

## **IMPACT OF HERDSMEN AND COMMUNITY CLASHES ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA**

**Ohazuruike, Kennedy<sup>1</sup>, Elechi, Felix Aja<sup>2</sup> & Eze, Patrick Nwuna<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of General Studies, Nile University, Abuja

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki  
[kennedyohazuruike@yahoo.com](mailto:kennedyohazuruike@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

The Nigerian State has become synonymous with herdsmen and community clashes, due principally to the fact that there is hardly any month that passes without the occurrence of this form of violence taking place, or any part of the country that has not witnessed the violent attacks of Herdsmen on most cases sleeping communities. The Herdsmen conflict is one of the worst forms of violence witnessed in Nigeria in recent years, having claimed over 5,000 lives, with about 7.5 Million people being directly affected and hundreds of thousand rendered homeless and properties worth billions of Naira destroyed. The paper examined the herdsmen attacks on communities who in most cases know nothing about the cause of these attacks, and the government efforts so far in addressing the menace. Exploratory research design, documentary sources and qualitative descriptive methods of data gathering and analysis were adopted. Anchoring our analysis on the relative deprivation theory, findings amongst others revealed that there is obvious denials of economic and security rights of the people which in turn encouraged the occurrence of these conflicts; and the government has shown apparent lack of political will to address the menace due to interest arising from certain quarters along ethnic and religious inclinations, as some arrested suspects were has not been prosecuted. The paper recommends that the government should rise up to the responsibility of providing security to lives and properties of the citizens and also create the enabling atmosphere for peace and integration to grow in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Herdsmen, Nigerian State, Conflicts, Security and National Integration

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The history of democratisation in Africa, in general, and Nigeria, in particular, has remained the history of national disintegration. Thus, the integration crisis facing Nigeria is manifest in the minority question, religious fundamentalism and conflicts, ethnic politics, indigene-settler dialectic, resource control, youth restiveness and militancy and the clamour for a (sovereign) national conference or conversation about the terms of the nation's continued unification, the Boko Haram insurgency and lately, banditry and the Fulani herdsmen attacks on farming communities across Nigeria. Nigeria's efforts at achieving national integration have remained largely unrealised in the face of insecurity challenges one of which is the incessant Fulani herdsmen attacks on unsuspecting farming communities across Nigeria. The status quo has convulsed the productive sector, limited the impact of government's economic programmes on the people, threatened food insecurity, complexified social insecurity, deepened the deterioration

of physical and social infrastructures, distressed the living standards of a vast majority of Nigerians, militated against the educational system and resulted in the ostracisation of the generality of Nigerians and their exclusion from the political and economic space, among other glitches. The entire social matrix in Nigeria is entwined and characterised by inter- and intra-community, inter and intra-ethnic, and inter and intra-religious strife which has acted and is still acting against the process of national integration (Onifade and Imhonopi, 2013).

The attacks by Fulani herdsmen have in recent years taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. In consequence, the sedentary agrarian communities have resorted to self-defence through local vigilante groups (Abass 2012; McGregor 2014). This has further aggravated violence, with destruction of lives and properties. According to Fasona and Omojola (2005), conflicts resulting from cattle grazing actually accounted for 35% of all reported crises between 1991 and 2005 in Nigeria (Adekunle and Adisa 2010). The North Central states of Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau Benue, and recently some state in the southern part of the country such as Enugu and Delta have been identified as the most affected areas in the country (McGregor 2014; Nigeria Watch Newsletter 2014; Olayoku, 2014). The Fulani in the course of carrying out their pastoral nomadic activities have been seen to have changed tactics from mere land grazing to barrel-induced-land grazing. The Herders-Farmers attacks in Nigeria have taken a multifaceted dimension. It has grown from an ordinary conflict or misunderstanding between the herders and the farmers to an ethno-political, social and religious conflict threatening the country's integrating process and security as the spread of this conflict into the Southern States, has further strained the fragile nature of relations across the different ethnic, religious and regional groups in the country. The impact of herdsmen related clashes has loomed large in the Nigeria environment, hitherto, it was herdsmen/farmers clashes, but in recent time, the trend has moved from herdsmen/farmers clash to the herdsmen attacks on unsuspecting farming communities. The herdsmen have progressed from attacking farmers in the farms to attacking and occupying communities as a whole. What this implies is that the attacks have taken a broader dimension from attacking a particular group of people (farmers) to attaching every group of people in a community. The import of this is that the impact of herdsmen and community clashes would be holistic since its effect is being felt by every segment of the Nigerian society, be it farmers or people who engage in other forms of endeavours.

The failure of the government in mediating such conflicts and setting up judicial commissions cannot be underestimated because over times, these has push affected communities to take the law into their own hands in an attempt to defend themselves. Couple with the lacklustre attitude of the government and security agencies to intervene when the attacks are ongoing has left the Nigerian society to be more than ever divided along ethnic and religious lines which invariably has become a cock in the process of national integration. Deriving from the above, the paper examines how the attacks on farming communities by the Fulani herdsmen with the ominous silence of the government and her security agencies has obfuscated or threaten national cohesion. The paper is divided into seven sections namely;

## 2. Conceptual Clarification and Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers' Community Attacks

According to Azarya (1996), the Fulani pastoralists of West and Central Africa trace much of their current political, religious, and socio-cultural identity from the eighteenth and nineteenth century *jihād* which sedentarized them within conquered communities. The Fulani are said to originate from Senegambia, before spreading across some 20 states in West Africa and the Sahel, up to Western Sudan and the Central African Republic (Blench 1994; Shehu and Hassan 1995; Blench 2010; McGregor 2014). In Nigeria, they are the mainstay of the meat and milk industry, accounting for about 90% of cattle herd ownership, which makes up 3.2% of the GDP (Abass 2012; Koster and de Wolff 2012). They rear different species of cattle, such as the *Keteku*, *Muturu*, and *Kuri*, but the *Zebu* is identified as the most common (Awogbade 1987; Iro 1994). They also supply skins, bones, and horns as complementary products. The pastoralist system involves young men who tend the herd while the women cook and sell animal products in the market.<sup>2</sup> The elders, in their own stead, are in charge of developing and managing resources at the levels of the community and domestic units (Awogbade 1987; Iro 1994). Despite the development and the centralisation of the state dating back to the colonial era, these informal governing mechanisms have been key to understanding the challenges the pastoralists face with farmers, explaining their social stratification and their seemingly egalitarian nature (Dyson-Hudson 1990; Bradburd 1996; Okello et al. 2014). From a historical point of view, certain scholars refer to the fact that conflicts resulting from cattle grazing have existed for as long as the practice of agriculture (Blench 2010; Abbass 2012). In the Nigerian context, however, colonization, together with the fall of the Sokoto Caliphate and the introduction of *jangali* (cattle tax), marginalized the Fulani and dispersed them further towards the South (Azarya 1996; Okello et al. 2014). According to Ofuoku and Isife (2009), the advancement of farming through irrigation and the increased decimation of pasture across the savannah also extended the scope of conflicts, through transhumance, to the coastal zones which were more ecologically viable (Blench 2010). This evolution was complemented with the provision of affordable trypanocides, which provided a coping means for the herders in the tsetse-infested humid regions of southern Nigeria (ibid.). Thus, the period from May to September, during the rainy season, has been identified as the intense period of attacks on farmers by pastoralists over arable land, when the Fulani return northwards with their cattle as the vegetation begins to appear. These clashes result from the invasion of the arable land by the cattle during this peak season of crop production (Adekunle and Adisa 2010; Abass 2012).

After the initiation of the first national livestock development project (NLDP) and the enactment of a grazing law by the Northern Nigeria Legislative Assembly in 1965, the authorities tried to provide grazing lands in order to make the nomadic Fulani sedentary (Awogbade 1987). In collaboration with organisations such as the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the objective was to enhance productivity and to demarcate 4,125 grazing lands across Nigeria, covering about 4.3 million ha, some of the lands being equipped with boreholes, fences, fire breaks, veterinary services, access roads, and dams (Awogbade 1987; Abass 2012; Koster and de Wolff 2012). The predominant types of ranches were to be individually owned by farmers with

large investments; there were few options for cooperatives and a collective management of the herds. Since 2009, grazing routes have also been marked out through Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau, Kastina, Bauchi, Abuja, Sokoto, and Adamawa. According to Abass (2012), however, only 270 of these official grazing lands are functional.

## **2.2 National Integration: Theoretical Overview**

National integration, otherwise termed nation-building, national unity, national cohesion, national loyalty, or the national question “involves consensus on the limits of the political community and on the nature of the political regime” (Liddle, 1970:205 cited in Otite, 2000:188). This simply means the forging of agreement among the members of a state on the extent of unity they wish to have as well as the type of political structure and institutions they desire. It is also a “process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based on an order its members regard as equitably harmonious” (Duverger, 1976:177). This implies that integration promotes unity which encourages smooth interaction among the members of the given society based on certain established principles of fairness. Jacob and Tenue (1964:9) define national integration as “a relationship of community among people within the same political entity... a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programmes.” They are thus referring to a society of oneness whose members are willing to live and work together harmoniously and share the same destiny. It has also been viewed as: a process by which members of a social system develop linkages so that the boundaries of the system persists (sic) over time and the boundaries of sub-systems become less consequential in affecting behaviour. In this process, members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community (Morrison et al, 1972:385 cited in Ojo, 2005:51). This relates to a situation where territorial divisions within a polity gradually yield ground to cordial interactions of its members owing to the integrative mechanisms established.

Also, Ogunjenite (1987) believes that national integration relates to the building of nation-states out of disparate socio-economic, religious, ethnic and geographical elements. According to Ogunjenite (1987) cited in Ojo (2009:18):

this entails the translation of diffuse and unorganized sentiments of nationalism into the spirit of citizenship through the creation of state institutions that can translate into policy and programmes in line with the aspirations of the citizenry. Stated in another way, national integration means efforts to weld together a plural society to enhance development but without necessarily jeopardizing ethnic identity.

Thus, national integration is a serious and purposeful endeavour, the failure of which has grave consequences. It is no wonder, therefore, that Odumegwu-Ojukwu sees it also as 'active nation-building' which means “forging out a nation out of our diverse ethnic groups.” He also contends that the failure to achieve this in respect of Nigeria is that: “Today, the result is that tribalism and ethnicity has become a potent source of friction, rather than diminish in the face of an emergent, virile and modern nation” (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989:174).

### **2.3 National Integration: The Nigeria Experience**

Most problems in Nigeria, including political instability, lack of political and socio-economic development, nepotism, corruption, and all the vices that plague Nigeria today stem from lack of national integration, as very few Nigerians believe they have any stake in Nigeria. Hence, Nigerian leaders pay lip service to the issue of restructuring and crafting a new constitution for the new Nigeria. Immediately after independence in 1960, Nigeria witnessed ethnic based agitations and party politics. This strengthened the ethnic bias and intolerance that existed among people from different parts of the nation. Ifeanacho and Nwagwu, (2009) pointed out that Nigerians hate each other, they fear each other, they do not know each other because they cannot communicate with each other. They are separated strategically by a power elite that arrogates powers to itself and retains such power by upholding the principle of divide and conquer.

In Nigeria, the practice of ethnic politics has sustained the belief that each of the over 250 ethnic groups must struggle for its own share of the national resources (Oyewale, 2010). Today, the emergence and growth of ethnic militias as well as the Boko Haram insurgency constitute great threat to the stability and unity of the nation. According to Ekanola (2006):

Today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of national identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more to primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of development in an increasingly competitive and globalised world, Nigerians are busy waging ethnic and religious wars....(Ekanola, 2006:280).

This socio-political background and the little emphasis placed on core-national-values in Nigeria are partly responsible for the unpatriotic, disunity, inter and intra-ethnic violence that characterize the nation. The predominant value system of wealth and material acquisition, ethnic and tribal loyalty are fundamental obstacles to national integration and survival of Nigeria as a nation. This is the reason why Ugwuegbu (2004) argued that a community populated with people without appropriate positive value will not survive. Bello-Imam and Obadan (2004) observed that instead of producing thinking and objective human beings, the educational system produced many fearful and uncritical citizens who were also selfish and indifference to public affairs. Nigeria cannot attain national integration that could foster expected development and national transformations except the citizens acquire and demonstrate required values and traits. According to Isola (2010) value development is the major factor in national development. Any nation not grounded in non-perishable values cannot make progress. Falade and Orungbemi (2011) emphasized that African nations need urgent innovative value orientation programme that can facilitate the development of core values as well as civic and political ideals in the citizens. The Nigerian dreams of national integration, peace and development can only come to reality with the internalization of the core values enshrined in the National Anthem and Pledge which reflect the national value of honesty, obedience, loyalty, cooperation and patriotism (Ajere and Oyinloye, 2011).

Nigeria is made up of diverse communities each of which has its own peculiar cultural background and value system. National integration and unity require coordinated and concerted efforts towards unified value system that can promote oneness. Nigeria as a heterogeneous society with more than 250 ethnic groups is confronted with historical problems that have impeded national integration and unity. National integration is one of the un-accomplished desires in Nigeria. Ifeanaccho and Nwagwu, (2009) observed that Nigeria's efforts at achieving national integration have remained largely unrealized. The entire social matrix in Nigeria is characterized by inter community and intra-community; inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic; inter-religious and intra-religious strife. Some of these conflicts are as old as the history of Nigeria as a nation. The problem of lack of unity and national integration in Nigeria emanated from the artificial creation of Nigeria as a single geo-political entity. As argued by Hansen in Ekanola (2006)

the creation of Nigeria as a single political entity did was to bring together people of different nationalities. Unfortunately, the peoples making up the country were not effectively integrated towards the end of evolving a true sense of national identity and commitment to the survival and development of a nation. The reason for the non-integration of the people from the diverse socio-political backgrounds is not far-fetched. The colonialists were less interested in developing a united Nigeria nation. Rather, they were much more interested in the resources available in the colony. Hence, the policy of divide and rule was adopted to enable them to achieve their goals.

Emelonye and Buergenthal (2011) observed that even though the British colonialists and the Nigerian elite that succeeded them used ethnicity to perfect their political strategies and notch up some socio-economic and political gains, poverty and ineffective governance in Nigeria today have further sharpened ethnic divisions leading to misunderstanding between ethnic and religious groups who see themselves as rivals that must be surpassed by any means, thus hampering national integration. They add that because the Nigerian state is beginning to lose legitimacy and authority, the fear of uncertainty has increased to the extent that citizens now resort to self-help, seeking security and solidarity in their own ethnic, religious or regional affiliation and identity. Thus, a new dimension to Nigeria's ethno-religious violence is the increasing recruitment and mobilisation of ethnic and regional militias, vigilantes and other armed groups: the Oodua People's Congress in Yoruba land, the Arewa People's Congress in the north, the Bakassi Boys in the east, the Egbesu in the south, and the emergence of a supercilious army of terror merchants who represent contending interests to Nigeria's detriment. The implication of these hydra-headed conflicts is that national integration suffers, there is increasing insecurity of citizens and property in the country, foreign investment is deterred and economic development is stymied.

From the array of conceptualizations above by different scholars, it is obvious that there are many meanings of the term even though some of them have some elements of similarity. National integration is a situation where the members of a state see themselves as one, treat one another fairly and work together cooperatively and freely agree to and do resolve their differences peacefully in the overall interest of the nation. In this way, unity, fair treatment,

cooperation, consensus, and peaceful conflict-resolution become essential components of loyalty to the nation.

#### **2.4 Efforts by the Nigerian Leaders to Promote National Integration**

The Nigerian leadership have over the years made some efforts at enhancing national unity. Some of these efforts as noted in Onifade and Imhonopi (2013) are summarised below:

1. Creation of more states aimed at addressing the agitations by the minorities in order to keep the country united;
2. The National Youth Service Corps which was aimed at helping to unite the country. Created by Decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973, the National Youth service Corps sought to enhance the interaction among the nascent educated elite in the country scattered in different parts of the country by providing them with the opportunity of living and serving in some developmental capacities in states other than their places of origin so they could better understand the cultures, languages and general lifestyle of their host communities;
3. The Federal Character Principle initiated by the government which was aimed at achieving fair and effective representation of the various components of the federation in the country's position of power, status and influence;
4. The movement of the Federal Capital Territory from Lagos to Abuja was seen as an integrative policy of government to further unite Nigerians;
5. Introduction of the revenue sharing formula which aimed at addressing the violence taking place in the oil rich Niger Delta, which was a response to quell the agitation for resource control. For instance, the 1999 constitution allocated 15% to those oil producing states via the derivation principle;
6. The unifying National Policy on Tertiary Education is another factor aimed at national integration in Nigeria, as Nigerian universities were seen to "serve as instruments for fostering national unity";
7. Establishment of unity Schools run by the federal government tends to promote unity in diversity; and
8. Introduction of a uniform Local Government system in Nigeria is yet another measure

While it is easy and very tempting to blame the colonialists for all of Nigeria's woes, history and recent events in the country have revealed the covert selfishness, hunger for power and primitive accumulation exhibited by the political elite which has for a long time hindered the progress of the country. Much worse than this, many political leaders exploit ethnicity for personal advantages.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Our discussion in this paper is anchored on the assumptions of the relative deprivation (RD) theory whose foundation is strongly rooted in the work of Ted Gurr (1970) who tried to explain the reason why people engage in political violence/conflict or rather the cause of instability in a society. He identified social psychology factor in the form of relative deprivation as the cause of political violence/conflict. He theorized that just as frustration causes aggression on the part of an individual, relative deprivation instigates collective violence by social groups. RD according to Gurr (1970), is a term used to denote the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the “ought” and the “is” of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence (Mbaeze & Nnaji, 2018).

Marx (1847) captures the intuitive appeal of RD as an explanation for social behaviour. If comparisons to other people, groups or even themselves at different points in time lead people to believe that they do not have what they deserve, they will be angry and resentful. RD describes these subjective evaluations. Thus, RD is a social psychological concept *par excellence*. It postulates a subjective state that shapes emotions, cognitions, and behaviour. It links the individual with the interpersonal and intergroup levels of analysis. RD therefore points towards the discrepancy between people's value expectations and their value capabilities. These include things that people desire and feel they deserve. Once this people feel deprived of these values (resources, opportunities, wealth etc.) which they hitherto feel they should obtain, they feel resentful and frustrated. In other words, relative deprivation creates a situation in which people are prompted to take action for social change so as to acquire that value possessed by others upon which they feel deprived. Gurr also noted that the greater the scope and intensity of deprivation, the greater the violence. The argument of Gun's (1970:24) relative deprivation thesis that, 'the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result (Mbaeze & Nnaji, 2018).

The significance of this theory is that it recognizes and legitimizes both Herdsmen and Farmers needs in Nigeria. The needs of both must be met, not the needs of one at the expense of the other. This helps to move the conflict from zero-sum to win-win. The abstraction of 'human needs' helps to eliminate the sense of mutually exclusive goals. Rather than fighting over the constitutional future of the grazing routes, with the mutually exclusive goals of maintenance of peace, the situation shifts to one in which both groups seek to fulfill their needs such as security, identity, recognition and development. These needs are not satisfied at the expense of the other community, but are realized along with the other community's needs. These needs are not mutually exclusive or gained at the expense of another; they are universal. Farmers-herders differences from the RD perspective are not only seen as resources conflict but are also sometimes represented as ethnic conflict between the two groups. Since farmers and herders groups have different values, custom, physical and cultural characteristic, dispute between them are frequently characterized as ethnic conflict. The conflicts between these two opposing groups have posed a serious national problem for Nigeria's unity as the conflict has claimed thousands of lives and properties worth billions destroyed (Mbaeze & Nnaji, 2018).



#### **4. Herdsmen and Community Attacks in Nigeria**

Below are some incidences of attacks on farming communities by the Fulani herdsmen who claim in most cases that they are carrying out revenge attacks on them over the killing of their fellow herders and cows by farmers from the communities that are being attacked.

In Benue state, across Agatu, Buruku, Logo and Tarka LGAs, the violent conflicts between herders and farmers have affected access to education and violated educational rights of school age boys and girls. Tarka local government area is renowned for production of vegetables, tomatoes, pepper and other spices. They also produce rice, groundnuts, cassava, and yam in significant quantities. The supply chain of these agro products in the state has suffered setbacks as a result of the conflict which affected rural communities.

Due to the desertion of several settlements and consequent abandoning of economic activities across the four LGAs, the conflict has left impacts and introduced dynamics that will likely affect the income generating activities for a long time, as fear exist among the people.

Tenuche and Ifatimehin (2006:362) identified communities in different parts of Kogi where violent clashes had taken place around the state. Some of these are Ogbagbala, Ibaji, Ogbogbo, Odolu and Okpakpata, Egga, Icheke, Isanlu and Ejiba.

On 17 February, 2014, attack and counter attack in Kadarko district of Keana Local Government Area between the Tiv farmers and herdsmen. On 24 February, 2014, the continuous Tiv-herders conflicts in Awe Local Government Area and Ekye Development Area of Doma Local government extended to Keana Local Government Area. On 22 August, 2014, there was a violent clash between herdsmen and Eggon farmers in Lafia East Development Area, Nasarawa Eggon and Obi Local Government Areas. On 13 October, 2014 violent conflicts between the herders and Eggon farmers in Nasarawa South Senatorial zone – in which there was invasion into Lafia, the state capital on the 14 October, 2014 by the Ombatse militias in pursuit of the herdsmen. On 24 April, 2015, two herders were said to have gone to Dauda, a Tiv settlement which is a boundary between Nasarawa and Benue state for cow business but could not return that same day. Their dead bodies were discovered the following day after a thorough search by their relations from Keana town where they came from. The case was reported to the police for proper investigation. Then on 25 April, 2015, some Tiv communities surrounding Keana town were attacked by unknown persons suspected to be Herders, leaving people dead. The Eggon-herders ethnic feuds that started in early February 2013 in Basa village of Kokona Local Government Area had spread to Doma and Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area. Peace which had started returning to the affected areas was disrupted on 17 March, 2013, when some suspected herders invaded two villages in Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area (i.e. Ladi- Ende and Ambana-Egga).

A number of armed violence have occurred outside Jos between the Tarok and the Hausa/Herders in Wase, Langtang North and Langtang South local government areas in 2004, the Geomai and the Hausa-Herders in Shandam local government area in 2002, the Quan Vs Pan in Quan'pan local government area of Plateau state in 2006, the Berom and the Herders in Jos South, Riyom and Barikin Ladi, since 2006 to 2014.

The Farmers-Herders Conflict has remained a serious and recurring threat in the Kaduna state, especially considering the reports of such clashes that had consumed many lives and property in the southern part of the state – Southern Kaduna. As in most states in Nigeria, the menace of herders on farmers is very pronounced in Kaduna state, especially in the Southern part of the state. There has been serious confrontation between the herders and farmers in the state. The criminality that accompanies this problem is that these herders attack villages in the night thereby killing defenseless people many of whom have not had prior problem with them. Closely related to this is the nagging issue of cattle-rustling and kidnapping, across the communities in Birni Gwari; about which many lives have been lost, property destroyed and huge sums of money seized. Kaduna state has been noted for high profile kidnappings for huge ransoms and herder-farmer conflict. The proximity of the state to Abuja has made it attractive to such criminal gangs who waylay people on the highways and their residents.

Zamfara state has been terrorised by multiple criminal gangs that perpetuated violent rural banditry which turned the countryside into desolate areas, severely disrupting economic and social life with thousands of residents displaced.

Jigawa State has a large concentration of semi-settled cattle herders – who generally live peacefully with their Hausa farmers. Jigawa is an international gateway for the cattle herders as well as an attractive area to herders from the neighbouring states This had made many communities vulnerable to largely transient foreign cattle herders from countries like Niger and Mali. Such herders were occasionally involved in clashes over land and water points with devastating losses of lives and destruction of properties in different parts of the state.

Katsina state has also been experiencing cases of clashes between farmers and herders in the local communities. Such conflicts often occur in the rainy season especially at the onset or towards the end when herders relocate from one point to another in search of pastures. Farmer-herder clashes are a constant occurrence in Malunfashi town and its environs because its land is fertile and attractive for grazing.

In Sokoto state, the herder-farmers violent conflicts are attributable to a number of factors, which include Night grazing; Child pastoralist practices; and the destruction of farm produce by the cattle. Grazing of animals at night results in the crossing of boundaries and attacks on farmlands resulting in massive destruction of crops. Children pastoralist practices on the other hand result in unintended damage to farmlands by cattle due to limited experience by the children to guide the cattle (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017).

The people of Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu state woke up on Monday, 25 April, 2016 to the fiery swords of irate herdsman who occupy the bushy parts of the Local Government. The unsuspecting villagers, who are mainly agrarians, had from time to time had quarrels with cattle-herders who would always release their cattle to graze in the villagers' farmlands and defecate in their streams. Two villages, namely: Mgwogo and Onueke were first to be attacked. The people said that the cattle-herders had targeted the able-bodied men and youths, killing many and leaving others with different degrees of injuries, while many fled and settled in neighbouring towns in the Nsukka Local Government Area. Although there was no

independent confirmation, different accounts estimated that 40 indigenes of Nimbo were killed, including properties worth millions destroyed. Following the attack, economic activities in Nimbo and other affected communities were paralysed. Some community leaders indicated that they had received advanced report of the planned attack and reported to the Police, but that the Police could not stop the attack. In reaction to the incident, a group of anti-herder protesters, made up of a coalition of thirteen nongovernmental organisations and women from Nimbo Community had taken to the streets to protest against the violent conflict. The impact has been the destruction of farmlands, crops, killings, maiming, rape, trauma and pollution of drinking water at the village stream, hate messages, ethno-religious resentment, etc. Some of the stakeholders that have continued to intervene include: traditional rulers, women groups, the state government, civil society organisations, security agencies, among others. The conflict has not been resolved as there remain cases of reported attacks on unsuspecting farmers in Nimbo and other communities in the area by the cattle-herders (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017).

In Ebonyi, the conflict was found to have led to loss of peaceful co-existence, breakdown of established friendship, perpetual fear of attack and loss of family means of livelihood (Umeh & Chukwu, 2016).

Also, below is a tabular presentation of the Fulani herders' attacks on communities across the

**Table 1: Presentation of some recent Herdsmen-Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria.**

S/n	Place	Date	Immediate cause(s)	Death toll / Casualties / Degree of Destruction
<b>A.</b>	<b>Incidences of 2016</b>			
1.	Udeni Ruwa, Nasarawa state	January 6	Destruction of farm crops	Between 12 and 38 people were killed and many wounded.
2.	Gareji village in Taraba State	January 17	3 people were killed	
3.	Demsare, Wunamokoh, Dikajam and Taboungo of Adamawa State	January 23	Between 30 and 60 people including a police DPO were killed and properties destroyed.	
4.	Agatu, Benue State	February 2	Reprisal attack	7 people were killed and the community was thrown into mourning
5.	Tom-Anyiin and Tom-Ataan communities, Tombu in Buruku LGA, Benue State	February 7	Clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers	10 persons were killed and the community was raided.
6.	Abbi, Enugu State	February 11	2 persons were killed and some were declared missing	

7.	Agatu, Benue State	February 24 & 28	Reprisal attack against the alleged killing of a prominent Fulani man by the people of Agatu in 2013	Between 300 and 500 persons were killed and wounded. Others were displaced.
8.	Ossissa, Ndokwa, Delta State	March 2	Some people were wounded and residents were forced to flee their homes as houses were destroyed.	
9.	Mbaya-Tombo, Benue state	March 7,8 13 & 17	Dispute and destruction of farm crops	Over 35 persons died and properties were destroyed.
10.	Ugwunesi in Awgu LGA, Enugu State	March 26	It was a reprisal attack by the Fulani herdsmen after armed farmers killed a Fulani traditional ruler Ardo of Kardorko- Alhaji Habibu Domo, and four others	2 Soldiers, 18 others were Killed. Thousands were displaced and more than 1000 homesteads were destroyed.
11.	Ohali-Elu, Rivers State	April 3-7	Clash with communities	About 7 to 16 people were killed.
12.	Ilado, Ondo State	April 9	Hon. Olu Falae, former SGF, was attacked by herdsmen and they killed his security guard	Herdsmen attacked and killed the security guard of Chief. Falae.
13.	Angai, Dashole, Dori and Mesuwa villages of Taraba State	April 10	Farm land dispute	Between 15 and 44 people were killed.
14.	Agatu, Benue State	April 20	Policemen attacked	Some persons were injured and a policeman was declared missing.
15.	Ndiagu Attakwu, Nkanu-West LGA, Enugu State	April 25	Herdsmen were alleged to have entered the heart of the community that afternoon and a woman sounded a gong, after which the cows scattered: the herdsmen gathered the herds and left, only to return in the night and raided the village.	Many were murdered, including a catholic church seminarian and a pregnant woman whose stomach was cut open. Also houses were destroyed,

16.	Nimbo Community of Uzo-Uwani LGA, Enugu state	April 25	Herdsmen were said to have earlier disagreed with the villagers over the use of farmlands as grazing fields.	46 people were killed and 10 houses were burnt, including Christ Holy Church International during the invasion.
17.	Dungun Mu'azu, Sabuwa LGA, Katsina State	November 25	Reprisal attack	8 people were massacred (7 men and 1 woman)
<b>B.</b>	<b>Incidences of 2017</b>			
18.	Abraka and Obiaruku, both in Ethiopie East and Ukwuani LGAs, Delta State	January 9	No fewer than 5 persons were killed.	
19.	Zango-Kataf Local Council of Kaduna State	January 17	Herdsmen opened fire in Samaru Kataf market	3 persons were killed and five injured.
20.	Ipiga village in Ohimini LGA, Benue State	January 24	Grazed cattle and destroyed farmlands	15 persons were killed. A bloody fight that took the lives of two of the herdsmen and about 13 of the villagers.
21.	Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State	January 24	Commercial car taking students to school from Kafanchan was waylaid by alleged herdsmen	5 students of the College of Education, Gidan Waya were shot dead.
22.	Rukumawa Tsafe LGA, Zamfara State	February 10	Clash between community members and suspected herdsmen	8 people were confirmed dead.
23.	Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State	February 21	Fulani herdsmen launched attacks on four communities	About 21 people were killed.
24.	Mbahimin community, Gwer East LGA, Benue State	March 2	Renewed hostilities between herdsmen and farmers in Mbahimin community	No fewer than 10 persons were killed.
25.	Omumu community, Ika South LGA, Delta State.	March 6	Clash between suspected herdsmen and residents of Omumu community	6 persons died.

26.	Tiv community, Mkgovur village in Buruku LGA, Benue State	March 11	7 people were killed.	
27.	Umuobasikwu, Ozuitem community in Bende LGA, Abia State	March 14	Clash between herdsmen and the people of Umuobasikwu	1 person was killed and several others injured.
28.	Adam Village, Kwande LGA, Benue State	March 27	Herdsmen farm attack	1 killed, 1 injured, women raped in their farms.
29.	Emuhu community in Ika South LGA, Delta State	March 28	Attack by suspected herdsmen	3 persons were killed while six others sustained injuries.
30.	Obio Usiere in Eniong Abatim, Odukpani LGA, Cross River State	April 1	Raid a community	killed no fewer than 10 persons
31.	Tse-Akaa village, Ugondo Mbamar District of Logo LGA, Benue State	May 8	Clash with herdsmen	3 persons were killed.
32.	Ossissa community in Ndokwa East LGA, Delta State	May 12	Farmers who worked with Ugo Farm were ambushed on their way home	Suspected herdsmen beheaded a commercial motorcycle rider and six farmers.
33.	Afam Uku, Oyigbo LGA, Rivers State	May 18	Herdsmen attack	2 persons lost their lives.
34.	Ewu community, Esan Central LGA, Edo State	May 22	Herdsmen entered farmland raped two women and strangled them to death	2 people were killed and 1 was wounded. Crops were destroyed and lots of persons sacked from their farmlands.
	Mbakyondo, Mbakpa and Senger Communities in Benue state	April 6, 2018		10 people killed and many houses were burnt
	Nimbo in Uzo Uwani Enugu state	April, 25 2016		40 people killed and Houses, Churches and Buses, Motor Cycles were Burnt
	Agatu Benue state	April 23, 2013		47 people killed and Houses were burnt

	Ikpele & Okpopolo	November 9, 2013		7 people killed and over 6000 people were displaced
	Agatu Laa benue	November 20		36 people killed and 7 villages were overrun
	Abajimba Guma LGA of Benue State	March 25, 2014		25 people killed Over 50 were injured and many properties destroyed

Source: Oli, N. P., Ibekwe, C. C. & Nwankwo, I. U. (2018), Modified by the Authors.

Also, a testimony by Mr. Emmanuel Ogebe, Esq. Special Counsel, Justice for Jos Project on the U.S. Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram and other threats in Northern Nigeria; noted that the spokespersons for the herdsmen's association argued that their action was provoked by the Agatu people killing "10,000 cows" although according to him they saw no signs of dead cows (only dead people) during their tour. This claim was highly improbable. According to Mr Emmanuel Ogebe; indeed, "we saw as many as 10,000 live cows." This sort of impunity flummoxes Akpa Idu, a community leader and chair of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee set up by Benue State to, alongside Fulani community leaders, stem the attacks; "Why is the government not doing anything about it? Are they above the law or do they allow them continue jihad? The herdsmen were told to move their cows out of the state to pave way for peace talks. Instead more are coming. They move at will with sophisticated weapons." Akpa Idu further recalled the last major attack on March 15, 2015 when 80 of his people were killed during a 5 a.m. attack as they celebrated early morning mass at the local Catholic Church. Idu said that, privately, Fulani leaders on his peace panel complain about unknown herdsmen amongst them who are not amenable to suasion but he remains unconvinced. Other leaders have told him that contributions were taken and cows sold to raise an offering to fund the attacks on Agatu. "This is not about grazing. This is about a takeover for their empire. They will plant their flag like Boko Haram," he cautioned.

In an interview with Punchng, the leader of a delegation of The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigerian (MACBAN) to the defense headquarters, Senator Dagiri Alkali claimed that the attacks carried out by the Fulani herdsmen is more of a necessity arising from the effects of the Boko Haram attacks in the North. He claimed that the Boko Haram insurgents attacked the Fulani in the North-East and other parts of the country and stole millions of cows from the breeders. He added that the Fulani were also victims of the activities of cattle rustlers in Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue and parts of Kogi states with millions of cows taken away from them. According to him, the herdsmen were simply acting in self-defense. He was quoted saying "But you, as the military people, you know self-defense is an art (Akinyetun, 2016).

Most troubling of all, the Fulani have free rein to travel all over Nigeria, actually West Africa.

They are found in several African countries including some of those to which the Boko Haram insurgency has spread, and are able to move freely across national borders with their cattle and arms. The bloody attacks on farming communities by the herdsmen continue to occur in several parts of the country. The Nigeria government's response to the violence tends to oscillate between the use of military force and mediation by eminent persons at a crisis point. The latter are engaged to hold consultative meetings in conflict situations or appointed into peace commissions of inquiry. When military forces are deployed to contain particular spikes in the violence, the treatment of the civil population has itself become a critical political and security challenge (Hoffman 2014). The accounts of excessive use of force, extra-judicial killings and other human rights abuses cannot be overemphasized. The duo efforts have failed as attacks have continued unabated over the years. Furthermore, between 2002 and 2010, the federal government appointed four commissions to investigate the violent conflict (largely herdsmen/farmers) around Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States: Justice Okpene Judicial Commission of inquiry into communal conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states in 2002; Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State, headed by Shehu Idris, Emir of Zazzau, May 2004; Federal administrative panel of inquiry into the 2008 crisis, headed by Major General Emmanuel Abisoye; and Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos Crisis, headed by Solomon Lar in 2010. However, there has not been any strong political will to implement the reports of the several commissions of inquiry. The herdsmen/farmers clashes have attracted international attention. Human Rights Watch (HRW) in December 2013 said clashes in central Nigeria had killed 3,000 people since 2010, accusing Nigerian authorities of ignoring the violence. According to official figures, in Nigeria, more than 35 per cent of land area of 923,768 square kilometres is threatened by desertification affecting the livelihoods of more than 40 million people (Eromo, 2016). In recent times, this ongoing tension in Nigeria has witness dramatic escalation to include attacks, kidnappings and killings by the nomads (Aluko, 2017).

To this extent the global index (2015) had ranked the Fulani herdsmen as one of the five deadliest terrorist groups in the recent times. The Global Terrorism Index of 2015 states that over 90 percent of the attacks carried out by the group are on private citizens, accounting for 81 percent of deaths in the area. And these attacks have mainly been through armed assaults, killing an average of 11 people per attack. The Fulani militants are ranked just after the al-Shabaab in terrorist attacks (Aluko, 2017).

The domination of other groups, with or without force is a major feature of the Fulani. This is better grasped when one remembers Jihad launched in 1804 and recently, Sharia. As submitted by Nmezi (2005) "... in the case of Nigeria, the post-civil war situation has been the gradual and incremental manoeuvring of the Hausa-Fulani group, of the political process, to favour their dominance over other groups. This is plainly a politico-cultural hegemony. Their excruciating strangulation of the country's economy by their corrupt practices, coupled with their sanctimonious pretentiousness are clear indications of this groups plan to hegemonize the entire nation state". Nmezi went further to postulate that "there are indicators everywhere that point to their propensity to dominate the other ethnic groups. The thirst for hegemony has once again



reared its ugly head in the history of the Fulani as it drives them to take over farmlands outside their geopolitical zone. Having one's kinfolks as the head of country should definitely warrant the "right" to intimidate others. Intimidation by the Fulani has its root in the early days of colonial Nigeria (Akinyetun, 2016). Ahmadu Bello (cited by Akinola, 2016) in the Parrot Newspaper of 12th October, 1960 was quoted saying:

“The new nation called Nigeria should be an Estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the Minorities in the North as willing tools and the south as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future”

This message of warning was intended to not only intimidate the minorities and the South mentioned but to also acquaint them of the fate that beholds them from the “big-brother”. Perhaps, the recent and ongoing attacks are a wakeup call to resuscitate the 'task' (Akinyetun, 2016).

## **5. The Impacts of Herdsmen attacks on Farming Communities in Nigeria**

Herders - farmer's conflict has far reaching implications for the states concerned. The first concern according to Abba and Usman (2008) is that of food security. In all the states under consideration, particularly Taraba and Benue states, the majority of those displaced are women and youths who make up substantial part of the farming community, just like in Nasarawa, Kaduna (Southern Kaduna) and Plateau States. The instability caused by the incessant conflict, will likely lead to food shortages for the communities that depend on subsistence farming. Conflicts resulting from the use of Fadama land may also jeopardize huge financial investment by government, Africa Development Bank and World Bank in the Fadama projects nationwide (Ardo 2004:6). Also, Adebayo and Olaniyi, (2008) noted that the impact of the herders-farmers conflict has been observed to lead to the displacement of the farmers from their places of origin. They have thus become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with a far-reaching impact on farming activities. Because the people displaced are peasant farmers they often depend on others to give them land to plant crops on a smaller scale than what they have cultivated before. This has often led to low agricultural yield mainly to support their existence at a subsistence level. Their economic well-being is thus tempered with because of this conflict. Their cash crops production has reduced, their subsistence level also has dropped.

According to Adebayo and Olaniyi (2008:5) reduced standard and levels of education has been noticed during violent attacks by the Fulani herdsmen on unsuspecting farming communities. The unhealthy looks of the victims of attacks could be seen anytime one visit the scene or some of the internally displaced people camps that are littered all over the country. These attacks have led the children of the victims to be out of school for about one or two years, as their parents cannot afford the school fees due to the destruction of their means of livelihood. The low capital base leads them to poor health as they are unable to purchase drugs prescribed in the clinics available around where they are. This has definitely lead to very low Human Capital Development Index (Eje, Angai, Abdullahi, Eje, Wudaba & Ishaku, 2017). Abass (2012) maintains that the socio-

economic consequences of herders-farmers conflicts are usually eminent. Conflicts between the crop farmers and nomadic famers or grazers create some mistrust, tension and open confrontations between the opposing groups. Reduction in income and output of crop farmers occur as a result of indiscriminate bush burning and destruction of crops by cattle which lead to either partial or total loss of crops by the farmers. The effect on crop yield therefore has negative impact on the affected farmer's income with its summary impact on the overall agricultural income. This tends to negatively affect farmer's savings, credit repayment ability, as well the food security and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply, thus, farming and rural/agricultural development is discouraged. Nyong and Fiki (2005) pointed out that resource-related conflicts are responsible for over 12 percent declines in per capita food production in sub-Saharan Africa.

The conflicts have not only heightened the level of insecurity, but have also demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the food crisis in Nigeria and other affected countries due to loss of farmer lives, animals, crops and valuable properties (Cotula, Toulmin and Hesse 2004:4). Chukwuma and Atelhe (2014) observed that the effects of herders –farmer's conflict for Nigeria's national security cannot be over emphasized. The humanitarian, economic, and social consequences of conflicts have been manifold and telling. The attendant security and livelihood crises threaten the collective subsistence and survival of the affected populations. There are also other externalities, such as diminution of agricultural productivity and decline in household capital, all of which do not augur well for societal and national sustainability. Herders- farmer's conflicts according to Ibrahim, Abdurrahman, Belel, and Umar (2015) also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of pastoral production and agriculture in West Africa (Moritz, 2010). These conflicts reinforce circles of extreme poverty and hunger, and destroy social status, food security and affect mostly the most marginalised groups that include women and children. This affects education of children leading to obstacles in their development and mass displacement (Eje, et al., 2017). Consequentially, this debilitates the once mutually existing farmer-pastoralist relationships. This awful situation becomes worst, especially when either the farmer or the pastoralist is categorised into a group relating to religion, tribe or region. These conflicts have caused a sharp and substantial increase in prices for key northern agricultural crop exports such as cowpeas, maize, millet, rice and sorghum, to the rest of Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon. This rise in prices is mainly due to a decrease in agricultural output, uncertainties at markets and an increase in transportation costs (Ibrahim, Abdurrahman, Belel & Umar 2015:9; Eje, et al., 2017).

There have been reduction in crop production all over Nigeria as a result of the constant attacks carried out by the Fulani herdsmen on farming communities as these attacks have engendered fear on the farmers who now very afraid to engage in farming activities for fear of their lives and farms would be destroyed by the rampaging Fulani herdsmen. This reduction in the output of crops production is due to a combination of factors. First, there has been reduction in the availability of labour due to the threat of attacks on farmers on their way to their fields. Both farmers and farm labourers are afraid of attacks on the farms or bombs planted on the roads to farms. The lack of labour has caused inadequate and improperly timed weeding and harvesting. Asides the loss of lives and property to the incessant attacks, the ripple effects are felt in the fact

that food production has dropped leading to a rise in the cost of food that results in a corresponding rise in the cost of living. Benue state is described as the food basket of the nation but these attacks have cast a pall on the farming and food production activities. This leads to an invariable heightening of the poverty levels, a rise in crime as a result of the unemployment of the vulnerable youth population. There is also a rise in prostitution as affected mature females must find alternative means of eking out livelihoods in the face of their inability to return to the farms or even be assured of safety in their villages. This rise is accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of cases of avoidable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among the youthful population on which the posterity of the nation is expected to depend.

Another effect herders' attacks can cause among conflicting communities is a possibility of unnecessary competition such as competition for power, religious competition and so on. Among other effects are destruction of property and environment, loss of lives, displacement of the citizens and migrants in the affected areas. The more visible consequence has been violent clashes in the towns, burnings of churches and a large-scale migration of people out of the affected areas to places with a more supportive administration. However, in rural areas, the effect has been to draw natural resource conflict into the politico-religious arena (Yahaya 2011:36; (Eje, et al., 2017).

The states government where these attacks have taken place has apparently been unable to handle the onslaught by these herdsmen which has over heated the polity and is still threatening to tear the fabric that holds the Nigerian society to pieces if not checkmated.

The federal government of Nigeria has over the years display poor policy formulation and implementation towards addressing the menace caused by the Fulani attacks on farming communities across the country. Currently, the government plans for a diversification of the nation's economy with a heightened focus on agriculture and increased green areas are on the front burner yet the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' conflicts and grazing land matters have not been adequately resolved to ensure an appreciable level of compromise and stability.

Lack of commitment and support to security and the conspiratorial actions of the security agencies has exacerbated the proliferation of arms into the country since the occurrence of the Arab Spring and the Libyan uprising (Genyi, 2014), and has also increased the propensity of the Fulani herdsmen to carry sophisticated arms to go unchecked. The aggrieved communities in some cases has taken advantage of this lacuna to arm themselves in self-defense thereby leading to situations that portend very grave consequences to national integration. Also, lack of ranching options and the effective checkmating of deforestation make it imperative for the herdsmen to roam freely. In these Middle-Belt states, even within the residential areas of the metropolis, it is a common sight to encounter herdsmen and young boys (most times fully armed with guns and other types of weapon) leading herds comprising more of cattle, a few sheep and very rarely, dogs, across the major roads, and through undeveloped plots of vast land, etc. sometimes constituting a nuisance to road users and other citizens. There are no restrictions whatsoever on the routes designated for these herdsmen thereby heightening the 'no-holds-barred' approach to pastoralism in the nation.

Loss of internally generated revenue (IGR) is one of the fallouts of the failure of the Nigerian government to tackle the menace of Fulani herdsmen attacks on farming communities within the states in the Middle-Belt region (Plateau, Benue, Kaduna and Nasarawa). These are states which were not highly rated as economically viable and so are largely dependent on the IGR for sustenance. In their overall assessments of the revenue-loss impact analyses of the farmer-pastoralist conflicts including losses based on number of fatalities, Plateau state topped the charts as having incurred notable losses in IGR followed by Kaduna, Benue and Nasarawa states. The losses ranged between NGN 109 and 347 million in 2010 alone accounting for 22 - 47% of the potential IGR collection in the states (McDougal, et al, 2015).

The Fulani herdsmen are sacking whole communities on a scale that appears rivalled only by armed rebel groups that threaten sovereign nations. The context of the conflicts between the pastoralists and farmers in the Middle-Belt region has undergone a metamorphosis. It has lost the tinge of conflicts arising from grazing misdemeanours and no longer has the indigene-settler colouration. Rather, it has taken on an expansionist land-grabbing undertone with a politico-religious agenda that borders on the struggle for land resource control and the indigene-settler question which together reflect the nexus of the crises in the region over the years. As it is, nothing tangible has been done to effectively put these Fulani herdsmen in check and the possibility of them spiraling out of control is high if a cue is to be taken from Nigeria's experience with the Boko Haram group which festered as an amorphous group until it became the hydra-headed monster attacking state formations and other government institutions today. The Fulani herdsmen and their activities already fit into the descriptions of terrorism offered by Nigeria's Terrorism Prevention Act (2011) and though they may as yet not have attacked state institutions, their activities qualify them for identification as fifth columnists (Umoh, 2017).

The fact that the president is also of Fulani extraction and that the ethnic group is known to have a unique affinity for its members as has been explained as some of the reasons for their attacks on some communities in the Middle-Belt region, have also been touted as possible reasons for the government's lacklustre attitude to addressing the attacks (Abdulbarkindo & Alupsen, 2017).

It has been observed that the violent disposition of the Fulani herdsmen have given rise to anti-Fulani sentiment in most parts of the country and has also continued to instil hatred against them (Idowu, 2017). Some persons have cited a Fulani expansionist agenda as being behind these attacks. A Twitter hashtag to that effect, #MAFO (Movement Against Fulani Occupation) has been launched and there have been allegations of possible government collusion in this perceived expansionist agenda (Nwosu, 2017). The conflict further deepened the ethnic consciousness among Nigerians as it was basically a conflict between the Muslim Fulani herders and the Christian farmers. A good number of people from the South view the advancement as an attempt to rip them off their lands while the others believe it's an attempt to Islamize the Southern part of country (Mbaeze & Nnaji, 2018).

According to Burton (2016), cooperation between innocent citizens, aggrieved by Fulani herdsmen attacks and the government is appearing hard to come by; hence, he suggests that the

conflict will require multi-level cooperation if it is to be resolved peacefully (Oli, Ibekwe & Nwankwo, 2018).

According to Amnesty International, clashes between herdsmen and farmers in Adamawa, Benue, Taraba, Ondo and Kaduna have resulted in 168 deaths in January 2018 alone and in 2017, 549 deaths and thousands displaced across Enugu, Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Cross River, Adamawa, Katsina, Delta and Ekiti State. In most cases of the conflict both farmers and herdsmen relocate as a result of attacks and reprisal attacks. More often than not, farmers are afraid of going to their farms lands for fear of attack by herdsmen in areas where there is conflict. This again affects production and income of farmers. Moreover, as a result of the killings, a lot of children have been rendered fatherless and motherless and husbands and wives turned into widows and widowers. Herders-Farmers conflict has lead to the wanton destruction of material resources. It has also facilitated land degradation as conflicts often results to the destruct environmental, physical, human and social capital, thereby altering available sustainable development opportunities that should enhance national development (Mbaeze & Nnaji, 2018).

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Nigeria is under a severe internal and security threat as the threat has political, economic and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the nation and can be traced to many factors in which the Boko Haram insurgency and of recent, the Fulani-herdsmen appears to be major factor. Most worrisome in the present development is the pillaging, raping, killing, kidnapping and sacking of farming communities by Fulani herdsmen. Stories abound in the national dailies on daily basis of how these shepherds strategically attacked and are still attacking several communities, with reckless abandon with the use of sophisticated assault weapon (Ajibefun, 2018). In recent times, the killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen over their attacks on farming communities have rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with the Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. This recent wave of violence in Nigeria as observed by Kasarachi (2016) cited in Ajibefun (2018), has disrupted socioeconomic, religious and educational activities, political instability and threatened the national unity in Nigeria. These extra judiciary killings have forced thousands of people to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety.

According to Ekanola (2006: 280)

Today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of national identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more to primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of development in an increasingly competitive and globalised world, Nigerians are busy waging ethnic and religious wars.

This socio-political background and the little emphasis placed on core-national-values in

Nigeria are partly responsible for the unpatriotic, disunity, inter and intra-ethnic violence that characterize the nation. The predominant value system of wealth and material acquisition, ethnic and tribal loyalty are fundamental obstacles to national integration and survival of Nigeria as a nation. This is the reason why Ugwuegbu (2004) argued that a community populated with people without appropriate positive value will not survive. Bello-Imam and Obadan (2004) observed that instead of producing thinking and objective human beings, the educational system produced many fearful and uncritical citizens who were also selfish and indifference to public affairs. Nigeria cannot attain national integration that could foster expected development and national transformations except the citizens acquire and demonstrate required values and traits.

The indices inherent in twenty-first century pastoralism in Nigeria portend grave consequences for national stability and sustainability if nothing is done to curb the menace. It is noteworthy that state failure is characterized by the inability of the government to deliver socio-economic and political goods to the citizenry especially in a developing country like Nigeria on whose shoulders the onus for national growth and development rests. The responsibility for the security of the lives and property of her citizenry falls within this purview. This reality brings with it, a need for the Nigerian government to return to the drawing-board, evaluate our existing laws, processes and procedures, scrap the unworkable old laws and develop more functional ones that take cognizance of contemporary issues, in the light of true patriotism and a desire for national integration and posterity.

The Fulani herdsmen must be brought under the control of the laws governing the country. Their existence as nomads or 'human free-radicals' can no longer be unrestricted and so the boundaries within which they are allowed to ply their trade must be clearly spelt out. The government must also do more to enforce the rule of law without any bias. A situation where groups of pastoralist bandits are paid to prevent them from taking life or engaging in premeditated conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as was done in Kaduna state, Nigeria, is humiliating and laughable.

The government should embark on afforestation projects aimed at reclaiming desert encroached areas in the far north so that the land mass is enough for the pastoralists to ply their trade without having to leave the vicinity. Alongside this, there should be a perennially abundant supply of the different types of forage that the pastoralists claim that the herds have a preference for. This will ensure that they have no cause to wander into the territories or areas outside the northern parts of the country where the religions, cultures and traditions are totally alien to what they are accustomed to.

Also, Ranching method of cattle rearing should be adopted and encouraged at rearing location across the country while the herdsmen should be given needed training for effective and efficient management of the ranching.

There is need for proper re-orientation of the essence of social interaction irrespective of the religious and ethics background

Government should be firm and fair in its resolution and implementation of decisions.

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