

AN ASSESSMENT OF HERDERS FARMERS CONFLICT ON INSECURITY AND FOOD CRISIS; A STUDY OF SOUTHEAST STATES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study attempts to assess the insecurity and food crisis resulting from herders and farmers conflict in the southeast region of Nigeria. The objective of this study is, amongst others, to investigate the causes and effects of the conflicts on the food crisis in southeastern Nigeria. The study is anchored on Karl Marx conflict theory and frustration aggression theory. A survey research design is adopted for the study. A Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator was used to derive a sample size of 384 from a population of 23,283,555 with a multi-stage sampling technique. A closed-ended questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Data obtained were analyzed and presented in simple percentage and frequency tables. The findings revealed that the effect of all of these incessant clashes that resulted in killings, kidnapping, raping, etc., thereby causing food crises in the southeastern region was that the conflicts greatly affected security negatively as a result of destruction of lives and properties, which resulted in the emergence of the Eastern Security Network [ESN] that contributed negatively to insecurity in the southeast. The finding revealed that expansionist agenda for territorial occupation was a driving force amongst the herders; the farmers protracted fear of damage to their farmland and crops resorts to protecting their crops and farmland from trespassing by herders, while herders, on the other hand, resort to protecting their cattle from being killed, rustling, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that immigration officials should check illegal immigrants at the national border against infiltration by strange herders whose intentions are to propagate a hidden agenda of territory acquisition and other inordinate motives. Governments at all levels should mediate between the herders and farmers for a cordial relationship as well as provide adequate security to both herders and farmers to avert unnecessary conflicts.

Key Words: Assessment, Insecurity, Food Crisis, Herders, Farmers and Southeast.

Introduction

Despite several measures and peace talks, the fatal consequences emanating from the clashes between herders and farmers have been on the rise. Both federal and state governments had earlier promised to provide alternative grazing or ranches for herders to forestall further clashes,

but all these seem to be a mirage. Amoge et al. (2018): These conflicts have now become so threatening to the country's national integration, such that the hitherto peaceful relationship between farmers and herdsmen across various parts of Nigeria is degenerating to a carnage level."

The Fula people, often described as the Fulani, are regarded as the world's largest nomadic group, with about 20 million people dispersed across Western Africa. They reside mostly in Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Cameroun, Senegal, and Niger. They can also be found in the Central African Republic and Egypt. They are primarily Muslim people; they are also called Fula or Fulbe. There are generally three (3) different types of Fulani based on settlement pattern, e.g., the nomadic/pastoral or Mbororo, the semi-nomadic, and the settled or town-Fulani. The pastoral Fulani move around with their cattle throughout the year.

The statement accredited to President Buhari during Donald Trump's administration that killer herdsmen (terrorists) are remnants of the Gadhafi army contradicts the statement of the national leader of MiyattiAlah that the killer herdsmen are from Zamfara, Niger, Kaduna, Bauchi, and Katsina States. Mayalti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), presently headed by Alhaji Muhammadu Kirowa, was founded in the early 1970s with headquarters in Kaduna and became operational in 1979, gaining wider acceptance as an advocacy group in 1987, which centers on promoting the welfare of Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria. It has become a loose partisan advocacy group. There is diverse speculation about the origin of the Fulani herdsmen. Some anthropologists opine that the origin of Fula is connected with Egypt, while others argue that the Fulani people have links with Israel or the Senegambia region. Steven (2015) said, however, that the ethnic origin of the Fulani people may be traceable to the socio-economic interaction between ancient West African and North Africans, such as Egyptians.

Nze (2015) asserts that before the present farmers-herdsmen conflict assumed a dangerous dimension, the relationship between them had become cordial and symbiotic."

Vanguard (2016) report on the southeast farmers-herders conflict was that 46 people were killed in Nimbo, an agrarian community in Enugu State, in an attack allegedly carried out by over 500 Fulani herdsmen. *Vanguard* also reported that over 2000 people were killed, 40 injured, and many houses and churches were destroyed as a result of the attack. Also, in Abia State, *Thisday* newspaper in 2016 reported an attack by a group of suspected Fulani herdsmen in Abam, another agrarian community in Arochukwu local government area. The incident was said to have occurred on the farm of the farmers when they were harvesting their crops on November 14, 2016, with several people killed and others having various degrees of injuries.

Erondu and Nwakanma (2018) assert that the conflicts between nomadic cattle herders, who are largely Fulani, and sedentary agrarian communities in the central and southern zones of Nigeria have escalated in recent years and have assumed various dangerous dimensions, threatening the country's security and political stability. In the aftermath of these attacks, families of farmers, especially in Enugu and Ebonyi States, that are predominantly farmers because the states don't produce crude oil, have never had any issues feeding before, but now it is difficult for them to feed themselves. And this scenario is affecting the entire state's food production for commercial purposes; prices of food items in the entire southeast region have skyrocketed. Since 2016 and recent times, attacks by herdsmen over land and grazing areas have escalated, and the states economies, which are driven by agriculture as they usually produce large quantities of rice, yam, cassava, maize, and cocoyam, have been negatively affected. The famous Abakaliki yam and rice are on astronomical increase in price. Palm produce in these two states is also affected. Before these attacks, a popular farmer in Ebonyi State, Victor Okpabi, said he had four hectares of rice farm, two hectares of cassava farm, and two hectares of yam and corn farms, from whose proceeds he earns money and feeds his family, but now everything had gone under by the destruction done by Fulani herders. 'He exclaimed, 'I don't know what to do because all my investment is gone.' Lezuya (2021) says food security is national security, and any household head that is unable to feed his household is not deemed responsible. By extension, any nation or

state unable to feed its populace cannot be said to be responsible. The speculation by some schools of thought and in 2022 by the former Governor of Benue State, Mr. Ortom, that there is a Fulanization Agenda and others saying that there is a territorial acquisition agenda by the Fulanis, hence their infiltration, this paper is meant to investigate these speculations and the insecurity as it affects the food crisis in southeast Nigeria.

A bill sponsored by Titus Zam (APC Benue North-West) seeking to ban open grazing and establish ranches for herders in the country passed a second reading at the current 10th senate in June 2024. The Benue-North senator said, "If passed, it will proffer a solution to the aged-long farmer-herder crisis." He lamented how conflict had led to the loss of lives and properties in almost every zone in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The clash between farmers and herders in recent times has contributed to the heightened insecurity issue in Nigeria and, by extension, southeast Nigeria. Not only has the conflict exacerbated insecurity, but it has also intensified the food crisis, as farmers, fearing for their lives, abandon their agricultural produce to the herders. This problem leads to food shortages, thereby leading to food crises among the people. It is important to stress that when there is adequate security, farmers will not have to worry about their safety, but when the reverse is the case, there will be heightened tension. Southeast Nigeria in recent years has witnessed its own fair share of farmers and herders' conflict, which appear to have contributed to the insecurity issue and, at some point, food production shortages leading to a food crisis. The incessant conflict may prompt one to ask, could there be any hidden agenda by the herdsman? As the conflict seems to be having significant influence on food production and the security issue in southeast Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What influence farmers and herders' conflict on food production in the southeast of Nigeria?
2. What effect does farmer and herder conflict have on security of the south east?
3. Are there hidden agendas from herdsman hence the incessant conflicts?

Review of Related Literature

Oluwole (2021) reported that in a meeting of the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in Ado Ekiti, both parties made suggestions on how to end the clashes, which have resulted in the deaths of many farmers in the state. He stated that at the meeting, Joseph Adewole, a community leader of Ijero, lamented that a number of people had been killed in Orin and Isaba Ekiti and nobody had been arrested and prosecuted. Saying, "Some Fulani people are claiming that Nigerian lands belong to them and that they must get it by force and that the government must arrest those making such incendiary comments." Onu (2021), in a report, noted that Miyetti Allah lists conditions to stop clashes between farmers and herders in the southeast. In view of this, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria [MACBAN] chapter in the Southeast said it will support any policy by the government that seeks to stop the clashes between host communities and the herdsman.

Also, commenting on the issue the leader of the association Alhaji Gidado Siddiki, noted that:

The governor's position is a welcome development, but for the policy to work as expected, the following provisions must be in place for peace and equity. And the conditions are that there should be training and re-training of Fulani herdsman on mechanized grazing, provision of land for ranching in the 36 states of the federation and the FCT, and continuous town hall meetings between the government, farmers, and herders in the affected areas. The leader of MACBAN also said that about 89 percent of herders had no knowledge of mechanized grazing.

Anytime insecurity is mentioned in Nigeria, the first idea that comes to mind is Fulani herdsmen. He further noted that southeast is a good host, hence condemning all forms of criminality in the same manner, and suggested that a Fulani Youth Vigilante group should be established so that they can work with security agencies to ensure security in all communities. However, Nnia Nwodo (2019) argued that Ohanaeze Ndigbo would resist Fulani Vigilante's in Igboland. He even pointed out that the PAN-YORUBA social-political organization described the proposal as a provocative agenda.

Pan-Niger Delta Forum [PANDEF] (2019) expressed displeasure and totally rejected the idea, describing it as an attempt to establish a colony for Islamization. In a similar vein, Ameachi and Nwosu (2021) noted that the development confirmed the perception that the people of the region are all being seen as conquered people and that the attempt to set up a vigilante group in the territory of another ethnic group. That for a particular part of the country to say that they are coming to the southeast to set up a vigilante group means they are regarding that place as their conquered colony. They further said that the governments of Igbo land are too myopic to the extent that they cannot see what these people they have been meeting with want to do, as they could not even react nor speak against it when the request was made.

Concept of Fulani Agenda

Adurokiya (2019), in a report, noted that former President Olusegun Obasanjo revealed a grand plot by some elements to foist a Fulani and Islamic agenda on Nigeria and other west African countries and called for global action against terrorism and other organized crimes. He further stated that Obasanjo supported his allegation by saying, 'It is no longer an issue of lack of education and employment for the youths in Nigeria. It is now African Islamization and global organized crimes of human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, gun trafficking, illegal mining, and regime change.' On the other hand, Adurokiya (2019), in a report, noted that Obasanjo queried the federal government for allowing the Boko Haram and herdsmen's attacks to fester by treating the matter with kid gloves, urging President Buhari to rally local and global stakeholders in seeking solutions to the fight against terrorism. He tasked Buhari to take the issue of insecurity seriously at all levels and address it at once without favoritism or cuddling. Both Boko Haram and herdsmen's acts of violence were not treated as they should at the beginning. They have both incubated and developed beyond what Nigeria can handle alone.

The Daily Post (2021) in a report noted that Governor Ortom of Benue State insisted that the agenda of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria is to conquer the entire nation. According to him, The Fulani Nationality Movement, which claimed responsibility for the recent attack, said that Nigeria is their only country. He said that the Fulani Nationality Movement, FUNAM, were the people who attempted to kill me recently. They said Nigeria is the only country that belongs to them. It is written, and I have the document. I have sent a copy of the document to the President, Police, and DSS. The FUNAM said they wanted this revolution in 1800 but could not achieve it through Usman Danfodio. They claim they have the power, money, and all it takes to achieve it. Also, terrorism that we used to hear in faraway countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries has surfaced in Nigeria. If the federal government has power to stop secessionists like Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Igboho, then they should have power to stop banditry in the country. They call attackers unknown gunmen, but for me, I know they are Fulani people coming to kill us. They claim they want to capture the whole country.

The Daily Post (2021) reported that the former vice chancellor, Prof. Saror, at the celebration of his 80th birthday in Makurdi, Benue State, explained that insecurity in Benue and other parts of the country was brought by deliberate actions, describing it as a well-coordinated agenda to spread Islam across the country. He said, "The insecurity we are experiencing in Benue and Nigeria today is not an accident. It is a planned program. "Boko Haram is not made up of miscreants; they are intelligent people who are highly connected in Nigeria and other parts of the world." He said further, "The armed Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents have contacts

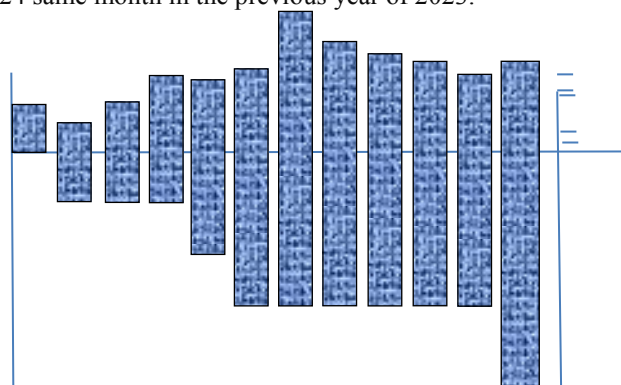
that extend to the Middle East, Asia, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, among others. He stated that billions of naira fund them to carry out the caliphate's conquest agenda in the country.

Concept of Food Security of Sustainable Development Goals [SDGS]

One of the SDGS goals is to reduce extreme hunger in an articulated drive as committed by world leaders to actualize this goal by 2015. But in 2021, it cannot be categorically said that Nigeria has met or achieved this set goal. Amongst other reasons, insecurity has been a bane militating against this important goal. In Nigeria, staple food production is experiencing a downward trend not just because of ad hoc agricultural policies of the government but because of incessant herder's farmer's conflict all over the country. Insecurity has caused food production to decline and resulted in negative effects on cost and insufficient food in both rural and urban cities. This deliberate program of the 2nd goal of a sustainable solution to end hunger in all its forms by 2030 in its entirety and to achieve food security has seriously been threatened in Nigeria by these obnoxious hydra-headed herders-farmers conflicts. The idea behind this goal is to ensure that everyone everywhere has enough good quality food to live a healthy life, ensuring commitment to universal access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food at all times of the year. In order for the SDGS to be successful, every level of government will be countered on a benchmark; for instance, in Nigeria, the federal, state, and local governments cannot be said to be accountable for successful implementation of this goal because of the current insecurity caused by the herders' farmers' debacle. Doyim (2017) observed that in Nigeria, food insecurity is worsened by natural insecurity as a result of protracted armed conflicts involving various groups, especially Boko Haram and Fulani herders. According to them, the activities of these groups in terms of invasion and sacking of farming communities have resulted in many civilian fatalities, thus creating acute insecurity. The state of insecurity in many of the farming communities has made it practicably difficult for farmers to continue to engage in agricultural production optimally, thus affecting productivity and causing market disruptions with attendant food price shocks. Rashid (2012). The insecurity in Nigeria is having a serious negative impact on farming communities as it prevents them from engaging in crop production at an optimal level.

Cost of Food in Nigeria

Because of the frequent clash between herders and farmers, cost of food has increased at 20/30 percent as at July 2024 same month in the previous year of 2023.



Food Inflation Index

Source: National Bureau of Statistic of Nigeria (NBS)

Andohol Jerome (2012) asserts that the importance of staple foods cannot be overemphasized as its availability is not only a nutritional status but also an important revenue for agriculturally based countries. He asked to what extent within the context of existing data will staple food

production in Nigeria lead to an unprecedented economic growth which will assist in actualizing the MDG target of eradicating extreme hunger in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Lezuya (2021) carried out a study on “impact of farmers and herdsmen conflict on food security, focus on Taraba State.” The researcher examined the extent to which conflict between farmers and herdsmen affects food production, food availability, food stability, and food utilization in Taraba State. The study revealed that the increasing incidents of farmers – herder’s conflict has led to entranced atmosphere of fear and insecurity in the rural areas, which has greatly attacked crops farming and grazing activities. There is now a resultant low productivity, food instability, low food utilization, food inaccessibility, and inadequate availability of food in Taraba State. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended, among others, the need to assist farmers with zero-interest credit facilities to boost food production and strengthen ties between herders and farming communities to improve security in rural farmer’s areas. Amoge et al. (2018), in their study “assessment of the effect of farmers-herdsmen conflict on national integration in Nigeria,” They examined incidents of farmer-herdsmen conflict and its causes and effect on national integration in Nigeria. The study found that farmer-herdsmen conflicts are not caused by a single reason but are propelled by multi-cause factors, such as limited resources, reprisal attacks, and shortages of land, as well as climate change. They concluded that farmers’ conflicts are inimical to the unity of the country and therefore recommended that a visibility study be carried out in the establishment of suitable cattle ranching resources for herdsmen and restoration of earlier symbiosis relationships between herdsmen and farmers, and the Nigerian porous border be well monitored.

In research conducted by Oladotun et al. (2019) entitled “Herders-farmers communal conflicts in Nigeria. An indigenized language as an alternative resolution mechanism.” The researchers attempted to determine the causes of the conflict and proffer a linguistic approach in conflict management through the use of indigenized Hausa language as a tool for mediation in herder farmers’ communal conflict in Nigeria. The study revealed that previous attempts to solve these incessant clashes have largely focused on communication, compensation, the creation of cattle colonies, and the proclamation of bans on open grazing, and so on. But on the contrary, the researchers failed to acknowledge that the majority of the herders are Fulani’s, not Hausas, who don’t all understand Hausa language as they recommended. They speak a language known as Fulfude, which also most Hausas do not understand. Popoola et al. (2020) in their study “effect of farmers and herders’ conflict on entrepreneurial practice in southwestern Nigeria.” They investigated the causes and the impact of farmers and herdsmen conflict on the entrepreneurship practice and security standard in southwestern Nigeria. The study attested to the fact that farmer and herdsmen conflict is not caused by a single reason but is stimulated by multi causal factors, which majorly include limited resources in face of greater need, reprised attack, and among others. They also found that farmers-herdsmen conflicts have disintegrative consequences for society and should seek the restoration of earlier symbiotic relationships between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. And also, peace studies should be introduced to our educational system, making it compulsory from primary schools’ level to university level.

Nwakanma et al. (2019) in a study entitled “demography of conflict and the herders-farmer’s crisis in Nigeria.” The researchers, relying on the demographic theory of conflict, demonstrated how population overshoot in Nigeria explicates the new violent and widespread dimensions of the various causes of the farmers’ conflict, the exponential growth of Nigeria’s population, and the endless contest for space and property in the country. Their study recommended that Nigeria as a country should begin to pay attention to the cost and impacts of population growth and create accordingly right-based population policies that adapt Nigeria’s population strength to a positive force for sustainable development. The study tallies with this research paper assertion on propagation of hidden agenda for territorial acquisition of herdsmen.

Adeola and Akwayi (2023) in a study entitled “Effect of farmers-herders clashes on the supply and demand of foodstuffs in Nigeria with special reference to Oyo, Benue, and Ebonyi states in Nigeria. The findings of the study indicated that the farmer-herder clashes involving conflicts over land, water resources, and grazing continue to have significant effects on food supply and demand in Nigeria. The study recommends government active adoption of a bottom-top approach to policy decisions that facilitates dialogue and mediation between farmer’s and herders through engagements of community leaders, religious figures, and local authorities to hold the clashes at bay and suitably increase food supply and demand in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Karl Max Conflict Theory

This theory was developed by Karl Marx, the theory explains that due to society’s never-ending competition for finite resources, it will always be in a state of conflict. The Theory examines any social phenomenon through the lens that there is a national human instinct towards conflict. It does not say that conflict is bad or good, but rather, that it is an unavoidable aspect of human nature and helps explain why things are the way they are, a conflict theory can be used to look at wars, violence, revolution, and forms of injustice and discrimination, explaining further that there is natural disparity in society that causes these problems.

Frustration Aggression Theory

This theory was developed by John Dollard Leonard Doob and Neal Miller in 1939 which says that aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person’s efforts to attain a goal. The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. Dollard explains that if the individual is prevented from achieving a goal by some external factor, then this will lead to frustration which will always lead to aggression.

The relevance of this theories to this study is based on the fact that farmers and herders in Nigeria had been in constant conflict due to the fact that land for agricultural and grazing purposes are limited in supply hence the farmers and herders are always protecting their interest. Herders migrate from place to place to look for greener pasture for their cattle, while farmers protect their crops against encroachment and destruction by the herders which most times result to conflicts.

Methodology

Survey research design was used in this study, with close-ended questionnaire and interview schedule as instrument for data collection. From a projected population of the southeast as at 2021 at 23,283,555, the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator was used to determine the simple size of 384 at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error.

The multistage sampling techniques was used. At stage one the researchers purposively selected the state capital for easy access to respondents and the fact that most of the food are transported to the capital where major sale are done. At stage two, major cities within the state capitals were purposively chosen that is one from each state. At stage three, from these cities one community was randomly selected from each of the cities that is from Owerri Municipal (Umuoyima), Abakaliki (Izzi), Awka North (Achalla), Umuahia South (Ahiaukwu) and Enugu North (Nsukka). At stage four the researchers distributed questionnaire among these five communities. That is $384/5 = 77$. That is to say the researchers gave 77 copies of questionnaire to respondents in each of the community proportionately. The respondents who were included were educated and enlightened especially on the issue of herders and farmers’ conflict.

The simple percentage and mean analysis method were used for data presentation and analysis with 4-point Likert scale.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings

Section A: Socio-Demographic Factors of Respondents

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	51%
Female	184	49%
Total	384	100%

Table 2: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 29	40	10
30 – 39	84	22
40 – 49	95	25
50 – 59	108	28
60 and above	57	15
Total	384	100%

Table 3: Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	300	78%
Single	44	13%
Widowed	40	10%
Total	384	100%

Table 4: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Cattle rearing	75	19.5
Farming	280	72.9
Artisan	29	7.5
Total	384	100%

Table 5: Educational Status

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage
No education	26	6.7%
Primary	58	15.1%
Secondary	117	30.2%
Tertiary	98	26.0%
Quran education	85	22.0%
Total	384	100%

Source: Field survey 2024.

In this study the analysis revealed that they were more male than female, in the area of age distribution in the study those within the age range of 50 – 59 were marginally higher than other age groups. They were more married respondents at 78% in the study. In terms of occupation, those farming were more with a 72.9%, while for educational status; those with secondary education were more with a 30.2%.

Research Question 1: What influence does farmers and herders' conflict have on food production in the southeast of Nigeria.

Table 6: Influence of farmers and herdsman conflict on food production in southeast Nigeria

S/No	Options	SA	A	D	SD	N	M	Decision
1	Conflict between farmers and herdsman has not affected food production and price	50 13.0%	40 10.4%	110 28.6%	184 48.0%	384 100%	1.8	Reject

increase in southeast								
2	Protectionist tendencies between farmers and herders did not affect farming and cattle rearing in southeast Nigeria	35 9.1%	28 7.2%	149 38.9%	172 44.8%	384 100%	1.8	Reject
3	The killings, kidnapping, raping, destruction and burning of Houses during farmers herders conflict in southeast	45 11.7%	33 8.6%	168 43.8%	138 35.9%	384 100	1.8	Reject
	Was not enough to stop production of food	Grand mean					1.8	

Source: Field survey 2024.

Table 6 shows the responses from the respondents in southeast states on the influence of farmers and herdsmen conflict on food production. From the table it was revealed that respondents disagreed to the options enumerated. Based on this a grand mean = 1.8 was derived which is lower than the criterion means = 2.5. This confirms that the conflict between farmers and herdsmen affected negatively food production in southeast states. Therefore, from the table above the highest proportion of each of the options showed that 184(48.0%) of the respondent strongly disagreed to the notion that the conflict between farmers and herdsmen has not affected food production inversely meaning that it affected food production in southeast, Nigeria. While 172(44.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the conflict did not affect farming and cattle rearing in southeast, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What effect does farmers and herder's conflict has on security of the southeast.

Table 7: Effect of farmers-herders conflict on security of the southeast states.

S/No	Options	SA	A	D	SD	N	M	Decision
1	The conflict between farmers and herdsmen have greatly affected security in the southeast states of Nigeria	174 45.3%	105 27.3%	65 16.9%	40 10.4%	384 100%	3.0	Accept
2	The destruction of live and properties during the conflicts between farmers and herders were not too much to cause insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria	63 16.4%	50 13.0%	90 23.4%	181 47.2%	384 100%	1.9	Reject
3	Violent attacks between farmers and herders is responsible or the emergence of ESN (Eastern security Network) in the southeast Nigeria	130 33.9%	168 43.8%	50 13.0%	36 9.3%	384 100%	3.0	Accept
		Grand mean					2.6	

Source: Field survey 2024

Table 7 shows the responses derived from the respondents in the five eastern states of Nigeria on the conflict between farmers and herders regarding the effect of the conflicts on security of the southeast. From the table its observed that the respondents agreed to most of the option stated. Based on the response a grand mean = 2.6 was derived which is above the criterion mean = 2.5. This reveals that the conflict between farmers and herders affected security in the southeast. The highest proportion of each of the option showed that 174 (45.3%) strongly agreed to option which says the conflict between farmers and herders affected security in the southeast, while 181

(47.2%) strongly disagreed with the notion that conflict between farmers and herders were not too much to cause insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria.

Research Question 3

Are there Fulani agenda from herdsmen due to the incessant conflict hence the possession of A-K 47?

Table 8: With Fulani agenda hence the possession of A-K 47

S/No	Options	SA	A	D	SD	N	M	Decision
1	The constant conflict and possession of A.K 47 without arrest from the security forces does not portend there is a Fulani agenda from the herdsmen	38 10.0%	50 13.0%	110 28.6%	186 48.4%	384 100%	1.8	Reject
2	The proposal of setting up vigilante group on the southeast by Miyetti Allah does not mean they want to conquer the entire southeast	34 8.9%	26 6.9%	147 38.2%	177 46.0%	38100%	1.8	Reject
3	That some Fulani people are claiming that Nigeria lands belong to them and that they must take it by force is just a word of mouth, they don't mean it.	45 11.7%	36 9.4%	138 35.9%	163 43%	163 43%	1.9	Reject
Grand mean							1.8	

Source: Field survey 2024.

Table 8 indicates that the respondents in southeast states on if there are Fulani agenda of the herders, show that respondents rejected the options enumerated. Based on this a grand mean = 1.8 was derived which is lower than the criterion means = 2.5. This conforms that the herdsmen have Fulani agenda other than mere cattle rearing. From the table above the highest proportion of each of the option showed that 186 (48.4%) rejected (strongly disagreed) to the option which says with the herders possession of A.K 47 does not portend they have hidden agenda, while 177 (46.0%) strongly disagreed that the proposal of leadership of herdsmen (Miyatti Allah) to establish vigilante in southeast region does not mean they want to conquer the southeast, and 165 (43%) also disagreed that Fulani's clamming that Nigeria belongs to them and that they will claim it by force is just a word of mouth.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in Table 6 reveal that killings, kidnappings, raping's, destructions, and burnings of houses during herders' farmer conflicts affect the southeast negatively in terms of farming and food production. The region is now experiencing food shortages and high-cost food items. This finding is supported by both the Karl Max conflict and frustration aggressive theories because the principle of conflict theory says conflict is an inevitable aspect of human nature since there is natural disparity in society as a result of human instinct towards conflict. So, the conflict between herders and farmers comes to play, as the theory proffers. This conflict resulted in low food production, low animal husbandry by the herders, and a high cost of food stuffs in the southeast. The empirical studies by Amoge et al. (2018) explain that the conflicts caused fear and insecurity, resulting in low productivity and inadequate availability of food in Taraba State, the same as the five states of the southeast. Amoge et al.'s (2018) study with the result of limited resources such as land also supports this current study's finding. At the moment, evidence of food insecurity and the high cost of food stuff is not in dispute.

Findings in Table 7 show that the conflicts between herders and farmers greatly affect security negatively as a result of destructions of lives and properties. The violent attacks resulting in the emergence of the Eastern Security Network [ESN] contributed negatively to insecurity in the southeast. This finding is also supported by both theoretical frameworks; the Fulani herders and farmers were frustrated due to a lack of land for grazing and farming, respectively. The formation of the Eastern Security Network by IPOB was a big blow to the Fulani herdsmen and its umbrella organization, Miyetti Allah. This led to more aggression from the cattle herders, making the Karl Max conflict and aggression frustration theories succinct to this study. Popoola et al. [2020] empirical study found a place here also; it found limited resources as a major problem that leads to conflicts. Also in support is Nwakanma et al. [2019], which revealed that demography is a factor that causes conflict between herders and farmers because of population overshoot in Nigeria. Herders' activities and population in Nigeria have increased; hence, they migrate to all parts of Nigeria from other countries. Struggling to grab lands makes them have conflicts with farmers in the southeast.

Findings in Table 8 indicate that there is Fulani agenda other than cattle rearing; hence, they are in possession of an AK-47 instead of the normal bow and arrow and long staff they were known for. The destruction of properties, killings, and the demand for setting up a vigilante group in the southeast by Miyatti Allah and the claim that Nigerian lands belong to them all point to the fact that they have a Fulani agenda to establish. The empirical study of Nwakanma et al (2019) gives credence to the Fulani agenda as demography, which the researchers revealed as a problem due to the increase in population in Nigeria, is in order. The influx of herders from West Africa, other African countries, and Sahel regions has caused the population of herdsmen to increase, spreading to every nook and cranny of Nigeria. The reported claim also by Miyatti Allah that Nigeria belongs to them has not helped matters. Therefore, the Karl Max conflict and frustration aggressive theories come to play, giving this study its validity.

Conclusion

From the findings, variables such as grazing and arable lands for both cattle rearers and farmers are insufficient, hence the continuous conflict between the farmers and herdsmen across the country. The call for banning open grazing and the establishment of cattle ranching is of essence. The lack of knowledge amongst the cattle herders is constituting a big problem, and as a result, the incessant clashes between farmers and herders would continue if nothing was done in that area. And the fact that the conflict refuses to abate and the government's lackluster approach gives credence to the speculation of a hidden agenda.

Recommendations

1. Government at all levels (Federal, State and Local Government should as a matter of urgency address the lingering conflicts between the farmers and herders by ensuring that dialogue is initiated between stake holder for amicable habitation so that food production for agricultural crops and animal husbandry are crisis free.
2. The federal government who has the prerogative of security should ensure that the security agents provide security in every community to ensure safety of live and properties, the immigration officials should check illegal immigrants and recall illegal arms from the possession of herders and farmers. Security of lives and properties should be paramount at all times.
3. The federal government should prove to all and sundry that they are making sincere efforts to end the incessant conflicts by applying the carrot and stick approach to dispel the rumor of Fulani agenda for fulanization or Islamization of Nigeria.

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