

*Abada et al., 2018*

*Volume 4 Issue 2, pp. 1710-1726*

*Date of Publication: 31st October, 2018*

*DOI- <https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.42.17101726>*

*This paper can be cited as: Abada, I. M., Okafor, N. I. & Ofobuike, C. L. (2018). Political Economy of Cattle Colony: Between Herders-Farmers Conflicts and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 4(2), 1710-1726.*

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## **POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CATTLE COLONY: BETWEEN HERDERS-FARMERS CONFLICTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*In sub-Saharan African countries, agriculture has remained the mainstay of the economies. It has contributed to about 86.03% of the nations' Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Nigeria being like every other nation state in Africa has been encouraged in the area of agriculture which stands tall to provide sustainability to the teeming population. In the recent time, the perceived serial conflicts between the Fulani herders and the indigenous farmers across the country has brought in fear of depletion of agricultural production, systemic disequilibrium and loss of lives and property. However, it is against this backdrop that the paper sets to appreciate the effects of herders-farmers conflicts on food production, sustainable national development and the political economy behind establishing cattle colonies across the country. Methodologically, the study appropriated qualitative method while generating its data and analyzed in content. The theoretical frame work of analysis is adequately anchored on the theory of eco-violence as*

*propounded by Thomas Homer-Dixon (1988; 1999); and Gledistch, (2002). The findings of the study has adequately revealed that the serial conflicts between herders and the farmers had gravely undermined the contribution of agricultural sector, depleted internally generated revenue and loss of man power that would have sustained national development in Nigeria. The study strongly recommends among other; the voluntary giving out portion(s) of land by private individuals or purchase of land by the herders for their private businesses.*

### **Keywords**

**Cattle Colony, Conflict, Farmers, Fulani Herders, Nigeria**

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## **1. Introduction**

In Nigeria, agriculture has remained the mainstay of the economy following the dwindling of the petroleum resources and attendant economic recession ravaging the economies of the transitional African societies. Thus, the significance of agriculture in the development of the economies of Third World nations, including Nigeria, is undeniable. Nigeria with a population of about 170 million people occupying a land area of 923, 773 square kilometers continues to benefit immensely from agricultural production activities (Abada, Okafor & Udeogu, 2018). However, according to National Economic Intelligence Unit (2006), it maintained that about 82 million hectares of arable land out of which only 42% is so far cultivated contributed between 31.2% and 39.2% of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1986 and 1995, and over 40% in 1999 and 2006.

Since 1960 when Nigeria got her independence from Britain, the country has witnessed different forms of violent clashes ranging from the ethno-religious killings in the Northern region, the Civil War that lasted for three years resulting in wanton destruction of lives and property, occasional electoral violence, communal and border clashes etc. The Islamic Sect commonly known as Boko Haram has since its emergence in 2009 laid siege on the Nigerian State and till date, has caused tremendous damage on the human and natural resources of the country despite the seemingly repelling of the sect by the Nigerian military as reported widely in the local media (Adisa, 2014).

Corroborating the above, it is very important to recall that for the past decade, the Boko Haram terrorist group has run riot in Nigeria unceaselessly, carrying out fatal and lethal attacks and kidnappings across the northern part of the country. According to Amaza (2016), he maintains that the serial attacks by the organized Boko Haram terrorists have claimed up to

twenty thousand people and displaced more than a million. But while the worst activities of Boko Haram which have attracted national and global attention now seem to be reducing in intensity and modulation, another emerging conflict between the pastoral farmers and the arable and crop farmers is taking a very significant and dastard dimension. It portends a state of disequilibrium in the system of systems in Nigeria's transcendental nation.

However, these conflicts which manifest as contradictions of interests and mutual suspicions between the Fulani Herdsmen and local farmers in different communities in Nigeria has clearly exposed and defined the contemporary Nigerian security architecture and securitization of lives and property as mere sham. The phenomenon has become a national issue as many states in the federation have received their share of the crises ravaging the entire polity. The southern states that are located thousands of miles from the home states of the Fulani herdsmen have continued unceasingly in the recent time, experiencing such dastard attacks by Fulani herders on agricultural produce and marginal fall in the rate of revenue generation in the states.

According to Olabode & Ajibade (2010) and Adisa (2014), they maintained that the clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farmers used to be confined to the northernmost regions of the country but due to the increasing desertification of nomadic grazing lands and shortfalls in availability of bodies of waters in those areas which were traditionally cattle-rearing territories, overgrazing and lower rainfall, the nomadic herdsmen had been forced by forces of nature to press and push farther and farther south in search of grasses and waters for their herd. This has caused clashes with farmers whose farmlands are being destroyed, particularly in the country's middle belt, the country's most fertile agricultural belt.

Furthermore, Okeke (2014), avers that the ongoing war between the Fulani Herdsmen and farming communities is an old aged problem. It has escalated in the last decade and has assumed a deadly dimension. The escalation of the crises is more worrisome owing to the poor attention given to it by the Nigerian government. These clashes occur when the Fulani Herdsmen move into non-Fulani homelands with their cattle which usually lead to wanton destruction of the farmer's crops and in the act of resistance mount by the indigenous farmers to prevent entry into the farms, resort to killings, stealing of cattle and poisoning of the farm land. Reacting to the inimical activities of the herders above, the Global Terrorism Index (2015), maintains that the Fulani militants are the fourth most deadliest militant group in the world with a record killing of

1229 people in 2014. Also, SBM Intelligence, a socio-political consulting firm supported and reports that there have been 389 incidents involving herdsmen and farming communities between 1997 and 2015, with 371 of these attacks occurred in the Middle Belt region which includes Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa and Niger states and Northeastern region of Taraba state.

The increasing frequency in deadly clashes between these two sets of farmers in the southern states of Nigeria has been a cause for worry among concerned citizens and scholars of security studies. According to Asogwa and Okafor (2016), they assert that the conflict has presented a very disturbing complex scenario to Nigeria's national security. It is estimated that Nigeria loses about \$14 billion annually to these clashes. In February, 2016 about three hundred people were killed and a further seven thousand persons displaced in four communities in Agatu area of Benue State (SBM Intelligence, 2015). There had been serial attacks in states like Rivers in the South South and Enugu, South East and Ondo state in the South West, where a former presidential candidate, Olu Falae, was abducted from his farm by herdsmen for many days. The conflicts thus, present tremendous challenges, not only to the unity of the Nigeria entity but, also to the country's drive to attain an appreciable level of socio-political and economic development. Philosophically, Baruch Brody (1977) ascertains that this dimension of conflict also arises from psychological egoism and many other philosophers has equally classified it as resulting from losing sight of certain community values that breeds self-interest which is a philosophical inference that shapes the world today as no one cares for the welfare of others (Bujo 1998; Arthur 1986).

## **2. Conceptual Clarification**

The basis for proper understanding of social phenomenon has remained a careful and thorough appreciation of certain underlying concepts. Understanding the political economy of establishing cattle colonies and the nature and character of herders-farmers relationships across the Nigeria state will better be appreciated through the following concepts.

### **2.1 Conflict**

In post the colonial African states, the meaning and characteristic nature of conflict has remained in vague and lacked vigor. This is as a result of crisis of scholarship among security experts, writers and policy analysts. Notwithstanding, with the recent emergence of political anthropology as an interesting specialty in the field of sociology, the study of conflict has

adequately gained substantial ground for scholarship. As a social action, conflict is a simultaneous occurrence of two or more mutually antagonistic impulses or motives. It can also be describe as a struggle involving ideas, values and limited resources. Conflict is an action that obstructs, prevents and renders ineffective another action with which it is incompatible. It exists wherever incompatible activities occur. Conflict is perceived divergence of interests that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously.

According to scholars like Schellenberg (1996); Kezsbom (1992) and Burton (1987), conflict is a simultaneous action and process that occurs where one party perceives that other party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affects something that the first party cares about. It is part of competition process that is basic to the survival and successful evolution of the sapiens, Homo sapiens and to his search for new and better ways to cope with limited resources and stress from environmental change (Larfela, 1988).

The conflict between Fulani herders and the indigenous crop farmers across Nigerian state has taking shape as a better way to cope with limited resources due to fast encroachment of arid and desertification in the northern part of the country, coupled with the fall in the level of bodies of water at the Lake Chad basin and threats emanating from deadly Boko Haram terrorists. It is observed that Herders migrating to the savannah and rain forests of the central and southern states are moving into regions where high population growth over the last four decades has heightened pressure on farmland; water pollution and these incompatibility and disagreements increasingly turn to violent-conflict (International Crisis Group, 2017).

## **2.2 Cattle Colony**

The concept of colony is derived from the Latin word *colonial*, *colonus* and *cologne* which is an example of a settlement. The Roman colonies first appeared when the Romans conquered her neighboring cities. These cities were in turn converted as small farming settlements. A colony could be in the form of trade outpost, military base or farming settlement (Wikipedia, 2018). Cattle colony is one of the neighborhoods of Bin Qasim Town in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. The word cattle colony has a very fraught implication for Africans who were colonized by Europeans and doubly contentious, and at the heart of the current, fierce resistance (Oseloka, 2018). According to the minister of agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbe, he conceives colony as bigger than a ranch. He maintains that in a colony, 20 to 30 ranchers can share the same colony, a ranch is usually owned by an individual or company with few number of cows, in

a cattle colony, hundred to three cows, are owned by different individuals (Opinion Newspaper, 2018). According to Onyekakeyah (2018), cattle colony is like a shopping complex where cattle and meat trade are carried out. He maintained that colony has nothing to do with grazing or rearing of cattle or other livestock. But, despite varying views by concerned scholars and stakeholders, cattle colony in Nigerian context, is a settlement set aside by government for rearing and other activities relating to cattle management. However, the underlining policy option behind the establishment of cattle colony has become queried. The implication of establishing the cattle colony with national treasure or the country's common wealth is derailed as it sets to favour few privilege elite at the detriment of the masses. The government ought to provide conducive environment for all irrespective of the farmer being a herder or arable farmer.

### **3. Literature Review**

It is a tactful and concise review of extant works or study materials that have direct and indirect bearing to the topic of investigation. As a significant and critical activity, the review of literature focuses on identifying contributions already made on the subject of investigation (Abada, Okafor & Omeh, 2018). However, the review of extant literature will be done based on the following themes:

#### **3.1 Climate Change, Transhumance and Food Security in Nigeria.**

In the recent time, scholars have strongly agreed that there exists a conflicting relationship between the nomadic herders and farmers in Nigeria. This perceived conflictual relationship has led to perceived food insecurity in the country. According to Ofuoku and Isife (2009), they stated that there is a consensus among observers that farmers-herders clashes have since the 20<sup>th</sup> century become widespread in the coastal countries of West Africa, particularly in Nigeria. They recorded that there are recurrent clashes of interests between the host farming communities and the nomadic cattle herders caused by contamination of streams, disregard for traditional authority, sexual harassment of women, and indiscriminate defecation on the road by the moving cattle. The herders are cattle-rearing group of Fulani origin who pasture their cattle around and beyond as a result of inadequacy of food materials in their locality and other ecological factors.

According to Olabode and Ajibade (2010), in their study discovered that about 73 percent of farmers in Nigeria are predominantly engaged in subsistence farming and most of them are

involved in growing food crops, such as maize, yams, guinea corn among others. They further observed that most of these food crops are of nutritious value to the cattle and this in most cases serves as the alternative feeding that attract the cattle especially in dry season which their activities had reduced the volume of food production in the region leading to propensity to food insecurity in the country. However, according to Olaniyi, and Okeke, (2015), they acknowledged the effects of climate change on the herders or pastoral farmers as they move southern part of the country. Accordingly, climate change has clearly puts pressure on the herders to move into other regions leading to localized conflicts and tensions that affect the needed human resources that would be engaged in the production of agricultural products and foods. The aggressive behaviour of herders and farmers in the wetland areas is due to high level of frustration which has swiftly affected farming and production of food that help sustain the teeming population. Here, Olaniyi,et al (2015), maintained that the frustration is of two ways; the herders are fleeing their traditional arid zones towards wetter places and are frustrated by dwindling pastures that sustain their means of livelihood. Upon reaching the wetter regions, their cattle consume the crops of farmers, who in frustration, respond by attempting to kill off the destructive animals or drive out the newcomers.

Buttressing the above, Odoh and Chilaka (2012), reported the findings of Kabiru Yammama, a Climatic and Environmental Consultant who posited that the effects of climate change are partly to be blamed for the disputes between herders and farmers in Nigeria. According to them, northern nomadic communities are increasingly moving southwards as climate change turns their grazing land into desert. They further noted that about 35 percent of land that was cultivable 50 years ago is now desert in eleven of Nigeria's northernmost states including Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina and Yobe. Thus, the effects of this rapid change in climate and rearing of farm animals such as cattle cannot be overemphasized as it affects food availability in Nigeria (Odoh and Chilaka ,2012).

Contributing to the debate on climate change, herders-farmers and food production, Leed (2006), cited in Abugu and Onuba (2015), noted that the negative impact of climate change has increased the fear that environmental degradation and demographic pressures would displace millions of people in the Sahel region and will lead to huge social upheaval. They submit that the continuous crisis between Fulani herdsman and their neighbors in the Middle-Belt and South-Eastern region since the year 2000 can be attributed to the factors of environmental scarcity as

they contribute to percentage decline in food production. In fact, it is as a result of worsening climate condition in the Sahel region that has made demographic migrations to the middle-belt and south-Eastern region inevitable.

Therefore, one can unequivocally states that climate change has had negative effects on availability resources such as, water, food production, social amenities and general wellbeing of the people. Climate change has thus contributed to massive migration of Fulani herdsmen to other regions in Nigeria and depletion of the ozone layer has led to heat wave, dryness of the rivers and lack of pastures for cattle to graze amongst others. The relative lack of adequate rainfall has made the land to dry, leading to inadequate pastures for the cattle and exposing the herders to migrate to safe areas of the Eastern and middle-belt regions where the level of the nation's gross domestic products had sagged as a result of unmitigated destruction unleashed by the Fulani herders practicing transhumance.

Moreover, Scholars have in the recent past doubled their studies on the impacts of climate and the activities of herders on food production in the country as indicated by Fasona and Omojola (2005), who pointed out that the herdsmen versus arable crop farmers conflicts have not only brought about high level of insecurity but have also demonstrated high potential to the food crisis in Nigeria and other countries because of loss of human lives, animals and crops. In the same vein, Ofuoku and Isife (2009), argued that among other effects, there is reduction in output and income of crop farmers as a result of the destruction of crops by cattle and indiscriminate bush burning. Many farmers lost part or the whole of their crops and it links to reduced yields which translate into low income on the part of the farmers who take farming as a major occupation.

Furthermore, the relationships between the warring factions of farmers tend to negatively affect their savings, credit repayment, as well as the food security and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply. The wanton loss of human lives gravely affect agricultural activities as the human labor that hitherto produces both crops and animals are being depleting on daily basis. In their contribution, Uma *et al* (2014), asserted the situation of food production in Nigeria when they estimated that over 53 million Nigerians are hungry which is about 37 percent of the total population of over 170 million and 52 percent live below poverty line.



However, while maintaining that the herders-farmers' conflict in Nigeria must be sincerely and holistically resolved by the government to ensure peaceful coexistence and interdependence, Audu (2015), reiterated that conflicts between the farmers and pastoralists have a more direct impact on food security. As far back as decades of years ago, people had begun to bemoan on the impending adverse impacts of the herder-farmer crises on food production as well as security in Nigeria. Eme, *et al.* (2014), & Osagie (2013), alerted that as a result of the growing fears of insecurity over the past in the country fuelled by lack of stable supply and rising food prices, prices of essential commodities and food products have skyrocketed making them unaffordable to the common man. Prices of rice, for instance, has been hitting historic highs of N12, 500 per bag, triggering a panic amongst the people across the country. The Persistent increase in prices of other staple products such as fish, bread, meat, cereals, chicken, yam, onions, beans, vegetable oil, tomatoes, groundnut oil and others are occasioned by low output due to poor relationship among the crop farmers and the herders. This has aggravated the continued woes of the common man as he finds essential commodities very difficult to purchase from the market. Shortage of products and ever-increasing prices has created unsettling sentiments across communities, dampening the country's efforts to end poverty. Meanwhile, Ofuoku and Isife (2009), posit that the socioeconomic effects of the herders-farmers conflicts include reduction in crop yields and income of farmers, displacement of farmers, loss of lives and property and loss of products in storage. 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.

### **3.2 Intractable Herders-Farmers Conflicts and Sustainable Development in Nigeria.**

Nigeria and indeed many countries of the world have pledged to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations which is aimed at ending poverty, hunger, as well as other socio-political and economic challenges by 2030. The government's laudable successes and failures in curbing what seems as intractable conflicts between the herders and the indigenous farmers in achieving sustainable national development has been an issue of discussion and debate among scholars and public policy analysts. Just like Abugu and Onuba (2015), they opined that both the migrant pastoralists and the indigenous farmers constitute human resources of the nation and both contribute individually or collectively to national development. While the migrant pastoralists are carrying their cattle to graze in the

regions, the owners of the land, essentially the farmers are heavily affected as the herdsmen's cattle destroys crops, farm land and other agricultural products which often results to conflicts and confrontation.

However, considering the number of people killed by the conflicts and confrontation, it becomes glaring that the human resource that engaged in economic activity in the nation have been depleted and can no longer engage in their usual productive economic activities, thereby reducing consumerist strength of the nation. More so, the presence of Fulani herdsmen in the affected areas creates climates of fear as they possess sophisticated arms and ammunitions with which they use to unleash terror on the people of the regions and other perceived enemies. (Abugu and Onuba, 2015).

In a separate study carried out in Nigeria's Guinea savannah of Kwara State, Fiki and Lee (2004), cited in Adisa and Oluwasegun (2010), reported that out of 150 households interviewed, 22 reported loss of whole farm of standing crops, 41 reported losses of livestock, while eight households from both sides reported loss of human lives. These indicated that stores, barns, residences and household items were destroyed in many of the violent clashes. No wonder Okoli and Atelhe (2014), emphatically agreed that the conflict situation portends negative for sustainable peace and development in Nigeria. They further maintain that given the extent of crisis and violence that has characterized the conflict; they posited it would be obvious to state that such a situation is an enemy of sustainable development both in the affected communities and Nigeria as a whole while noting that development which invariably translates into national security cannot be attained and sustained under the atmosphere of crisis. In the light of the foregoing, it can be rightly induced that agricultural production in any country requires an enabling environment to reach its maximum potential. Sustainable development in agriculture as well as other sectors of the economy, demands a peaceful co-habitation of producer communities. It is only through cooperation that local communities could implement sustainable.

The increasing frustration and impoverishment of farmers occasioned by perennial and extensive farm plot destruction and ensuing bitter conflicts are eroding the gains of agricultural and other sustainable development interventions. No wonder Oni-Ojo and Roland-Otaru (2013), argued that conflict is a significant threat to sustainable development in addition to poverty and world insecurity. They further delineated the close relationship between development and conflict. To them, development exacerbates violent conflict and likewise contributes to

sustainable development. And conflicts, if not properly managed can hinder the process of sustainable development. (Oni-Ojo and Roland-Otaru, 2013).

### **3.3 Political Economy of Cattle Colony, A Strategy for Accomplishing an Unfinished Agenda**

For over two hundred and fourteen years ago in the Northern part of Nigeria, as well as parts of the Republic of Niger, was the scene of a revolution conventionally known as the “Sokoto”, the “Fulani” or the “Uthman Danfodio” jihad. The jihad which is often regarded as the sixth pillar is an obligation binding on a Muslim community, and not on the individual Muslim. Only the people of the present Benue, Plateau and parts of Kwara states escaped the jihad. According to Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu & Ubani (2005), they maintained that some areas like the core of the Borno Empire, Zuru (Sokoto state), parts of Bauchi and Adamawa successfully resisted the jihad.

However, the above reflects the history of Nigerian society before the colonial epoch as a theatre of wars. These wars were waged against different individuals, groups and sects. But, the prominent amongst the wars and clashes was the holy war waged by the leader of Islamic sect, Uthman Danfodio. It was aimed at forcefully converting the non-Moslem into Islamic religion. About #27 billion naira equivalent was lost during the war. The actualization of the interior motive of the holy war was put to halt in some quarters as a result of fast growing proselytization and monitorial system by Christian missionaries in the north central and some quarters in the Northern Province.

In addition, following the independence of Nigeria in 1960 and subsequently in 1978, the then military government through military decree promulgated the land use act of 1978, thereby entrusting all the land to the sole ownership by the military government. This had encouraged people to move from one region to the other for one meaningful thing or the other. Though, the Fulani herders had been characterized with the system of transhumance, and the 1978 land use act propelled them for further expedition. They capitalized on the importance of the land use act to migrate from the far North to the Middle Belt region, South- South, South-East and South Western regions for their pastoral farming. Their movement could also be attributed to fast shrinking in the level of water at the Lake Chad Basin and series of threats from the deadly Boko Haram. The continual downward movement of the cattle herders to the southern Nigeria has seriously constituted threat to the lives and property of the citizens. The community farm lands

are utterly destroyed by cattle and women are serial raped, butchered and communities set ablaze at any instance to resist the Herders.

However, examining the political economy of establishing cattle colony, the former presentation of private member bill by Senator Rabiu Kwakwanso of Kano state, advocating for the establishment of cattle ranches and colonies across the nation and that of a bill titled “Bill for an Act to Provide for the Establishment, Preservation and Control of National Grazing Reserves and Livestock Route and the Creation of National Reserve Commission” by Mrs. Zanaib Kure, senator representing Niger south senatorial district, were aimed at curtailing the frequent conflicts and violent attacks experienced by the herders and the hosting indigenous farmers across the thirty six states of the federal. The bills were seriously attacked by greater number of senators from the southern part of the country coupled with some senators from northern extraction of Benue and Taraba states. The bills were swiftly designed to formalize the unfinished agenda left behind by the founding father, Uthman Danfodio. According to Idowu (2017), he maintains that the opponents of the bills opined that rather than the claims of the proponents, the actual hidden agenda of the sponsor and other northerners is to formalize and advance the expansionists agenda of Uthman Danfodio and hegemonic quest to dominate the politico-economic spheres of the Nigeria state.

However, it is instructive to note that the domination of the Herders is a direct domination by the few privilege northern elites who have the cattle. The cattle belong to few elements from the north, and they are using institutional procedures and manipulations, state apparatus to perpetual themselves at the corridor of power. The attempt to promulgate cattle colony in to law will be a perfected plan to Fulanize and Islamize Nigeria. Priye (2018), believes that the purported idea of establishing cattle colony across the states in Nigeria is a strategic tactics to capture the whole Nigerian state and Islamize. He continues to maintain that the establishment of cattle colonies would enthrone the Fulanis as the supreme overlords. They would be the only ethnic group in a country of 180 million people that have the widest territorial presence in the country and would begin to dominate the political leadership of every state in Nigeria as they have done in most northern states (Priye, 2018).

Furthermore, the appropriation of the national security and security architecture will easily provide a soft landing for execution of Sharia law, only when the National Assembly and States Assemblies had been influenced on same note. The unflinching supports from state

governors across the northern states and some very few in the north central, Kogi, Nasarawa and Niger states informed the secret agenda of the governors involved to use the avenue to capture more hectares of land for their personal aggrandizement, propagation of Danfodioism and total delinking of southerners from the schemes of things. Contributing to the issue of political economy of establishing cattle colony in Nigeria, Oseloka (2018), sees the establishment of cattle colony as a veritable instrument that stands tall to re-engineer sustainable development. He is of the opinion that the establishment of cattle colonies across the states in Nigeria will facilitates cattle production, thereby contributing to the nation's Gross Domestic Products. The reformation of the cattle industry and industrialization helps build formidable economic advantages. On the other hand, the poor production, demand and supply of cattle as a result of absence of cattle colonies in the country has adequately undermine dairy production and significantly affected the nation's national income.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

The theoretical framework for the study is anchored on the theory Eco-violence as propounded by Thomas Homer-Dixon in 1998; and revisited in 1999. Also, Gledistch in 2002 validated the authenticity of the theory. Likewise, the use of Elite theory as propounded by Vilfred Pareto (1848-1923), Robert Mitchel (1875-1936), Graetano Mosca and Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929). But, for the sake of the study, the theory for discuss will anchored on Eco-violence theory. The propositions of the theory are;

- Environmental scarcities will have profound social consequences, contributing to insurrections, ethnic clashes, urban unrest and other forms of civil violence especially in the developing world (Hommer-Dixon, 2009)
- That renewable resources scarcity is the causal mechanism behind many conflicts (Schwartz, Deligiannis & Hommer-Dixon, 2009),
- Environmental transformation alters the socio-political fabric of society, disrupting productive relationships and ultimately adversely affecting established constraints on and mechanisms of social peace (Hommer-Dixon, 1998),
- That human ingenuity can reduce the likelihood of conflicts, particularly in countries with efficient markets, capable states and an educated populace.

#### **5. Theoretical Application of Eco-violence**

Theory maintains that large population in many developing countries is depends largely on four key environmental resources that are very fundamental in crop production. These factor variables are essential for sustenance of man and future. Accordingly, these environmental resources include fresh water, crop land, forests and fish. The inadequately supply of these environmental resources due to misuse, overuse and natural occurrence of degradation trigger off conflicts. In this regard, one would appreciate that the dearth of the available resources for sustenance of man that would help him engage in one form of agriculture or the other prompt the demands to meet up with the challenges. However, short supply and inconsistency of resource scarcity is the product of unequal distribution as a result of environmental hazards that force some quarters of society into arid and condition of deprivation and violence. These sources of environmental scarcity are in turn caused by variables such as population growth and explosion, increasing modernization and economic development, pollution and obviously climate change.

Thus, environmental resource scarcity constrains agricultural and economic productivity, further inducing the disruption of economic livelihoods, poverty and migration. Migration can occur either because the environmental quality of a habitat has become degraded or probably migrant's economic outcome is likely to better in areas with greater resource availability. The outward movement of the Fulani pastoral farmers from the far Niger Republic to the northern Nigeria and continued migration to the southern part of the country is inextricably tied to environmental scarcity. The inadequate supply of the environmental resources for the sustenance of the herders and their cattle, force them to continual transhumance. As the herders move downward, they find the needed pasture at the savanna to browse upon. Their activities constitute threats to human existence as the farm lands are utterly destroyed, thereby creating resource scarcity for the indigenous crop farmers. The inability of the two warring parties to reconcile and reach a lasting compromise will trigger full blown conflicts.

Moreover, the settlement of the herders and their social relations to the members of the community tend to degenerates social transformation, culture change and ultimately alter established constraints and mechanisms for social peace. This brings forth social disequilibrium and systemic breakdown. When violent situation occurs in the society, the later will be prone to devise strategies to curb the social menace. The hosting communities will experience environmental scarcity as a result of poor sustainability of environmental resources in the form of fresh water, crop land, forests and fish.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

On the basis of the available empirical evidence, the study concludes that ongoing conflicts between the Fulani herders and arable farmers in different agrarian communities in Nigeria is a clog in the wheel of Nigeria's drive to achieve sustainable national development. We viewed this position from the light of the incessant destruction of lives and properties that emanates from the crisis situation.

The destruction of farm lands by cattle in the course of pasturing is a factor that contributes to the low agricultural productivity in Nigeria. This is because the destruction lowers the expected yield and this in turn results to low product in the market. The high cost of food materials as well as the unavailability of food in many Nigerian homes is also products of the conflict that plagued the two major Nigerian farming groups. Several statistics indicates that the situation is likely to worsen if adequate measures are not taken by the Nigerian government and other stakeholders in view of quenching the conflict. In the light of the identified challenges posed by the incessant Herders/Farmers conflict on Nigeria's hindrances to achieve sustainable national development, this study makes the following recommendations:

- Voluntary giving out portion(s) or hectares of land by private individuals or outright purchase of land by the herders or their lords for their private businesses.
- Nigeria should create a relationship of mutual respect and regard among the Fulani herdsmen and crop farmers. This should be done through effective sensitization of the both farming groups aimed at addressing the grazing of cattle on cultivated farmlands. Other major agricultural stakeholders in the country should also be involved in ensuring that while the crop farmers cultivate the ground and the herdsmen rear their cattle, no form of provocation should emanate from their activities.
- For Nigeria to achieve sustainable national development through diversification of the economy, particularly through agriculture, efforts must be made to eradicate all forms of clash between the Fulani herdsmen and arable farmers in Nigeria.

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