

FULANI-HERDSMEN AND FARMERS CRISES UNDER BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION- CAUSES, EFFECTS AND ITS MANAGEMENT (2015-2018)

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Abstract

This study examined the state of Fulani-herdsmen and farmers' crises under Buhari's administration: Causes, Effects and its Management. The source of information for this study is secondary which relied mostly on Newspapers and internet materials. From the study, the major causes are; the traditional trek routes, which become favorite cropping sites because of their better soil fertility resulting from the concentration of animal manure from the trekking herds in these areas. Inadequacy of grazing resources and poor management of the existing grazing reserves has resulted to the crises. On the effects, it has social and economic effects; social effects- Sexual harassment of women, acquiring of weapons/arms and reduction in quality of social relationship, economic effects- Loss of produce in storage, displacement of farmers, and reduction in output and income of farmers/nomads. As a result of the above, we recommend the following: The Federal Government as a matter of urgency should ensure that ranches are created in states that want them. This will go a long way to stop movement of the cows, reduce clashes, and these cows' stands to do well when provided for as in the case of India, Chad and other countries of the world that export cow milk and meat. The Federal Government of Nigeria needs to invest on National Orientation programs for the need to value lives in this country. The National Orientations Agency should be strategic in this direction.

Keywords: *Fulani-herdsmen, Farmers, Crisis, Causes, Effects, Management*

Introduction

The Fula people also known as Fulani in Hausa language, are a mass population widely dispersed and culturally diverse in all of Africa, but most predominant in West Africa. The Fulanis generally speak the Fula language. A significant number of them are nomadic in nature, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry grasslands of their environment, keeping isolate from the local farming communities, making them the world's largest pastoral nomadic group (Eyekpimi, 2016 in

ResearchClue.com). They are massively spread over many countries, and are found mainly in West Africa and northern parts of Central Africa, but also in Sudan and Egypt. The main Fulani sub-groups in Nigeria are: Fulbe Adamawa, Fulbe Mbororo, Fulbe Sokoto, Fulbe Gombe, and the Fulbe Borgu (Eyekpimi, 2016 in ResearchClue.com).

Nigeria as a nation state is under a severe internal socio-economic and security threat. At a more general level, the threat has special economic, political and environmental dimensions.

Each of these dimensions has greatly affected the nation's stability and can be traced to the Fulani-herdsmen and Farmers crises, poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage and environmental degradation (Damba, 2007 in ResearchClue.com).

The first crisis between herdsmen and farmers was recorded in 1948. The second was in 1951 this led to the migration of Fulani Bororo to Sudan. In 1955 there was a clash/genocide which led to the Sudanese Government issuing a quit notice to all Fulani Bororo to relocate to their home countries. These people were mainly from Borno, Sokoto and Kano States in Nigeria

(Ibrahim, 2018). In April 1956, the Nigerian Government sent a delegation comprising Alhaji Mohammad Ribadu-Minister of Lands, Alhaji Abubakar Akalai of Sokoto Native Administration, Malam Maaji Shani – Legal Adviser Borno Native Administration and Mr. J.R. Knowles- A Senior Veterinary Officer. This led to the Fulani's eventual relocation to Nigeria two years later (Ibrahim, 2018).

Subsequently, urbanization as in the case of Federal Capital Territory (FCT) dislocated these Fulani herdsmen from these ranches or dams and power projects as in Mambila and Mokwa leading them to permanent dislocation. This led the Nomadic Fulanis to forcefully design their own grazing corridors and or to acquire temporary sites which inevitably are farm lands of farmers (Ibrahim, 2018). Furthermore, it is on record that by 1964 the government has gazette about 6.4 million hectares of land which was enacted in 1965 in 144 locations or areas in the savannah region of Northern Nigeria with about 3 (three) between Oyo and Ogun States. This was primarily started by Malam Hamisu Kano working with pastoralist on livestock vaccination (Ibrahim, 2018). These however were literally abandoned or not fully realized and have been massively encroached upon as grazing reserves. The cattle routes (Burtali/Labi) have also been abandoned or have succumbed to the similar factor of urbanization, creating a source of friction as the known livestock route overseers were no longer employed to preserve the routes.

Again, environmental challenges known as climate changes in addition to urbanization, encroachment and population explosion of both the human and livestock have added to factors challenging peaceful co-habitation. The herdsman who overtime has become emotionally attached to his cattle and in the face of the above factors that wouldn't have guaranteed access to grazing lands and water for his animal and allowed to roam and live in the wild coupled with lack of both formal and Islamic education becomes exposed to ignorance due to no fault of his. And thus thinking and thought processes leads him to belief he is the only person capable of securing and protecting himself and his livestock (Ibrahim, 2018).

Again, the abolition of "Jangali" or cattle tax in the 80's by most governments in Northern Nigeria further alienated the government from the moral responsibility of providing basic human and cattle vaccines and medicine. These can be seen from the meager budgetary provision by most State Governments. The near semblance of specific and direct relationship with the herdsmen and civil

authority is by way of appointment of Ardo's by Emirs who equally have no constitutionally recognized functions or authority. Complaints to immediate authorities and our expensive process of justice an average Fulani man living in the wild does not have the tools and means of pursuing justice. And a head of a Fulani family might retort to his grown up children that you are all living witnesses when this misfortune was inflicted on us, "with little or no religious or formal education" the next option is for such children to imbibe rustling or kidnapping as a means of revenge, these are practical realities (Ibrahim, 2018).

By 1978 Nigeria Government introduced the Land Use Act which vests the custody of land in the Federal Capital Territory on the Federal Government/Minister of Federal Capital Territory; custody of Urban Center Land is vested on the State Government and custody of rural area land is vested on Local Government Councils. This is to make it easier for non-indigenes of a particular area to apply and secure land on lease in their host communities as well as provide opportunity for natives to apply and be given a certificate of occupancy to claim ownership of their ancestral lands. Most Fulanis who are used to migrating from one place to the other did not take advantage of this. Consequently, they lacked where they could claim as their grazing routes and grazing land. There increasing movement from one place in the eyes of modern law amounted to trespass and encroachment of the properties of others. Over the years this brought conflicts of interest on land in some places (Ahmed-Gamgum, 2018). Looking at the above factors, we can say that Nigerian government has failed to provide alternative ways whereby the fulanis can carry out their respective activities without having issues with their host communities. Finally, the study looked at the state of the crises under Buhari's Administration: the politics, causes, effects, and its management.

Carnage in Nigeria

According to Nwosu (2017), an accurate account of the death toll resulting from herdsmen – farmer violence in Nigeria is difficult to come by due to the lack of a dedicated database. Therefore, most of the evidence comes from newspaper reports of various incidents involving the herdsmen and farmers in settled communities. Some sources claim that since 2001, over 60,000 persons had died as a result of the conflicts, making it deadlier than the notorious Boko Haram uprising. A BBC reported that over 50,000 deaths were caused by the crisis between 2001 and 2004 alone. Of these deaths, women and children accounted for almost 35,000. Some accounts have it that the violent confrontations started since 1990s or earlier than that. A report showed that the economic cost of the herdsmen-farmer conflicts in only the four states of Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa and Plateau at about \$14 billion annually. Current figures are likely to be higher, especially with the spread of the conflict to other states.

Little wonder, the Global Terrorism Index showed the Fulani herdsmen as the fourth deadliest terrorist group in the world in 2014. Only the fearsome trio of Boko Haram, ISIS and Al-Shabab were adjudged deadlier. Though herdsmen-associated carnage halved year later, herdsmen remain a formidable armed group (Nwosu, 2017).

Politics in Herdsmen/Farmers Crises

The present crises between herdsmen and farmers are economic and environmental problems. Some politicians and few gullible Nigerians have turned it to a political one. At this moment, the crisis requires both political and socio-economic solutions. Most of us have chosen to ignore the fact that

though, crises between nomadic cattle rearers and farming communities have taken some dangerous dimension, and the crisis in Nigeria is as old as the trades (Zayyad, 2018). Furthermore, due to demographic changes and other factors like cattle rustling, overgrazing and expanding human and cattle population, the entire crisis is now purely a resources war- land and access to it. But at the present, politics, tongue and faith have crept in at some communities in which the herdsmen and the farmers belong to different tribes and religions. Nevertheless, remove land and the crisis will fizzle, leaving us with the political ripples. The herdsmen/farmers crisis requires economic, environmental and political solutions-the political class and other stakeholders need to provide permanent, feasible and win-win solutions. Ranching or cattle colonies are indeed one of the best ways to rear cows but it is complex, complicated and not as easy as we assumed. On the other hand, anti-grazing law has proven to be more of crisis igniter than a problem solving vehicle ((Zayyad, 2018).

Buhari's Administration and the Crisis

According to Nwosu (2017), though the crises obviously predate the Buhari administration, the administration's actions and inactions in the face of continued confrontations have subjected it too much flak by Nigerians. One of the most prominent attacks allegedly perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen in the Buhari's era was the Agatu Massacre in Benue State. In February 2016, over 300 persons from the communities were massacred, while some 7,000 were displaced. Some reports showed that many people died in ten Agatu communities at the hands of suspected herdsmen in early 2016. These killings were accompanied by the destruction of houses and other property as well as allegations of rape. According to their leader, the attacks were reprisals against the Agatu people for killing a prominent Fulani man and stealing his cattle in 2013.

That it took the president more than one week to issue a statement of condemnation and order an investigation, and that his spokesman stated his taciturn stance on the crisis on the grounds that "[the President] is not a (sic) talkative," have angered many Nigerians. Moreover, allegations of either inaction or outright collusion with the herdsmen have been leveled against the government and security agencies. In an interaction, the member representing Agatu in the Benue State House of Assembly, Mr. Sule Audu, accused the military of allowing the Fulani herdsmen to occupy the sacked communities, while their cattle's, numbering over 100,000, freely grazed on their farmlands. That the president is Fulani also added ammunition to his attackers, who saw his slow response as a tacit support for the killers (Nwosu, 2017).

Further south, on 25 April 2016, suspected armed Fulani invaders attacked Ukpabi Nimbo, a town in Enugu State, killing so many souls. This drew wide-ranging condemnation, and highlighted the potential threat of the conflict feeding other security flash points. The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra, a group agitating for a restoration of the separatist Republic of Biafra, the implication should the killings continue. The group is viewed as treasonous by the government. Some communities in the South-East zone have threatened revengeful attacks. Similar cases of herder-farmer conflicts have been reported in some parts of the country (Nwosu, 2017).

It is baffling that virtually no successful prosecution or conviction has been secured on any of these incidents of killing and wanton destruction of property by the herdsmen. To aggravate the people's sense of betrayal, the governor of Kaduna State and a powerful ally of the President, Nasir el-Rufai,

accepted settling them in order to stop killing the mainly Christian southern Kaduna people. Kaduna was embroiled in a crisis involving Fulani herdsmen and southern Kaduna residents in December 2016. The most worrying aspect of it is that the attacks were carried out during the 24 -hour's curfew in the state (Nwosu, 2017).

As in the case of the Agatu Crisis, the Southern Kaduna Killings were said to be reprisal attacks by Fulani herdsmen for previous murders. Even if the compensation was made in good faith, that the governor, a Muslim Fulani, paid fellow Muslim Fulanis rather than bring them to justice, has been seen by many as emboldening the herdsmen. Even a UN reports on herdsmen perpetrated attacks in Nigeria noted, "the complete impunity enjoyed so far by the perpetrators". Reports also had it that 5 persons were arrested over the Nimbo Massacre even though the Massacre was allegedly perpetrated by over 500 armed herdsmen. One thing is certain: it is worrying when attacks and reprisals can be carried out in a country, with little or no consequences for the perpetrators (Nwosu, 2017).

Perhaps the most perplexing question surrounding the conflicts is how cattle herdsmen end up with sophisticated weapons like the AK-47 (semi-)automatic gun. As has been noted by some concerned Nigerians, the specter of a fully-armed Fulani herdsman is new. A number of factors, such as the Libyan Crisis and the resulting free flow of firearms in the wake of Ghaddafi's death, gun running, and local politics, have been blamed for the relatively easy access of Fulani herdsmen to dangerous and sophisticated weapons.

A related problem is Nigeria's porous borders. The recent spate of herdsmen-perpetrated violence has been attributed to foreign transhumant Fulani's. If this is true, the fact that foreigners can travel as far south as Enugu and Osun State to wreak havoc points to an even deeper problem that has plagued successive administrations in Nigeria, and persists under the present Buhari administration: the lack of effective border security. Even the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) regulation does not endorse unregulated and/or armed grazing, and calls for an evolution to ranching (Nwosu, 2017).

To be fair to the Buhari administration, there seems to be some desire to prevent future attacks. Currently, the grazing bill is before the National Assembly. The bill seeks to establish a grazing reserve in each state so as to not only improve livestock production, but also prevent herdsmen-farmers' conflicts. However, given the charged nature of the problem, it appears the bill hardly enjoys any support from many states of the south. Many see the bill as unjust, alleging that their lands will be expropriated to serve Fulani commercial interests. Others see it as affording the Fulanis a potential leeway to dominate the south. Even more worrying is the fact that some Fulanis are not in the support of the bill, insisting that it is an infringement on their rights to movement. So far, it appears that the federal government has neither embarked on any systematic enlightenment campaign to douse these concerns, real or imagined, nor proposed an alternative feasible solution (Nwosu, 2017).

The lack of a broad-based and coordinated national policy on grazing has the potential to lead to anarchy, where different states take their destiny into their own hands. A case in point is that Ekiti State had enacted Anti-grazing law. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (the umbrella body representing the herdsmen) has condemned the law, which prohibits grazing outside designated places and times, as well as with fire arms.

Careful analysis of the conflicts indicates that allegations of cattle rustling are at the heart of some of the clashes. Herdsmen accused the settled communities of stealing their cattle and murdering their colleagues and children, necessitating their bearing arms. According to the Chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in Plateau State, Mohammed Abdullahi, "The Fulani use the AK47 for defence since the government has failed to protect them." While not an acceptable solution, such self-defence is an indictment of the security apparatus in Nigeria (Nwosu, 2017).

Another security-related question is what the police and other relevant security agencies are doing to either forestall or promptly respond to attacks by Fulani herdsmen. That large-scale massacres and pillage can be carried out during a 24-hour curfew as in the Southern Kaduna Killings is reprehensible and speaks to either an ineffectual security apparatus or worse still, active collusion by security agencies. And the general failure of the government to successfully prosecute most of the perpetrators of the violence on both sides not only fails to deter future attacks, but also encourages a dangerous arms racing on both sides of the conflict (Nwosu, 2017).

Methodology

This study which centered on Fulani-herdsmen and Farmers crises under Buhari's Administration: Causes, Effects and its Management relied on secondary sources of information. The research design used in this work was documentary. Secondary sources of data collection are Newspapers and Internet materials relevant to this study.

Causes of the continuous crises between the Fulani-herdsmen and Farmers in Nigeria
According to Ingawa, Ega, and Erhabor (1999) in Alhassan 2013 reported that the key underlying causes of farmer-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria are:

1. Decline in internal discipline and social cohesion, as the adherence to the traditional rules regarding grazing periods, and the authority of the traditional rulers is breaking down. This is exacerbated by increased rent seeking of the formal and traditional authorities in managing resource access.
2. Particularly severe on the traditional trek routes, which become favorite cropping sites because of their better soil fertility resulting from the concentration of animal manure from the trekking herds in these areas. Within the fadama areas, this is exacerbated by the fragmented nature of the crop plots, which makes prevention of animals straying in the crop plots difficult.
3. Inadequacy of grazing resources, as increasing crop cultivation (and increasing commercialization of the crop-residues) and poor management of the existing grazing reserves have resulted in a significant reduction in available livestock feed resources, in particular in the Northern States.
4. Moreover, the high value crops introduced by National Fadama Development Project (tomatoes and onions) produce almost no crop-residues for livestock feeding.
5. Finally, the regulation that twenty percent of the fadama would need to be set aside for grazing (National Agricultural Policy, 1988) has not been adhered to.

Effects of the Fulani-herdsmen and Farmers crises in Nigeria

Violent crisis in Nigeria, like other parts of the world, have created a rift in human relations, caused serious threat to peace, unity and food security among many other effects (Basil, 2015 in ResearchClue.com). Crisis is inevitable as long as we live together, especially in a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious community like Nigeria. However, violence leaves us with various forms of retardation and underdevelopment resulting from the destruction of lives, farmland and property. The menaces of violent crisis have been on the increase in some most Nigerian cities in the last two decades (Ilufoye, 2009 in ResearchClue.com). Most of these crises are generally regarded as ethno-religious bigotry and antagonism.

According to Kassam (2014) and Basil (2015) in ResearchClue.com, the crises in most part of Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' crises are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. These Fulani herdsmen and farmers' crisis have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other. The crisis has had devastating effects on intergroup relationships especially in Nasarawa Egor in Nasarawa State and Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State. Apart from the loss of lives, farmlands, food produce and property, it has profound influence on residential relationships, leading to new trends in the polarization of communities (ResearchClue.com).

However, in supporting the above statements, Ajibefun (2017) stated both the social and economic effects of the crisis. On the social effects, he listed the following:

- Sexual harassment of women
- Acquiring of weapons/arms
- Reduction in quality of social relationship
- Reduction of social support
- Loss of human life
- High cases of rape

On the economic effects, Ajibefun (2017) listed the following:

- Loss of produce in storage
- Displacement of farmers
- Reduction in output and income of farmers/nomads
- Scarcity of Agricultural products
- Loss of houses and properties
- Infrastructural damages

Management of Fulani-herdsmen and Farmers Crises in Nigeria

Some Nigerians have offered solutions to the reoccurring crisis-a media veteran, Timanus

Mathias has called for a return to the old order- " The old order rested on mutual respect, access to grazing land through mutually agreed terms with traditional authority and locals. Peace was essential not AK47 rifles" (Zayyad, 2018).

According to Nigerian Working Group (A coalition of public policy experts) suggested ways to address the lingering violence in Nigeria's livestock farming business on *Peace Building and Governance* in a paper released on January 7, 2018 dissected the historical context of the crisis and

recommended solutions that ranged from the creation of new grazing reserves and deployment of modern technology like an electronic chip to track animals (tracking of animals could help address the problem of cattle rustling and crises that have become so rampant) which is today practiced in Katsina State (Premium times, 2018).

Again, according to George Onmonya Daniel, we live in a country where we don't plan at all despite signs of the changing times and when change abruptly faces us we are confused.

That's the dilemma we find ourselves on this farmers and Fulani-herdsmen crisis which the Fulanis have resolved to get what they want through mass murder or whatever means. People have been divided over what to do and not to do, some suggesting an overhauling of the grazing culture and suggesting ranching, others proposing grazing routes. Now which one is more realistic? As population grows so the demand for land. Nigeria's population is almost 200million today and in the next 30 years there is the projection that this population would increase by fifty percent. It means more people would need more lands. Lands doesn't increase/expand, it is static, in fact with global warming, even the land changes, and some of the nutritional lands would become waste if we don't do anything about anything in a country where nothing is done about anything. As demand for land increases by the natives who own such land, it is crystal that the proposal of grazing routes wouldn't work in the long run. So what are we supposed to do? Find a solution that would be win-win for all of us in a long run. These things are not rocket science. The best long term solution is ranching for Nigerian herdsmen. The Nigerian government must learn how developed nations were able to keep their cows in ranches and they produce more milk and meat than ours. It is time to train our herdsmen in this trade. It is time to keep these herdsmen in one place so than they can become educated and not roaming around. The change is now staring at us face to face and change is ranching in states that wants them (Daily Trust).

An environmental educationist, Murtalla Abdullahi posited that: „solutions that have been proposed are mostly kinetic in nature and will not solve the crisis but only help in tackling the symptoms and the grazing bill that focuses on appropriating grazing land and stock reserves will lead to an intensification of the conflict“ politicians have turned the herdsmen/farmers crisis into an easy to „sell“ and „buy“ commodity for campaign, most especially when election is approaching; this has exposed the level of poverty of ideas of some of our politicians as they can only use crude method to grasp power. There are many commissioned reports and recommendations on how to tackle the crisis. However, what is needed now is a feasible solution- which is advocacy. The easiest way to reach the entire herdsmen population is through the radio, despite being nomads, the Fulani herdsmen always move around with radio sets while the farmers can be reached through community leaders (Zayyad, 2018).

Herdsmen and farmers are indeed partners; it is politicians that are making the situation look like a 'we' versus 'them' situation to score cheap political points. Most nomadic Fulani communities and farming communities have co-existed peacefully. In fact, in farming communities, once harvests are done with, they invite herdsmen to camp at their farms for mutual benefits- the farmland get manure while the cattle eat from the farms residue. The federal government should ensure that states that are ready to provide ranching in their respective states copy what was done by former Jigawa state governor Sule Lamido in respect to bone of contention. In most parts of Jigawa state, the then government established demarcated grazing reserves, cattle routes and water pumping windmills for herdsmen to freely mosh their herds. The grazing land is also watered frequently by the water

pumping windmills for grasses to grow even during dry seasons. On the other hand, the farmers were provided with large expanse of farmland to cultivate crops. One beauty of this is; the farmlands have dual function- they have on them facilities for dry season farming. This dual solution, apart from promoting co-existence between farmers and herdsman, will enhance local community security, safety and development. Another advantage of this that is most of the herdsman will not unnecessarily wander around in search of pasture and water because the windmills provide drinking water for their own use as well as for their large livestock. The multi-bladed wind pumps constantly pump water which continually irrigates the large area of the land on which lush grasses grow even during dry seasons. And finally, both herdsman and farmers feel ownership of the land. The herdsman/farmers crises are not faith, tongue, ethnic, geographic or class wars, but rather resources (Zayyad, 2018).

Findings

From the study, the following findings were made:

It was discovered that there is blockage of cattle routes as a result of increase in population and urbanization. In addition to that, it was discovered that the crises are politically, economically and environmentally driven. It was also discovered that there is poor National Orientations for values by the government. It was also discovered that the population of Nigeria has outnumbered the current security apparatus in the country which gave room for killings to continue to linger and most times the killings are politically and socio-economically driven. It was also discovered that in Nigeria, the borders are so porous that bad elements from other countries around come in and commit crimes ranging from killings and other social vices in the country.

Recommendations

From the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Federal Government as a matter of urgency should ensure that ranches are created on states that want them. This will go a long way to stopping movement of the cows, reduce clashes and these cows" stands to do well when provided for as in the case of India, Chad and other countries of the world that export cow milk and meat.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria need to invest on National Orientation programs for the need to value lives in this country. The National Orientations Agency should be strategic in this direction.
3. As a matter of urgency, the Federal Government should strengthen the security apparatus and most importantly make them fully independent. Again, state and community policing should be encouraged because it will go a long way to arresting these incessant killings in the country.
4. Finally, sentiments should be taken away when fighting this ugly problem by Nigerians.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Fulani-herdsman and farmers' crisis is very deadly and should be put to a stop by leaders at all levels and the led. It has taken thousands of lives in the country and therefore should be seen as a very pressing situation that needs to be arrested by all means. We are of the opinion that

the government and its organs should do more on media literacy and support state and community policing.

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