

**THE MENACE OF FULANI HERDSMEN AND FARMERS' CRISIS: A FOCUS ON  
FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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***ABSTRACT***

*The study examined the menace of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's crisis: with a focus on food security in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the populace of Akpan Andem Market and Itam main market in Uyo and Itu Local government area respectively. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select 215 respondents out of the population. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts in evaluation and Test and Measurement. Data from 258 completed questionnaires were subjected to PPMC analysis. The findings show that Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis in Nigeria has proportional relationship on the level and volume of food availability and food accessibility by the populace of the society. The present study recommends that there should be legislation to remedy the effect of desertification in the Sahel region and other Fulani communities. Government should come up with policies to create grazing reserves and dams for pasture and water in states that are predominantly Fulani so that they do not stray long distances in search of pastures. There is need for constant dialogue between government and the concerned groups involved in the crisis and exchange ideas. This, will foster unity and peaceful co-existence.*

***Keywords: Fulani; Herdsmen; Farmers; Crisis; Food; Security; Accessibility***

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## 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 Fulani's generally speak the Fula language. A significant number of them are nomadic in nature, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry grass lands of their environment, keeping isolate from the local farming communities, making them the world's largest pastoral nomadic group (Eyekpimi, 1101L). 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, FulbeMbororo, FulbeSokoto, FulbeGombe, and the FulbeBorgu (Eyekpimi, 1101L).

Prior to the twentieth century, cow rearing was widespread within the Guinea, Sudan and Sahel grassland belts wherever crop production was administered on little scale solely throughout the short time of the year. This gave cow herders access to a colossal space of grass land. However, the introduction of irrigated farming within the grassland belt of Nigeria and also the inflated withering of pasture throughout the season has created less obtainable pastures for cows. The herdsmen had to maneuver southward, to the coastal zone wherever the wet season of the year is longer and also where the soil retains water longer, in search of greener pastures and water for their cows (Ofuoku+Isife, 1100M). Because the herders migrate southward wherever the grass is healthier, and frequently interfere with areas long claimed or cultivated by settled farmers, conflicts typically ensue (Olaniyan, Francis +Okeke-Uzodike, 1101X). These conflicts are believed to have existed since the start of agriculture and are either inflated or shrunken in intensity or frequency looking on economic, environmental and alternative factors (Aliyu, 1101X).

In several places, herders have clashed with farmers and their host communities over their cows' destruction of crops; farmers' encroachment on grazing reserves and indiscriminate bush burning by nomads that unremarkably results in loss of crops (Adeoye, 1101C; Ofem+Inyang, 1101V; Olaleye, Odutola, Ojo, Umar +Ndanitsa, 1101O). The ostensible boldness of the perpetrators and the misery caused has continued to draw in mixed perceptions. Whereas, several people understand it as mere farming, pasture land and water dispute; others see it as reprisals in defense of live stock from banditry in farming communities (Eyekpimi, 1101L; Mikailu, 1101L). In recent times, there are many cases of herdsmen-farmers clashes in Nigeria. Ofuoku and Isife (1100M) noted that in Densina, Adamawa State, twenty-eight individuals were killed; whereas, 1100 farmers were displaced and rendered homeless in a clash between them. Similarly, Idowu (1101C) submits that the violence has displaced over 100,000 individuals in Benue and Enugu States and left them under the care of relatives or in makeshift Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps, and yet several are still troubled to rebuild their lives.

Nigeria as a nation 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 clashes, ethnic militant armies, ethnic and religious conflicts, poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage and environmental degradation (Damba, 1100C).

According to Homer-Dixon (1100D), environmental scarcities contribute to violent conflict in many developing nations. In Nigeria, the conflict between nomadic herders and sedentary farmers is a leading resource-use conflict. The cause borders primarily on the competition to have access to land and freshwater (for grazing), resources which have become acutely scarce in Nigeria (Audu, 1101M). Massive desertification of vegetative lands and drought in Northern Nigeria compels herders to migrate toward the South in

order to provide green pastures and water for their livestock. In the course of their movement down South, the nomadic herdsmen momentarily settle in farming communities where green vegetation and water is available. Disputes arise between herders and farmers over allegations from both parties. On one hand, farmers accuse herders of destroying their crops by the encroachment of herded livestock on their farmlands and contaminating community water sources. On the other hand, herders accuse farmers of poisoning, killing or stealing their cattle and denying them access to grazing routes.

Pastoralism is a conventional occupation among certain groups in Nigeria including the Kanembu, Kwoya, Manga, Fulani and the Shuwa Arabs (Blench, 11010; Muhammed, Ismaila† Bibi, 1101X). However, the Fulanis are the most prominent herding group, owning over 80 percent of the country's livestock (Abass, 11011). The fact that no other pastoral group is as numerous and expanded as the Fulani (Blench, 11011) could be presumed a reason for the pervasive stereotypes about the occupation of the Fulani pastoralists (Olayoku, 1101V), and why they are the herding group mostly involved in disputes with farming communities.

The conflict between herders and farmers is a protracted issue in Nigeria. Violent clashes between them have been frequent since the 1980s, but gained new momentum in intensity and reoccurrence at the country's return to civilian rule in 1999 (Blench, 11011). The progressive increase in the occurrence of clashes between herdsmen and farmers has been confirmed by different research findings and reports. It is reported that whereas only 10 incidences were recorded between 1990 and 1995, there was an upsurge to 111 attacks between 1996 and 1999 (SBM Intelligence, 1101L). The conflict has been responsible for the death and displacement of many people in various regions of Nigeria. Fatalities are not limited to the conflicting herdsmen and farmers as innocent members of host communities are also casualties of the conflict. According to the Human Rights Watch (11011), the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers significantly contribute to inter-communal violence and death of about 11,000 people in North-Central region of Nigeria between 1990 and 1999. On 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1999, Fulani herders were reported to have raided and killed over 1100 people in Agatu communities in Benue State, an epitome of the level of brutality that has become synonymous with the conflict in recent times.

The herders-farmers conflict has turned all the more fatal due to the proliferation of firearms among herders. Although the argument may be advanced that they carry guns and other sophisticated weapons around to protect themselves and their livestock from bandits who steal their cattle, the possession of arms, most likely, makes violence an instinctive reaction for the herders whenever there are contestations between them and farmers. Fulani herders have often been linked to rape and kidnap cases in farming communities. An example is the case of a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Olu Falae, who was abducted on 11<sup>st</sup> September, 1999 from his farmland in Ilado, Ondo State and held captive by some Fulani herdsmen (Lawal, Olumide † Akingboye, 1101X). He was later released on September 14, 1999.

Food security is a broad concept which cuts across many dimensions. It means access to adequate food for a healthy life. Food security according to World Bank (1996) is a condition in which all have access to sufficient food to live healthy and productive lives. To Pottier (1999) food security involves interconnected domains, with questions on agriculture, society, environment, employment and income, marketing, health and nutrition, and public policy.

In the words of World Bank (1996), food security is of three folds. These are food availability, food accessibility and food affordability. Food availability for farming households means ensuring sufficient food for the households through production. The above definition, no doubt, point to at least two parts of this complex concept: access to

available food and adequate nutrient intake for sustainable health. The conceptual model below was developed for the study to operate farmer-herdsmen conflicts in **Nigeria**.

According to **FAO**, (2011) food access relates to how people acquire the food they consume and is determined by two factors, that is economic and physical access. Food access is determined by disposable income, food prices and accessibility of social support, while physical access depends on the physical infrastructure that aids access (**Headey & Ecker 2011**). This dimension reflects the demand side of food security and highlights uneven inter- and intra-household food distribution and socio-cultural limits on food choices. (**Bickel, Price, et al. 2000**) include other elements in their definition of food access like: social access (adequate access in a socially acceptable way, that is, not stealing or prostituting for food); food quality and safety (ensuring sufficient diversity and safety to promote good health) and low risk of losing assets. The indicators of physical access include levels of physical infrastructure development like paved roads, railways, electricity, irrigation facilities etc., while those for economic access includes domestic food price index, disposable income, expenditure survey (**FAO 2011**). Utilization or consumption of food is also related to the allocation of food within a household, which is not always equal across household members, either due to lower quantity and quality or because household members' health status differs affecting their ability to absorb nutrients (**Jones et al. 2011**). Common measures for this dimension include the **DDS**, food consumption surveys and anthropometric measures.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This work adopted ex-post facto research design. The population comprised of all the populace of importers of food stuff in **Akpan Aendem Market** and **Itam main market** in **Uyo** and **Itu Local government area** respectively. Out of this population, the researchers arbitrarily choose a sample of 100 respondents from the importers of food stuff through a stratified random sampling technique. An instrument called "**Menace of Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers Crisis Questionnaire (MFHFCQ)**" was developed by the researchers to elicit information on the independent and dependent variables presented in both sections (**A** and **B**) of the questionnaire. Section **A** of the instrument measured the demographic data of the respondents such as names, gender, age, educational qualifications and marital status, food item imports; while section **B** measured the independent variables. The content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in **Test and Measurement** who marched the items of the instruments with the research questions in order to determine whether or not the instruments measured what they were supposed to measure. The reliability was determined through experts in **Test and Measurement** and **Statistics** were given the instrument for rating in respect of the consistency with the research objectives. Items, in which at least two experts agreed upon, were regarded as suitable, the reliability coefficients was 0.68 and was considered substantially high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using **Pearson Moment Correlation** analysis, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To examine the effect of herders-farmer's crisis on food availability in **Nigeria**
- ii. To examine the effect of herders-farmer's crisis on food accessibility in **Nigeria**

### **Hypothesis**

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

- i. There is no significant relationship between herders-farmer's crisis on food availability in **Nigeria**

- ii. There is no significant relationship between herders-farmer's crisis on food accessibility in Nigeria

## RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

### Hypothesis Testing

#### Hypothesis I

There is no significant relationship between herders-farmer's crises on food availability in Nigeria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table i)

**TABLE 1**

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Herders-Farmer's Crisis on Food Availability in Nigeria**

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r
Herders-Farmer's Crisis (x)	CLXI	IIIIIIIIII			IIIIIIIIII	0.0C*
Food availability(y)	IIIDIC	XCIIIX				

\*Significant at 0.025 level; df = 256; N = 258; critical r-value = 0.138

Table I presents the obtained r-value as (0.0C). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.0IIID) at 0.0IIIX levels with IIID degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.0C) was greater than the critical r-value (0.0IIID). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between herders-farmer's crises on food availability in Nigeria.

#### Hypothesis II

There is no significant relationship between herders-farmer's crises on food accessibility in Nigeria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table ii)

**TABLE 2**  
**Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between herders-farmer's crises on food accessibility in Nigeria**

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	$r$
Herders-Farmer's Crisis (x)	LXI	IIIIIIIM	IIIIIIIII	0.00*
Food accessibility (y)	IIIIIMML	LIIIIMII		

\*Significant at 0.025 level; df =256; N =258; critical r-value = 0.138

Table II presents the obtained r-value as (0.00). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.138) at 0.025 levels with 256 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.00) was greater than the critical r-value (0.138). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between cattle ranching and the promotion of peaceful co-existence among Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the data analysis of this study, it was concluded that Fulani herdsmen and farmers' crises in Nigeria have proportional relationship on the level and volume of food availability and food accessibility by the populace of the society. The study also recommended that, there should be legislation to remedy the effect of desertification in the Sahel region and other Fulani communities. Government should come up with policies to create grazing reserves and dams for pasture and water in states that are predominantly Fulani so that they do not stray long distances in search of pastures. There is need for constant dialogue between government and the concerned groups involved in the crisis to exchange ideas. This will foster unity and peace co-existence.

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