MAJOR EFFECTS OF HERDSMEN AND CROP FARMERS CONFLICTS ON EXTENSION SERVICE DELIVERY AND MITIGATIONS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH-EAST ZONE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study was on the major effects of herdsmen and crop farmers conflicts on extension service delivery in Rural Communities of South East, Nigeria and likely mitigations.. Objectives of the study were; to examine the socio economic characteristics of farmers and herders in the study area, socio economic and environmental factors influencing the conflicts,ascertain the effects of farmers and herders conflicts on extension services in the study area, examine the major causes of the conflicts, identify strategies for sustainable coexistence of herdsmen and farmers in the study area. A combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques were employed in the selection of 254 respondents (180 farmers and 24 herdsmen). Also interviewed were 50 Extension agents. Primary data were sourced through field survey with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire and interview schedule. Descriptive statistics were employed in data analysis. The result of data analysis showed that destruction of the farmers' crops by cattle was the greatest source of conflict (89.4%) followed by contamination of sources of potable water (66.3%). Other activities of herdsmen that caused conflict as perceived by the crop farmers were plucking of fruits, cutting of bamboo for their tent making and defecation along the road and playing grounds. The result also showed that the conflicts seriously affected extension services in the study area as it disrupted T and V extension system ,39%, farmers participation, increased fear.Based on the herdsmen, the major causes of conflicts were hitting of the cattle by farmers (100%), followed by injuring and killing of the cattle (87.5%). However, raping of Fulani girls or women was not experienced by the Fulani community in the area. Other sources were abusing and cursing of Fulani herdsmen and blocking of roads by crop farmers. Identified consensus Mitigational intervention options for sustainable peaceful coexistence among the farmers and herders included encouraging herdsmen to learn the custom of their host community, compensation of aggrieved farmers and herders, punishment of the offenders, educating farmers and herdsmen on their interdependence and institution of a regular meeting of herdsmen and community leaders'. The study concluded that the institution of stake holders to oversee the compensation of the aggrieved was very necessary. It also concluded that compensation of the aggrieved herders or farmers and punishment of the offenders should be an imperative mitigational measure. Recommendations such as restricting herdsmen to their own communities, provision of grazing reserves, as well as restricting herdsmen to particular locations were made, among others

INTRODUCTION

The quest for protection and preservation of secured economic resources of livelihood appears to be the bane for continued conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in different places. In West Africa, conflicts between farmers and herders have been a common feature of economic activities for ages (Tonah, 2006).The northern region of Ghana has recently experienced increased clashes between the two groups over access to land resources. (Olaniyan, Francis & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015). The struggle for the use of agricultural land for planting and grazing is becoming fiercer and increasingly widespread in Nigeria, largely due to intensification of production activities that are necessitated by rising human population (Fasona&Omojola, 2005). Prior to 20th century, cattle rearing was prevalent in the Guinea, Sudan, and Sahel savanna belts where crop production was carried out on small scale only during the short rainy season. This gave the cattle herders access to a vast area of grass land. However the introduction of irrigated farming in the savanna belt of Nigeria and the increased withering of pasture during dry season has made pasture less available for cattle. The herdsmen had to move Southwards to the coastal zone where rainy season is longer and the soil retains moisture for long in search of greener pasture and fresh water for their cattle (4) (Ofuoku&Isife, 2009). As the herders migrate southwards where the grass is much lusher and often intrude into spaces long claimed or cultivated by settled farmers, conflicts usually ensued. These conflicts are believed to have existed since the beginning of agriculture and either increased or decreased in intensity or frequency, depending on economic, environmental and other factors (Aliyu, 2015). In many places, herders have clashed with farmers and their host communities over destruction of crops, farmers encroachment on grazing reserves and indiscriminate bush burning by nomads which normally lead to loss of crops (Ofem & Inyang 2014,).

The seeming boldness of the perpetrators and mystery surrounding the real cause has continued to attract mixed perceptions. While many perceived it as a mere farming, grazing land and water dispute, others see it as a reprisals in defense of livestock from banditry in farming communities (Eyekpimi 2016; Mikailu, 2016). In recent times, there have been prevalent cases of herders-farmers clashes in Nigerian rural Communities. Ofuoku and Isife (2009) noted that in Densina, Adamawa state, 28 people were killed, while about 2,500 farmers were displaced and rendered homeless in a clash between them, similarly, Idowu (2017) submits that the violence has displaced more than 100,000 people in Benue and Enugu states and left them under the care of relatives or in makeshift internally displaced persons (IDPs) while many are still struggling to rebuild their lives. The resultant effects are usually loss of lives and crops, destruction of properties, displacement of persons, decline in income/savings, as well as threat to food and national security. Besides, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) recently placed the Nigeria's Fulani herdsmen as the world's fourth deadliest militant group for having accounted for about 1,229 deaths in 2014. While Boko Haram was associated with about 330 casualties in the first quarter of 2016, the herdsmen accounted for nearly 500 deaths and have shown no sign of slowing down. As such, it has been predicted that the herdsmen might well surpass Boko Haram as Nigeria's most dangerous group (Burton, 2016).

2.0 Methodology

The study was conducted in South-East Geo-political zone of Nigeria. The choice of this region was due to reports of herdsmen and crop farmers conflicts in the zone. In addition, the zone is at the centre of the oil belt in Nigeria. The South-East zone is located between latitudes o4^{o} 15' and 7^{o} 25' north and longitudes 05^{o} 50' and 09^{o} 30'east (Obi, 2013). The South-East region is bordered on the East and South-east by Cross-River and Akwa-ibom states, on the south by Rivers state, on the north by Kogi and Benue states (Cometonigeria, 2011). The zone covers a land area of 109,524qkm which is about 11.9% of the total area in Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling techniques were used in selection of the respondents. Three states namely Abia, Ebonyi, and Enugu out of five states were purposively selected because of the endemic reports of farmers and herders conflicts in the states. In the first stage, three states Abia, Ebonyi and Enugu were purposively selected out of the five states of South-East geopolitical zone because farming and rearing activities take place there In the second stage, two agricultural zones were purposively selected from each of the three states because of the reports of herdsmen and farmers conflicts in these areas of the zone.

The Agricultural zones selected were Umahia and Ohafia zones in Abia state, Ebonyi north and Ebonyi central zones in Ebonyi state, and Agbani and Nsukka Zones in Enugu state. In the third stage, two extension blocks were purposively selected from each of the six agricultural zones on the basis of their high level of involvement in farmers and herders conflicts. In stage five, 4 circles were proportionately selected from the blocks to make 8 circles selected in Abia, 28 circles selected in Enugu and 16 circles selected in Ebonyi states. From the circles, 8 farmers were selected from Abia, 32 were selected from Ebonyi and 140 selected from Enugu to give a total of 180 farmers .On the part of the herders, 8 herders were randomly selected from the three states each to make a total of 24 herders. The study also made use of 50 extension Officers of Agricultural Development Programms randomly selected to ascertain the effects of Herders-Crop farmers conflicts on extension delivery .Thus a total of 254 respondents were used for the study. Primary data were sourced by the use of structured questionnaire and interview schedule. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and means scores derived from 4points Likert type scale with decision point of 2.5 were employed in data analysis. Focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted to compliment and affirm the findings from data analysis with qualitative information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 Sources of conflicts; Distribution of respondents according to the causes/sources of conflict is presented in table 1aDistribution of farmers according to sources of conflict

Source	Frequency	%
Crop destruction	80	44
Pollution of water sources	45	25.2
Blockage of stock route	10	5.6
Burning of range land	25	14
Stealing	8	4.48
Raping young girls/ women	5	2.8
Violation of customs	7	3.92
	180	100

From the above, the major causes

Sources: ***Field survey, 2018.*** From the above, the major causes of conflict according to the farmers are crops destruction 44.% followed by the pollution of water source by herders and their cattle 25% It was also followed by burning of range land 14%.Other minor sources are stealing of farmers crops and violation of customs and raping.

From the above, the major causes of conflict according to the farmers were crop destruction 44.% followed by the pollution of water source by herders and their cattle 25.2 % It was also followed by burning of range land 14%.Other minor sources are stealing of farmers crops and violation of customs .It was also affirmed at a Focus Group Discussion in the area.

1 b Distribution of respondents according to sources of conflict by herdsmen is presented in table 1 b The study ascertained the main causes of conflict from the herders

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Blockage of stock route	4	16.7
Stoppage from grazing	2	8.3
Killing of cattle	16	66.7
Confrontation/abuse from farmers	2	8.3
Total	24	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table has shown that the major cause of conflict for the herdsmen is killing of their cow. (66.6%). It was followed by the blockage of stock route by farmers. While the least cause of conflict is (8.3%) which is confrontation and abuse.From an interview, the herders preferred dialogue to confrontation and killing of their cow.

3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO HE EFFECTS OF HARDERS FARMERS CONFLICTs ON EXTENSION SERVICES BY EXTENSION AGENTS.

Source	frequency	Percentage
1. Reduced T&V extension system	15	30
2. Reduced co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation	7	14
3. Increased fear of attack	20	40
4. Reduced farmers participation	5	10
5. Reduced government support	3	6
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2020

The above table showed that the major effect is fear of being attacked during the visit (40%) followed by reduced Training and visit extension system (30%). It was also observed that level of monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation also reduced due to fear (14%). The agents also affirmed that the farmers were also afraid to come to their farms for training (10%). Lastly the support from the government also reduced due to fear of unforeseen circumstances (6%).

4 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTS OF FARMERS HARDERS CONFLICT ON EXTENSION SERVICES IN SOUTH EAST BY FARMERS.

Source	Frequency	Percentage
1. Reduced T &V extension system	70	39
2. Reduced monitoring co-ordination and evaluation	40	22
3. Reduced participation by farmers	30	16.8
4. Reduced food production	20	11.1
5. Increased fear of attack	20	11.1

Total	**180**	**100%**

Source: field survey 2020

From the table above, the major effects of farmers harders conflict is reduced T&V extension system (39%) followed by reduced monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation(22%) and reduced participation by farmers. The above shows that extension service was seriously affected by herders - farmers conflicts.

Table5: Results of Factor Analysis on Socioeconomic and Environmental Factors that Influence Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts in the study area

S/N	Factor	Social	Economic	Environmental
I	Curriculum of nomadic education does not include the sustainability of ecosystem	0.312	0.329	0.737
Ii	Herdsmen do not have knowledge of the custom of host community	0.685	0.257	0.339
Iii	Change in climate condition	0.217	0.346	0.813
Iv	Water pollution	0.333	0.294	0.748
V	Environmental degradation	0.241	0.226	0.703
Vi	Resource depletion	0.198	0.673	0.294
Vii	Over grazing of farmland	0.206	0.312	0.688
Viii	Cattle defecates in bodies of drinking water	0.214	0.293	0.744
Ix	Depletion of arable land for farming	0.303	0.349	0.652
X	Lack of economic will to tackle the challenges	0.247	0.653	0.219
Xi	Increased availability of modern weapons	0.746	0.195	0.318
Xii	Interpreting conflict as religious or political	0.615	0.274	0.185
Xiii	Unwillingness of government to accept the scale of con-Flicts	0.708	0.193	0.206
Xiv	Judicial commission held subsequent to conflicts do not result in effective action	0.633	0.216	0.184
Xv	Destruction of crops by cattle	0.229	0.789	0.216
Xvi	Indiscriminate burning of farmlands	0.341	0.218	0.739
Xvii	Increasing rate of cattle theft	0.306	0.219	0.748
Xviii	Antagonistic perceptions and beliefs among herdsmen and farmers	0.729	0.341	0.283
Xix	Lack of access to water points	0.512	0.189	0.226
Xx	Pollution of water points	0.311	0.238	0.743
Xxi	Female harassment	0.603	0.187	0.214
Xxii	Cattle rustling	0.216	0.802	0.175
Xxiii	Harassment of herdsmen by host communities	0.493	0.213	0.229
Xxiv	Increased population pressure	0.218	0.196	0.773
Xxv	Food insecurity	0.317	0.708	0.188
xxvi	Overall economic crisis	0.274	0.644	0.239

Source: Field survey,2018

The result in table 5 shows that the factors were classified as, social, economic and environmental factors. However, after careful examination of the factors, the following variables were considered as social factors. Herdsmen do not have knowledge of the customs of host community (0.685) increased availability of modern weapons, (0.7467), interpreting conflicts as religious or political (0.615), unwillingness of government to accept the scale of conflicts (0.708), judicial commissions held subsequent to conflicts do not result in effective action, (0.633), antagonistic perceptions and beliefs among herdsmen and farmers (0.729), lack of access to water points (0.512), female harassment by herdsmen and (0.603) harassment of herdsmen by host communities (0.493).

Resource depletion (0.673), lack of economic will to tackle the challenges (0.653), destruction of crops (0.789), cattle rustling (0.802), food insecurity (0.708) and overall econom-ic crisis (0.644) loaded high under economic factors.
Curriculum of nomadic education does not include the sustainability of ecosystems (0.737), change in climate condition (0.813), water pollution (0.748), environmental degradation(0.703), overgrazing of farmland (0.688), cattle defecates in bodies of drinking water (0.744), Depleting arable land for farming (0.652), indiscriminate burning of farmland (0.739), increased rate of cattle theft (0.748), pollution of water points (0.743) and increased population pressure (0.773) recorded high numerical values under environmental factors.

Variables that loaded high in two or more factors or did not load up to 0.40 were discarded. The implication of this finding is that various social, economic and environmental factors affect herdsmen and farmers conflicts in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 6: Arable Crop Farmers' Perceived Intervention Options for Sustainable Resolution of Crop Farmers-Herdsmen Conflicts in the Study Area

Intervention Options	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
Each community to provide adequate grazing reserves for Herdsmen.	36	27	47	50	2.3	Rejected
Herdsmen to rear their cattle along federal Roads only.	46	22	34	58	2.5	Accepted
Restricting the number of cattle to the carrying capacity of host community grassland.	36	63	42	19	3.4	Accepted
Curriculum of nomadic education to include the sustainability of ecosystem farmland.	72	55	25	8	3.2	Accepted
Encourage Fulani to learn the custom of the host community	79	48	18	15	3.1	Accepted
Legislation to confine cattle to particular locations.	56	72	20	12	3.2	Accepted
Compensation of aggrieved farmers and herders.	86	50	16	8	3.4	Accepted
Punishment of the offenders.	89	57	4	10	3.5	Accepted
Educating farmers and herdsmen on their Inter-independence	88	62	8	2	3.5	Accepted
Institution of and regular meeting of herdsmen community leaders' committee forum.	77	59	12	12	3.3	Accepted
Leasing out grazing land by the community to herdsmen.	36	30	33	61	2.3	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2018.
Note: SA – Strongly Agreed, A – Agreed, D- Disagreed, SD –Strongly Disagreed

Result presented in Table 6 showed that almost all the inter-vention options for sustainable resolution of crop farmers-herdsmen conflicts were accepted by the respondents. This is confirmed by the fact that the mean score obtained from the respondents (crop farmers) were higher than or equal to 2.5 in accordance with the decision rule. The result indicated that punishment of the offenders had the highest mean score of(X = 3.5) and closely followed by educating farmers and herdsmen on their interdependence.

Table 7: Herdsmen Perceived Intervention options for Sustainable Resolution of Crop far mer s-Herdsmen Conflicts in the Study Area

Intervention Options	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
Each community to provide adequate grazing reserves for Herdsmen.	4	4	6	2	2.7	Accepted
Herdsmen to rear their cattle along federal roads only.	0	2	9	5	1.8	Rejected
Restricting the number of cattle to the carrying capacity of host community grassland.	0	0	4	12	1.3	Rejected
Curriculum of nomadic education to include the sustainability of ecosystem farmland.	0	4	7	5	2.0	Rejected
Encourage Fulani to learn the custom of the host community.	2	8	3	3	3.0	Accepted
Legislation to confine cattle to particular locations.	0	0	4	12	1.3	Rejected
Compensation of aggrieved farmers and herders.	6	10	0	0	3.4	Accepted
Punishment of the offenders.	5	5	2	4	2.8	Accepted
Educating farmers and herdsmen on their Inter-independence.	4	8	2	2	2.9	Accepted
Institutions of and regular meeting of herdsmen community leaders' committee/forum.	2	9	2	3	2.7	Accepted
Leasing out grazing land by the community to herdsmen.	10	2	2	2	3.5	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2018
Note: SA – Strongly Agreed, A – Agreed, D- Disagreed, SD –Strongly Disagreed

Analysis presented in Table 7 shows that respondents (herdsmen) accepted some of the intervention options and rejected others. The result indicated that leasing out grazing land by the community to herdsmen recorded the highest followed by restricting the number of cattle to the carrying capacity of host community grassland (X=3.4) and compensation of aggrieved farmers and herders (X=3.4). The respondents (farmers) rejected two options as means of resolving crop farmers-herdsmen conflicts. The options were each community to provide adequate grazing reserves for herdsmen (X=2.3) and leasing out grazing land by the community to herdsmen (X=2.3). Mean score of 3.5 and closely followed by compensation of aggrieved farmers and herders (X = 3.4). Other acceptable options included encouraging Fulani herds-men to learn the customs of the host community (X = 3.0), educating farmers and herdsmen on their interdependence (X= 2.8) and institution of and regular meeting of herdsmen community leaders committee/forum (X= 2.7). However, the rejected intervention options were; restricting the number of cattle to the carrying capacity of host community grassland (X=1.3), legislation to confine cattle to particular locations (X=1.3), herdsmen to rear cattle along federal roads only (X=1.8) and curriculum of nomadic education to include the sustainability of ecosystem/farmland (X =2.0).5

3.0 Conclusion

The study identified the major effect of conflicts between the herdsmen and food-crop farmers as being both social and economic in nature. The economic aspect included stoppage of extension service delivery, destruction of farmers' crops, instilling fear on the community by the herders., stealing and non-payment or incomplete payment of cattle by the host community. Violation of women and the customs of the farm community by the herdsmen and blocking of roads by the farmers there by denying herders and their cattle access through the community. It was also deduced that peaceful coexistence and business ties were affected .These constituted the major cause of reduced food production and social challenges like fear of insecurity that engulfed the study area. Consensus measures for sustainable resolution of herders-farmers conflicts in the area included the institution of stakeholders' forum made up of both groups to supervise, oversee and resolve issues affecting the farmers and herders, compensation of aggrieved herders or farmers and punishment of the offenders as well as educating farmers and herdsmen on their inter-dependence. Unless these issues are handled, conflicts will continue in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were added to the consensus measures for sustainable and peaceful coexistence among the Herders and the farmers.;

1. Access to land resources is a major cause of herder-farmer conflicts in South-East zone of Nigeria that leads to crop destruction. Government should ensure that there is equity and accessibility to arable and grazing land to avert constant conflicts.
2. Enforcment and restriction of the number of animals (cattle) to the carrying capacity of the grassland of a given area should be enacted in order to avoid over-grazing and destruction of ecosystem in South-East zone of Nigeria.
3. Government at all levels should provide grazing reserves to accommodate the interest of herdsmen since cattle is one of the major source of protein (meat) in Nigerian markets,
4. The leaders of nomadic Fulani should encourage their community to learn the customs guiding their host community to avoid violation which often leads to conflict,
5. The Livestock Transformation Committee already set up by Federal Governments should transform the rearing pattern of the herders to be the same with that of the developed countries

(6) Herdsmen should be properly educated or re-oriented on the sanctity of human lives and better ways of handling grievances

7) Establishment of stake holders committee that will be made up of leaders of the host community and herders to reconcile the aggrieved, to ensure and decide on adequate compensation of victims

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