

# Causes and Consequences of Farmers and Herdsmen Conflict in Fika Local Government, Yobe State, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Mohammed A.N.A.Imam (Ph.D), <sup>2</sup>Mohammed Ali

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sociology, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Sociology, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

**Abstract:** - *The research focused on causes and consequences of conflict between farmers and herdsmen conflict in Fika local government area of Yobe state which become very endemic phenomenon. The main objective of this research is to explore the causes and consequences of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in the area. Conflict is a global phenomenon as well as social problem that destruct the lives, properties and human social relations. Farmers and herdsmen conflict is prevailing acts which hindered the development process in human society. Both primary and secondary data were used as the source of data. The findings of the study revealed that the remote causes of the conflict were poor land tenure system, perceived antagonism among the farmers and herdsmen information gap. Also it's revealed that gun, and arrow, knife and sphere were the weapons used to attack opposition party. The findings also have shown that the community leader's intervention as problem solvers are needed. Hence the study recommend that enlighten both parties to understand the damages they are causing to the economy and environment is affecting local and national development programs. Also wide grazing spaces should be provided to herdsmen, as well as zero tolerance measures should be adopted.*

**Keywords:** - *Causes, Consequences, Farmers, Herdsmen, Fika*

## Introduction

Conflict over resources use is not uncommon and perhaps not unnatural in human ecosystem. Moor and Bazarma (2010) noted that conflict is not a something bad it's perhaps a necessity in the evaluation and development of human organization. But when conflict degenerate to violent destructive clashes, conflict become not only unhealthy but also counterproductive and progress-threatening. Nyong and Fiki (2005) pointed out that resource-related conflicts are responsible for over 12% decline in per capital food production in sub-Saharan Africa. Competition –driven conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have become common and recurrent phenomena in many parts of Nigeria. The herdsmen have identified conflicts arising from land use as the most important problem they face in their grazing land use often times led to serious manifestation of hostilities and social fraction among the two land users in many parts of Nigeria. The conflict is not only heightened the level of insecurity, but also have

Demonstrate high potential to exacerbate the food crisis in Nigeria and other affected countries due to loss of farmer lives, animals, crops and valuable properties (Ardo, 2004). In some Nigerian states such as Nasarawa and Plateau the conflicts between farmers and herdsmen has become very serious challenge and not only led to loss of lives and properties, but changing its dimension from land or resource conflict to ethnic conflict, in north central, between Tiv and Fulani as well as Eggon and Alongon in Assakio ( Daily Trust, 2018). With same line in Fika Local government the conflict largely evolved from the competition on fertile land between the two groups, where the farmers are seeking for fertile land for farming, the herdsmen or cattle rearers who are moving from place to another looking for a grazing land for their cattle, as a result the conflict will start. Thus, this paper intend to understand the mechanisms of the conflict in order to

adopt new strategies for conflict management and resolution in the area.

### **Methodology**

This study applied survey method to obtain all necessary data related area of study. Primary data were collected directly from the field by using questionnaire as main tool, while secondary data were collected through text books, journals and internet web sides. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive technique due to the nature of phenomena under study. Sample of 50 respondents were purposively selected from the main three tribal groups (Fulani, Hausa and Bolewa) to represent the population of study area. The data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using a simple percentage and frequency distribution table base on the responses of the respondents.

### **Concepts Clarification:**

1. **Conflict:** The term conflict is derived from word configure which means to strive together. Conflict is usually brings to mind configures of war, misunderstanding, argument, stress, crisis and aggression. Boege and Turner (2006) defined as an activity which takes place when conscious beings (individuals or groups) wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their needs or obligations. On the other hand conflict refers to some form of friction disagreement, or discord arising within a group when belief or action of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more a members of another groups. Nicholson (1992) noted that conflict is subject to different interpretations in different context, and can be defined in many ways and also can be considered as an expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression and misunderstanding.
2. **Farmers:** Bengtsson (2007) explained the word farmers was originally use to describe a tenant paying a large hold rent ( farm) often for holding a lords manorial demesne. The use of the word was eventually extended to mean any tenant or owner of a large holding. However, a farmer is a person who engages in agriculture,

raising living organism for food or raw materials is also called agriculture. The term usually applies to people who do some combination of raising field crops, orchards and other livestock. Farmer may own the farm land or might work as a labor on land owned by other, but in advance economics farmer is usually a farm owner, while employees of the farm are known as farm workers or farm hand.

3. **Herdsmen:** This is an owners or breeders of a livestock, herd man is a person who breeds, rear or care for cattle or rarely other livestock in the herd. Herdsmen can also be seen as or a keeper of a herd especially of cattle or sheep.
4. **Pastoralist:** pastoralist is a person who herds livestock, often as a nomadic wanderer without a set farm area. According to Webster dictionary pastoralist is a person who raises livestock, especially a nomadic herder. Whereas, pastoralist is the branch of agriculture concerned with the raising of livestock. Its animal husbandry, the care, tending and use of animals such as camels, goat, cattle and sheep. Pastoralist generally has a mobile aspect moving the herds in search of fresh pasture and water.

**Theoretical Framework:** Theory is one of the foundations for the development of any scientific research, therefore, for winter (1994), is a system of interrelated ideas that enable one to explain and predicted phenomena. Conflict represents a related set of ideas which became useful in explaining social phenomena and actions. There are many theories aim to explain the conflict, but for purposes of this study the Marxist conflict theory will be adopted to explain the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in the study area. The conflict theory use to explain social structures in this context, they are interested in showing how the social structure of the society serves the interest of various group that complete for scarce resources. Karl Marks (1818- 1883) have developed theoretical framework on this premise, and for him a man survive before he engaged in to any form of activity, and inter-into any other forms of relationship with other social being and organized for material production. Marks also argues that,

materials forces are limited as such people struggle for the materials at both individual and group level, and the struggle for material force cause conflict which leads to change in society. Cosre (1977) also asserted that human relation is characterized by ambivalence, that social relation always involves harmony and conflict, attraction, repulsion, love and hate. Therefore, based on Marxism conflict theory explanation in relation to conflict between farmers and herdsmen in study area is over the forces of production (land for farming and grazing). Also according to Marx it the forces of production that determine the outlook of the society, as such the farmers and pastoralist found themselves conflicting situation, furthermore, the relation of production between farmers and herdsmen here can be seen in terms of land use for the production of crops and for grazing.

### **Literature Review:**

**I - The Nature of Conflict:** Conflict is clash or disagreement between two or more groups or parties who have incompatible differences, it is a situation where two or more parties pursue similar goals but believe that such goals are achievable by just one of them and employ every resources within their disposal to hinder the other party from attaining such goal (Maltosa, 1999). The argument is that pastoral conflict cannot be grappled with, by focusing on their explanation, but by looking at all forms of socio-political and economic relations in the society as these related to the aggregation of the place of who controls and get what? Conflict often expresses itself in the form of violence, and once it assumes this character, it becomes undesirable and counter-productive, and conflict can lead to mutual satisfaction and growth, and can produce hostilities (Galtung, 1996). Conflict however, is social phenomenon which occurs whenever there is perceived antagonistic relationship between parties pursuing opposing interest (Pruit and Rubin, 1986). Furthermore, it is the struggle over value and claims to scarce resources status, power in which the aim of opposition is to eliminate or injure their rivals (Alemika and Okoye, 2002). Conflict is therefore, centered on human existence at different levels of the

society, the implication of this is that as long as human beings continue to live together and interact, conflict would continue in a society. Conflict becomes desirable if it creates an avenue of opportunity for leaving about people that involved and consequently promoting social interaction (Aluko and Baurtons, 1999).

**II – Classification of Conflict:** The typology of pairs of actors involved in natural resources conflicts, however, usually involves pairing farmers and/ or herders with themselves or other actors (Fishfalks non- local private sector, in migrants and the state or its agents). Moor er-al (1998) discussed that it may be more useful to categories conflicts in terms of weather- they are within (farmer/farmer conflicts) or between production system such as farmers/herders disputes. Shettima and Tar ( 2008) perceived conflict as resource conflict that usually involves the interaction between two or more users over a common environmental resource including land, pastor, crop residue, livestock corridors and water points. They further argue that resource use conflict is arises from competition and conflict of interest. Blench ( 1999) has also provided a broad and useful classification of resource conflict in semi-Aride Africa, his classification was based on two general arenas of conflict namely point and eco-zonal resources. Point resources include mines, large farms and reserves, while eco-zonal resources refers to the patchy resources of semi-arid region. The conflict occurring between pastoralist and farmers is classical example of over eco-zonal resources (Shettima and Tar, 2008). Blench (1996) similarly categorized conflicts in the Sahel as eco-zonal and endemic to the transition between the extensive livestock cropping system. Conflicts are arising in pastoral regions not only between cultivator farmers and herders and among themselves and their communities( horizontal), but also between each of these and the state of specific development projects ( Kertical,1997).

### **III- Causes of Conflict**

**1- The Policy Related Causes:** A popular view among scholars of pastoralist conflicts that the state “farmer’s bias” in national policy has

indirectly contributed to land conflicts in Africa (Mkatu, 2005). This bias is more glaringly exhibited in the clause recommendations of a soil conservancy committee in Sudan, which states that “in dispute settlement the right of the cultivators farmer should be consider paramount to that of nomadic or herders because the crops yield a bigger return per unit area” ( Et-Tayeb, 1985, Shazali and Ahmed, 1999). Wilson- fall (2000) has traced the origin of public authorities favor for farmers over herders still receiving poor attention from post-colonial authorities in West Africa. According to Wilson fall also the formal relationship between the pastoralist and the state is the most pro vocative, to date no Sahelian government has formalized the management and oversight of state policy regarding the protection and assurance of grazing pasture and water rights for pastoralist, this has cause anxiety and conflict and it remains a recurrent phenomenon between Hausa farmers and Fulani herders in study area. This type of marginalization has been reported to occur, in Nigeria where the politicians distribute large hectors of grazing land to farmers as way of fulfilling campaign promise (Anon, 1995).

**2- Ethnic and Socio-Cultural Causes:** Conflict in most cases is a contradiction of multiplicity of factors acting together such as ethnic, sociocultural and political factors are often mobilize by conflict ‘ entrepreneurs’ through identify politics in in order to promote disaffection and hat rate ( Frek,2007). When ethnic and sociocultural interest and cleavages prevail in the midst of scarcity of resources which both parties depend on, is likely to culminate into ethnic wars between not only farmers and pastoralist, but by extension have the tendency to involve other ethnic nationalities as a matter of group solidarit This has been exemplified by the arm conflict between Fulbe and Tubu-arab ethnic groups in Diffa and between the Fulbe and Birom in Jos. The ethnic and sociocultural dimension of the conflict has open new paradigm in better

understanding the dynamics of the conflict difference in economic and sociocultural background among farming and pastoral communities are often articulated into ethnic or indigence-settlers wars. Conflict between farmers and pastoralist is not peculiar just to swampy area like Chad region. For example in Mambila, Plateau and Adamawa states, armed youths and Fulani settlers clashes in 2002 leaving many killed (Daily Trust News Paper 2002).

**3- Environmental Causes:** Coe and Foley (2001) on climatic data analysis revealed that, rainfall event have reduce leading to draught and increasing desertification in some areas or regions. Resources such as forest, water, and visitation among others become not only scarce but also a vital source of competition conflict between farmers and pastoralist in many regions in West Africa including lack Chad and Nigeria. Also resources are degraded faster than they are renewed due to increase in population of resources users such as farmers and pastoralist.

**IV- Cropping System in Nigeria:** According to Lambiou and Laub (2006), 75% of today’s foods comes from 12 Arab crops and five animals’ species. With just three Arable crops (Rice, Maize and Wheat) accounting for about 60& of the calories and proteins obtained from plants. Worldwide arable crops enjoy remarkable dominance, playing significant roles in the socioeconomic live of both rural and urban peoples. In Nigeria, production arable crops is essentially the prominent feature of agricultural activities, and almost all farmers cultivate one or more arable crops for food and income. Adisa (2012) posted that Nigerian agricultural production is dominated by rural-based small scale arable crop producers, who account for about 80% of total food requirements.

Central Bank of Nigeria (2005) reported that 36.525 and 82.41 million hectors of arable crops were cultivated in 2005 and 2005 respectively. Further CBN reported that production arable

crops increased from 88.3 million tons in 2001 to 111.8 million tons in 2005. According to CBN the wide grown arable crop in the country is maize, accounting for 6.6 and 7.5 million hectares in 2004 and 2005 respectively, maize is grown in almost every part of the country and rely on rainfall to produce. This expansion of number of hectares grown by arable crops mainly maize will lead to decrease the grazing areas for animal herders which may create tension and conflicts between two parties.

#### **IV- The cattle Herding System in Nigeria:**

Cattle herding is dominated almost entirely by the Fulani in Nigeria, Iro (2002) have gave a vivid documentation of Fulani herding system, according to him herding is a daunting task and contrary to the wide spread beliefs, it's not the delight of the Fulani they herd not as a matter of choice but as necessity. Swinton (1987) cited that most Fulani men herd cattle well past the middle age, herding is dominated by the youth, while decision making about grazing are mainly made by the elderly family members.

Describing the annual herding circle of the Fulani, Iro (2002) stated that the herding season begins with southward movement of the herd and along rivers and stream valleys from October to December marking the end of rainy season and beginning of dry season. January to February is the Hamattan season is characterized by longer grazing hours, herd splitting and more frequent visits to stable water sources. These thus increase southward movement of the herds, but by March and April are usually the toughest for the herdsman and his cattle, as is the hottest period in the grazing calendar. May and June signify the end of dry season and vegetation begins to appear, this also marks the beginning of northward movement of cattle herds. From this period up to September which is the peak of rainy season, though characterized by cattle breeding, more milk production and shorter grazing hours, cattle herding coincides significantly with arable crop production. Farmer –herdsmen conflict therefore, became prevalent during this period.

**V- Management of Conflict:** Natural resources conflict management is essential and important mechanism that needs an attention from the government at all levels considering its implication in West African countries including Nigeria. Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur International Zusammenarbeit - GIZ (1997) has presented two views on the meaning of conflict management, the first is an intervention aimed primarily to positively influence the cause of conflict by attempting to identify existing potentials for learning from conflict, and to break the vicious circle of rising mutual aggression by changing ways of thinking, attitudes and behaviors among the parties to the conflict. The second is understanding of conflict management places emphasis on the process but nevertheless endeavors first and foremost to achieve a solution to the conflict. According to this principles techniques of conflict management are process by means of which an attempt is made to solve anticipated or existing conflict below threshold of resorts to the court and by consent, involving all actors and possibly also a neutral third party. Winter (1994) pointed that local mechanism for managing conflict must be transparent and encourage participation otherwise they lose legitimacy and become less effective. De Leener Sow (1995) noted five pre-requisites for conflict management based on a process of negotiation, First each of the conflicting parties must recognize the existence of the conflict, second each party must define the conflict in the same way, third the parties must accept each other mutually as interlocutors, Furth the parties must share the same criteria on how to resolve it and fifth the parties must agree on the rules of the game.

#### **Data Presentation**

This study was conducted in Dumbulwa, Fika local government area of Yobe State, In order to obtain required information from study area, a sample of 50 respondents were purposively selected from three main tribal groups( Fulani, Hausa and Bolewa), total of 50 questionnaire

distributed were successfully returned. The processed data were analyzed as interpretation is showing below:

**Table 1: Occupational Status of the Respondents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	10	20
Handwork	07	14
Business	15	30
Herdsmen	10	20
Others	08	16
Total	50	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The above table (1) indicated that, the both farmers and herdsmen are representing a significant number 20 % per each, while many of respondents are engage business 30%, and few of them are handworkers 14%.

**Table 2: Causes of conflict in the Study Area**

Cause	Frequency	Percentage
Poor Land Tenure System	20	40
Environmental Causes	13	23
Others	17	37
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The above table (2) concerning the causes of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in the area showing 40% of respondents considered the poor land tenure system as the main reason for the conflict in the area, while environmental issues are constituting 23% of respondents perceptions as causes of the conflict in the area, but also there are others factors responsible for the conflict which represent about 37% of respondents opinion's.

**Table 3: Negative Conflict Consequences Experienced by the Respondents**

Negative Consequences	Frequency	Percentage
Economic	20	40
Environmental	20	40
Others	10	20
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

According to above table (3) the most respondents responded to the economic and environmental consequences as the major conflict impacts in the area accounting 40% per each, while others responded to the question differently 20%.

**Table 4: Response to the Conflict**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	86
No	02	04
Others	05	10
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

In the above table (4) respondents are on the reaction to the conflict involved by the parties and they are responding to the conflict with violent 86% which is very unfortunate indicator that the research community is still remain vulnerable and continue to suffer from this types of conflict. While a few of respondents responded by indicating that they are not response to the violent with only 4%, and some responded by no specification 10%.

### Discussion of the Findings

Most of the respondents are of the opinion that, the remote causes of conflict are many, ranging from poor land tenure system, ecological and environmental factors, perceived antagonism among the parties, inadequate attention, information gap , water points and depleting soil fertility. Majority of these factors were also reported by Adegboye (2004) and Haggblad, Hazel and Mkandawire (2005) as being responsible for conflict and slow agricultural growth and livestock improvement in Nigeria and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. This finding is consistent with those of other researchers such as Gefu and Kolawole (2005) indicated that intensification and extensification of agricultural production due to increasing human population contributed to the rate and level of the farmer-herdsmen conflict in Africa south of Sahara. Adegboye (2004) also noted the effect of depleting soil fertility on farmer-herdsmen conflict and declining food production. The issue of drinking water for cattle was another factor, as well as water for domestic consumption as crucial problem of rural communities has also been noted by

other researchers. Consistent with the observations of Boege and Turner (2006) they stated the striking correlation between water scarcity conflict/tension over access to water, this finding indicates that water scarcity is a central element in farmer-herdsmen conflict in study area. The theme of deals with the conflict response, it actually revealed deeper information on how the respondents reacted to the conflict, not how they coped with effect of their natural conflict. However, some respondents claimed to fight back as their farms usually with weapons, this set of respondents may be referred to as being conflict –prone. Another issue centers on the perspectives of participant on how to manage farmer’s herdsman conflict, this was identified as government and local authority’s responsibility. There is need to the government must show more serious commitment to prevent and control the farmers and herdsman conflict.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that, the periodical struggle for scarce resources has generated into violent conflict in study area between Fulani herdsman and farmers. The conflicts have become more intense, widespread and destructive. Since most of Fulani herdsman do not own or possess the land rights, they depend on open land to feed their cattle, climax in intense pressure on land and incidence of conflicts.

Ecological, climate change and government policies on agriculture, especially the all years Fadama Farming are threat to herdsman access to pasture. However, additional farm space acquired and encroachment of traditional cattle routes have drastically reduced the grazing space for the livestock to access pasture areas and water points. Furthermore, the use of police and courts to resolve conflicts between herdsman and farmers by the government has been ineffective. This has contributed to the frequency of the clashes especially since 1989 up to democratic dispensation.

All these have exacerbated chronic insecurity that has encouraged the conflicting parties to take responsibilities for their security and to depend themselves, which is a threat to the sustainability of the federation. The research also found that, the

interest of local authorities to end the rhetoric on the demarcation of grazing land and concrete steps or measures to address the genuine needs of herdsman for grazing land, resolved the re-occurring conflicts in the agricultural sector which currently provides employment to over 80 percent of the country’s population.

### **Recommendations**

A multi-stage conflict management framework is required to curb the danger posed by farmers-herdsman conflict in Fika local government area of Yobe State, the proposed framework may include:

1. Statutory constitution/establish and committees are needed, at local, State and federal levels. It should include the relevant occupational unions, traditional and local leaders should involve in conflict resolution.
2. Farmer’s poverty is increasing due to many factors including conflict, there is need for more concerted and deliberate policies and programmes on how to find realistic and practical solutions to farmer’s poverty.
3. Social amenities such as roads, health centers, schools among others should be provided, this would generate employment opportunities for youth and reduce pressure for land.
4. There must be a deliberate design to enlighten and mobilize the parties in conflict to understand the ecology and resources available in the area. These will open window for interdependence and complimentary among groups in the optimal use of the resources for collective benefit and equitable access.

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