

CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISM EFFECTIVENESS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF HERDERS/FARMERS CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

Herders/farmers conflict has posed a serious national security threat in recent times, resulting in loss of lives, livestock production, and food security in Nigeria. The southwestern part of Nigeria is not exempted. This study examined the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted to manage the conflict in southwest Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Social identity theory was adopted, which believes that social group membership, also called collective identity, has an impact on self-esteem. Individuals will try to maintain self-esteem by viewing their social groups positively. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data gathering and analysis. Ondo, Ekiti, and Oyo State were randomly selected as study areas. Taro Yamane formula was employed to determine a population sample size of 387, which were purposively selected. Copies of a structured questionnaire were administered to gather quantitative data, and key informants were purposively selected and interviewed to elicit necessary qualitative data. The data analytical method adopted was simple statistics based on percentages and descriptive analysis. The study shows that the conflict intervention mechanisms adopted to manage the conflicts were not effective. These include the intervention of herders-farmers traditional heads (55%); inter-ethnic committees (52%); state ban on open grazing (65%); public campaigns, and sensitization of herders-farmers to ensure compliance with grazing policies and laws (65%), a three-tier conflict management committee (59%) among others. This study, therefore, recommends training on conflict management strategies for herders-farmers, traditional heads, and committees to learn new approaches to conflict resolution, a well-trained and equipped state-based task force to ensure compliance with grazing policies and laws in Ondo state. Finally, the recruitment of more local people into the "Amotekun" security outfit established recently to checkmate security threat activities in the state is advocated.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, Herdsmen, Farmers, Conflict.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Wikipedia (2019), conflict resolution is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and reprisal. The concept of conflict resolution can be thought to encompass the use of non-violent resistance measures by conflicted parties in an attempt to promote effective resolution. Broadly speaking, Boule (1996); Wertheim et al., (1998); Fisher and Ury, 1996; Burton (1986); Charles Sturt University (1998); and cited in Manning (2019) conceived that the concept of "conflict resolution" is open to many interpretations. On the one hand, conflict resolution can be regarded as any process that resolves or ends conflict through methods that can include violence or warfare.

Alternatively, it can be viewed as a non-violent process that manages conflict through compromise or through the assistance of a third party who either facilitates or imposes a settlement or resolution. Conflict resolution processes are many and varied and can be seen on a continuum ranging from collaborative, participatory, informal, non-binding processes (such as mediation, conciliation, and third-party negotiation) to adversarial, fact-oriented, legally binding, and imposed decisions that arise from institutions such as the courts and tribunals. Typically, non-adversarial practices, such as mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and conciliation, are practices that have been associated with conflict resolution or alternate dispute resolution procedures rather than adversarial institutions such as courts and tribunals where a settlement is imposed on the disputants by an external authority.

In contrast, mediation, conciliation, or negotiation are activities that facilitate communication between participants who are seeking to resolve their differences in a cooperative way. The key to resolving

conflict is to focus on interests rather than positions, which is the solution one party seeks to impose on another. That conflict can only be considered resolved if the following conditions are met:

- The solution jointly satisfies the interests and needs of the parties via a joint agreement.
- The solution does not compromise the values of either party.
- The parties do not repudiate the solution even if they have the power to do so following the settlement.
- The solution is fair and just and becomes self-supporting and self-enforcing.

Nowadays, southwest Nigeria is not in any way immune from the conflict emanating from the herdsmen across the country, as they have carried out attacks in some states in the zone. Notably, for example, Olaniyan (2017) discloses that on April 20, 2016, herdsmen attacked five communities in Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State, and a number of people were killed in the process; on May 21, 2016, Oke-Ako community in Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State suffered a similar fate when Fulani herdsmen invaded and killed two people. Following this killing, Olaniyan (2017) revealed that Governor Fayose gave out cash and ammunition to local hunters and vigilante groups with a directive to attack and kill herdsmen in return. The Governor also placed a ban on open grazing through a law titled: "Prohibition of Cattle and Other Ruminants Grazing in Ekiti, 2016," made by the State House of Assembly, which was supported by Afenifere group (a Yoruba cultural group), but condemned by groups from the northern region. The law criminalizes grazing in some places within the state and outside certain periods of the day. It also prohibited carriage of any kind of weapon by herdsmen, with the charge of terrorism hanging on the neck of flouters and 6 months jail for offenders, among others.

Therefore, this study examines the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place to resolve the conflict between herders and farmers in southwest Nigeria.

Statement of problem

It is obvious that the herders/farmer conflict is degenerating and posing a threat to human security in Nigeria and perhaps in the southwest, as it appears to have affected the price of food and the fear of herders' invasion.

Omojola (2005) claimed that the problem was due to herder's invasion of crop farmers, but the work did not address the effectiveness of the mechanism established by the government at different levels to address the conflict in the Southwest Zone of Nigeria. Furthermore, Olugbenga (2016) explains that the efforts of Nigerian police and military have not stopped the conflict but did not point out other mechanisms, and the solutions proffered are not sufficient as the conflict persists. Iganwa (1989) and Ibrahim (2012) were only interested in what the government should do to improve the livelihood of herdsmen families through policy that would bring about livestock development. Their work did not consider the effectiveness of the mechanism for resolving the lingering conflict.

The herders and crop farmers conflict has continued to linger despite the mechanism put in place by the authorities to resolve the problem. Therefore, the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place requires reexamination, as existing research on the conflict has not sufficiently addressed the issue. Oyedepo (2018), African Report (2017), Omojola (2005), Olugbenga (2013), Ingawa et al. (1989), and Ibrahim (2012) pointed out that herders and crop farmers have often engaged in occasional minor clashes but did not explain the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place to resolve it. The African Report (2017) admitted that both the federal and the state governments have poorly addressed the issue; it did not identify the effectiveness of the mechanism adopted. Therefore, this study examines the conflict resolution mechanism put in place to resolve the conflict between herders/crop farmers in southwest Nigeria and its effectiveness.

Significance of the study

This study investigates the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanism put in place to resolve the conflict between herders/crop farmers in southwest Nigeria. Importantly, the study recommendations would serve as a policy guide for the policymakers to address the herders-crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria and other geopolitical zones of the country and neighboring countries. Governments experiencing similar problems in their territory may want to adopt the same. It would also serve as a source of reference material for researchers who will embark on a related topic in the future. This study would also broaden the knowledge of the researchers on conflict and the mechanism for resolving conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have carried out research on the herders and farmers' conflict. For instance: Ningxin's (2018) study on "Nigeria's herdsmen-farmers conflict and peacebuilding" assessed the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria and gave the consequences of the conflict. According to Ningxin, tens of thousands of Nigerians have been displaced. Women and girls were particularly affected, and in poverty, lack of access to resources, and their husbands were killed in the conflict. Violent conflicts between herdsmen and farmers from Nigeria have escalated in recent years, which threatened people's lives and the country's stability. The conflicts between herdsmen and farmers have resulted in a humanitarian crisis. It was suggested that there is a need for the African Union and other organizations to help mediation by bringing up strategies and tactics to prevent, manage, and resolve this conflict. Adding that a nation can only grow gradually when people can get along with each other and cooperate with the government. Mediation and other interventions are useful in reducing prejudice in cross-cultural conflicts. Basic understanding of cultural differences

is the key to evaluating strategies to reduce conflict. Mediators can help establish a positive connection between parties. It is essential to get more knowledge of the cultural and historical backgrounds of the different parties. The analyses of this conflict can help individuals to pursue social equality, economic equity, and political rights, as well as to reinforce social co-existence and enhance peacebuilding in a multi-cultural environment.

Ajibefun (2018) investigated the causes of herders and farmers' clashes in Nigeria, as well as the social and economic effects of the menace of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, and revealed that the major cause of the conflict was the destruction of crops. The social effect of the menace of herdsmen is loss of human life, sexual harassment of human life, acquiring of weapons/arms, reduction in quality of social relationships, reduction of social support, and high cases of rape, whereas the economic effect of the menace of herdsmen is a reduction in output and income of farmers/nomads, loss of produce in storage, displacement of farmers, scarcity of agricultural products, loss of house and properties and infrastructural damages. It also revealed that farmers' and herders' perceptions of the causes of herdsmen and farmers' clashes in Nigeria are not different, while farmers' and herdsmen' perceptions of the social effects and economic effects of herdsmen and farmers' clashes in Nigeria are different. It was recommended, among others, that representatives of the host communities and herdsmen should be conveyed under a public forum, involved in the decision-making, and permitted to take part actively in the planning procedure of restoring peace to most of the affected communities.

Oli et al. (2018) examined the prevalence of herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria. They identified some factors that usually led to clashes, including: limited or unavailability of sufficient resources such as grazing fields, farm lands, destruction or grazing on crops, long-standing disagreements, lack of access to farm or grazing fields and scarcity of fresh water. Consequently, loss of human and animal lives, destruction of crops and properties, displacement of persons and animals, distrust between herdsmen and farmers, rising anti-Fulani sentiment, and breakdown of peaceful relationships with many communities in some parts of the country. It recommended, among others, that the government should establish cattle grazing fields in the six geopolitical zones of the country and out-law open grazing of cattle. This must be done through due consultation, dialog, or appeal to some aggrieved regions of the country that may oppose or resist the move. Poor water management practices in the country should be improved by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources. This is in view of the fact that climate change cum water shortage and drought are the major reasons herdsmen are migrating southward in search of fresh water and grass for their cattle.

Oluwasuji et al. (2018) wrote that the political history of Nigeria is characterized by an unprecedented level of insecurity. Intercommunal and interethnic clashes, religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence, and bomb explosions have been on the increase, leading to enormous loss of lives and properties and a general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the people. In recent times, inter-ethnic relations tension has resonated in Nigeria. This is due to the activities of some ethnically motivated groups. "The Political Economy of Herdsmen Activities and Inter-ethnic Relations in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Issues and Prospects" focused primarily on the activities of the nomadic Fulani herdsmen in some parts of Nigeria such as Kaduna, Enugu, Benue, Ekiti, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kogi States. In these conflicts, many lives and cattle are lost, and properties are destroyed. The paper examines the causes of the incessant Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflicts in Nigeria. Second, to underscore the nexus between the incessant conflicts and interethnic relations in Nigeria, and third, to overview the alternative options to ameliorate the incessant conflicts between the herdsmen and the hosting farming communities vis-à-vis to douse the ethno-religious dimension of the conflict.

The gap in literature

From the above review work of Ningxin (2018); Ajibefun (2018); Oli *et al.* (2018); and Oluwasuji *et al.* (2018): on herdsmen and farmers conflict, it is obvious that these scholars have made commendable contributions to the subject under study. There is no doubt that some variables and characteristics or indicators identified in their contributions supported this present study. Particularly, in the aspects of questionnaire construction, numerous variables identified by these scholars on causes, effects, and recommendations for conflict resolution served as parameters that were borrowed and measured in this new study.

The major gap in the literature from the review is that there is not much research work that investigated the effectiveness of the mechanism that has been put in place to resolve the herders-farmers conflict, which forms the major focus of this present study. This makes this present study promising to contribute new knowledge, more so that it covers southwest Nigeria, where there was not much research focused in the past on conflict resolution mechanism effectiveness between herders and farmers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social identity and relations theories

Social identity theory is one of the theoretical frameworks that explain inter-group conflict situations. Social identity theory developed from a series of studies, frequently called minimal-group studies, conducted by the British social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in the early 1970s (Ellemers, 2020). Social identity theorists believe that social group membership, also called collective identity, has an impact on self-esteem. Individuals will try to maintain self-esteem by viewing their social groups positively. Ellifritz (2019), citing Tajfel, explains that social identity theory is the idea that individuals define their own identities with regard to social groups and that these identities strengthen and protect self-identity; that group identities make an individual develop the tendency to view one's own group as superior compared to others group, and the potential to degrade other groups to strengthen one's own group cohesion. As an individual spends more and more time with their specific group, they may move on to experience the next level of investment in that group, known as identity fusion. Identity fusion is characterized by not only strong feelings of association with the group but also strong relational ties among group members and the belief that oneself and the group each strengthen one another (Ellifritz, 2019).

According to Spears (2011), social identity theorists viewed social competition as a means for disadvantaged groups to challenge the status quo, helping to explain social change, how identity is transformed, and radicalized through collective struggle, and the importance of emotions to group identity and group life. Social identity theorists such as Tajfel *et al.* (1979) believed that social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership(s). These groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world. The world of "them" and "us" through a process of social categorization.

However, the social identity theory links or interfaces with the social relations theoretical explanation, which assumes a multitude of social interactions (a dynamic, changing sequence of social actions between individuals (or groups) who modify their actions and reactions due to the actions by their interaction partner(s). In other words, they are events in which people attach meaning to a situation, interpret what others are meaning, and respond accordingly). Moreover, these interactions are regulated by social norms between two or more people, with each having a social position and performing a social role. It equally assumes that individual relationships are characterized by an immense number of social, physical, and verbal interactions that create a climate for the exchange of feelings as well as response to the outside environment (Encyclopedia, 2021).

The interface between social identity and social relations is revealed in the conflict phenomenon of Fulani herdsmen and crop farmers group in Nigeria. It informs why the Fulani herdsmen do not only speak of their

identity but find support within the larger group from the North when there is a problem between them and other groups across the country. Moreover, crop farmers, when there is a problem, tend to seek support from the South within a larger group with the same identity. To buttress this, Olaniyan (2017) revealed that Governor Fayose gave out cash and ammunition to local hunters and vigilante groups with a directive to attack and kill herders in return due to the killing carried out in Ekiti State by the Fulani herdsmen and the Governor also, placed a ban on open grazing through a law, made by State House of Assembly in 2016. The law was supported by the Afenifere group, a Yoruba cultural group in the southwest, but condemned by groups from Meyaity Allah, the northern region where the Fulani herdsmen have their identity and support.

Therefore, this study is to examine the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanism put in place to resolve the conflict between herders/crop farmers in southwest Nigeria.

Significance of the study

None

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study relied on descriptive research design to examine the effect of the herdsmen-crop farmers' conflict on livelihood in southwest Nigeria and the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place to resolve the conflict. The research design depends on both primary and secondary data. The primary sources involved the construction and distribution of a questionnaire to respondents, whereas the secondary sources involved the use of books, journals, and documents to gather data in line with the problem under study.

Population of the study

The major population of the study comprises herdsmen and crop farmers in the Southwest Geo-political zone of Nigeria. This zone was selected because of its large land, wide range of farming settlements, and geographical contiguity to the northern states.

Sample size of the study

For the purpose of this study, 193 herdsmen and 193 crop farmers with one paramilitary were selected across the six states of the southwest zone. On the whole, 387 sample sizes were selected from the targeted population by identified sampling techniques.

Demographic information of respondents

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. The table shows that 320 (83.0%) of the respondents were male, whereas the remaining 67 (17.0%) were female. The result from this table implies that more of the respondents were male.

Table 2 shows the age distribution of the respondents. The table shows that none of them were between the ages of 18 and 25 years,

Table 1: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	320	83.0
Female	67	17.0
Total	387	100.0

Source: Author's calculation

Table 2: Age distribution of respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
18–25 years	0	0
26–32 years	35	9.0
33–39 years	77	20.0
40–46 years	250	65.0
47 years and above	25	6.0
Total	387	100.0

Source: Author's Calculation

35 (9.0%) of them were between 26 and 32 years, 77 (20.0%) of them were between the ages of 33 and 39 years, 250 (65.0%) of them were between the ages 40–46 years whereas the remaining 25 (6.0%) were 47 years old and above.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by employment status. The table shows that 80 (21.0%) of the respondents were employed, whereas the remaining 307 (79.0%) were not employed.

Effectiveness of the mechanisms to resolve the Fulani herdsmen and crop farmers' conflicts in southwest Nigeria

Answer to Research Question: What is the effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to resolve the herders–crop farmer conflict in southwest Nigeria?

Table 4 shows that of the 387 respondents, 179 (46.0) strongly disagreed with the statement that: Herders and farmers' traditional heads' intervention was effective. 208 (54.0%) disagreed with this position, none were undecided, none agreed, and none strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority did not accept that Headers and farmers' traditional heads' intervention was effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 5 shows that of the 387 respondents, 180 (47.0) strongly disagreed with the statement that: Inter-ethnic committees' intervention was not effective. 7 (1.0%) also disagreed with this position, and none were undecided. However, 200 persons (52.0%) agreed, and none strongly agreed. This implies that the majority accepted that the Interethnic

committees' intervention was not effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmer's conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 6 shows that of the 387 respondents, 69 (18.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that: The Herders and Farmers Associations intervention was effective. 250 persons (65.0%) disagreed with this position, and 68 persons (17.0%) were undecided. However, none agreed, and none strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority did not accept that Headers and Farmers Associations' intervention was effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 7 shows that of the 387 respondents, 87 (23.0%) of them strongly disagreed with the statement that: Government settlement intervention for both parties to calm tension was not effective. 50 persons (13.0%) disagreed with this position. 40 persons (10.0%) were undecided. However, 200 persons (52.0%) agreed, and 10 (2.0%) strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority of the respondents accepted that Government settlement intervention was not effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 8 shows that of the 387 respondents, 67 (17.0%) of them strongly disagreed with the statement that: Government gazette grazing

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on employment

Employment status	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Employed	80	21.0
Not Employed	307	79.0
Total	387	100.0

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 4: Headers and farmers' traditional heads intervention was effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	179	46.0	46.0	46.0
Disagree	208	54.0	54.0	100.0
undecided	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 5: Interethnic committees' intervention was not effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	180	47.0	47.0	47.0
Disagree	7	1.0	1.0	48.0
Undecided	0	0.0	0.0	48.0
Agree	200	52.0	52.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 6: Headers and farmers associations intervention was effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	69	18.0	18.0	18.0
Disagree	250	65.0	65.0	83.0
Undecided	68	17.0	17.0	100.0
Agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 7: Government settlement intervention for both parties to calm tension was not effective.

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	87	23.0	23.0	23.0
Disagree	50	13.0	13.0	36.0
Undecided	40	10.0	10.0	46.0
Agree	200	52.0	52.0	98.0
Strongly agree	10	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 8: Government-gazetted grazing reserves were effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	67	17.0	17.0	17.0
Disagree	220	57.0	57.0	74.0
Undecided	100	26.0	26.0	100.0
Agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

reserves were effective. 220 persons (57.0%) also disagreed with this position. 100 persons (26.0%) were undecided. However, none agreed, and none strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority did not accept that the Government gazette grazing reserves were effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 9 shows that of the 387 respondents, 60 (16.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that the state ban on open grazing was not effective. 50 persons (13.0%) also disagreed with this position. 7 persons (1.0%) were undecided. However, 250 persons (65.0%) agreed, and 20 (5.0%) strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority of the respondents accepted that the state ban on open grazing was not effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 10 shows that of the 387 respondents, 167 (43.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that: Educational campaigns to increase awareness and compliance with grazing reserves policy and laws were effective. Furthermore, 220 persons (57.0%) disagreed with this position, and none were undecided. However, none agreed, and none strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority did not accept that Educational campaigns to increase awareness and compliance with grazing reserves policy and laws were effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 11 shows that of the 387 respondents, none strongly disagreed with the statement that: Government stock grazing reserves and water reservoirs along stock routes were not effective. Furthermore, none disagreed with this position, and none were undecided. However, 260 persons (67.0%) agreed, and 127 persons (33.0%) strongly agreed as well. This implies that all the respondents accept that the government's stock grazing reserves and water reservoirs along stock routes were not effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 12 shows that of the 387 respondents, 60 (15.0%) of them strongly disagreed with the statement that: A three-tier farmer-herdsmen conflict management committee setup was effective. 227 persons (59.0%) also disagreed with this position. 100 persons (26.0%)

Table 9: State ban on open grazing was not effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	60	16.0	16.0	16.0
Disagree	50	13.0	13.0	29.0
Undecided	7	1.0	1.0	30.0
Agree	250	65.0	65.0	95.0
Strongly agree	20	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 10: Educational campaigns to increase awareness and compliance with grazing reserves policy and laws were effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	167	43.0	43.0	43.0
Disagree	220	57.0	57.0	100.0
Undecided	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

were undecided. However, none agreed, and none strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority did not accept that the three-tier farmer–herdsmen conflict management committee set up was effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 13 shows that of the 387 respondents, 17 (10.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that: Public enlightenment campaigns, seminars, and symposia to sensitize the farmers and herdsmen on the negative effects of the crises were not effective. 40 persons (10.0%) also disagreed with this position. None were undecided. However, 250 persons (65.0%) agreed, and 80 respondents (21.0%) strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority of the respondents accepted that Public enlightenment campaigns, seminars, and symposia to sensitize the farmers and herdsmen on the negative effects of the crises were not effective in resolving the Fulani herdsmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

Table 14 shows that of the 387 respondents, 100 (26.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that: Community security operatives were effective. 250 persons (65.0%) also disagreed with this position. 37 respondents (9.0%) were undecided. However, none agreed, and

Table 11: Government stock grazing reserves and water reservoirs along stock routes were not effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Undecided	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Agree	260	67.0	67.0	67.0
Strongly agree	127	33.0	33.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 12: A three-tier farmer-herdsmen conflict management committee setup was effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	60	15.0	15.0	15.0
Disagree	27	59.0	59.0	74.0
Undecided	100	26.0	26.0	100.0
Agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's calculation

Table 13: Public enlightenment campaigns, seminars, and symposia to sensitize the farmers and herdsmen on the negative effects of the crises were not effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	17	4.0	4.0	4.0
Disagree	40	10.0	10.0	14.0
Undecided	0	0.0	0.0	14.0
Agree	250	65.0	65.0	79
Strongly agree	80	21.0	21.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 14: Community security operatives were effective

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Strongly disagree	100	26.0	26.0	26.0
Disagree	250	65.0	65.0	91.0
Undecided	37	9.0	9.0	100.0
Agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Calculation

none strongly agreed as well. This implies that the majority did not accept that community security operatives were effective in resolving the Fulani herders–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In connection with the above findings on the effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to resolve the herders–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria, the study findings show that the mechanisms put in place to resolve the Fulani herders–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria, including herders and crop farmers' traditional heads intervention, herders and farmers associations intervention, government gazetted grazing reserves, educational campaigns to increase awareness and compliance with grazing reserves policy and laws, a three-tier farmer-herdsmen conflict management committee set up, and community security operatives; inter-ethnic committees' intervention, government settlement intervention for both parties to calm tension, the state ban on open grazing, among others, agreed with the finding of Ahmed-Gamgum (2018) that the policy mechanism adopted by Federal and some State Governments to resolve the conflict include intergroup committees, open grazing prohibition, and establishment of ranches laws to guide behaviors and the resolution of future conflicts that may arise between farmers and herders in their respective states were not effective. However, disagreed with Aliyu's (2015) findings that traditional rulers and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria's (MACBAN) intervention were effective in the resolution and management of the herders and crop farmer conflict.

The researcher conducted an interview about the causes of the herders and farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria and the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place by the government to curb this crisis. The traditional ruler of the Ajowa community in Ondo state who represented the community said:

One of the major causes of the farmer/herders conflict in southwest Nigeria is the overstepping of boundaries. This is a result whereby the herders grazing over the farmland and destroy the crops planted by the farmers, and the farmers will always want to protect their farmland. Other causes, according to the traditional ruler, are a disregard for traditional authority, sexual harassment of women by nomads, and indiscriminate bush burning. The traditional ruler mentioned the loss of houses and properties, loss of lives, and loss of produce in storage as the effects of the crisis. He said the government had introduced some mechanism to curb this farmers/herder menace in the state, but the effectiveness of the efforts is in doubt.

Amatekun, a major security agent established by the southwest regional government to handle farmers/herders crisis-related issues, was also interviewed about the conflict between the herders and crop farmers in southwest Nigeria. The spokesman claimed the following as the causes of the conflict (Destruction of crops, cattle theft, indiscriminate defecation on the road, straying of cattle, and indiscriminate bush burning). He mentioned displacement of farmers, loss of lives, and reduction in output of crops farmers as a result of the destruction of

crops by cattle and indiscriminate bush burning as the socioeconomic effect of the conflict. Although the spokesman claimed that efforts had been put in place to tackle this issue but not been totally captured.

SUMMARY

The herders-farmers conflict is one of the national security issues in Nigeria, constituting a serious threat not only to lives and properties but to food and livestock production in the country. The main aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place to resolve the conflict. The study was to explore the causes of herdersmen, and crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria, identify the effects of the conflict on the livelihood of herders and crop farmers in southwest Nigeria as well as examine the effectiveness of the resolution mechanism put in place to resolve the herdersmen–crop farmer's conflict in southwest Nigeria. The study findings are as follows: The causes of Fulani herdersmen and crop farmer's conflict in southwest Nigeria are: disrespect for government policy and laws on grazing, lack of strategies and programs to disarm herders of dangerous weapons, the inability of the security apparatus to fish out the miscreant among others. The effects of the conflict on the livelihood of Fulani herdersmen and crop farmers in southwest Nigeria are: The parties in conflict are demoralized due to the loss of human and animal lives by both parties, loss of houses and properties, destruction of farm crops and yields, reduce access to safe food and nutrition, loss of products in the storage and none of the mechanisms put in place to resolve the herdersmen–crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria is effective.

CONCLUSION

Based on this research, it is obvious that the causes of the Fulani herdersmen and crop farmers conflict in southwest Nigeria and the negative effects of the conflict on the livelihood of Fulani herdersmen and crop farmers in southwest Nigeria are well known to both parties. However, this study also argues that none of the mechanisms put in place to resolve the conflict was effective, including the herders' and farmers' traditional heads' intervention, herders and farmer's associations' intervention, government-gazetted grazing reserves, educational campaigns to increase awareness and compliance with grazing reserves policy and laws, a three-tier farmer-herdsmen conflict management committee set up, and community security operatives, inter-ethnic committees' intervention, government settlement intervention for both parties to calm tension, state ban on open grazing, government stock grazing reserves and water reservoirs along stock routes and public enlightenment campaigns, seminars and symposia to sensitize the farmers and herdersmen on the negative effect of the crises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommended to resolve the conflict and to stop further consequences or effects on farmers/herders in southwest Nigeria

1. The existing mechanisms put in place to resolve the Fulani herdersmen–crop farmers conflict in Ondo state include herders and farmers' traditional heads intervention, Headers and Farmers associations intervention, a three-tier farmer-herdsmen conflict management committee set up, community security operatives, inter-ethnic committees' intervention, government settlement intervention for both parties to calm tension should be reviewed to identify their weakness and strengthen them become more effective on their roles.
2. There is a need to recruit more best available grassroots men into AMATEKUN, who will be able to function adequately well towards achieving the vision and purpose of establishing the agency.
3. Disrespect for government policy and laws on grazing is one of the factors identified in this study as a cause of the conflict, which has implications for enforcement. Therefore, the enforcement agencies should ensure strict compliance with grazing laws, and violators should be made to face the consequences of the law without discrimination.

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