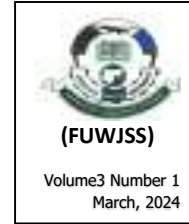


**HERDERS-FARMERS CONFLICT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LOGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**



**Ishaya Samaila Atobauka**

**Bitrus Joseph**

**Abe Emmanuel Bonku**

Department of Political Science

Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

*ishayas@fuwukari.edu.ng*

*bitrusjoseph2020@gmail.com*

*ebonku800@gmail.com*

**Abstract**

This study interrogates the impacts of herders-farmers conflict on the socio-economic development of residents in Logo Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopts the ex-post facto research design. The study engages the resource scarcity theory as the theoretical framework of analyses. The study's findings revealed that there is blockage of cattle routes as a result of population growth and urbanization in Logo Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. This has resulted to the quest to expand farmlands; as such, the routes used by herders are cultivated and this aggravates conflict. The study concludes that because of the persistent herders-farmers conflict in Logo Local Government Area, economic and agricultural activities in the area have dwindled thereby causing food shortages which translate to poverty and hunger. The study recommends that both the Benue State Government and the Federal Government of Nigeria should as a matter of urgency ensure that grazing reserves are created to mitigate herders-farmers conflict from reoccurring and that there should be increasing economic opportunities and reducing economic inequalities through job creation, skills acquisition training and fair labour practices.

**Keywords:** Herders, farmers, conflict, poverty, food shortage, development

**Introduction**

Nigeria, over the years has been battling with the issue of insecurity, ranging from the unwholesome activities of the Boko Haram terrorist

group, to kidnapping and currently the most devastating rampaging menace of the Fulani herdsmen group. This menace should always put the government on alert that the number one priority of any government is to ensure that its citizens are not only secured but are free from any threat or danger. Sequel to this, security-related matters should not be treated lightly. According to Anter (2015), the Fula also known as Fulani, are mass inhabitants widely spread in all of Africa, but most dominantly in West Africa. They are aboriginally from the Middle East and North Africa. The history of the Fulani began with the Berbers of North Africa around the 8th or 11th century AD. Over a millennium ago, from AD 900 - 1900, they spread to most parts of West Africa and to some areas of Central Africa (Anter, 2015). The Fulani migrants were predominantly Muslims. As the population increased, the numbers of converts to Islam also increased. On the foreign, the Fulani herders most often than not settled in fertile areas to rear their cattle and when the migration began to be dictated by economic and socio-political factors, increased trends of conflicts between the herders and their host communities (farmers) escalated. Many Nigerians lose their lives, properties/farmlands and crops every year to Fulani herders. The conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers came into existence as a result of the encroachment on farmlands by the Fulani herders. Nigeria is under a grave internal and security threat, which seemingly has political, economic and environmental undertones. Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the nation. Most worrisome in the present development is the pillaging, raping, killing and kidnapping by the suspected Fulani herdsmen. Stories abound in the national dailies of how these assumed shepherds strategically attack houses in several communities, with sophisticated weapons like AK-47 assault rifles and machetes.

According to Schama (1996), land, crops, livestock, water resources and vegetal resources play prominent roles in the development, maintenance and projection of socio-economic strength of a society. Hence resource ownership and its utilization have resulted to conflicts involving man since time immemorial (Schama, 1996). Among all the aforementioned resources, land has remained an overwhelming source of conflict among various user groups as well as individuals. Thus, crisis between Fulani herdsmen and farmers for the use of agricultural land is becoming fiercer and increasingly widespread in Nigeria, largely due to the intensification and diversification of production activities that are necessitated by increasing human population (Gefu & Kolawale, 2005, Fasona & Omojala, 2002). Moreover, it is noteworthy that the herdsmen security challenge bedeviling Benue State is an age-long issue. It started again over two decades ago according to historical documentations.

Successive governments have neglected the conflict and its victims, and where action was taken, it was insufficient. Consequently, available records have it that the constant atrocities committed by the Hausa-Fulani herdsmen signify persecution because of the targeted killing of a particular religious group, and the destruction of their places of worship. Also, the continued violence and the inaction of the federal government is suggestive of a deliberate agenda, championed by the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen, to occupy an area considered as being dominated by one ethno-religious group (Adamu & Alupsen, 2017).

As noted in the World Watch Research report on Nasarawa State, the ideology linked to the Hausa-Fulani Muslim invasion of Benue is based on the understanding that “Komai na Allah ne. Ko wane fili na Allah ne, ba naku ba, ba na kafirai ba, na Allah ne” i.e. Everything belongs to Allah. Every piece of land belongs to Allah and not you; it is not for you infidels but for Allah. Thus, with climate change and competition over limited resources and environmental threat to the ways of life of the herdsmen, the use of terror and its religious justification has been intensified, particularly in Benue (Adamu & Alupsen, 2017). The phrase “everything belongs to Allah” reflects the Muslim understanding of God. The Muslim God is seen as being the one true God, with no equal. Therefore, the sovereignty of Allah is the foundation for all Islamic socio-political and economic systems, and society must be governed in accordance with the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet (Arisi & Oromareghake, 2011).

Logo Local Government Area was created out of the erstwhile Katsina-Ala Local Government Area on October 1, 1996 by the administration of General Sani Abacha (Dada, 2006). The Local Government derives its name from the Logo stream which runs through the local government from the east to the west. Logo Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the twenty-three Local Government Areas in Benue State and its headquarter is located in Ugba town, it has the population of 169,570 made up of 86,069 males and 83,501 females according to 2006 population census (Dada, 2006). Logo people, mainly the Gaambe-tiev and Ugondo clans speak one language-Tiv which is the 6<sup>th</sup> most populous ethnic group in Nigeria. All are descendants of one patriarch, Tiv Takuruku. It is the fourteenth most populous Local Government Area in Benue State (Dada, 2006).

The economy of Logo Local Government Area is mainly farming, fishing and trading, with few civil servants since the area is mainly riverine area, with the flow of River Benue especially at the northern tip. River Logo, a tributary of River Katsina-Ala has also contributed to the swampy nature of the area. The soils are therefore clayey, thereby supporting the cultivation of rice, cassava and fishing activities. Soya beans, beneseed and yam are also cultivated on large scale (Dada, 2006). Because of the trading

activities in the local government area, the following local markets were established; Anyiin, Ugba, Ayilamo, Abeda, Iorza Dooshima, Dusa Anyone, Adzege, wende Gondoza, Mbadyul and Ikyoo. Traders come from far away northern states of Kano, Sokoto and Maiduguri, eastern, southern and western States of Lagos, Enugu, Port-Harcourt to buy from those local markets, the prospects are even higher today for those that will come to buy from the local markets (Dada, 2006). Logo Local Government Area has a very rich culture, this culture is widely expressed in numerous activities such as colorful dances, music and festivals. Dance troupes such as Dooshima Dance Troupe has represented Benue State in different national and international occasions and festivals (Dada, 2006). Other dancing troupes in the local government include but not limited to Tight Kpenye, Takere and Oliver Anye, Bagu and Swange etc (Dada, 2006).

Conflict between crop farmers and nomadic herders in Nigeria especially in Logo local government and Benue state generally usually result to loss of lives and properties (Tenuche & Ifatimehim, 2009). Hence, an understanding of the causes and effects of conflict between farmers and nomads in the host communities is an important step towards realizing the goals of socio-economic development policies in the said state. Therefore, the incessant occurrence of Fulani herders and farmers conflict has largely left adverse effects on the socio-economic development of the people. Fulani herders and farmers conflict, no doubt has negative impact on the social and economic development of Nigeria. Though, there is no parameter for measuring the depth of the effect and negative impact of Fulani herders and farmers conflicts in Benue in particular and in Nigeria in general; this work sets for itself the task of evaluating the herders-farmers' incessant clashes in Logo local government in order to ascertain its effects on the socio-economic development of the state in particular and in Nigeria in general.

The socio-economic development of any society hinges within the circumference of human security. The peaceful atmosphere of any society will encourage the people to be innovative, enterprising, productive and potential in carrying out their day to day activities. Unfortunately, in recent times, Logo local government has become the theatre of farmers/herders conflicts. The conflict has become a reoccurring decimal in Logo local government; it has spread and caused serious havoc in the community. The rising spate of farmers/herders conflicts in Logo has created a wide gap in the social and economic activities in the local government area. No society exists without conflicts and no conflict occurs without a cause or causes, effects and counter-reactions which makes the curious minds to inquire into what actually causes this conflict between herders and farmers, what are actually the effects of this conflict on the socio-economic activities in Logo

LGA, in what ways has the said conflict affected social activities in Logo LGA and the role of Benue State Government in averting farmers/herders conflict in Logo LGA. Until these are answered, the study will be of no significance to academics. Therefore, this study interrogates the effects of herders-farmers' conflicts in relations to the research questions.

### **Herders-Farmers' Conflicts in Nigeria**

Over the years, scholars have extensively written on the unfortunate acts and activities of the rampaging herders-farmers' and its attendant effects on the socio-economic development of Logo LGA of Benue State in particular and Nigeria in general. These renowned scholars include: Okereke (2012); Bello (2013), Kasarachi (2016); Nzeh (2015); Awogbade (1987); Tonah (2006); Adamu and Alupsen (2017); Haman (2002) amongst others. Though, the term "conflict" has been variously conceptualized, the multiplicity of the definitions has always pointed at one direction: that conflict is an enduring and inevitable aspect of social existence. It is believed that wherever a community of individuals is found, conflict is basically a part of their experience. Thus, most conflicts are social in character and usually arise as human beings pursue their different survival and security needs. In this regard, Stagner (1967) contends that a conflict situation arises when two or more human beings desired goals which they perceived as being obtainable by one or the other but not yet by both; each party mobilizing energy to obtain the goal, desired objective or situation and each party perceive the other as a barrier or threat to such goal(s). In the words of Coser (1956) conflict is a struggle between parties over desirable values. According to him, conflict refers to struggle over values or claim to status, and scarce resources, in which the aim of the conflicting parties is not only to gain the desired value, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Mack and Synder (1971) opine that, central to all conflicts is the existence of scarcity where the wants of all actors cannot be fully satisfied and where the quest for such resources result in conflict-behaviour. Similarly, to the above views, Dougherty and Ptalzgarff (1981) maintained that, the term conflict refers to a condition in which one identifiable group of human beings in a given environment (whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, political among others) is engaged in conscious positioning to outdo one or more identifiable human groups because they are pursuing what appears to be incompatible goals.

According to Idowu (2017), conflict is usually the product of the existence of incompatible goals, interest and pursuits in which the actors involved may employ the use of violence or not to outdo one or more identifiable human groups because they pursue an incompatible goal among

others. Herders-farmers' conflict is as old as the existence of man. It started from the children (Cain and Abel) of the first man (Adam). Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a crop farmer according to Bible's account, however, Cain killed Abel in the field out of jealousy. Okoro (2018) averred that herdsmen/farmers or herders'/crops farmers' conflicts are conflicts occurring between peasant farmers or subsistence cultivators and nomadic or transhumant live-stock keepers. Hussein, Sumberg, and Seddon, (1999) sees farmers/herders conflicts as comprising different types of conflicts, including ethnic conflicts, interest conflicts, resource disputes, political action, evictions, killings, cattle raiding and cattle rustling.

According to Hagmann (2003), there exist differences between 'herder-herder' conflicts and 'farmer-herder' conflicts. He maintained that herder-herder conflicts are usually conflicts between nomadic or transhumant livestock keepers that arise between receiving groups over their territory's resources and incoming groups searching for water and pastures, and cattle raiding. Herder-herder conflict is a conflict that results from theft of cattle or other animals among the Fulani herdsmen. It is herdsmen rustling cattle of other herdsmen, or when un-experienced herders entrust their animals in the care of experienced herders under agreements, and when such agreements are breached conflict occasions within. The violent cattle raids among pastoralists in East Africa are examples of herder-herder conflicts. Farmers/herders crisis as opined by scholars above is not limited to just destruction of farm produce but imbedded in it are ethnic crisis, interest crisis, resources dispute, political actions, evictions, killings, cattle rustling etc.

### **Socio-Economic Development and Poverty Reduction in Benue State, Nigeria**

Okoro (2018) considered socio-economic development as the relationship between economic activity and social life. It is the continuous improvement in the well-being and in the standard of living of the people. It therefore, centres on poverty reduction or reduction of suffering of the poor and increase their access to social services. It also requires action to increase the poor's ability to generate an income in order to meet their basic needs. Socio-economic development according to Okoro (2018) refers to the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors. Therefore, it can be understood as the process of social and economic development within the society. It is measured with indicators such as, gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Social development is a process, which results in the transformation of the social institutions in a manner, which improves the capability of the society to meet the objectives. Economic development

is the development of economic wealth and resources of the nations or regions for the well-being of the individuals (Okoro, 2018). He added that socio-economic development and empowerment of the individuals leads to progress and wellbeing in all spheres. It influences all aspects of human existence within the country. Socio-economic development is seen in changes in laws, changes in the physical environment, ecological changes and changes in security situations of every society.

### **Theoretical Framework: Resource Scarcity Theory**

A theory is an idea or belief about something arrived at through assumption and in some cases, a set of facts, propositions, or principles analysed in their relation to one another and used, especially in science, to explain phenomena (Encarta, 2004). In this research, many theories can be used to explain it however; the work adopts the Resources Scarcity theory as its framework of analysis. The rationale behind the choice of Resources Scarcity theory is that it is considered the most appropriate theory that explains better, the statement of problem of this work. The Resource Scarcity theory was propounded by Thomas Malthus (1766-1834); Garrett Hardin (1915-2003); Barbara Harell-Bond (1935-2018); and Oxenfeld and Kelly (1969) (Percival & Thomas, 1998). The original formulation of the theory by Malthus stated that population growth would out spaced food production which will later lead to scarcity. His idea was anchored on population growth which will lead to scarcity because the production of food cannot be enough to serve the population and some land that are supposed to have been used for food production would be used for the settlement of the increasing population in the community. Garrett Hardin later came up with his postulation in his famous essay "*The Tragedy of the Commons*", where he argued that overused of shared resources would lead to their depletion. He opined that when resources located in a particular community is overused by the people or one group of the society; it will lead to its depletion which will in turn lead to conflict between the groups in the society. Barbara Harell-Bond in her own perspective propounded that resource scarcity can lead to forced migration and conflict in the developing countries. Oxenfeld and Kelly hold the idea that resource scarcity theory explains why some new ventures choose franchising instead of chaining as a means of growth (Percival & Thomas, 1998).

The general idea of the resource scarcity theory states that conflicts often arises when there is a competition for the scarce resources available in the society, this implies that when there is not enough to go round, people or groups may become more aggressive in trying to secure access to those resources. This can be manifested in various ways such as conflict over land, like the Nigeria-Cameroun conflict over Bakassi Peninsula and the

current one in Boki Local Government Area of Cross Rivers, water ways like River Nile conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia and conflict over oil like the Iraq war (Mildner, Solveig, & Gitta, 2011). The core idea of the theory is that when resources become scarce, groups or individuals will compete for those resources which can be in various forms including:

- Territorial disputes as groups or individuals will vie for control over land and natural resources.
- Economic competition as groups or individuals fight over access to market or natural resources.
- Ideological or religious conflict as groups or individual with different belief system or practices struggle for dominance.
- Socio-cultural conflict where groups with different values or norms come into conflict over how resources should be used (Mildner, Solveig, & Gitta, 2011).

The theory presumed that resource scarcity can lead to a “tragedy of the commons” where everyone pursues their own self-interest and depletes shared resources, inequality in resources distribution can lead to social and economic instability and increased risk of conflict. Existing tensions such as religious or ethnic conflict can be exacerbated can lead to increased conflict which will further lead to migration as people search for better opportunities elsewhere (Mildner, Solveig, & Gitta, 2011). Notwithstanding this however, the following assumptions have been put forward by Malthus (1766-1834); Hardin (1915-2003); Harell-Bond (1935-2018) and Oxenfeld and Kelly (1969) for the resource scarcity theory:

- i. Resources are finite and limited.
- ii. As population grow and demand for resources increases, competition for those resources will intensify.
- iii. Resources scarcity can lead to conflict as groups or individual will vie for access to resources.
- iv. Resource scarcity can exacerbate existing tensions and lead to political, social and economic instability.
- v. The role of government policies regarding land can exacerbate or mitigate the resource scarcity and conflict.
- vi. Cultural, religious differences and tensions between groups exacerbated by economic competition for limited resources prompts conflict in the society.

Resource Scarcity theory can gainfully be employed to explain the problems associated with farmers’-herders’ conflict in Logo Local Government Area of Benue State. To this end, Logo Local Government Area is seen as a farming community full of arable and fertile land for farming and pastures for grazing due to the tributaries of River Benue which waters the grasses that are scarce and limited leads to competition for the



land between the crop farmers and herders who migrated from drought prone areas into Logo thereby leading to the conflicts experienced in the LGA. Each group was struggling to have access and control the scarce resources. The impact of climate change forced the herders to migrate into Logo LGA in search of a better pasture for their cattle whereby their interest conflicted with that of the resident farmers over the scarce resources available which led to the exacerbation of the existing conflicts before the period under review.

The role of government policies in the colonial era that preserved certain land as cattle routes in the regions that does not belong to the herders was considered by the indigenes of Logo LGA as land grabbing which is part of the issue that has flamed the conflict in Logo. When crop farmers cultivates a particular land which earmarked by the government as grazing route and a herder come across such scenario, it will become an issue which can escalate into a full blond conflict. The conflict between the duos in Logo LGA has deep roots in colonial and post-colonial history; colonial policies favoured certain groups over others leading to inequality and resentment in the society. The policies led to land grabbing and force displacement of people leading to the on-going disputes over land ownership and access while the post-colonial government continue to marginalize certain groups leading to further resentment and conflict. Furthermore, the link between the Resource Scarcity theory and the crises between the crop farmers and the Fulani herders is very simple and concise. In this regard, it is essentially believed that the two parties have needs to meet up with; the herders need the grasses, whereas the farmers need the land and want their crops alive and not being destroyed by the Fulani herders. Therefore, when conflict is bound to occur is when these two parties' needs contrast each other and each group compete for the scarce resources and have access over it which prompt their decision of taking up arms and engaging in violent conflict which affects the communities. When the herdsmen graze on farmer's crops, they destroy the crops and in reprisal attack, the farmers may resort to physical attack on the herders. This leads to conflict precipitated by divergent needs over scarce resources which makes the community to get into critical stage.

### **Research Methodology**

Research methodology implies the systematic way of how research is being conducted scientifically. It involves step-by-step procedures so that another researcher could replicate the study in another situation. It comprises of design of the study, population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrument, methods of data presentation/analysis and interpretation. In other words, it is the study of various steps, methods,

or techniques that are generally involved and/or adopted by a researcher in studying the research problem alongside the logic behind it. Therefore, this unit attempts to provide an explicit description of the sources of data, sample/sampling techniques as well as the methods adopted for how these data are generated and analysed. This research work relied majorly on qualitative research methods. These helped to describe and analyze the effect of herders-farmers' conflict on the socio-economic development of Nigeria especially in the Logo local government area of Benue State. The population of this study is 169,570 which include the farmers, the herdsman, traders who resides, trades and graze within the Logo local government area of Benue State and the officials of works department since they are at the heart of the topic in discussion. The researchers used the purposive (judgemental) sampling techniques to select the participants for the sample; this technique was adopted to guarantee key respondents' views on the matter of herders-farmers' conflict in the Logo local government area of Benue State. The sample size for this study is twenty (20) which means five (5) persons were selected from among the farmers' association, herders' association, traders' association and officials of works department of Logo local government area. These five (5) persons that were interviewed include the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO of the farmers' association, herders' association and the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO of traders' association and the Director, Deputy Director, Administrative Officer, Executive Officer and the Store Keeper Works department of Logo local government area of Benue State. The sources of data used in this research work are both the primary and secondary sources, the primary source is obtained through interviews with relevant respondents across the focus area while the secondary source include journals, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, internet materials, unpublished materials, periodicals, monographs amongst others. For this research, an interview method of data generation was adopted to compliment the secondary sources; the interview contains carefully selected questions within the ambit of the research topic under study. For this study and the nature of the data involved, qualitative narrative/content analysis is used.

### **Impacts of Herders-Farmers' Conflict on Trading Activities in Logo Local Government Area**

The Chairman of Traders Association was asked whether the conflict has created any effect on the economic activities in the local government and he started by saying that peace is a sine-qua-non for development and a means of economic growth and prosperity of the people in the local government as such, he wants to state clearly that economic activities such

as buying and selling, trading, transport businesses, farming activities etc. has declined due to the age-long conflict between the duo (Personal Interview, 2021). He went further to add that markets days across the villages in the local government were at some point not observed due to the fear of attack from the Fulani herders (Personal Interview, 2021). The Secretary of the Traders Association affirmed what was said by the Chairman of the association that it has posed a great negative effect on the economic life of the people where it caused some Igbo traders not to visit the local government to carry out their trading activities and those that reside there also relocated to a safer environment where they can carry out their business activities in peace (Personal Interview, 2021). The PRO added that the numbers of traders who ply the roads to markets in the local government area has reduced drastically because of fear of attacks from the Fulani herders and that so many shops in the locality has been closed down due to relocation of the traders.

The Chairman of the Herders Association in response to the effects of this conflict on the economic activities of Logo LGA stated that their cattle which serves as a source of meat and milk to other businesses within the LGA are been killed on a daily basis and more so, hampering on the prices of meat, milk, hides and skin in the markets in the local government (Personal Interview, 2021). The PRO further aligned with the views of the Chairman that it is not only the crop farmers that are doing business but even them that rears animals it is a business as such when some cattle are been killed it causes the Fulani to avoid the local government which will lead to shortages of milk (nunu) and beef in the local government which serves as a source of protein to the building of the body of the dwellers (Personal Interview, 2021).

#### The Effect of Herders-Farmers Conflict on Social Activities in Logo LGA

The Chairman of Traders Association observed that the attacks by the herdsmen on farmers have created social dislocation and continuous suspicion among Fulani and other ethnic groups within the areas attacked. Herdsmen are now looked upon with social stigma and people are no longer comfortable with herdsmen who are generally undertaking their legitimate nomadic businesses. The Chairman of Farmers Association opined that social integration and cohesion which often exists between the herdsmen and (Tiv) residents have been damaged as most communities no longer socialize with herdsmen. The Secretary of Traders Association further observed that previously, Fulani herdsmen were allowed to join community associations such as social clubs, vigilante group etc. and relate with members of the community but currently, they are strongly denied the privileges of joining such associations which has inevitably created social

dislocation. The PRO of Farmers Association submitted that in some communities, it has been resolved that no member shall provide land for herdsmen to graze their herds. This has greatly affected social relations between them. The secretary PRO of Traders Association said that the crises between farmers and herdsmen have also led to tense and volatile inter-group relations amongst the various peoples involved (Tivs and Fulani). This manifests itself in mutual mistrust and animosity which are often misplaced. From the side of the Herders Association it was submitted that they (pastoralists) sees the farmers as enemies of their collective survival and destiny, and vice versa. This creates an ambience of mutual suspicion and perpetual tension that threatens peaceful coexistence, security and stability of society. The Chairman of Herders Association and that of the Farmers' Association all agreed that there have been social activities going on or observed in Logo local government area such as religious activities, festivals such as cultural associations activities, sporting activities etc. before the conflict. The Secretary of Traders Association asserted that the social activities in the local government are mostly carried out by the Tiv people who are indigenous to the local government while the Fulani herdsmen only partake in little when they are either invited or given the chance (Personal Interview, 2021). The PRO of herders' association added his own voice by saying that the Fulani in Logo also observed some social activities such as naming ceremony (suna) of new born babies, chadi (display of bravery by the man that wants to marry a particular lady he loves), hawan kaho (ridding of cow) among many other things whereby they always invite the Tiv people to join them (Personal Interview, 2021).

### **The Roles of Benue State Government in Herders-Farmers' Conflict in Logo LGA**

The crop farmers' and traders' associations leaders believed that before the enactment of the anti-open grazing law, the Benue State Government has been sending security agents to such villages where there are security reports of attacks on them before they occur and has sometimes sent security operatives to such places in the heat of the conflict to stop the conflict because of how inimical it is to the development of the State at large. The Chairman and the Secretary of the herders association believed that the government is lopsided in the deployment of the security apparatuses to the affected areas and that the anti-open grazing law enacted by the Benue State Government was because of them yet, they believed that the government has been trying its best to maintain peace and peaceful coexistence between them and their host who are their neighbours by calling for town hall security meetings between them in the local

government headquarters Ugba and the State capital Makurdi (Personal Interview, 2021).

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The study revealed that desert encroachment in the northern region which forced the nomadic herders to move down to the middle belt seeking for pastoral land full of water to feeds and water their cattle is one of the causes of this conflict. Knowing fully well that Logo local government is

more of a swampy area with river tributaries scattered across it, the Fulani herders have no option than to move down to it to graze their herds, this desert encroachment in the north has forced herders into Logo local government which exacerbated the crop farmers and conflict.

It was also discovered that the conflicts are politically, economically and environmentally motivated. The scarce resources which is the viable land, pasture and the environmental change are the major factors causing the nomadic herders to move down into the local government and in trying to compete for the scarce availability of the land, it escalate into conflict where the claims of right are made. It is also discovered that there is a great negative impact of the conflict on the economic and social activities of the local government, the economic activities are dislocated and dwindled thereby causing food shortages in the locality, the state and the nation at large. This is translated into poverty since businesses no longer fare well and buyers no longer go to buy and sell in the local government and the social relationship among the people is exchanged for suspicion and hatred toward one another.

It was also discovered that properties worth millions of naira were destroyed as a result of the conflict leaving many in the IDPs camps across the state and business premises were also destroyed, people who will offer the man power needed for the production of agricultural products to feed the nation were killed there by causing food shortages in the country.

It was also discovered that the Benue State government has made significant efforts in averting the conflict besides the enactment of the anti-open grazing law, it also calls for town hall meetings between the stake holders of the conflicting parties to sensitise their people of the need for peaceful coexistence because peace is a sine-qua-non for development.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Crop farmers'/herders conflicts are very fatal to the socio-economic development of any place as such, it should be discouraged by both the political, religious and community leaders at all levels of government in Logo local government area of Benue State and the entire nation. The socio-economic impacts of this conflict are enormous on both sides. This kind of conflict has claimed a lot of lives in the local government, Benue State and the entire country; this can also be the reason behind food shortages in the country therefore, it should be seen as a very serious issue requiring peaceful resolution by all means necessary. The Benue State government and its auxiliary (subordinate) institutions should do more on orientation concerning peaceful coexistence and encourage state and community policing.

The Benue State and the Federal Government as a matter of urgency should ensure that grazing reserves are created in the local governments in Benue State and Nigeria at large to mitigate such conflict from reoccurring. As a matter of urgency, the Benue State and the Federal Government should strengthen the security institutions and most importantly make them fully impartial in their operations across the 24 LGAs of the State. State and community policing should be encouraged because it will go a long way in arresting these wanton killings in the local government, the state and the country since the number of the security operatives will increase to bit up the security situation. There should be business empowerment and grants to the affected persons to boost the socio-economic development of the local government area and modalities should be put in place to rehabilitate those in IDPs camps across the state.

There should be reconstruction and rebuilding of the infrastructural facilities that were destroyed in the local government area to enable students go back to school and health care services rendered to the people. Finally, the Federal Government should grant autonomy to the local governments to enable the local government chairmen carry out their full function which is protections of lives and properties of the people.

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