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Farmers - Herders Conflict and Human Insecurity in Yobe State

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Abstract

Farmers - herders' conflicts and human insecurity in Nigeria have been persistent issues that have significantly impacted the social, economic, and political landscape of the country, been plagued by farmers - herders conflicts stemming from various factors such as resource competition, ethnic differences, political marginalization and climate change issues. The objectives of this research work is to analyze the historical context of Farmers herders conflicts; causes of Farmers herders conflict in Yobe state and assess the implications of these conflicts on human security in Yobe State from 2013-2023. The research adopted qualitative research documentary methods as its instrument of data collection; and thematic approaches was also used to analyze the data. The research found out that historically there is no evidence on when the Farmers - herders conflict started in the state, but it was there since the creation of the state in 1991 and to date (52) communities were affected by the conflict which causes human insecurity in the area. Resource Competition due to climate issues, historical grievances, ethnic

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differences and weak governance and security are among the major leading causes of Farmers - herders' conflict in Yobe state. The research further reveals that Farmers - herders' conflict in Yobe state caused human insecurity such as: displacement, loss of livelihoods and property: social cohesion; psychological trauma and economic stagnation. The study therefore can be use as a policy framework in mitigating the consequences caused by farmers - herders' conflict.

Key Words: Conflict, Human insecurity, Farmers-herders.

Introduction

Farmers - herders' conflicts and human insecurity in Nigeria have been persistent issues that have significantly impacted the social, economic, and political landscape of the country. Nigeria, a diverse nation with over 250 ethnic groups, has experienced Farmers - herders' conflicts that have often been fueled by competition for resources, historical grievances, and political power struggles. The country's colonial legacy, which involved the amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups into one country, has had a lasting impact on the dynamics of intercommunal relations. Additionally, the struggle for control over land, water, and other natural resources has been a recurring trigger for conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups.

According to Iji (2021) the rise of ethnic tensions and the proliferation of both small arms and light weapons have further exacerbated the situation, leading to widespread human insecurity in affected regions. The lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms and the failure of governance structures to address the root causes of these conflicts have perpetuated the cycle of violence and insecurity.

In recent years, the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria has added another layer of complexity to the issue of Farmers - herders' conflicts and human insecurity. The activities of this extremist group as noted by Ibrahim (2022) have led to widespread displacement, loss of lives, and a humanitarian crisis in the region, further aggravating the already fragile security situation.

Understanding Farmers - herders' conflicts and human insecurity in Nigeria requires an in-depth analysis of the historical, social, economic, and political factors that have contributed to these challenges. It also necessitates an examination of the roles played by state and non-state actors, as well as the impact of regional and international dynamics on the resolution of these conflicts.

According to the available literatures in Farmers - herders' conflict and human insecurity, intercommunal conflict and human insecurity in Nigeria are complex issues with various perspectives and explanations from scholars and researchers. These conflicts often arise from a combination of historical, political, economic, and social factors, and they have significant impacts on the well-being of individuals and communities.

Some scholars such as Shimawua (2019) and Adibe (2020) emphasize more on historical factors who postulated that Farmers - herders' conflicts in Nigeria have deep historical roots, often stemming from ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. The country's colonial past and subsequent independence have left a legacy of ethnic and religious tensions, intensified by competition for resources and power. Historical grievances and unresolved disputes have contributed to the perpetuation of intercommunal conflicts, leading to human insecurity in affected regions.

Unlike the forgoing scholars, other literatures from the finding of Mukhtar et'al (2020) and Gamgum (2018) look at it in political point of view; that Farmers - herders' conflicts in Nigeria are often fueled by struggles for political power and influence. Political leaders and elites sometimes exploit ethnic and religious divisions to mobilize support and maintain their hold on power. This manipulation of identity-based politics has contributed to the exacerbation of intercommunal tensions and human insecurity, as marginalized groups seek to assert their rights and interests.

Eneji &Agri (2020) disputed that Farmers - herders' conflict and human insecurity are typically due to economic factors which also play a significant role in Farmers - herders' conflicts and human insecurity in Nigeria. Rivalry over land, natural resources, and economic opportunities often leads to tensions between different communities. In many cases, economic marginalization

and disparities in wealth distribution contribute to feelings of injustice and inequality, fueling intercommunal conflicts and worsening human insecurity.

Farmers - herders' conflicts in Nigeria are often rooted in social dynamics according to the findings of Newman et'al (2023) including issues related to identity, belonging, and social cohesion. Social divisions along ethnic, religious, and cultural lines can create fertile ground for conflict, as communities vie for recognition, representation, and protection. Social exclusion and discrimination further contribute to human insecurity, as individuals and groups face threats to their safety and well-being.

From a security standpoint, farmers - herders' conflicts to Otolorin (2017) pose significant challenges to the stability and security of Nigeria. In some cases, these conflicts have been exploited by non-state actors, including insurgent groups and criminal organizations, to further their own agendas. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons exacerbates the impact of Farmers herders' conflicts, leading to widespread human insecurity and displacement.

Findings of Iji (2021) and Okoro (2019) identified farmers - herders' conflict as regional perspective. Farmers herders' conflicts to them in Nigeria often have regional dimensions, with specific areas experiencing heightened tensions and violence. Factors such as environmental degradation, competition over grazing lands, and historical grievances contribute to localized conflicts that have broader implications for human insecurity in affected regions.

From the foregoing therefore, Farmers herders' conflict and human insecurity in Nigeria are multifaceted issues that require comprehensive and holistic approaches to address. Understanding the various perspectives and explanations of these challenges is crucial for developing effective strategies for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and the promotion of human security in Nigeria. Efforts to address intercommunal conflicts must take into account historical, political, economic, social, security, and regional dynamics to foster sustainable peace and stability in the country.

As mentioned by Sambo and Sule (2023) Yobe State has been plagued by Farmers - herders' conflicts stemming from various factors such as resource competition, ethnic differences,

political marginalization and climate change issues. These conflicts have led to the displacement of populations, loss of lives, destruction of property, and overall deterioration of human security in the state. This research therefore, aims to examine the root causes, dynamics, and implications of farmers - herders' conflicts on human insecurity in Yobe State.

The objectives of this research work was to analyze the historical context of Farmers herders' conflicts in Yobe State; causes of Farmers - herders' conflict in Yobe state and assess the impact of these conflicts on human security in Yobe State from 2013-2023.

Therefore, the research will answer the questions of how does Farmers - herders conflict emerge in Yobe state? What are the causes of Farmers herders' conflict in Yobe state? What are the implication of this conflict on human security in Yobe state?

The research intends to investigate the Farmers - herders' conflicts and Human Insecurity in Yobe State focusing centrally on Farmers versus Pastoralist clashes in the state as its scope.

Conceptualization

Farmers - herders' Conflict

Conflict refers to a struggle or clash between two or more parties arising from differing interests, values, or goals. It can manifest on various levels, including interpersonal, organizational, societal, or international. Farmers - herders' conflict specifically denotes a type of conflict that occurs between different communities typically famers and herders, often characterized by distinct ethnic, religious, cultural, or regional identities.

In the context of this research therefore, farmers - herders' conflict denotes such conflicts are rooted in the dynamics of group and ethnic identity and can arise from historical grievances, competition for resources, or political marginalization. Intercommunal conflicts can lead to heightened tensions, discrimination, violence, and displacement, impacting the social fabric and stability of a region.

Human Insecurity

Human insecurity encompasses the vulnerability and exposure of individuals and communities to various risks and threats that undermine their well-being, safety, and dignity. This concept extends beyond traditional security concerns and encompasses factors such as poverty, displacement, discrimination, environmental degradation, and violations of human rights among others.

In this research, human insecurity refers to a situation when people are exposed to danger, threat and fear which result from armed conflict, economic instability, social exclusion, or natural disasters, leading to physical, psychological, and socioeconomic harm.

Methodology

The research adopted qualitative research base on the philosophical postulation of interpretivist method of inquiry; for it allows for an in-depth exploration of the live experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of individuals and communities affected by these issues Bamisaye & Faforji (2009) the chosen research design for this study is a phenomenological approach, which aims to understand the essence of the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in or affected by farmers - herders' conflict and human insecurity in Yobe State from 2013-2023.

The documentary methods of data collection was used where systematic analysis of existing documents, reports, and records related to farmers - herders' conflict and human insecurity in Yobe State from 2013-2023 were examined. The research began with a comprehensive review of existing literature to establish a theoretical framework and identify gaps in knowledge. This followed by the identification and selection of relevant documents for analysis from the span of 2013-2023. The thematic analysis was used where the data was coded and categorized to identify key themes and patterns related to farmers - herders' conflict and human insecurity.

Discussion

In order to have a crystal clear guide and framework that will serve as a model, this research used Edward Azar's theory of protracted social conflicts focuses on the idea that conflicts are not just about direct violence, but are deeply rooted in societal and structural factors. Azar argues

that protracted conflicts are characterized by a lack of mutual recognition and participation among different groups within a society. These conflicts are sustained by a combination of political, economic, and social factors, and are often deeply ingrained in the fabric of a society.

In the context of farmers - herders' conflict and human insecurity in Yobe State, Azar's theory is highly relevant. The state has experienced longstanding tensions and violence between different ethnic groups, leading to protracted social conflicts. These conflicts are not just about immediate violence, but are also fueled by historical grievances, economic disparities, and political marginalization.

Azar's theory emphasizes the importance of addressing underlying structural issues in order to resolve protracted conflicts. In the case of Yobe State, this means addressing issues such as unequal access to resources, political representation, and social inclusion. It also involves fostering dialogue and mutual recognition between different communities to build a sustainable peace.

Emergence of farmers - herders' Conflict in Yobe State

Base on the documents available, there is no specific time as to when the famers - herders conflict started which has implication for human security in Yobe state. But it has been in existence since the creation of the state in 1991.

Farmers - herders' conflicts in Yobe State have emerged as a result of historical, social, and economic dynamics within the region. The state, like many others in Nigeria, is home to diverse ethnic groups, each with its own cultural identity and historical grievances. The advent of farmers - herders' conflict can be traced back to the competition for resources, prolong land disputes, and climate change impact (Joab-Peterside, 2020). Moreover, factors such as political manipulation, economic disparities, and weak governance structures have also contributed to the escalation of conflicts within the state.

To Bello (2013) Yobe State's strategic location as a crossroads for different ethnic and arid zone factor has further exacerbated tensions, leading to the emergence of violent confrontations and

clashes between communities. The breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have also played a significant role in the occurrence of intercommunal conflict in the state.

Bello (2013) and YBC (2024) also, identified the following communities that were affected by the ongoing conflict.

Table 1: communities that were affected by Fulani - Herders Conflict.

Local Government Areas	**Local Government Area Communities**
Bursari	Baimari, Dapchi, Tumsa, Kaliyari.
Damaturu	Kasaisa, Lawan kalan, Kalallawa, Salari, Damakasu
Fune	Dogon kuka, Jajere, Daura, Kayeri, Mashio.
Geidam	Balle, Jili, Gallaba, Kusur, Gumsa.
Gujba	Buni Yadi, Buni Gari, Dadingel, Goniri, Katarko.
Jakusko	Amshi, Girgir, Kazir, Karage, Jawur-Kaya, Yim, Gwayo
Nguru	Dumsai, Yamdugo, Bulanguwa.
Potiskum	Dumbuluwa, Dagauda, Kukargadu, Mamudo
Tarmuwa	Babbangida, Koriyal, Lantewa,Jumbam, Mafa, Churokosko
Yunusari	Bukarti, Bulabuwarma, Kanamma, Mazagum, Garin Gada
Yusufari	Maimalari, Kumaganam, Tulo-tulo, Kaluwa, Bulakulo

Source: *Bello (2013) and YBC (2024).*

Based on the table above, reveals more than (52) communities were affected by the Fulani - Herders conflict in Yobe State.

Causes of farmers - herders' Conflict in Yobe State

Several interconnected factors contribute to the causes of farmers - herders 'conflict in Yobe State as depicted from the findings of Bello (2013); Okeke, (2022) and Joab-Peterside (2020). These include:

a. Resource Competition: Yobe State, like many other regions in Nigeria, faces challenges related to land and resource allocation. As the population grows and economic opportunities become scarcer, competition for arable land, water, and grazing areas has intensified, leading to conflicts between pastoralist and farming communities.

b. Historical Grievances: Historical land disputes and grievances among different ethnic groups have often been exploited and manipulated by political and religious leaders, leading to the exacerbation of intercommunal tensions.

c. Ethnic Differences: Yobe State, like many parts of Nigeria, is characterized by diverse ethnic groups. The coexistence of these groups has, at times, led to ethnic tensions, which have fueled intercommunal conflicts.

d. Weak Governance and Security: The lack of effective governance and security structures has contributed to the proliferation of violent conflicts. Weak law enforcement, corruption, and ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms have created an environment where farmers - herders' tensions can easily escalate into violence.

e. External Influences: External factors, including the influx of arms and the influence of non-state actors, have also contributed to the escalation of farmers - herders' conflicts in Yobe State.

Implications of farmers - herders' Conflict on Human Insecurity in Yobe State

The impact of farmers - herders' conflict on human insecurity in Yobe State is profound and multifaceted. It affects various aspects of human security, including physical, economic, social, and psychological well-being as seen by Joseph (2019); Liman & Muhammad (2020); Okeke, (2022) and Muhammad, (2020) as follows.

a. Displacement and Loss of Livelihoods: farmers - herders' conflicts often result in the displacement of communities, leading to the loss of homes, livelihoods, and access to essential services. Displaced populations face food insecurity, lack of shelter, and inadequate access to healthcare and education.

b. Loss of Lives and Property: farmers - herders' conflicts lead to loss of lives, destruction of property, and disruption of economic activities, further intensifying poverty and vulnerability among affected communities.

In February, 2024 some Fulani pastoralists raided some parts of Yobe: villages in some parts of Fune local government, Gujba Local government areas of Yobe State which led to clash of the communities that resulted loss of lives and properties including burning of granaries.

c. Social Cohesion and Trust: farmers - herders' conflicts erode social cohesion and trust among different communities, hindering collaborative efforts for peacebuilding and development.

d. Psychological Trauma: The prolonged exposure to violence and insecurity such as Boko Haram has severe psychological implications, leading to trauma, worried, anxiety, and mental health issues among affected populations.

e. Economic Stagnation: farmers - herders' conflicts disrupt economic activities, deter investment, and hinder development initiatives, leading to long-term economic stagnation and underdevelopment in the region.

Findings

Bellow are the findings of the research based on the designed objectives as well as the question raised in the research work; the research found out that:

1. Historically there is no evidence on when the farmers - herders' conflict started in the state, but it was there since the creation of the state in 1991 and to date more than (52) communities were affected by the conflict which causes human insecurity in the area.

2. Resource Competition due to climate issues, historical grievances, ethnic differences and weak governance and security are among the major causes of farmers - herders' conflict in Yobe state.

3. The research also found out that farmers - herders' conflict in Yobe state caused human insecurity such as: displacement, loss of livelihoods and property: social cohesion; psychological trauma and economic stagnation.

Conclusion and recommendations

Farmers - herders' conflict in Yobe State is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach to address its root causes and mitigate its impact on human security. Furthermore, the impact of Farmers - herders' conflicts on human security in Nigeria cannot be overstated. These conflicts have resulted in loss of lives, displacement of populations, destruction of property, and a pervasive sense of fear and vulnerability among affected communities. To Gamgum (2018) human insecurity manifests in various forms, including food insecurity, limited access to healthcare and education, and psychological trauma, all of which have far-reaching implications for the well-being and development of individuals and communities.

Efforts to promote peace and stability in the state, the research recommended that should focus on addressing resource competition, historical grievances, ethnic tensions, climate change issues, strengthening governance and security structures, and fostering social cohesion and trust among communities. Moreover, sustainable peacebuilding initiatives, including dialogue, reconciliation, and the promotion of inclusive development, are essential for building resilience and mitigating the impact of farmers - herders' conflicts on human insecurity in Yobe State.

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