



Resource Competition and the Ruralization of Farmer - Herder Conflicts in Selected Local Government Areas of Plateau State: The Role of Traditional Rulers in Contemporary Conflict Management

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Abstract

The incessant conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria has become a recurrent decimal among states, local governments and communities. Thus, in Plateau state, the conflict has been a daily occurrence and becoming like a norm. However, the paper intends to take a critical assessment of the conflict between farmers and herders in some selected local governments with the aimed of finding lasting solution to the lingering crises. The method adopted for the research work was qualitative method and specifically thematic approach to data analysis. This was fundamental because its descriptive and historical in nature, which will give us a better comprehension of the issues involved in the crises between farmers and herders. The research work discovered that competition for the use of land resources was the major factor that led to the crisis between farmers and herders, that as a consequence it led to gross underdevelopment of the rural areas. The research work showed that informal institutions have engaged in mediation, reconciliation, arbitration among the two parties. However, the research recommends that traditional method of dispute resolution mechanism that was used prior to colonialism should be adopted; the use of unconventional methods should be employed because those living in the communities know the nooks and crannies more than the conventional military and paramilitary organizations; the government should have the political muzzle to nip this social menace to the bud; the communities affected by this conflict should adopt modern method of rearing castles like ranching.

Keywords: farmers herders, traditional rulers, conflict, resources competition, ruralization of conflict

JEL Classification:

Contribution to/Originality Knowledge

1.0 Introduction

The post-colonial Nigeria have experienced violent conflicts ranging from political, social, religious, cultural, ethnic and so on. The consequence of these actions has led to destruction of human and material resources (Albert, 2012). The cause of these conflicts can be traced to colonial invasion of the country as captured by Dauda (2013); that almost all forms of tensions and conflict in Nigeria are rooted in its colonial artificial creation as a nation.

However, Plateau State, known as the 'Home of Peace and Tourism', is a flourishing and distinct state in North Central Nigeria. The state is generally recognised by breath-taking natural beauty; well-endowed cultural heritage and; resilient people. From the majestic Jos



Plateau to the scenic hills and valleys, Plateau State is no doubt a treasure trove of natural wonders, waiting to be explored and experienced. With its exceptional blend of traditional and modern attractions, Plateau State has been a destination of choice for tourists, investors, and anyone seeking a peaceful and hospitable environment over the years. The Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, described the city as “the ecumenical heart of Nigerian humanity the city of open arms” (Premium Times May 24, 2014).

Thus, the beauty and attractiveness of the state is becoming a shadow of itself because of the ever-increasing challenges connected to violence, social unrest, conflict communal clashes as well as dearth of quality leadership in some communities. There is no gainsaying that the conflict in the state has metamorphosed into a rural problem, which has resulted in significant human suffering, displacement economic losses as well as leaving lasting trauma among individuals and communities; placing traditional leaders in a challenging position to tackle. At the heart of these conflict on the Plateau is between farmers and herders. Agricultural production provides the means of livelihood and economic sustenance for the majority of the population of Plateau State which is made up of Riyom, Barkin Ladi, Mangu and Bokkos.

Moreover, farmers and herders make significant contributions in meeting the nutritional needs of the country and thus contributing to food security of households. However, the farmers and herders have a long historical co-existence, at the center of this is land as the economic base of the society and competition on the ownership and exploitation of land. According to Lar (2022), farmers and herders have a long-standing partnership. Land has always been essential to human existence and is a foundational component of the economy. The ownership and usage of land and its resources are fundamental to livelihoods and culture. Herders, on the other hand, depend on land resources like plants and water for living; farmers who have turned to sedentary lifestyles rely largely on land for their daily livelihood.

Simmering tensions and violent outbursts are common realities hidden behind the bucolic façade of rural areas. Life disruption and progress are impeded by rural dissension, which stems from a complicated web of rivalry, historical grudges, and weak governance. However, there are strands of tradition the time-honoured customs and establishments that have long led rural communities intertwined with this complex web. Conflict in rural areas can be attributed, in part, to competition for scarce resources like water and land. These scarcities are made worse by population expansion and climate change, which pushes communities to the edge and divides farmers from herders. Historical grievances, where unsolved racial and religious divides become flashpoints for violence, are another source of fuel for these wars. Weak control in rural regions on the Plateau leaves a power vacuum that leaves conflicts unresolved and populations exposed

In addition, the conflict between farmers and herders has also been explained by a number of variables, with the movement of herders in pursuit of richer and greener pastures being the main cause of this conflict. This has been the situation in the Jos-Plateau, where, since the start of the twenty-first century, ceaseless conflicts between farmers and herders have dominated the landscape. This is due to the fact that the article will go into great detail on how this trend

was prompted by variables such as overpopulation, climate change, and other issues (Lar, 2022).

In the same vein, traditional institutions play a vital role in Plateau state, in maintaining cultural heritage, promoting social cohesion, and fostering community development. Community leaders, in particular, are the backbone of rural communities. They are the trusted figures who citizens turn to for guidance and support. Nonetheless, these roles are becoming even more tasking. This is urgently calling for information-driven and quality leadership for managing and navigating these emerging issues in the state, especially at the local level.

As such, in the middle of this conflict, traditional institutions and local leaders have the capacity to be peacemakers. These organizations, which include lineage groups, customary courts, and councils of elders, have a profound awareness of regional customs and social dynamics and ought to be investigated and strengthened. For many years, they have acted as conflict mediators, using their moral authority and customs to promote peace and preserve communal values.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

The crises between farmers and herders in Nigeria and in particular, Plateau state is not a new phenomenon. This is because conflict is inevitable in human society. However, violent conflict is what most societies are trying to avert. In the past, conflict between farmers and herders are amicably resolved by using traditional rulers. The situation has reached an alarming dimension as revealed by Adetula (2016) that in the past herdsman were known to have wreak havoc in certain communities in Nigeria, but the rate at which they are committing these atrocities have increased in recent times.

However, there were several insinuations on the causes of conflict between farmers and herders in Plateau state. Thus, some people tend to view it as competition for land resources, increased social vices in the form of kidnapping, rape, robbery, phone snatching, others linked it to politics, ethnic and religious connotation.

There are several reports by researchers on the effects of the crises on the affected communities ranging from destruction of lives and properties, increase in Internally Displaced persons camps and so on. Thus, the conflict between farmers and herders in Plateau state has negative impact on the socio-economic development of the state at large. This was captured in the statement that three people were killed and many pastoralist settlements in Plateau state were set on fire during the two days of conflict between farmers and herders in June 2009, according to Integrated Regional Information Network (2009). As evidence for the aforementioned claim, reports from Nigeria indicate that the situation has had serious repercussions, with over 6,000 fatalities and over 62,000 displaced in the Middle Belt states of Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Kaduna alone (Kwaja and Bukola 2018).

Thus, in view of the devastating effects of the conflict between farmers and herders on the socio-economic development of the state, frantic efforts were made by government, non-governmental organizations and other peace building agencies but couldn't yield the much-



needed result. Moreover, from the literature reviewed it showed that much has not been achieved in identifying the conflict merchants and the impact of interventions of various agencies in resolving this menace. The problem that prompted this research is to establish the real causes of the conflict and proffer solutions to the frequent crises between farmers and herders in Plateau state.

1.3 Research Questions

This research work seeks to answer the following questions

- i. What are the factors that led to the crises between farmers and herders in Bokkos, Mangu, Ryom and Barkin Ladi Local Government areas of Plateau State?
- ii. To what extent has this crisis impacted on the socio-economic activities of the people in these local government areas.
- iii. What are the roles played by the traditional/tribal and religious leaders in curbing this crisis between farmers and herders in the affected areas?

1.4 Objectives

- i. To investigate the factors that led to the crises between farmers and herders in the affected Local Government areas of Plateau State.
- ii. To find out the extent to which the crises affected socio-economic activities in the affected local government areas.
- iii. To identify the various roles played by traditional, tribal and religious leaders in curbing the crisis between farmers and herders in the affected local government areas.

1.5 Study areas

Plateau State is the twelfth largest state in Nigeria, and is roughly located in the center of the country. Its capital is Jos, Plateau State is celebrated as ``The Home of Peace and Tourism``. It has a population of around 3.5 million people based on the 2006 population census conducted by National Population Commission in 2006.

Plateau state is located in Nigeria`s middle belt. With an area of 26,899 square kilometers, it is located between latitude 80-degree 24`N and latitude 80 degree 32` and 100degree 38` East. The state is named after the picturesque Jos Plateau, a mountainous area in the north of the state with captivating rock formations. Bare rocks are scattered across the grasslands, which cover the Plateau. The altitude ranges from around 1,200 meters (about 4,000 feet) to a peak of 1,829 meters above sea level in the Shere Hills range near Jos. Years of tin mining have also left the area strewn with deep gorges and lakes. The state is made up of 17 local government areas. The local governments under study are: Mangu, Barkin Ladi, Bokkos and Riyom local governments between 2017 to 2024. The justification for the selection is because they are worst heat in recent times by the crises between farmers and herders.

2.0 Literature Review

The quest for peace and security is not limited to any particular discipline. Every field of human endeavor in the academia must explore ways of promoting and sustaining peace and security without which there would be no space for any form of growth or existence. Many researchers have proven that rural conflict is on the rise and there are several factors that led to the crises. The competition for the use of the resource resulted to conflict between farmers and herders. Thus, the crises have been on the increase in most countries in the Sahelian African region due to rapid population growth and the escalating effects of climate change (Nnaji, Ratna, & Renwick (2022).

In Nigeria, the crise between farmers and herders can be attributed to the effect of climate change. The effect of climate change has resulted in drought, heavy rainfall, destruction of farm lands, deforestation by human activities, increase in population, desertification and so on. These and many factors have led to the migration of herders from the northern part of the country to the south in search for greener pasture to grass their animals. The farmers use the land to cultivate their crops and wouldn't want their land to be invaded by the herders. As a consequence, the migration has led to the crises between the herders and farmers on the land. However, research was conducted in support of the statement by Udeh (2018), who examined how Nigerian conflicts between farmers and herders were impacted by climate change. The author found that unmanaged deforestation, drought, and damage had all been brought on by climate change in northern Nigeria. In quest of greener pastures, this has compelled herders to go even farther south in the nation. The migration has resulted in a violent conflict between the migrant herders and the farmers in the host villages over grasslands. According to the author, official actions have disregarded conflict's root cause, which is climate change. Furthermore, the Federal Government has been reluctant to respond and has only reacted by sending security officers to the impacted communities. The author recommended ranching, prohibiting open grassing, and moving livestock by trucks. The author ignored the fact that open grassing is the culture of Fulani people.

However, the causes of the conflict between the farmers and herders are not only limited to the challenge of climate change, there is intensive competition for land and water resources. This is supported by Bello (2013), who investigated the conflict between farmers and herders in Kano State, in Nigeria's north-western geopolitical zone. In the study, the research instruments were distributed using a four-stage cluster random sampling process. Thirteen of the state's forty-four local governments (LGAs) were impacted by the threat. Five farming settlements were chosen at random from each of the 31 LGAs, for a total of 155 villages. According to the report, in order to meet the increasing demand, it is necessary to provide food crops, livestock, raw materials for industry, and exports. This has led to competition for land resources and conflicts between farmers and herders in Kano State.

Other factors include rapid increase in population, porous border, bad government policies and so on. This was supported by an empirical analysis of the dispute between Nigerian farmers and herders from 2000 to 2017 was conducted by Cinjel, Musa, and Umaru (2018). Documentary research design and meta-analysis were employed in the study. The documentary



facts were taken from a variety of relevant published and unpublished sources. The main source of data was a structured interview consisting of both closed- and open-ended questions. The participative approach, which blends focus group discussions and informant interviews, was used to generate the primary data. The study's findings indicate that a number of variables, including a population boom, permeable borders, and poor governance, contribute to the conflict between Nigerian farmers and herders.

Although conflicts between herders and farmers have been ongoing historically, their frequency and intensity are increasing (Adelaja, & George, 2019). These conflicts directly influence rural households' food insecurity because of their direct impacts on the ability to cultivate land the herders want to access and/or to access food via markets. Farmer-herder (FH) conflicts occur when nomadic herders graze their animals (e.g., cattle) in farmers' cropland, leading to yield and income losses for farmers. Farmers sometimes retaliate by maiming the cattle or forcing herders out of their communities. In response, herders fight back, and FH conflicts occur (Day & Cuss, 2019).

However, the consequences of the clashes between farmers and herders include destruction of lives and properties, shattered economic development in the communities affected by the crisis. In support of the assertion research was conducted using a quantitative approach based on secondary sources of data collection, Okoro (2018) investigated the effects of farmers-herders clashes on Nigeria's social and economic development. The study found that the clashes have resulted in deaths, displacements, property destruction, mistrust between farmers and herders, food insecurity, and unemployment. The study also recommended that the government create grassing areas for herdsmen and impose taxes on them, a recommendation that some people view as land grappling.

In this regard, frantic efforts have been made by stake holders in peace building process in Plateau State to resolve the crises between farmers and herders in the affected communities but couldn't address the issues. This includes governmental and non-governmental organizations. This was explained that to effectively build peace among herders and farmers, Momale (2003) stated that in order to protect disadvantaged groups' rights to access resources, the government should establish policy guidelines and make sure they are implemented effectively. But according to the Centre for Peace, Diplomatic and Development Studies (CPDDS) (2012), the issue with the police is that they are not able to provide security because of poor logistics, especially mobility, which would improve their capacity to react to emergencies quickly and effectively. The storylines suggest that because of corruption and materialistic impulses that have alienated these institutions from the broader public, parties involved in disputes have lost trust in the police, courts, and security forces. This was in line with Gyong's (2007) assertion that the conventional approach to dispute resolution prior to colonization in Africa was better than the present strategies, the author further that the desire was to remove the cause of the dispute and reconcile the two parties in such a way as to restore the social structure of society to its state of equilibrium with elders of the community playing the role of impartial judges.

Therefore, in the northern senatorial districts of Plateau State, the League for Human Rights and the Youth Adolescence, Reflection and Action Center (YARAC) have been instrumental in settling conflicts between farmers and herders. This was in line with the findings of Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008), who suggested that the study area's informal traditional systems for resolving disputes are still in operation and that crop farmers and herders both favor the idea of conflict arbitration. However, Best (2009) said that the components of western alternative conflict resolution include grassroots, community-based initiatives, partnerships, good governance, negotiation, reconciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, and crisis management.

In line with the above statement, Ajala (2020) argued that the dynamics of the conflict are more complicated than has been reported and crucial aspects of the conflict have not been identified, prolonging the search for a lasting solution. They noted how traditional pastoralism is gradually giving way to neo-pastoralism, a form of pastoralism which involves larger herds and increased use of arms and ammunitions. These conflicts in the rural areas have thrown new challenges to the managers of the communities. Some become so overwhelm that synergy between key stakeholders become extinct resulting mutual distrust and apprehension. However, while the literature arising from the conflicts in other regions of the world are expanding and the lessons for peaceful coexistence is being learnt and documented, the conflicts from the Jos Plateau so far has received less literary critical attention. This is a gap that this study intends to address.

3.0 Research Methodology

The research method adopted for this study was based on how the data were generated, presented and analysed. It shows as a process that a researcher utilises to compress, organise and break down the data in the course of carrying out scientific research in social sciences.

In this research, a qualitative approach was being used. The rationale behind using qualitative methodology is to increase the understanding about dynamics, opinions and perceptions of people in the case study areas and its significance in solving the problem affecting the people. A literature review, observations, video/audio recordings, and interviews were used as methodological tools in the research process.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is seen as a framework for the gathering and breaking down of data. The selection of a research design shows decisions about the scale of preference relating to different approaches to the research process. Thus, it helps the researcher to make correct decisions in the process of the research. The research design for this study is narrative, which will be the most appropriate for the comprehension of the character and tradition of the crisis between herders and the locals in the study areas.

3.2 Sources of Data

Thus, the data collection method deals with how data were generated and presented, which were through primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data are original research



responses which are obtained via the first-hand study. Primary data include information collected from interviews, audios and videos recordings, observations, records of minutes of meetings, focus groups, among others.

Secondary data refers to the existing dataset which had previously been gathered by another person conducting research, which could be for a different research question.

Therefore, secondary data are obtained from related textbooks, journals, magazines, periodicals, reports on crises in Plateau State. Others are seminar papers, articles and other related books on the subject matter.

3.3 Sampling Method

It is a process for choosing participants from a population. In other words, sampling method is referred to as the target population that is the whole group of people from which the model might depict. The target group or the participants include the locals, traditional rulers, religious leaders, officials of tribal associations in the affected rural areas. The research work adopted a purposive sampling technique. It is described as the type of sampling technique that is judgmental, selective or subjective. This will also enable the researcher to get the opinions, views of the sample population on the crises in the areas of study. In this regard, 25 communities are selected from Bokkos, Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government areas of Plateau State for interviews, observations, questions, which will give us a total of 100 communities.

Sampling size: The local governments under study is made up of over 100 villages, as a result, to have a fair representation. The researcher selected 25 villages from each of the four affected local governments understudy. This will give us a total of 100 communities which is a fair representation of the local governments under investigation.

3.4 Theoretical Model

The study has adopted frustration-aggression theory which was founded by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Niel Miller O.H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears (1939) which argues that as sources of frustration accumulate during an economic crisis, for example frustrated groups may unleash their aggression on a convenient social target, often a minority group. The study is based on the frustration-aggression theory, this is a theory of conflict which argues that the pre-condition for violent reactions is relative deprivation. That the value expectations of the people are the goods like land, water, forest resources as material things that people believed they are justifiable entitled. The theory argues that the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration. The theory further explained that conflict is inevitable as explained by Karl Marx ``no matter how peaceful an individual is between husband and wife, if one is pushed to the world their bond to be reactions``. The theory believes that aggression is natural in human being except the manifestation that differentiate them, some react fast to certain circumstances and some react slowly to certain situations. The theory argues that individuals that react slowly when issues have been accumulated and kept on reoccurring, they become frustrated and there bound to be violent reaction.

Thus, the features of the theory include

- a. It showed that some people have hot temperament while others have slow temperament.
- b. It is only when a person is pushed to the world that he or she react to certain circumstances.
- c. In a situation where one observed the reoccurrence of a bad situation continually can result to outburst violent.
- d. Frustrated life style can result to aggressive behaviour.

However, this theory is fundamental to the study considering the fact that land, water, forest are resources that are collectively used by both farmers and herders. Famers utilized the land to plant crops while herders use the land to grass their animals. These human activities caused serious pressure on the land which reduces the quantity, fertility, population explosion, climate change associated with the use of this common resources. As a consequence, conflict arises between farmers and herders, this is because both groups felt deprived and frustrated on the use of these resources. However, both parties become aggressive towards one another resulting in loss of lives and properties in the affected communities.

This paper outlines the need conscious research focusing on need to equip local leaders for quality leadership for managing contemporary issues in the state. By educating these key local leaders, the state can foster collaboration, patriotism, communication, and equip them with necessary skills to address community pressing concerns to be more effective and efficient in-service delivery. With suitable knowledge, local leaders can leverage on the legitimacy of traditional institutions to navigate the tangled web of rural conflict and building a more peaceful future for rural communities.

3.5 Tools of Analysis

The tools used in the course of this research work include books, questionnaires, tables, quotes, themes, sub-themes.

4.0 Data Analysis

Data analysis is described as the method of using logical means to recap, condense, or evaluate the data collated from the field. However, the researcher adopted the use of qualitative data analysis, which deals with the interpretation of the data obtained from the field. This was through interviews, recordings of minutes of meetings, observations, among others. However, the researcher employed the use of thematic analysis as a type of qualitative data analysis for the comprehension of the trend under study.

4.1 Presentation of Data

Table 1 Showing Local Governments, Districts and villages affected by the crisis

S/n	Local Government	Districts	Villages
1	Riyom	Riyom	Wereng, Byei, Kwi, Rim
		Ganawuri	Bum, Tse, Attakar, Danse, Kwalkwi Kwalak, Fan rai



		Bachi	Kyeng, Shanong, Bangai
			Sopp
			Sharubutu
		Kwogo-Hoss	Sambak
			Ta-hoss
2	Mangu	Bungha	Dangbungha, Kwahas Bungha, Lapap, Tading, Dawo, Jackom
		Pushit	Bindyes
		Mangu Ward 2	Ntam, Sabonlayi, Lihitlubang
		Mangu Ward 1	Derdep, Dengdeng Lihit, Derkong
		Kerang	Fwangkwak, Duwong
		Katul	Twas
		Mangun	Nyemdung
		Kombun	Tidiu
		Jipal	Katul
		Mangu Halle	Kinat
		Bwai	Chisu, Gindirin-Ngok
		Gindiri	Seminary Area
3	Bokkos	Mushere	Horop, Iknwakap, Suwa, Kopour, Margif, Dingiak, Kawel, Garah, Rom, Dingak, Hok, Dimar
		Butura	Butura Kompani, Dar, Chikham
		Daffo	Ganda, Joso
		Mbar	Mangor, Bong
		Toff	Kumduk
		Tangur	Ndun
		Forof	Chenget
		Kamwai	Tukyeh, Takai, Maikatako, NTV
4	Barkin Ladi	Fan	Nding-Rapyam, Fan, Nding-Sesut, Nding-Rayi, Reyidi
		Gashioh	Ruku
		Ropp	Kassa, Bet, Rakwok, Gassa, Kapyar
		Mazad	Ramabongha, Fit-Makusho
		Hiepang	Pwomol
		Foron	Ratsok, Kassa
		Gashish	Ganaropp

Source: Field survey, 2024

The procedures for building themes

How the protocol of building themes was generated from the thematic analysis. The procedure for building of themes in thematic analysis in the cause of the research work include;

Question A: *What do you think are the factors that led to the crises between farmers and herders in your community?*

Table 2: Showing the factors that led to the crises between farmers and herders in communities.

Quotations	Codes	Themes
Majority of the respondents Talked about:	Struggling for grassing/farming spaces, boundary and grassing routes, land grapping, damaging of farm/crops, religious connotation, politics of exclusion, land ownership, open grassing.	Competition on land resources

Based on the quotations from the responses of the respondents, majority of respondents talked about the codes that were generated to include boundary and grassing roots, land grapping, damaging of farms/crops, religious connotation, politics of exclusion, land ownership, open grassing, struggling for grassing/farming spaces. The theme that emerged from the codes was competition for land resources

Question B: *What do you think are some of the effects of this crises on the socio-economic development of your communities?*

Table 3: Showing the effects of the crises on the socio-economic development of communities

Quotations	Codes	Themes
Majority of the respondents Talked about:	Destruction of lives and properties, rural urban migration, hunger/starvation, displaced from ancestral land, absent of unity, land grapping, scarcity of food, poor agricultural out-put	Gross underdevelopment

From the above quotations the responses of the participants, majority of them accepted the codes that were generated to include destruction of lives and properties, rural urban migration, hunger/starvation, displaced from ancestral land, absent of unity, land grapping, scarcity of food, poor agricultural out-put. The theme that emerged from the codes was gross underdevelopment.

Question C: *What are the roles played by traditional, religious or tribal organizations in curbing the crises between farmers and herders in your community?*

Table 4: Showing the roles played by traditional, religious, tribal organizations in curbing the crises between farmers and herders.

Quotations	Codes	Themes
Majority of the respondents Talked about:	Organised peace meetings, dialogue between parties, fuelling crises by some leaders, preaching forgiveness, some engaged in bribery and corrupt practices, tolerance, unity, prayer and fasting.	Mediation between worrying parties



From the table above, the responses of the participants, majority of them talked about the codes that were generated to include organized peace meetings, dialogue between parties, fueling crises by some leaders, preaching forgiveness, some engaged in bribery and corrupt practices, tolerance, unity, prayer and fasting. The theme that emerged from the codes was completion for land resources.

4.2 Discussion of research findings

From the analysis of the research work on resource competition and ruralization of conflict between farmers and herders in some selected local government areas of Plateau State. the role of traditional rulers/community leaders in managing the contemporary issues has been revealed;

4.3 Competition on land resources

The causes of farmers and herders' crises can be attributed to the intensive competition on the use of land. The farmers use land to plant crops while herders use the land to grass their animals. However, from the findings of this research, it showed that there are numerous factors that led to the crises between farmers and herders in these communities. It has to do with competition on land resources; this was captured by a respondent in Bachi, Riyom Local government "you see, one of the major factors that led to the crise between farmers and herders is that farmers need land to expand their crop production while herders are in need of verse land, water to grass their cattle, as a result of these demands by both parties result to crises". The statement was in line with (Iliyasu, 2021) who asserted that the "most critical" issue facing the Fulani cattle herdsman in their line of work, according to them, is conflicts resulting from land use.

In line with the above statement; in the face of unfavorable weather, Fulani herdsman are desperately trying to boost the productivity of their livestock farming, which has made the hunt for suitable pasture for cattle grazing necessary. Cattle herding and arable crop production coincide significantly during the rainy season's peak, which is marked by cattle breeding, increased milk production, and shorter grazing hours. This causes conflict between herdsman and farmers

In many parts of Nigeria, the resulting rise in competition for arable land has frequently resulted in significant hostilities and social tension between the two user groups. In addition to increasing the degree of insecurity, the conflicts have shown a high potential to worsen the food crisis in Nigeria and impacted on other nations because they have resulted in the loss of valuable properties, crops, livestock, and farmer lives (Idowu, 2017)

The research work further revealed that grassing on the farmers crops by herders and a reprisal by killing animals by farmers often result to confrontation between the two parties. This state was revealed by a leader in Deng-Deng Lihit of Mangu Local Government "the confrontation between the two parties starts when herders destroy crops using their animals, of course there must be reprisal attack by farmers. The herders have no grazing routes, desertification is

driving the herders into hinterland and the farmers have no enough land to cultivate crops as a result of increase in population and urbanization.

4.4 Gross underdevelopment

In an atmosphere of crises there wouldn't be any form of development rather there will be retrogression. The research showed that the aftermaths of the crises between farmers and herders often lead to destruction of lives and properties among the communities. This scenario was stated by a participant in Gassa Village, Ropp District of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area "in crises situation definitely there must be loss of lives and properties; this has some indicators; hunger, criminality, retarded education, economic hardship, food scarcity, low agricultural output, increased internally displaced persons, destruction of infrastructural facilities and so on. The above statement is supported by (FAO, 2015) that the activities of the herders, who travel around daily with their cattle in search of water and green pastures, have resulted in a number of violent communal clashes in Nigeria in recent years (FAO, 2015). This has led to the deaths of numerous farmers and herders, as well as the decrease in crop and herd productivity for others. The breakdown of the previously friendly relationship has had a significant impact on the state's overall food security as well as, more specifically, on households that have been left to bear the brunt of the state's conflict and migration, according to Sulaiman (2021). As a result, there is now food insecurity and economic uncertainty regarding the subsistence of people throughout the plateau state.

Furthermore, the devastating nature of the crisis between farmers and herders in communities that were affected. The research work further indicated that the conflict affects the income of the parties involved, the gross domestic products of the state and country in general. It breeds antisocial vices in villages that were affected by the carnage. This position was captured by a community leader in Chenget Village, Forof District (Kwatas) of Bokkos Local Government "one of the outstanding effects of the crises between farmers and herders in our community is that it reduces drastically the farmers income, the Gross Domestic Product of the state and the country at large. It resulted in social vices because it made women and girls child vulnerable to sexual assault, dwindling food supply, rising cost of living".

4.5 Mediation between worrying parties

The research work revealed that traditional rulers, tribal leaders, religious leaders have engaged in mediating between farmers and herders in several ways; organized peace meetings, preaching forgiveness, preaching tolerance, preaching unity, organized prayer and fasting to nip this menace to the bud. This was stated by a respondent in Mangor Village, Mbar District of Bokkos Local Government "as a leader in the community we use to organize dialogue among the worrying parties, preaching tolerance and peaceful co-existence, as a leader, we cannot fold our arms when there are crises. This is because in a situation like this development cannot take place". However, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations like the religious, traditional, tribal institutions, other informal methods have been implored in resolving the conflict between farmers and herders in the affected communities in Plateau state. This supported the findings of Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008), who believed that both crop farmers and herders preferred the topic of conflict arbitration and that



informal traditional mechanisms for resolving disputes were still in place in the study area. In contrast, Best (2009) claimed that western alternative dispute resolution includes grassroots community-based initiatives, good governance, partnerships, negotiation, reconciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, and crisis management.

5.0 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The incessant crisis between farmers and herders in Plateau State, has been widely reported as shown in most of the literature reviewed in this study. However, the study revealed that the major factors that led to the crisis was competition on land resources, the result led to destruction of lives and properties. The formal and informal institutions in dispute resolution seems in doubt. Thus, to address this crisis, there is need for a multidimensional approach in resolving the conflict between farmers and herders, this involved the conventional and unconventional methods of dispute resolution mechanism as recommend below;

- i. Since the conventional methods of the mechanism of dispute resolution has failed, there is need to adopt the traditional approach as used prior to colonialism. In pre-colonial era, the parties that were involved in disputes will be invited and discuss issues there by reaching an agreement, unlike the modern disputes resolution mechanism whereby they select some people who are not players in the conflict to come for dispute resolution. Especial those that stay in urban centers or the leadership of some tribal organizations who are not based in the affected rural areas.
- ii. The use of unconventional security apparatus like the vigilante, agro-rangers, civilian JTF, hunters or any other security outfit depending on the peculiarities of the communities that are affect by this crisis. This is because, these security outfits are members of the communities and they know the nocks and cronies of these communities than the conventional security forces.
- iii. The modern methods of rearing animals should be adopted hence, the issues of climate change, rapid increase in population, modernization have taken over most of the grassing routes. In other words, since moving cattle from one place to another can be attributed to the cause of the conflict, ranching should be the best solution to the crisis between the two parties.
- iv. The government of the day should have the political will to tackle these issues once and for all. There are war merchants who are benefiting from this carnage, culprits should be prosecuted and names published to serve as deterrence to others.

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