

# The Effectiveness of Government Strategies in Resolving Farmers-Herdsmen Conflict in Adamawa State

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**Abstract:-** The objective of this paper is three-fold: (1) to investigate the extent of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria; (2) to examine consequences of farmer-herdsmen conflict in the study area; and (3) to assess the effectiveness of Government strategies in resolving farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State. Methodologically, secondary data sources have been relied upon. The study also adopted descriptive research and impact assessment methods in order to describe the extent and consequences of conflict between farmers and herders, as well to assess the effectiveness of Government strategies in resolving farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State. The parameter for assessing the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies is the decline/increase in the rate of farmers-herdsmen clash and the rate of casualty accompanying the clash. The study findings indicated that the government is up and doing with effort to tackle the problem of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State by introducing such measures as security and legal actions, creation of grazing reserves, development programmes, cattle colonies and national livestock transformation plan, organized dialogue and negotiations, and comprehensive livestock development plan. Yet, these measures did not yield the desired outcome-ending or drastically reducing farmers-herdsmen conflict. There is an upsurge in the rate of violent clashes between farmers and herders in the various parts of the country, Adamawa State in particular. In the first half of 2018, more than 1,300 Nigerians have been killed and valuable properties worth billions of Naira have been destroyed in the violent confrontation between herders and farmers. In conclusion, to overcome the menace of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State, there should be systematic effort for identifying the root causes of the problem because to cure a cancer, we have to understand the root cause of the cancer. More importantly, effective leadership is necessary for any agency or policy to work effectively.

**Keywords:** Adamawa, Conflict, Conflict resolution, Farmers-herdsmen conflict, Strategies.

## I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Conflict between individuals and groups is traceable to the earliest written records as is evident in religious scriptures of Bible and the Quran and in mythical symbols of many cultures. Both scriptures had the parable of the children of Adam and Eve: Cain and Abel, in which Cain murdered Abel on a disagreement surrounding rivalry and animal sacrifice. Also, the Chinese emperors built the Great Wall to keep out the marauding hordes. The association of highly mobile pastoralists with raiding and warfare has been crucial

in establishing negative stereotypes throughout history. In West Africa, farmers formerly associated pastoral peoples with large-scale military conquest (Blench, 2003). Arguably, Fulanis and Tuaregs are the largest (semi-)nomadic group in the world found across the West Central Africa. Anter (2011) also pointed out that the Fulani is an ethnic group who are spread over several West African countries and in some places in Central African and the Sudan. Fulani people are found in Mali, Mauritania, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Togo, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Sudan and Cameroon.

In Nigeria, the Fulani people are found in large number. The nomadic group basically spends most of their lives in the bush and are the ones largely involved in clashes (Johnson & Akunola, 2017). In his *Fatwa on Urbanization of Nomads*, Muhammad Ballo (2000) narrated that, both Fulanis and Tuaregs are nomads and their herds compelled them to move from desert to the south where there was better pasture. Before the present farmers-herdsmen relationship became acrimonious, they had been living in cordial and symbiotic manner. There was a period in which herdsmen entered into Nigeria via the Nigeria/Cameroon border in search of greener pasture. The herdsmen settled in Borno/Adamawa where they found pasture and they had a peaceful symbiotic relationship with the farmers, a situation that proved beneficial to both groups (Nweze, 2005). Obviously, the peaceful co-existence was conditioned by sufficiency of land for farmers and herdsmen and the subsistence nature of farming, limited numbers of cattle managed by the herdsmen prevented fierce competition over scarce resources (Goke, 2018; Aliyu, Ikedinma & Akinwande, 2018).

With the increasing urbanization, numbers of cows, and limited land resources, the relationship between farmers and herders took a rather dangerous dimension, characterised by incessant conflict. Not only that increasing urbanization will be a reason for fighting between the Tuaregs and Fulanis and the settled communities they would later meet, Ballo (2000: 1) admitted that “northern Tuaregs clashed with the eastern groups over land of Adar and Gobir to which both were heading”. In similar vein, Blench (2003) asserted that as a result of the coming of the colonial regimes and the collapse of indigenous states, conflict between farmers and herders

took on a different colouring, becoming more associated with competition for natural resources. Nigeria, however, presents a very special situation quite unlike other West African countries, for two reasons; most notably the ambiguous prestige of pastoral culture particular to Fulbe pastoralists and also because of its large and comparatively wealthy population (Blench 2003).

Other reasons are; south ward movement of pastoral herds in to the humid and sub-humid zones, promoted by the successful control of epidemic posed by animal disease and the widespread availability of veterinary medicine and the expansion of farming activities into areas that hitherto served as pastureland. Since the 1950s, there has been a growth in human as well as livestock population in the coastal countries of West Africa. This gave rise to an increase pressure on natural resources and a stiff competition for available resources between farmers and herders (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010).

As time goes, cases of farmers-herdsmen conflicts across various states and locations in Nigeria began to draw the attention of the local authority and international community. These conflicts have now become so threatening on the country's national integration, such that the hitherto peaceful relationship between farmers and herdsman across various parts of Nigeria is degenerating to a carnage level (Kolawole, Amoge, & Eunice, 2018). The conflict is usually resulting in the death of hundreds of people, the destruction of thousands of homes and extensive harm to people's livelihoods (Amnesty International, 2018).

While conflict can be dangerous, it also carries the possibility of producing creative cooperation in a win-win solution (Shamir, 2003). Amnesty International (2018) argued that the government of Nigeria has failed to comply with its obligation to exercise due diligence, failing both to address the underlying causes of the violence between herders and villagers also to curb violence when it did occur. The key to this is for participants to engage as joint problem solvers, seeking to resolve the dispute, and to try and "enlarge the pie" rather than acting as adversaries and aggravating the situation. A mediator can play a valuable role in this process, facilitate a negotiation process which has come to a dead end, helping the parties concerned to focus on their essential interests rather than defend (or attack) fixed positions. The principles and procedures of consensus building should also be dealt with in some detail (Shamir, 2003).

Few studies have been carried out about the plights of herdsman (Sieff, 1997) and that of farmers (Tefera, 2013), both of which established a correlation that can generate conflict between the two groups. On the conflict between farmers and herdsman, many studies are available e.g; (Mareitu & Olarewaju, 2009; Johnson & Akunola, 2017; Tanimu & Akujuru, 2018; TersooUbwa, 2018), but most of them largely sought to take the broader picture of the farmers-herdsman conflict by focusing on the entire Nigerian society

(Blench, 2003; Nweze, 2005; Goke, 2018; Aliyu, Ikinma & Akinwande, 2018). Other studies focused on some affected states, like Kaduna State (Tanimu & Akujuru, 2018), Delta State (Ofuoku & Isife, 2010), Benue State (Gbaka, 2014; Musa, Shabu & Igbawua, 2014; TersooUbwa, 2018), Ekiti State (Ogo-Oluwa, 2017) and Ogun State (Ogunsanya & Papoola, 1999).

Although the above studies (and many more) have made significant contribution by drawing the attention of policymakers on the spate of conflict between farmers and herders at national and sub-national levels, there is dearth of (or no) studies that investigated the farmers-herders conflict with particular reference to Adamawa State, not to talk of concern on the government strategies in resolving such conflict. To fill this vacuum, the present study is designed to not only investigate the farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State, but it will also assess the effectiveness of Government strategies in resolving the conflict in the study area. The impetus for the study is that the role of government over the years in conflict resolution between Fulani herdsman and farmers are many and constructive, but the impact of these conflict resolution strategies is questionable given the prevalence of such conflict in the various parts of the country, Adamawa State in particular. The objectives of the study are:

- (1) To investigate the extent farmers-herdsman conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria;
- (2) To examine consequences of farmer-herdsman conflict in the study area; and
- (3) To assess the effectiveness of Government strategies in resolving farmers-herdsman conflict in Adamawa State.

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

*Conflict:* Conflict is variously defined because it is viewed differently. According to Dennen, (2005), conflict is incompatibility of interests, goals, values, needs, expectations, and/or social cosmologies (or ideologies). Conflict is a clash of interest over something valuable, material or abstract. Conflict is inevitable part of social life because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation. Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations presenting us with nothing short of a semantic jungle (Barcovitch, 2004). Pondy (1967) maintained that conflict is made up of (1) antecedent conditions, (2) affective conditions, (3) cognitive conditions and (4) behavioural conditions. Galtung (1999) and Barcovitch (2004) advance a conception of conflict which emphasizes its three, interrelated dimensions, namely: (1) conflict situation (the basic incompatibility), (2) conflict attitudes (range of psychological factors) and (3) conflict behaviour (set of related behaviour).

Like other terms, conflict generates considerable ambivalence and leaves many scholars and administrators quite uncertain about (1) its meaning and relevance and (2) how best to cope

with it (Barcovitch, 2004). Conflicts or dysfunctional disputes usually occur between groups of people and could be ethnic, religious, demographic, cultural (chieftaincy), political, economic or civic. Such disputes or conflicts occur at urban, rural or national levels. They may also be over farmlands, ponds, rivers or sites of construction of houses e.t.c. such disputes may last longer than necessary and is capable of hindering rural development in spite of other efforts (TersooUbwa, 2018).

In the modern peace and conflict scholarship, many peace researchers like (Deutsch, 1973; Galtung, 1973; Tjosvold, 2006; Buescher, 2013) reached the understanding that disputes are normal in human society, and not necessarily destructive, and that if they do not get out of hand they may have within them a potential for growth, maturity, and social changes, an opportunity for new ways of thinking and new experiences. Because conflicts are integral part of human interaction, one should learn to manage them: to deal with them in a way that prevents escalation and destruction, and arrives at new, innovative, and creative ideas to resolve them.

*Conflict Resolution:* The concept of conflict resolution is a double-edged sword, thus carrying with it many interpretations. On one hand, conflict resolution can be regarded as any process that resolves or ends conflict via methods which can include violence or warfare. Alternatively, it can be view as a non-violent process that manages conflict through compromise, or through the assistance of a third party who either facilitates or impose a settlement or resolution. Conflict resolution processes are many and varied and can be seen as a continuum ranging from collaborative, participatory, informal, non-binding processes (such as mediation, conciliation, third party negotiation) to adversarial, fact-oriented, legally binding and imposed decisions that arise from institutions such as the courts and tribunals (Boulle, 1998; Ogo-Oluwa, 2017).

In recent decades, the various conflict resolution approaches have become a widely accepted field both of academic study and of practice, with official and/or legislative functions in many countries. In international relations, they play an increasing role in containing, managing and resolving potential sources of conflict (Shamir, 2003). Everybody has their own individual preference for dealing with conflict. Some of us prefer to avoid conflict at all cost; others see conflict as a way to get their own way. This is why it is pertinent for a strategist to understand the concept of conflict resolution.

*Strategies of Conflict Resolution:* The concept of strategy can be seen as integrated coherent pattern of thinking, decision which if properly translated into action can produce desired outcome. Strategy is needed in all businesses of life, including public management, business administration, military, and political affairs. Consequently, strategies of conflict resolution are those systematic measures designed to manage tension and strife between contending parties (as individuals or groups) in

order to restore peaceful coexistence. Strategies for dealing with conflicts have been part of the human heritage, differing between cultures and societies. Nations, groups, and individuals have tried throughout history to manage conflicts in order to minimize the negative and undesirable effects that they may pose (Shamir, 2003).

The strategies of conflict resolution can be alternative dispute resolution (such as mediation, arbitration, and negotiation), security action (special/joint task forces or military), judicial action, and other developmental policies (pro-poor policies, fighting unemployment), etc. In 1974, Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann (cited in CPTP, 2014) created the *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model* which identifies and defines 5 main conflict resolution styles. Thomas and Kilmann observed that in conflict, individuals or groups are either trying to be assertive, cooperative, or assertive and cooperative (CPTP, 2014). By assertive, it means a party is trying to satisfy his/her own concerns. As for the cooperative, an individual or group trying to satisfy the other person's or group's concerns. Assertive and cooperative has just combined both

From the foregoing, five (5) main styles emerge which comprised of different levels of both types of behavior, assertiveness and cooperativeness. The five strategies are used to resolve conflict; they are: avoidance, accommodation, competing, compromising, and collaborating. Avoiding is a low assertiveness and low cooperation. Accommodating is a low assertiveness and high cooperation. Competing is high assertiveness and low cooperation. Compromising is a medium assertiveness and medium cooperation, while collaborating is high assertiveness and high cooperation. However, Brokenburr & O'Donnell (2016) contended that no matter what the strategy, resolution of conflict to mutual satisfaction cannot occur without mutual effort. This is why involvement of authority is vital in conflict resolution so as to ensure that the contending groups (farmers and herders in this case) are willing to restore peace and unity.

### III. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION

Albeit conflict is a common phenomenon, theoretical thinking about conflict is a recent development, just emerging after the Second World War (Pondey, 1967; Galtung, 1973; Galtung 1978). This is not referring to theory of conflict as a pillar of sociological thought, but theoretical underpinning within context of conflict as a recognised field of study. For the purpose of this paper, conflict theory will be used to analyse farmers-herders conflict in Adamawa State.

Conflict theory was developed by Marx (as cited in Henslin, 2009). Conflict theorists stress that society is composed of groups that are competing with one another for scarce resources. Although the surface may show alliances or cooperation, scratch that surface and you will find a struggle for power (Henslin, 2009). In the traditional conflict proposition, each society has some small group controls the means of production and exploits those who are not in control. In industrialized societies, the struggle is between the

*bourgeoisie*, the small group of capitalists who own the means to produce wealth, and the *proletariat*, the mass of workers who are exploited by the bourgeoisie. The capitalists also control the legal and political system: If the workers rebel, the capitalists call on the power of the state to subdue them. Many sociologists extend conflict theory beyond the relationship of capitalists and workers. They examine how opposing interests permeate every layer of society-whether that of a small group, an organization, a community, or the entire society. There is, then, a constant struggle throughout society to determine who has authority or influence and how far that dominance goes.

It is obvious that the farmers and herders are related in one way or the other. Farmers need cattle for animal traction, while herders need bush, where farmlands are located, for movement with their cattle and grazing. They are also related because cattle survive on grass and hays, while crops grow healthy with animal manure. This lead to relationship of some sort and, as pointed out by the proponents of conflict theory; conflict arises out of social interaction. Hence conflict is inevitable between farmers and herders. But the foundation of conflict is not only relationship but struggle for scarce resources in the course of social relationship. For example, the struggle for land use, the struggle for grazing routes for the herders which is now occupied by the farmers, and the struggle for cattle grazing lands can all lead to misunderstanding between farmers and herders in Nigeria.

In a nutshell, conflict approach recognizes that conflict is an inherent aspect of the social system, where a social group tries to dominate another group; hence it will emancipate the oppressed groups and bring development to the entire society. Unfortunately, Ritzer (2011) notes that conflict theories often seemed little more than mirror image of structural functionalism with little intellectual integrity of its own. Despite its ability to explain farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, the conflict theory is criticized on some grounds. Firstly, the theory argues that conflict is an engine of progress, but it fails to recognize the fact that conflict is often destructive. In fact, peaceful coexistence can better bring progress than conflict. Nigeria and many other developing countries are suffering socio-economic and political retrogression due to conflict.

#### IV. THE EXTENT OF FARMERS-HERDSMEN CONFLICT IN ADAMAWA STATE

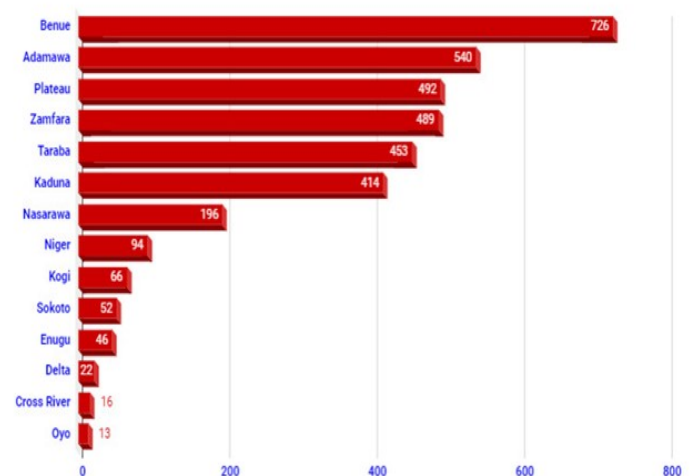
Nigeria's farmers-herders crisis is widespread, but Adamawa is one of the worst affected states. This is conditioned by factors like the geographic, socio-cultural and demographic composition of the Adamawa State. As noted by Egbuta (2018), the depletion of arable land for subsistence farming largely as a result of increasing urbanisation and the adverse effect of climate change, especially along the Lake Chad basin, there is increased struggle between herdsman and farmers, leading to violent confrontations and conflicts, deaths and forced displacement, as well as the destruction of agriculture and livestock. Farmers-herders conflict has

resulted in death of more than 6,000 people in the last three years and Adamawa is one of the worst affected states as it has been hit with high number of deaths, after Benue State (Ojekunle, 2018).

The Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore has claimed that, estimated 5,000 cattle herders have been killed in several states in Nigeria in ongoing conflicts between nomadic herders and local farming communities (Bada, 2018). While speaking during an interview with Nigerian Tribune, *Kautal Hore's* Secretary-General, Saleh Alhassan, lamented that enough has not been reported about the murder of herdsman. According to him, cattle herders have been brutally killed, with at least two million cows lost without any consequences for the perpetrators (Bada, 2018).

In the first half of 2018, more than 1,300 Nigerians have died in violence involving herders and farmers. What were once spontaneous attacks have become premeditated scorched-earth campaigns in which marauders often take villages by surprise at night. Herdsmen-Farmers Farmers-herdsmen conflict is now deadlier than the notorious Nigeria's insurgent and terrorist groups, such as *Boko Haram* and Niger Delta militia. As reported by International Crisis Group (2018), the conflict is now claiming about six times more civilian lives than the *Boko Haram* insurgency, and it poses a grave threat to the country's stability and unity (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Amnesty International (2018) visited 56 communities in Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Taraba, and Zamfara states affected by the clashes and conducted 262 interviews, including remotely with members of communities in Nasarawa and Plateau states. The organization also gathered the rate of deaths in these states as a result of farmers-herdsmen conflict as illustrated in the following graph:



Source: (Adapted from) Amnesty International (2018). *Harvest of death: Three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria*. Abuja-FCT, Nigeria. p. 5.

The above bar graph is adapted from Amnesty International (2018), showing the death toll for each of the fourteen states, with Adamawa State being the second most affected State. Ofuoku & Isife (2010) also studied the deadly episode in Demsa Local Government of Adamawa state, where 28 people were feared killed and about 2,500 farmers were displaced and rendered homeless in the latest hostility between cattle herders and farmers in the host community in July, 2005. This is one of the multiple encounters between farmers and herdsman in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Amnesty International (2018) reported that members of farmer communities in all parts of the Adamawa said they had lived in peace with members of herder communities, who are Fulani. The Fulani herders also said the same thing about living in peace with the farmers. In some communities, farmers said problems started over the destruction of their crops due to the animals of the herders grazing on their farmlands, while in other communities, they could not explain the reasons for the attacks. In some cases, farmers received prior information or heard rumours that they would be attacked, but in other cases, the attacks were unexpected. The Fulani herders blamed farmers for trying to chase them out of their communities by rustling their cattle and attacking them (Amnesty International, 2018).

However, the contents of media reporting are making it difficult to conclude whether farmers or Fulani herdsman are the victims. Many at times, a mention of vengeance or reprisal (e.g. Bagu & Smith, 2017) is made but the actual victimization of Fulani is almost always silent in the newspapers. Shehu (2017) expressed worries on how some news headlines open up with the Fulani herdsman as key actors before mentioning farmers. One of such reports by the Premium Times: On Sunday, showed that the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, in charge of Vunokilang Police Station in Girei Local Government Area of Adamawa State was killed alongside 30 other people in an attack by suspected Fulani herdsman. The suspected herdsman raided four villages: Demsare, Wunamokoh, Dikajam and Taboungo in what is believed to be a vengeance mission over an existing feud with farmers in the area (Shehu, 2017)

“The DPO and his team were attacked while on official duty in the affected villages where he was killed by suspected Fulani herdsman,” the spokesperson of the Adamawa State Police Command, Othman Abubakar, said. “Fulaniphobia is evident here as the Fulanis are always the suspects. What if the killings are orchestrated by dissidents that are not Fulani [such as *Boko Haram* insurgents or armed robbers]?” (Shehu, 2017: 220). *With author’s emphasis in square bracket.*

This bias and pre-judgment about the farmers-herdsman conflict is not limited to media reporting but also evident in academic writings and independent researches. For example, Bagu & Smith (2017: 4) were explicit in such tendency, thus: “Communities in Central Nigeria are locked in a worsening cycle of violence between largely Christian farming

communities and predominantly Muslim pastoralists, most of whom are ethnic Fulani”. The Central Nigeria, according the authors, “include the Nigerian states of Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Taraba, Adamawa, as well as the southern parts of Kaduna, Kebbi, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, and Borno state” (Bagu & Smith, 2017: 7).

Besides, Amnesty International (2018) found cases of human rights violations carried out by security forces in Adamawa, Benue and Taraba states. In some villages, Amnesty International documented cases where soldiers were accused of breaking into residents’ homes in the early hours of the morning and beating people up, on suspicion of owning guns. In Opalo Village of Adamawa, there were two documented cases of soldiers attacking and burning down communities over the alleged murder and disappearance of their colleagues. In Numan and Demsa LGAs of Adamawa State, Amnesty International (2018) documented a case of soldiers bombing five communities while responding to clashes between members of farmer communities and members of herder communities. These scenarios are making it complex to set the conflict between farmers and herders on record. It is equally difficult to address the underlying factors that led to the conflict.

#### V. CONSEQUENCES OF FARMERS-HERDSMEN CONFLICT

Farmers-herdsman conflict has multiple negative consequences on the socio-economic and political development of Adamawa State. While destruction of farmland by the herd of cattle can engender violent confrontation between farmers and herders, the conflict can lead to further destruction of farmlands, crops, houses, stored agricultural products and even lives. This can exacerbate the food insecurity which the entire Nigerian society is battling with. In line with this assertion, Shehu (2018) also observed that farmers-herdsman conflict contributes to the high rate of poverty and starvation and also leads to social disorganization amongst the families. Additionally, the conflict destroys the peaceful symbiotic relationships that exist between farmers and nomads.

One of the most reported consequences of farmers-herdsman conflict is the loss of many lives during each violent encounter between the farmer and herder communities. In five years, (between 2010 and 2015) available records have shown that 6,500 Nigerian citizens lose their lives; 62,000 households were internally displaced from their residences and villages, in 850 violent clashes between herdsman and farmers in the Middle Belt Region (New Telegraph Editorial, November 3, 2017). Also, sum of \$14.7 billion worth of properties and investments have been lost within the same period as a result of violent clashes (New Telegraph Editorial, November 3, 2017). With regards to this, Johnson & Akunola (2017) observed that Nigeria state has witnessed:

Series of mind-boggling and unthinkable bloodshed and the geographical space – the terra-

firma on the school atlas christened 'Nigeria' has in its earth the bones of millions of innocent people who lost their lives to avoidable clashes, the sun has dried the tears of many helpless and hopeless people who have lost their loved ones and the ground has also gulped the innocent blood of many who perished in various wars and violent movements which have characterised the state. (Johnson & Akunola, 2017: 51).

In environments that are already unstable, protracted farmer/herder violence has the potential to aggravate preexisting tensions. If the violence is not properly dealt with, farmer/herder conflicts have the potential to undermine community relationships, destabilizing the country and the state (Bagu & Smith, 2017). Additionally, Shehu (2018) opined that farmers-herdsmen conflict leads to mistrust among people who lived together for so many years because some northern Christian minority and southern politicians have labeled the conflict as a deliberate attempt by the Northern Muslim leaders to impose Islamic *shariah* or as a *jihad* movement to the mostly Christian dominated states of north central and southern states.

#### VI. GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES IN RESOLVING FARMERS-HERDSMEN CONFLICT IN ADAMAWA STATE

The Nigerian government has introduced some strategies to stop the farmers-herdsmen in Adamawa State. These strategies include security and legal actions, creation of grazing reserves, development programmes, cattle colonies and national livestock transformation plan, organized dialogues and negotiations, and comprehensive livestock development plan.

##### *Development Programmes*

To correct the anomaly associated with land tenure and ensure effective utilization of arable land for both farmers and herders in Nigeria, agricultural development agencies like River Basins, Agricultural Development Projects (ADP), Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Agricultural Land Development Agencies (NALDA) etc. were introduced as panacea for improved agricultural projects (Marietu & Olarewaju, 2009). It is important to stress the activities of the upper class in the society who have taken advantage of the flaw in the 1976 Land Use Decree to appropriate large parcels of land to themselves. This development created peasants' revolts in the different parts of Nigeria.

##### *Cattle Colonies and National Livestock Transformation Plan*

As a long-term solution, the government, in January 2018, announced a new plan to establish "cattle colonies" across the country. According to Agriculture Minister Audu Innocent Ogbah, each colony was to cover 5,000 hectares (about 25km by 20km) and would be a cluster of ranches, with resources and facilities including grass, water, veterinary services, mills

for converting agro-waste to livestock feed, schools, hospitals and markets, all secured by agro-rangers. States were expected to provide land and the federal government would bear development and maintenance costs – possibly with support from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and others. Ranchers and herders were to pay "a small fee". The government argued that benefits would include protection from cattle rustlers, fewer farmer-herder disputes, healthier stock, higher meat and dairy production, and more revenue for state governments (International Crisis Group, 2018).

##### *Creation of Grazing Reserves*

In 1965, the northern regional government of Nigeria initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the crisis of pastoralism that was linked to emerging conflicts between farmers and herders in the country. The Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965 created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. The reserves were envisioned to section off large swathes of land to be exclusively used by herders to graze their livestock. While initially considered a legislative solution, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access and usage of the reserves. In addition, herders were often unable to find sufficient pasture and water within the confines of the reserves due to climate changes and poor maintenance. Keeping livestock in one place increases the animals' vulnerability to disease and banditry, which incentivized herders to keep their herds moving outside the boundaries of the reserves. The federal and state governments have been derelict in the upkeep of these reserves to meet these concerns of farmers and herders. Amidst the absence of a concrete response plan to label and enforce the law on cattle routes by governments at all levels, existing reserves are being distorted (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehen, 2018).

##### *Security and Legal Actions*

The federal government has deployed additional police and army units, and launched two military operations to curb violence in six states – Exercise Cat Race, which ran from 15 February to 31 March, and subsequently Operation Whirl Stroke, which is still ongoing. The government has also stepped up its security response. It has deployed more police and military units to the troubled states. In November 2017, The Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, sent five mobile police (anti-riot) units to Adamawa State in order to prevent further clashes (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Even with these deployments, however, killings continue. President Buhari and other senior officials have consulted with herders and farmers leaders, as well as relevant state governments, to discuss ways to halt the attacks. As a long-term solution, the government has proposed establishing "cattle colonies", which would set aside land for herders across the country, and more recently unveiled a National Livestock Transformation Plan (2018-2027). These measures

signal greater commitment on the government's part, but they are yet to be implemented and the violence continues (International Crisis Group, 2018).

According to International Crisis Group (2018), the police have made some effort to collect or confiscate illegal arms. On 21 February Idris ordered the public to surrender all illicit firearms during the 21 days from 22 February to 15 March. The police reported about 4,000 firearms surrendered or recovered countrywide. But this total included only 453 firearms from the six states hardest-hit by farmer-herder violence. Moreover, the exercise did not disarm the groups responsible for the killings

#### *Organized Dialogue and Negotiations*

Federal government officials – including Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, Interior Minister Abdulrahman Dambazau and, belatedly, President Buhari – have undertaken fact-finding and consolation visits to conflict zones, but these trips have produced little effective preventive or deterrent action. On 18 January, the National Economic Council constituted a ten-person working committee, headed by Osinbajo. Its mandate includes stopping the killings, addressing impunity and facilitating the government's long-term plan to resolve the herder-farmer resource contest. The committee has recommended enhanced military deployments in the worst affected states and comprehensive dialogue with all parties involved in the conflict (International Crisis Group, 2018). In February and March, a subcommittee on dialogue, headed by Ebonyi state Governor David Umahi, with the governors of Adamawa, Benue, Plateau and Taraba states as members, visited Adamawa, Benue, Taraba and Zamfara states, consulted with various parties and submitted a report to the National Economic Council.

#### *Introduction of National Commission for Nomadic Education*

The federal government established the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989 through Decree 41 (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehen, 2018). It is presently known as Nomadic Education Act, Cap No. 20 Laws of the Federation. The main goal of the program was to economically and socially integrate nomadic pastoralists into the national life, through the provision of relevant, functional, and mobile basic education and livelihoods skills provision. It was also designed to help the pastoralists modernize their techniques of rearing cattle to maximize their economic potential, including dairy processing and marketing, animal vaccinations, and modern herding techniques. The program on nomadic education currently suffers from dilapidated infrastructure and human resource deficits, primarily due to a lack of adequate funding from the federal government (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehen, 2018).

#### *The National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016*

In 2016, the National Assembly attempted to pass legislation to address conflicts between farmers and herders through the controversial *National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill*

2016, which ultimately was not passed. This is largely due to the fact that the *Land Use Act of 1978* vests all powers related to the regulation of ownership, alienation, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state governors. This attempt and others by the National Assembly to legislate on grazing reserves were in violation of the *Land Use Act of 1978* and perceived as a move to usurp the powers of the governors (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehen, 2018).

#### *Comprehensive Livestock Development Plan*

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) formulated what was referred to as a "comprehensive livestock development plan" in 2005 (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehen, 2018). The plan was to address alarming rate of conflict between farmers and herders across the country; develop grazing reserves and cattle routes, through a review of the existing program. According to Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehen (2018) the Central Bank of Nigeria has released the sum of N100 billion (nearly USD \$300 million) to the 36 states for this purpose, but because of poor commitment to the issue, no state has been able to construct a ranch, reserve, or address the issue of stock route.

## VII. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The thrust of the paper is to assess the effectiveness of government strategies in resolving farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State. The fact that farmers-herdsmen conflict is becoming one of the major security and developmental challenges in Nigeria, the Government must not relent in designing strategies for the resolution of conflict between these two interdependent groups. In Adamawa State, the problem is getting worse because like the entire Nigerian society, Adamawa is diverse. That is why it is taking ethno-religious dimension. The paper concludes that the Government is making giant effort in order to tackle the problem of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State by introducing such measures as security and legal actions, creation of grazing reserves, development programmes, cattle colonies and national livestock transformation plan, organized dialogue and negotiations, and comprehensive livestock development plan. Yet, these measures did not yield the desired outcome-ending or drastically reducing farmers-herdsmen conflict. In order to overcome the menace of farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State, there should be deliberate effort towards identifying the root causes of the problem because to cure a cancer, we have to understand the root cause of the cancer. More importantly, effective leadership is necessary for any agency or policy to work effectively. Similarly, strategies for resolving farmers-herdsmen conflict in Adamawa State should be backed by good leadership.

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