access to common land. The most important features of the current disharmony between pastoralist and farmers strongly reflect the claims of both parties for a quest to control largest segment of the common land resource (Blench, 2003).

Though, personal relationships between pastoralists and farmers are based on both social and economic aspects. But more recently, this study discovered that these personal relationships have been mostly mere confrontations and hot disagreement about trespassing which in most cases were more accidental than deliberate. The sustained pressure on the common land resources by both parties result to land failure to meets the growing demand. The greater the degree of pressure on the common land resource, the greater the recurrent disagreement and conflicts. The degree of harmony and conflict between Fulani and farmers provokes a certain degree of perceptions, particularly in the patterns of the conflicts and corporation, leading to the predictable breaking of law and order as reported by various studies (Blench and Dendo, 2003; Butler, 2012; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014).

3.3 Socio-Cultural Nature of Farmers and Pastoralists in Nigeria

The socio-economic composition of the farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria is heterogeneous. It is common in recent years that both farmers and pastoralist were location and ethnically inclined in Nigeria. Moreover, almost all the farmers of the country are Nigerian unlike the pastorals where some portion of them are known foreigners from various African country, such as Senegal, Chad Republic, Kenya, Niger, etc (Butler, 2012).

Firstly, farmers are mostly endogenous populous that lived close to their farmland. Most farmers in Nigeria inherited there farmlands from their ancestors and grate grandparents. The popular perception of inheritance give the farmers believe that their farm lands are their identity and thereby criticized any policy that may result to take over of such land by others. However, the religion of most Nigerian farmers is not clearly defined due to heterogeneity of the profession. Almost all tribe, ethnic group or religion affiliation can be a farmer. Farming is mainly for the indigenous as well as the people residing in such location. This study also discovered most of the farmlands belong to the farmer. However, pastoralists are popularly known as a herdsman or a header. The pastoralists are mainly by ethnicity "Fulani or Fulbe". Pastoralists normally wander around with their animals to greener pasture. The Fulani tribe are found in various countries especially in West Africa, they move with their cattle across various international boundaries looking for greener pasture. The greater portion of the Fulani population known to be pastoralists in Nigeria were mainly Muslims by religion, though there are some modest population of other religion such as Christians, traditionalists, pagans, etc.

This study also discovered that pastoralists are not the sole owners of the bouquet of cattle they herd. The owners were in big town and cities across the country. Since pastoralist cannot live without herding, people tend to buy lots cattle and ushered them to pastoralists for herd for a stipulated pay. There is no single evidence that has portrayed the beginning of Fulani pastoralism in Nigeria, but it's clear that pastoralism is as old as the faming in the country. However, the little known is that most of the Fulani Pastoralist started their earlier settlements on the plain of current Bauchi state and subsequently transcended to the grassland of Plateau state (Blench, 2010).

3.4 Resources Deficits and Violent Conflicts

Nigerian farmers in most cases are the local indigenous population which their farmland productivity, safety, security and development are paramount. Farmers' claim for greater access to common land resource and the likes bring the controversial issue of increasing agitation for control, trespassing and encroachment of rights of others (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2011). However, the survival and struggles between or amongst communities are largely on economical motive than equity. Being the indigenous populous of a region, this study discovered that farmers fears any decline in land ownership and access will result to their lost of identity, source of livelihood, and also

result to higher migration to other areas to seek for jobs and other sources of livelihood. The complexity of common land resource is the centre for unstable claims and counter claims on pasture.

On the other hand, it is the culture of pastoralists is to roam incessantly with their bouquet of cattle exploring new terrains for greener pasture, leaving the harsh and treacherous environments for better (Greiner, 2013; Kwaja, 2014; Olaniyan and Okeke-Uzodike, 2015). Based on the primary data generated, this study alleged that it's only on few cases they capitulate to nature with primary objective of securing the security of their animals. The study also uncovered that the livelihood of pastorals depends on the condition of their herds and available grazing land which symbiotically relies on the availability of greener pasture, watering holes, health and safety. Land resource is at the centre of both the pastoralists and farmers welfare which can be aggressively access and converted flexibly depending on the need and utilization pattern, climatic conditions as well as land cover use pattern (Fukui and Turton, 1979; Odoh and Chigozie, 2012; Benjaminsen et al., 2012). Common land resource is not a fixed asset, can easily be influence with specific utilization and accessibility pattern (Sulaiman et al., 2011). This study found that most of the local populous exercise no restraints in individual or collective effort in protection, security and safety of their respective common land resources. When there is artificial fear for common land resource in a region, both security and safety become rare. Security and safety is very expensive and is for only those that can afford them, therefore, warranting them is priority by government as well as the local populous by all means necessary irrespective of the risks involved.

Basically, this study believed that efforts of government at all level are subject of acknowledgement since they were not mere lips services, since huge fund and various security arrangements are noticed all over. The current study ascertained that the active scenery of farmers-pastoralists conflicts creates assorted fear, unease and suspiciousness that can consequently affects the security and safety of both land patrons. This study also agreed that both patrons have come to term that government effort alone cannot assure mutual coexistence, guarantee adequate respective security and harmonious sharing of the common land resource.

3.5 Mechanisms of Farmers-Pastoralist Conflicts

These violent conflicts have their pawmarks throughout the Nigerian history, but mostly were promoted by various respective mechanisms. Throughout the history, there are increasing overlapping from land use patterns where one land use pattern is extended to another; for instance, conversion of farmlands to grazing reserve, grazing reserve to farmlands, farmlands to cities, schools, industries, etc. This study anticipated the following inexhaustible key mechanisms that promote the farmers-pastoralists conflicts in Nigeria:

- Modern changing land use/land over pattern
- Increasing demands (e.g. growing demands for food, proteins and fiber; fire wood)
- Growing Population
- Occupational expansion
- Expanding urbanization
- Environmental Hazard (drought, flooding, deforestation,)
- Modern climate changes, i.e. decreasing annual rainfall
- Failing soil fertility
- Foreigners/ International herders/herdsmen intrusion
- User-group urge for maximum resource rent

3.6 Hotspots of Farmers-Pastoralists Conflict in Nigeria

The Northern Nigeria has always being the nexus of considerable social, economic, political and cultural struggles and agitations. This study observed the strategic importance of Northern Nigeria in commerce, trade, transportation, population and religious beliefs have being in existence for a quite long period of time. The region known as "Middle-belt" in Northern Nigeria serves as the 'melting pot' of these violent conflicts between the famers and the headers. Religiously, greater portion of the Northern population are Muslims, and also culturally are considered as "Hausas" or transformed into "Hausa". Apart from Muslims, there are other religious beliefs such as Christianity, Traditionalist as well as Pagans. This region is in contact with several ancient empires and kingdoms in African, Mediterranean as well as the entire classical Islamic World. As a geographical region of Nigeria with great potential, the Northern Nigeria is enriched with vast and productive land resource despite much of it is arid and semi-arid, and also less densely populated as compared to their Southern counterpart.

Since the emergent of Northern Nigeria as a protectorate under British colony in 1900, agricultural activities remained the backbone of this region economy (Areola, 1987; Greiner, 2013). However, sustainable agricultural production required stringent strategic balance between the socioeconomic, political as well as ecological system. With pronounced dry season as a result of rainfall seasonality, the Northern Nigeria agricultural activities become less fruitful northward of the country due to rainfall decrease and variability. Furthermore, based on the largely Islamic culture that mingles with varieties of traditions and cultures as reported by Blench and Dendo (2003), the Northern Nigeria has varieties of cultural composition where each group projecting its interests in resources allocation, control, management and claiming superior rights over one another.

The most agricultural productive region of the Northern Nigeria based on rainfall sufficiency and soil fertility specifically is the middle-belt region (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014; Ogbeche, 2016), consequently, this region become a potential conflicts area. The plurality of the society is therefore related with recurring conflicts in this region ethno-religious as well as socioeconomic activities. The implications of the conflicts have brought about high degrees of loss of human, animal and material resources (Blench and Dendo, 2003; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). Plateau, Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Zamfara, Borno and Taraba as the major hotspots of these violent conflicts and struggles, the Northern region of Nigeria witnesses more frequent violent conflicts related occupations, specifically, agro-pastorals activities. There is always competing demands and struggles in accessing this region commons' which consequently is these occupations major source of sustainability (Adebayo and Olaniyi, 2008).

The Northeast part of the country also recorded various cases of conflicts emerged and because of the incessant clashes between the farmers and pastoralists (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2011; Odoh and Chigozie, 2012). Recently, it is highly necessary to examine the root causes as well as some accusations regarding such incidences as it has now become national catastrophe that affects most of the Northern state, and slowly encroaching the southern region of the country. Between 1996 and 2002 alone, Bauchi and Gombe States respectively recorded 28 and 112 reported incidences farmers-pastoralists conflicts which about 101 and 20 lives were loss for these respectively states, in addition to properties, animal losses and crops damages worth millions of naira (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2011).

The concept of occupational conflict and violence in the Northern Nigeria is associated with unimaginable dimension of destruction of lives and properties, human displacement and the burning of entire community settlements and their sources of livelihood. The fear of being the victim and likelihood of being targeted in these violent conflicts compose both patron to adopt the notion of no retreat no surrender as means to stay alive and maintained their sources of livelihood. Hence, the present study will contribute to existing literature toward clarifying some allegations regarding the contemporary conflicts between farmers and pastoralist in Nigeria through critically examining the implication of common conflicts associated with competing interest among key user-groups.

4. DEPLETION OF GRAZING LANDS AND EXTENTION OF FARM LAND

There are diverse evidences of shrinking grazing reserves as well as subsequent conversion of farmlands for other land use (Blench, 2010; Higazi, A. 2013; Ogbeche, 2016). The conversion of forest reserves to locations of criminal activities and the ineffectiveness of the Nigerian security operatives have created ungoverned spaces (Hendrix and Glaser, 2007). Though, it is common in Nigeria for forest and other virgin areas to be converted to hideout of various criminals as well as terrorised (Ladan, 2014). Ladan (Ibid) conceptualised the ungoverned space as "a physical or non-physical area where there is an absence of state capacity or political will to exercise control." Within the Northern Nigeria, most forest reserves are easily turned into ungoverned spaces by criminals and other terrorised organisations, for instance; the Sambisa forest and other various forests in Kaduna, Taraba, Benue and Plateau states.

The Nigerian law have sanctions every respective state governments to employs deliberately measures to preserve forests for sustainable benefits of humanity (Ladan, 2014; Bashir, 2014), however, the forest reservation also served as a means of conservation for sensitive social and political issue (Bashir, 2014). Therefore, the forests are products of legality and ought to be properly secured. This study affirmed that increasing invasion and conversion of the forest spaces in Nigeria especially in the Middle-belt region is a serious concern which has posed serious security concern and the larger question of the widening of ungoverned spaces. Forest reserves are increasingly becoming bases for insurgents to launch attacks; hideouts for armed robbers who launch attacks on travellers and traders; hideouts for thieves, criminals, and cattle rustlers; and bases for attacks on local people (Ladan, 2014). The lack of government presence in these areas constitutes a trigger for criminal operatives to operate with impunity.

4.1 Nexus of Cattle Rustling and Violent Conflicts

Based on the primary information, this study discovered that current spate of rustling is heavily militarised and deadly. Historically, only few individual pastoralists carry a bunch of cattle worth millions of Naira armed with only sticks and merchants and travel hundreds of kilometres through bushes, town and cities. Travelling through forest, the pastoralists were attacked, killed and their cattle were rustled. The present study is in line with the theory of arm cattle herder started as a mere survival techniques for the pastoralists and cattle safety (Katsuyoshi, and Turton, 1979; Greiner, 2013; Alemika, 2013). But more recently, a number of factors have being attributed to this transformation. For instance, the concept of political economy proposed by Kwaja (2014), that reported that cattle rustling are associated with an underground economy motive; which are organised crime committed by criminal and terrorised syndicate for solemnly financial gain. Moreover, other studies like Manu *et a.*, 2014; Bashir, (2014); Olaniyani and Okeke-Uzodike, 2015 and Olaniyani and Yahaya, 2016 also refer to cattle rustling are organized crimes motivated by wealth accumulation which are never subject to state taxation.

The present discovered that the urge for cheap wealth and accumulation of untaxed wealth has contributed toward the intensification cattle rustling in Nigeria. In essence, the shadow economy in this case acts as an outlet for stolen cows and brings in a lot of cash. Some of the sources of funding for terrorists groups in Northern Nigeria have been linked to cattle rustling. For example, the discovery of linkages between cattle rustling and the terrorised activities in Borno state has prompted the governor to impose a ban on the sale of dried meat in the state and also the restriction of importation and sale of cattle to only members of the Borno State branch of the Butchers and Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (Ogbeche 2016). Pastoralists source of livelihood solemnly depend largely on the bunch of cattle, when the cattle were rustled, the herds has no any means of livelihood. Therefore, the pastoralist embarks on revenge mission to his possible common resource competing rival. Which in most cases take their vengeance to close geographically suspected rivals were their cattle were rustled.

4.2 Quest for Equitable Access Between Farmers and Pastoralists

According to Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Nigeria official report in 2009, the country has officially demarcated about 4125 grazing reserves and routes throughout the country (IRIN, 2009). About one third of these total grazing reserves are put in use and converted to farmlands. In September 2009, in an effort to curb the recurrent farmers-pastoralists conflicts, the Federal Government of Nigeria device a means to carried out demarcation of grazing route running through the central states of Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue state. Moreover, other grazing routes were also marked out across states like Bauchi and Katsina states which revolved across Abuja (Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016). Further grazing routes were also demarcated across Sokoto state down to Oyo state, moreover, another grazing route from Adamawa state down to Calabar in the Niger Delta (about 2000km long) (IRIN, 2009).

Since the Fulani pastoralists are geographically indigenes of the Northern region of Nigeria, the conflicts for survival between the Fulani pastoralists and farmers are more common in the Northern region. These conflicts vary in form as well as intensity from one community to another, and also from one state to another. Though, more than 60 percent of the reported cases of conflicts occurred during the dry season (Theisen, 2012; Benjaminsen et al., 2012). This study discovered that socioeconomic factors are the key that aggravates these conflicts among these competing user-groups. The intensity and variations of the conflicts largely depend on the nature and type of the user-groups where the pastoralists graze. These contemporary violent conflicts have amounted to serious threats to peace, stability, prosperity in addition to the survival of means of farmers-pastoralists livelihoods (Butler, 2012). The conflicts, through provocative claims over access rights and control to farmland, grazing reserves and cattle routes have become ubiquitous and seem to have defied solutions (Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016).

The worsening exposure to aggressive conflicts in Northern Nigeria between farmers and pastoralists is not only caused by climate change but a combination of various assorted factors. These factors can be the population boom and increasing in food demand. This study believed that the combination of these compounded factors usually drives the farmers urge for encroaching into marginal lands that had been the traditional pasture routes or grazing reserves. Therefore, this has heightened struggles between the common resource patrons, which more often than not, resulted to scorching conflicts (Butler, 2012; Yusufu, 2014).

The present study uncovered that just as the population grows, this common resource users demand more land to meet the growing population demands and consequently sustained their respective livelihood. Moreover, the more the land is being cultivated, the less is the land available for posture; forcing Fulani to migrate and tramp on crops cultivated by farmers (Ofuoku and Isifie, 2009; Yusufu, 2014; Mcdougal, et al., 2015). Other study like the Odoh and Chigozie (2012) and Olaniyan et al. (2015) have thoroughly investigates the sources of Fulani pastoral system vulnerability, these studies have concluded that the greatest threat to Fulani pastoralists livelihood is the insecurity of their cattle largely associated with denied access to grazing reserves and water points.

This study deem that these impending conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Northern Nigeria are ubiquitous and on daily basis increasing. These conflicts are mainly centred on access to common resources (such as land and water) as well as depending source of livelihood. Just as the pasture land keep shrinking, consequently as a result of taking over by farmers, conflicts become inevitable. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the pastoralists to move and graze without veering into crop fields since most of the grazing routes were converted to other purposes (Odoh and Chigozie, 2012). These violent conflicts mostly happened around the resource-endowed locations, such as fertile land and flood plains, river valleys and other water points that are enriched with access rights as well as ownership.

4.3 Institutional Provisions, Governance And Broad Implication of Farmers-Pastoralists Conflicts

The present study has found that the upsurge of various assorted violent conflicts associated with farmers and pastoralists has manifested all forms and dimensions with range of implications on local, state as well as the Nigerian federation. The diversity of ethno-religious, geographical and cultural defragmentation has provided a fitting landscape for these conflicts. These conflicts are gravely threatening the unity of this country various ethnic identities. The scope, magnitude and frequency these conflicts have demonstrate the lack of trust among

various sections of the country. Most of these conflict prone areas live in constant fear and curiosity of getting caught in conflicts that can lead to loss of their loved ones as well as threatening their key source of income. This study uncovers that these occupations (farming and herding) serve as a unifying podium for these key patrons.

This study also agrees that struggle and competition over common resource has great potential to undermine the relative peace, stability and prosperity of the relative regions and the country in general. The persistence assumption toward maintaining the notion of “no retreat, no surrender” by all patrons signifies the porosity of Nigerian federation. These conflicts threatened the peace, security and economic prosperity of their respective regions and the country in general, besides amplifying the looming humanitarian crises and abject poverty rate among local populous (Theisen, 2012).

These challenges are due to policy implications of the political economy with the formulated policies designed ostensibly to reduce and manage the conflicts, but ironically turned to escalate them the more (McDougal, 2015). Since the essence of federalism is “good governance” through collective effort for peace, safety and security for constituents of the units. However, human security is very much necessary; therefore, the elimination of potential threats of existence and fear of the deprivation must be sufficiently guaranteed to all common patrons (Olaniyan et al., 2015). The mismanagement of these conflicts shows that there is a weak institutional capacity in Nigeria’s federation to manage them right from traditional to governmental institutions (Greiner, 2013; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014).

Since 1960s, violent conflicts and uprisings have virtually undermined the Nigerian State and economy peace, stability, prosperity as well as development. Hence, political, socioeconomic and tensions have provided a suitable decorum that consequently escalates these violent conflicts. Despite greater efforts by Nigerian states in limiting these conflicts, however, most of these efforts were not timely (Greiner, 2013). The country failure to manage and resolve these conflicts have raised more questions than answers to the Nigerian federation. The woeful failure of the Nigerian State in enhancing security to Nigerians is breeding mistrust and lack of patriotism amongst Nigerians and leaders (Adebayo and Olaniyi, 2008; Kwaja, 2014). This study believed that the recent cast of dark clouds over the survival of Nigeria’s federation these issues of violent occupational conflicts, more especially the farmers-pastoralists conflicts. This study believed that the recent violent occupational conflicts, especially the recent rampaging farmers-pastoralists conflicts are reminiscent of a “cast of dark clouds” with potentials of threatening the survival of Nigeria’s federation.

CONCLUSION

This study critically analyzes key common allegations and consequently revealed respective relevant crucial realities regarding the modern violent occupational conflicts involving farmers and pastoralist in Nigeria. Based on some clustered response and secondary data collected, the present study has demonstrated that farmer-pastoralist associated conflicts have potentials of threatening the Nigeria’s federation. This study concludes that these violent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists routinely erupt over access to grazing reserves and stock routes, water points for animals and farmland for households. Importantly, the present study approach differs from typical accounting-cost attempts to sum the cost of conflict or benefits of peace.

The present study observed some common allegations and folklores regarding these conflicts between farmers and pastoralist in Nigeria. Some of these key allegations include; All cattle belongs the herder, all pastoralists are Muslim, all pastoralists are Nigerians, the pastoralists have secret agendas of religions crusades and marginalisation, Pastoralists travel to various communities in order to snatch/attack/murder or maimed the local. Moreover, farmers have legal right to convert grazing reserves to farmlands, and the adoption of act of no retreat no surrender is necessary to the survival of both common resource patrons.

Whereas the reality of these conflicts between farmers-pastoralists conflicts are discussed as followed. Initially, most of the farmers were mainly indigenous people of close communities where as farmers can be herders from as far as Senegal and Niger Republic, and also as close as Nigerian from Northern part of the country, while the Pastoralists are combinations of both Nigerians and foreigners. Though, the impacts of climate change and variability have greatly contributed to this type of conflicts related to common resource and livelihood (Ofuoku and Isifie, 2009; Butler, 2012; Topher *et al.*, 2015). However, whenever there is common resource, consequently, there are possibilities of common problem and Challenges. For example; effect of climate change that results of decrease in the amount of annual rainfall does not only affects the crop production but also the available grazing stock and grasses, decrease in income, competing interest in resource access, etc. Both farming and herding are legal occupations in Nigeria like any other occupation and can greatly contribute to the country economy in addition to being source of food and fibre, hence, both consequently suffer from this menace. The continuous attacks on pastoralist and their livestock have greatly contributes to their militarization just as Markakis (1998) study which focused on the Horn of Africa that argued shrinking common resource has triggered an intense war of struggle for survival, which in turn poses serious threats to the existence of common resource key patrons.

The political economy of land use in Nigeria is inherently biased against pastoralists’ interest within the system of resource access and usage. Interestingly, Most of the hundreds of cattle stolen were never found, caught and apprehended by the security system. Moreover, selling off of bunch of stolen cattle in Nigerian markets signified the gaps in intelligence gathering system. Hence, some state governments in Nigeria have continued to

play some roles in the escalation of this violence. For exemplar, the case of “indigenes” and “settlers” was not efficiently addressed regarding farmland, grazing land and water spots which were vital to the survival of farmers and pastoralists (Kösteret *et al.*, 2012; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014).

The present study is in line with Markakis (1998) which focused on the Horn of Africa which reported that cattle rustling are primarily the result of a “shrinking resource base” that has triggered an intense war of struggle for survival, which in turn poses serious threats to the existence of some groups. In sum, considering the microeconomic effects of these farmers-pastoralists conflicts, these violence have not being only on the rise across Nigeria, but have stretched across the Sahelian region of Africa. These rampaging violence have being inter and intra connected with various issues, for instance, ethno-religious violence riots (e.g. the case of city of Jos on various occasions), extremism violence (the case of Boko Haram in the North-Eastern Nigeria), and the Lord’s Resistance Army (Northern Uganda).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this above analysis and conclusion, the following recommendations were made. There is need for collective user-participatory collaborations between all stakeholders at all level for local resistance policies for common resource access and usage. There is need for regional participatory approach toward resolving these burning issues of famers-pastoralist conflicts. Through, making the policymakers in both Nigeria’s federation as well as counterparts across the Sahel to adopt greater measures and techniques in minimizing and managing these disputes associated with occupation judiciously. Moreover, most of these losses of lives and properties are avoidable through proper institutional arrangements and provisions, such as cases of trespassing can be resolve amicably with strict fine and other form of sections.

Within Federal Government of Nigeria structure, these frightening conflicts can be minimized and possibly managed when there is a sound and clear policy and provision to both common resource user-groups considering the feelings of each group as well as developing a means of curtailing it. In order to develop an effective, efficient and acceptable system for managing these conflicts, the present study agreed with Markakis (1998), Sulaiman, et al. (2011), Kösteret et al., 2012 and McDougal et al. (2015) recommendations that there is the need to appreciate and identify the cultural issues associated with the vulnerable groups. In addition, there is the need to comprehend how the farmers and Fulani on the one hand and the community and the state on the other have viewed such conflicting issues and the strategies put in place to ameliorate or even resolve them. Until the sources of such conflicts are clearly identified, understood, managed and resolved, such incidences will continue to show their ugly heads at the slightest provocation.

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