



Effects of Incessant Herdsmen- Arable Crop Farmers' Conflicts on Rural and Agricultural Development among Farmers in Taraba and Plateau States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed effects of incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts on rural and agricultural development among farmers in Plateau and Taraba States, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of arable crop farmers in Taraba and Plateau States. Stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 252 respondents as sample size. Data for the study were collected from primary source with the use of structured questionnaire and were analyzed with the use of inferential statistics such as Kruskal-Wallis. There were no significant differences ($P > 0.05$) between Plateau and Taraba States in terms of effects of incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmer' conflicts on rural and agricultural development, H. Cal. $(-75) < X^2$ Tab (11.1) at 0.05 level of probability. It was concluded that there were effects of incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts on rural and agricultural development which are displacement of people, loss of lives and properties, environmental pollution, threats to peace and security, decrease in food production and famine among others. The study, therefore, recommended that there should be good government policy on open grazing, there should be a control on immigration of foreign Fulanis into Nigeria, ranching should be encouraged, and Land Use Act policy should be fully implemented.

Keywords: Effects, herdsmen, farmers, Conflicts, rural and agricultural development:

Introduction

Crop production and livestock rearing are major fields of agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large. Fulanis indisputably represent a significant component of the Nigerian economy. They are the major breeders of cattle and sheep in Nigeria. The Fulanis own over 90 percent of the nation's livestock population, which accounts for one-third of the agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and 3.2 percent of the nation's GDP (Abbass, 2014; Bello, 2013).

According to Akerjiir (2018), in the past, crop farmers and the pastoralists had a cordial and stable relationship that enables them to co-exist for decades. This interdependent relationship on each other is evident as both groups depend on each other for survival, and it formed the benchmark for exchange which brought about rural and agricultural development. The crop farmers and the pastoralists have a long heritage and economic relationship, though there were sources of disagreement existing between both groups that were resolved by both groups peacefully (Akerjiir, 2018).

Due to peculiarity of activities of the herdsmen, they move from one place to another in search of pastures. During their journey, they frequently trespass on farmlands in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables. Attempts by arable crop farmers to prevent them from causing havoc are met with stiff and violent resistance. Most times, the crop farmers are overpowered, injured and killed, while others are evicted from their homes. Sometimes, the herdsmen are accused of taking these opportunities to steal, rape, raze houses and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through (Adetula, 2016).

These two agricultural sub-sectors have been the source of concern and worries because of incessant conflicts in almost all parts of Africa. Farmer-herder conflict is a common conflict that occurs between crop farmers and pastoral farmers. According to Mijah (2020), more worrisome on the issue of insecurity in Africa is the problem of the Fulani herdsmen-farmers' conflicts across the vast lands of Africa and Nigeria in particular. Nonetheless, the frequent attack on the farmers and citizens of Nigeria these days by the herdsmen is terribly alarming, especially in Plateau and Taraba States.

According to International Crises Group in 2020, the conflicts also have a strong potential to spread to other neighboring countries in West Africa, while response to the crisis at both the Federal and State levels have been poor. The victims of conflicts include women, children, young and old residents of the community. The deprived interrelationships between farmers and herdsmen have been seen to have negative effects ranging from destruction of crops, contamination of streams by cattle, overgrazing of land, disregard for local traditional authorities, defecation of cattle on the road, cattle theft and

straying of cattle. Although several recommendations towards minimizing this conflict have been made by community leaders and governmental agencies, the problem of conflicts between farmers and nomad herdsmen, but no implementation (Akinpeloye et al., 2020).

Rural development according to Nwachukwu (2013), entails transformation of rural area into socially, economically, politically, educationally, orderly, and materially desirable condition, with the aim of improving the quality of life of the populace on a self-sustaining basis. Age et al. (2012) viewed rural development as series of quantitative and qualitative changes which occurred amidst rural areas and whose converging effects indicate in time, a rise in standard of living and favorable changes in the way of life of the rural citizens.

Agricultural development can only occur when there is increased food production accompanied by a substantial increase or improvement in rural infrastructural facilities such as clean drinking water, constant electricity power supply, good roads, health facilities, and provision of quality education. This can only be achieved if there is peace coexistence in the rural areas (Age, 2017).

Herdsmen attacks have resulted in massive loss of lives, displacement of people and the disruption of the occupational pursuit of many, all of which have impoverished victims of their attack, worsen the living conditions of those in IDP camps, affected environs and importantly, resulted in a significant decrease in agricultural (crop and livestock) production. About 6,000 persons have died in the last three years as a result of Herdsmen attacks. This constitute a huge loss in human capital, and when corroborated with reports of about 175,000 displaced persons in Benue State alone, the economic security of the country is further threatened (Agbakwuru, 2018).

According to Guska (2019) conflict between farmers and herdsmen has continued to assume a threatening dimension to human survival and economic livelihood. The incidence of serious resource conflicts for survival between the two groups have led to the loss of lives, and herds, while others have experienced dwindling productivity in their crops and herds. In most of these encounters, citizens are regularly killed, and the destruction or loss of property leaves an already endangered populace even poorer. The frequency and scale of these conflicts have not only become alarming but have also produced adverse consequences in the destruction of villages, settlements, crops, irrigation facilities, human and animal lives.

The incessant violent conflicts between herders and farmers in Plateau State have made peace a scarce commodity in almost all the senatorial zones. The narrative has change from peaceful communities to communities where people live in fear as cases of attacks have become the order of the day. While it is undoubtedly clear from literature that government and non-governmental organizations have played significant role in peace building among herders and farmers in Plateau State (Gukas, 2019).

Edward (2022) revealed that different weapons were used, from guns in Delta to bows, arrows, charms, cutlasses, and spears in Borno. Taraba State recorded a round of attack by suspected herdsmen in 2013, when the Christian communities in Southern Taraba Senatorial District and those on the fringes of the Central Senatorial District, especially in Gassol and Bali local government areas, were attacked. Today, the dimensions of these conflicts have changed with more parties now involved and sophisticated weapons being used leading to counter and reprisal attacks of high magnitude.

It is noteworthy that some research work has been carried out by other researchers on herdsmen activities in other parts of the country. However, little or not much has been done on the effects of incessant herdsmen-farmers conflicts on rural and agricultural development among rural farmers in Taraba and Plateau States, Nigeria. For instance, Bello (2013) worked on herdsmen and farmers conflicts in Northeastern Nigeria: Causes, repercussions, and resolution. Kalu (2019) worked on farmers-herdsmen clashes in Nigeria and its effects on food security. Abba (2018) worked on Re-occurring farmer/herder conflict in Adamawa State: The absence of good governance. Chijioke et al (2019) worked on Crop farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria: Exploring the socio-economic implication on national development.

However, farmers in Plateau and Taraba States are facing serious challenges by the activities of these herdsmen which have led to decrease in food production, loss of lives and properties and migration of farmers from rural communities. It is due to this inadequacy that this study assesses the effects of incessant herdsmen-farmers conflicts on rural and agricultural development among rural crop farmers in Taraba and Plateau States, Nigeria. Here introduce the paper, and put a nomenclature if necessary, in a box with the same font size as the rest of the paper. The paragraphs continue from here and are only separated by headings, subheadings, images and formulae. The section headings are arranged by numbers, bold and 9.5 pt. Here follows further instructions for authors.

Methodology

This study was conducted in Plateau and Taraba States, Nigeria. The two States share common boundary and are in the Middle belt region of Nigeria. Plateau State is the twelfth largest State of Nigeria and is in the center of the country. It is geographically unique in Nigeria because its boundaries surround the Jos Plateau, having the Jos Plateau totally in its central and northern part. Its capital is Jos. Plateau State Latitude and longitude coordinates are: 9.8965° N, 8.8583° E. Plateau State shares boundaries with Taraba State, south-west Nasarawa, north-east Bauchi, and north-west Kaduna State. (Plateau State ICT Development Agency, 2021). The population projection based on the 2006 population census of 3,206,531 of State is said to be 5,400,974 persons and land area of 26,899 Km² (National Bureau of Statistics Estimates, 2024). Plateau State is also divided into 17 Local Government Areas (Plateau State ICT Development Agency, 2021).

Taraba State: Taraba State was carved out of the former Gongola State in 1991. It is named after the Taraba River which traverses the southern part of the State. Taraba State capital is Jalingo which is situated in the middle-belt part of Nigeria, and it occupies 58,795 Km² (square kilometers). Taraba State lies between latitude 6°30' N and 9°36' N and between longitude 9°30' E and 11°45' E. Taraba State is bounded in the West by Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue States, on the eastern border by Adamawa State and the Republic of Cameroon, and on the northern border by Gombe State Nigeria (National

Galleria, 2021). The population of the State is said to be 2,294,800 people in the 2006 population census and the projected population in 2023 is said to be 4,331,885 persons (National Bureau of Statistics Estimate, 2024). The State is divided into 16 Local Government Areas

A multi-stage sampling procedure comprising purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select a sample size of 252 respondents used for the study. The first stage involved purposive selection of two States (Plateau and Taraba States) out of the 36 States in Nigeria due to their incessant herders-farmers conflict. In the second stage, the population in each State was stratified according to the existing agricultural zones namely, Southern, Central, and Northern Zones making a total of six agricultural zones based on the existing structures.

In the third stage, two Local Government Areas were purposively selected from each of the six agricultural zones from the two States using purposive sampling techniques due to incessant attacks on farmers in the areas. In the fourth stage, two rural communities from each of the Local Government Areas were randomly selected making a total of twenty-four (24) rural communities in Plateau State: Wase (Zangu 10, Mavu 11), Shendam (Yelwa 12, Shendam 13), Barkin-Ladi (Dorowa 9, Kassa 8), Bassa (Maiango 11, Kishesho 10), Bokkos (Ganda 13, Marish 8), Mangu (Mangu 12, Kombu 7) rural communities were selected and Taraba State: Wukari (Gidan-Idi 13, Rafin-Kada 14), Ibi (Sarkin-Kudu 10, Gindin-Waya 10) Ardo-Kola (Sunkani 9, Iware 8), Jalingo (Janibanibu 8, Kona 9) Gassol (Kwarrarafa 13, Tella 11), Bali (Garba-Cede 11, Suntai 12) rural communities were selected. Finally, a sampling frame was developed for each of the selected rural communities and using a proportional allocation of 5% (0.05) across board for convenience, a total sample size of 252 respondents was selected for the study.

Table 1: Sample Size Selection Plan

<i>States</i>	<i>Agric. Zones</i>	<i>Local Govt. Area</i>	<i>Rural Communities</i>	<i>Sampling Frame</i>	<i>Sample size (0.05)</i>
PLATEAU	<i>Southern</i>	<i>Wase</i>	<i>Zangu</i>	202	10
			<i>Mavo</i>	223	11
		<i>Shendam</i>	<i>Yelwa</i>	257	13
			<i>Shendam</i>	240	12
	<i>Northern</i>	<i>Barkin-Ladi</i>	<i>Dorowa</i>	183	09
			<i>Kassa</i>	164	08
		<i>Bassa</i>	<i>Maiango</i>	212	11
			<i>Kishesho</i>	195	10
	<i>Central</i>	<i>Bokkos</i>	<i>Ganda</i>	266	13
			<i>Marish</i>	153	08
		<i>Mangu</i>	<i>Mangu</i>	239	12
			<i>Kombun</i>	135	07
Sub-total (b)				2469	124
TARABA	<i>Southern</i>	<i>Wukari</i>	<i>Gidan-Idi</i>	267	13
			<i>Rafin-Kada</i>	275	14
		<i>Ibi</i>	<i>Sarki-Kudu</i>	193	10
			<i>Gindin-waya</i>	204	10
	<i>Northern</i>	<i>Ardo-Kola</i>	<i>Sunkani</i>	188	09
			<i>Iware</i>	153	08
		<i>Jalingo</i>	<i>Janibanibu</i>	165	08
			<i>Kona</i>	178	09
	<i>Central</i>	<i>Gassol</i>	<i>Kwarrarafa</i>	257	13
			<i>Tella</i>	228	11
<i>Bali</i>		<i>Garba Cede</i>	213	11	
		<i>Suntai</i>	235	12	

<i>Sub-total (a)</i>	2556	128
<i>Grand Total (a+b)</i>	5025	252

Source: Adapted from PLADP (2021) and TADP (2021)

Result and Discussion

Effects of Incessant Herdsmen-Arable Crop Farmers' Conflicts on Rural and Agricultural Development in Plateau and Taraba States

Table 4 shows that there was no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) between Plateau and Taraba States in terms of effects of incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmer' conflicts on rural and agricultural development. The Kruskal-Wallis (H) test conducted shows that $H. Cal. (-75) < X^2 Tab (11.1)$ at 0.05 level of probability.

In plateau State, it was found that loss of lives/properties (56.5), displacement of people (56), famine/decrease in crop production (54), threat to peace and security (53), environmental pollution (50) were the major effects of herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts on rural and agricultural development.

In Taraba State, the major effects of herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts on rural and agricultural development were loss of lives/properties (65), destruction of farmlands/markets (60), displacement of people (60), threat to peace and security (60), and famine/decrease in crop production (58)

This implies that the incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts have similar effects on rural and agricultural development in both Taraba and Plateau States. In other words, the incessant conflicts between pastoralists and arable crop farmers in Plateau and Taraba States have similar excruciating negative impacts on rural and agricultural development. For instance, loss of lives/properties, destruction of farms and markets, destruction of bridges/roads, destruction of schools, hospitals, churches/mosques, wells/boreholes were the common effects of incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts on rural and agricultural development in both Taraba and Plateau States. These findings agree with Age et al. (2017) who stated that incessant conflicts between pastoralists and arable crop farmers in Benue State highly affected rural and agricultural development.

Table 4: Kruska-Wallis Analysis of Effects of Incessant Herdsmen-Arable Crop Farmers' Conflicts on Rural and Agricultural Development in Plateau and Taraba States.

States	Plateau State						Taraba State					
	Responses						Responses					
	VS		S		NS		VS		S		NS	
Variables	Freq	R ₁	Freq	R ₂	Freq	R ₃	Freq	R ₁	Freq	R ₂	Freq	R ₃
Loss of lives/properties	116	56.5	4	6.5	4	6.5	128	62	-	-	-	-
Destruction of farmland/ market	43	30	51	36	30	27	127	60	-	-	1	3
Displacement of people	108	56	10	13.5	6	8	127	60	1	30	-	-
Destruction of bridges/ roads	8	10	50	35	66	47	1	30	40	28	87	52
Famine/ decrease in crop production	104	54	11	16.5	9	12	117	58	11	16.5	-	-
Destruction of schools/ hospitals	10	13.5	54	38	60	44	-	-	72	49	56	39.5
Destruction of churches/ mosque	8	10	59	43	57	41.5	-	-	48	33.5	80	51
Environmental pollution	74	50	29	26	21	23	52	37	48	33.5	28	25
Threat to peace and security	93	53	13	19	18	21	127	60	1	30	-	-

Destruction of dam/ fishponds	11	16.5	56	39.5	57	41.5	17	20	46	31	65	46
Destruction of wells/ boreholes	8	10	47	32	69	48	-	-	27	24	101	54
Destruction of police station/ electricity	63	45	19	22	42	29	1	3.0	11	16.5	116	56.5
H. Cal= -75 X² Tab 0.05= 11.1 K-1= 5		$\sum R_1$ = 404		$\sum R_2$ = 327		$\sum R_3$ = 288		$\sum R_4$ = 363		$\sum R_5$ 238		$\sum R_6$ = 327

1.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there were incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts in both Plateau and Taraba States. Most of the Effects of incessant herdsmen-arable crop farmers' conflicts on rural and agricultural development in the study area include displacement of people, loss of lives and properties, environmental pollution, threats to peace and security, decrease in food production and famine among others. Hence, the followings recommendations were made:

- i. Sedentarization Livestock Policy should be adopted by Pastoralists in their States of origin.
- ii. There should be control on immigration of foreign Fulanis into Nigeria by immigration officers at the borders.
- iii. Ranching should be encouraged to be practiced than the old pastoralism in the study area.
- iv. The Land Use Act of 1978 should be reformed to avoid unauthorized encroachment on land by herdsmen.
- v. Perpetrators should be arrested and prosecuted by the relevant authorities.

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