

Conflict Dynamics between Farmers and Herders: A Case Study of Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria

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Abstract

The farmers and herder's conflicts have become a significant concern globally, posing threats to food security and socio-economic stability. Therefore, the study explored farmer-herders conflicts in Abuja Municipal Area Council, FCT Abuja specifically Karshi, Chori, Gasaki and Wasa communities. The specific objectives were to examine the nature and causative factors of farmer-herders conflict and study the socio-economic effects of farmer-herders conflict. Conflict and Frustration Aggression theories were used for the study. Using mixed methods, the study drawn a sample size of 210 respondents out of which 100 respondents were farmers and 100 were herders in Karshi, Chori, Gasaki and Wasa communities of AMAC. An in-depth interview (IDI) was conducted with 5 herder *Hardo* and 5 farmers using purposive sampling techniques. Multi-stage sampling techniques were used to select respondents for the study. The study revealed that conflict between farmers and herders were for competition for land and water, greener pasture, grievance and political in nature and competition for scarce resources was a factor in the farmers-herders conflict. They often compete for access to land for grazing, water sources, population growth and urbanization increase and farming, the Fulani herdsmen and cattle lands (*Labi*), destruction of crops, communication barriers, inadequate grazing reserved, cattle rustling and mutual distrust. Also, study revealed that the conflict has contributed to the deteriorating social relations between the farmers and the herder resulted in suffering and loss of lives and properties, which has effect on agriculture or farming and livelihood of the people.

Keywords: Conflict, Farmer-header, Causative factor, Socio-economic, Effect

Introduction

Globally, herders-farmers conflict has a long and complex historical background. The land disputes among nomadic pastoralist and farmers is nothing new. Competition for common,

limited and declining natural resources often trigger conflict across the world, which is counter-productive (Adenkunle and Adisa, 2010; Moore, 2005). Also, in many parts of the world, farmers rely on their agricultural lands to cultivate crops and raise livestock. They fence off and cultivate their fields, aiming to protect their crops and livestock from encroachment. On the other hand, herders depend on grazing lands to feed their livestock, which they move around in search of fresh pastures. The conflict between these two groups occurs when there is a scarcity of land or when there is an overlap in the use of the available resources (Ogunbode, Ayodele, Oyebamiji & Faboro, 2023).

Hence, herdsman-farmers conflicts in Nigeria are getting worse almost on a daily basis. According to Mayhem (2018) an age old rivalry has now grown deadlier. Although a strife between herdsman and farmers date back centuries, it has escalated sharply as climate change pushes herders. Accordingly, Ismail (1994), the Fulani Herdsmen are nomadic Herders whose history can be traced to the Futa Jalon Mountains of West Africa and whose primary occupation is raising live stocks. They are largely located in the Sahel and semiarid parts of West Africa but due to changes in climate patterns, many herdsman have moved further south into the Savannah and Tropical Forest Belt of West Africa. Fulani Herdsmen are found in countries, such as Senegal, Cameroon etc.

The conflicts often involve disputes over land boundaries and encroachment. Farmers might feel threatened by herders bringing their livestock onto cultivated lands, leading to damage of crops. Contrarily, the herders argue that they have traditional grazing rights or that the land they are using was previously communal or unclaimed. These conflicts are further intensified by issues of land ownership, cultural differences, and lack of clear land use policies and regulations.

Thus, the clashes between herders and farmers can be traced to time immemorial. Consequently, these clashes can be severe and can lead to economic losses for both parties, including damaged crops, loss of livestock, and loss of livelihoods. Also, the conflicts can result in violence, displacement, and deaths, especially in areas where tensions have escalated into ethnic or communal violence. Nevertheless, the volatility and intensity of resource-based conflict are usually heightened when the conflicting groups or users of the resources belong to different ethnic nationalities with differing faiths and socio-cultural values as in the case with cattle herders and crop farmers in Nigeria and vice versa.

For instance, communities like Karshi, Gasaki, Wasa and Chori in Abuja Municipal have increasing scarcity of water and fertile land required for both cultivating agriculture and cattle herds; and farmers engage in the expropriation of land that has been specifically designated for grazing reserves and also encroach into established grazing routes. Conversely, herders often cause damage to crops, pollute water sources, and trespass on private land in their efforts to provide food for their cattle. This situation creates the need to explore the nature, causative factors and socio-economic effect of farmer-header conflict in Abuja Municipal.

Theoretical Framework

In understanding the root causes of the farmer-herder crises, theory of conflict was adopted. In fact, the basis of this theory is of two groups of people fighting for scarce commodities. That is why conflict theory states that tensions and conflicts arise when resources, status and power are

unevenly distributed between groups in a society and that these conflicts become the engine for social change' (Cole 2016). The theory further says the core cause of conflict is unequal sharing of wealth, political positions and power among people in a state, either caused by human intervention, or using force.

Karl Marx (1848) who is the father of conflict theory, centered on the cause and effects of class struggle. The theory focuses on the distribution of natural resources which are unequally allocated. Marx sees society as a collection of people with varying wants and interests who have scarce funds to satisfy those wants. This leads to inequality in this society, which also results in conflict and social change. Each group seeks to get or acquire more resources, and due to scarcity, competition in the form of a clash between them is unavoidable. As the competition intensifies, one group becomes greedy, impeding the progress of the other in acquiring the resources. Land resources like agricultural lands, crops, grass, water sources, are in high demand in the Middle-belt and are required by both farmers and herders for the sustaining of their varied forms of source of income or food (Ogbeide, 2017).

Conflict would arise not just between herders and farmers competing for these resources, but also when one of the groups seeks to infringe on or abuse another's previously acquired and previously gained resources. Conflict is likely to erupt if farmers in need of agricultural lands trespass into grazing areas, or if robbers in host communities try to steal livestock from the herders for economic gain. Vice versa. They could also allow their cattle to graze on farm crops, Stream pollution and intimidation of female farmers which could lead to confrontation (Ofem & Bassey, 2014).

Frustration Aggression Theory

Frustration aggression theory was first proposed by Miller et al (1939), however, Berkowitz significantly modified it in 1969. The theory states that, the appearance of violent conduct always implies the presence of frustration, and vice versa, the presence of frustration inevitably leads to some kind of violence (Miller et al 1939) as cited in Breuer and Elson (2017). Frustration in this context is seen as an interference with the occurrence of an induced goal-response, rather than as an emotional reaction, as opposed to the use of the word in ordinary English. In other words, frustration is characterized as an occurrence rather than a subjective state (Breuer & Elson, 2017).

Frustration "always leads to some form of violence" implies that aggression is a guaranteed result of any form of frustration and therefore frustration causes violence, but it is also not the only sort of incitement that it may cause. The hypothesis goes on to say that irritation produced by interruption in purpose driven activities creates a quickness for aggressiveness, which, when instigated, might lead to a violent reaction. The cause may be a little aspect of behavior, such as a simple joke, attitude, or little comment that would ordinarily be disregarded, but to the individual with frustration who is already looking for a chance to express his dissatisfaction, it could cause a violent response or revenge.

Linking this theory to this study, there are two groups of people with two different goals or aim. The goal of farmers in AMAC is to cultivate land grow healthy crops in other to sell that is commercial purpose or for consumption purpose while the herders goal and aspiration is to

provide a healthy green grazing field and clean water for the herds so they can grow, fatten up and be ready for consumption of be sold out. The case whereby the farmers land or crops are damaged, water contaminated or other farmer’s especially female farmers are harassed, there is tendency of the farmers acting in an aggressive way. If the water they are supposed to direct the herds to drink is contaminated, and or if the herd keeps getting smaller due to theft then aggressive response from the herders can be unavoidable. And with this aggression comes conflict and clash.

METHODS

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study used mixed methods to draws a sample size of 210 respondents out of which 100 respondents were farmers and 100 were herders in Karshi, Chori, Gasaki and Wasa communities of AMAC because of high number of herders and farmers. An in-depth interview (IDI) was conducted with 5 herder *Hardo* and 5 farmers using purposive sampling techniques. Multi-stage sampling techniques were used to select respondents for the study.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The study adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection in order to obtain the data. The data were collected from primary and secondary sources. The questionnaire was made in English and translated into Hausa, Gwandara, Fulani or Gbagyi where applicable. The secondary data were generated from textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc. The quantitative data generated were processed with the Social Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) vision 4.9. Descriptive statistics were used during the analysis and presented in the form of tables, frequencies and percentages.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

What is the nature of the farmer-herders conflict in Abuja Municipal Area Council?

Table 1: The Nature of Farmer-Herders Conflict in Study Area

The Nature of Farmer-Herders Conflict	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Competition for land and water	32	16.0
Greener posture	9	4.5
Grievance	14	7.0
Political	51	25.5
All of the above	94	47.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

On the nature of farmer-herder conflict, Table 1 above revealed that 16.0% of the respondents said that the nature of farmer-herders were for competition for land and water, 4.5% opined that the conflict for greener posture while 7.0% said it’s for grievance, 25.5% posited that the nature of conflict between farmer and herder were political in nature and 47.0% of the respondents posited that conflict between farmer-herders were competition for land and water, greener posture, grievance and political in nature. Therefore, the overwhelming number of the respondent are of the view that the nature of conflict between farmers and herders were for competition for

land and water, greener posture, grievance and political in nature in the study area. Moreover, in an interview with Hardo narrated that the contamination of water bodies by the cattle is another source of conflict between the farmers and the herder. In Abuja, some communities have pipe borne and borehole water, while others communities' herder depend on the rivers for their daily activities. The rivers serve as the main source of water for people living in these communities, these same rivers serve as drinking water for farmers, herdsman's and their cattle in the communities, but some children from those communities pollute the water. Sarkin Noma revealed that:

...the same rivers that the cattle drink from, thereby polluting them (rivers) with their dirty skin, faecal matter and secretion from their mouth. We (the farmers) share and compete with the cattle for the same water. At times the Fulani herdsman denied us access to the water when we go to the farm. Sometimes, the cattle pollute the water with their hoofs and defecated into the water as well. With this, you can't use it for anything. You have to stop working and come back home, master (IDI with Sarkin Noma, 2024).

Table 2: The Nature of Relationship etween Farming and Herders in Study Area

Nature of Relationship Between Farming and Herders	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cordial	114	57.0
Non-cordial	56	28.0
Can't say	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

The above table 2 clearly shows that 57.0% of the respondents were of the view that the nature of the relationship between farmers and herders were cordial, 28.0% said it's non-cordial and 15.0% of the respondents cannot access the nature of relationship. This indicates that most of the respondents are of the view that the nature of relationship between farmers and herders were cordial.

Table 3: Respondents' View on Between Farming and Herders, who Initiate Conflicts

Farming and Herders, who Initiate Conflicts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmers	30	15.0
Herders	68	34.0
Both farmer and herder	102	51.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 3 above indicates that 15.0% of the respondents said that farmers initiate the conflict, 34.0% opined that herders initiate the conflict while only 51.0% said both farmers and herders initiate the conflict. Therefore, the overwhelming numbers of the respondent are of the view that both farmers and herders initiate the conflict in the study area. An in interview with Sarkin Noma

narrated that Abuja Municipal Area Council can no longer be referred to as the food basket of the FCT because farmers are finding it difficult to access their farms for fear of being kidnapped or killed by herdsmen.

Table 4: Respondents’ View on whether they Personally Experienced Conflicts with Farmer or Herders Regarding Farming Practices or Land Use in Study Area

Respondents Experienced Conflicts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	92	46.0
No	108	54.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

The above table 4 above presents data on personal experience conflict with farmer or herders regarding farming practices or land use of the respondents. The Table indicates that 46.0% of the respondent’s experience conflict with farmer or herders regarding farming practices or land use and 54.0% said did not experience conflict with farmer or herders regarding farming practices or land use. It is therefore clear that the percentage of those with “Yes” is higher than those with “No”, which show that most farmer and herders did not experience conflict with farmer or herders regarding farming practices or land use in the study area. An interview with Sarkin Noma revealed that:

...vegetables and potatoes in commercial quantities to feed my family, I have not experienced any form of conflict due to the presence of security men along the axis of my farm, but that farming business has been hit by the invasion of cattle herders in recent months. Our problem here has been the invasion of our farms by herdsmen, nothing like kidnapping here. We don’t have such things happening here (IDI with Sarkin Noma, 2024).

Table 5: Duration of Conflict between Farmers and Herders in Study Area

Duration of Conflict Between Farmers and Herders	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Only 2 years	25	12.5
3-5 years	33	16.5
8-10 years	40	20.0
12 years and above	102	51.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

The above table 5 indicates that 12.5% of the respondents said conflict between farmers and herders were in existing for only 2 years and only 16.5% of the respondents opined that, the conflict exists for 3-5 years, 20.0% of the respondents 8-10 years, 51.0% said the farmers and herders exists for 12 years and above. The above revelation is a clear indication that conflict between farmers and herders were in exist for more than a decade in the study area, it’s can be attributed to poor security strategies and poor conflict management and misappropriation of priority.

Table 6: The Factors that Attract Herders in Study Area

Factors that Attract Herders	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Water	22	11.0
Grazing land	28	14.0
Farming land	21	10.5
All of the above	129	64.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

On the factors that attract herders to the area, Table 6 above indicates that 11.0% of the respondents said that herders were attracted to water, 14.0% opined that grazing land were the main target of herders while only 10.5% said herders were attracted to farm land and 64.5% of the respondents posited that herders are attracted to water, grazing land and farm land. Therefore, the overwhelming numbers of the respondent are of the view that scarce resources, such as water, grazing land and farm land in the study area. Hardo posited that;

Both the farmers and Fulani herdsmen know the presence of the rich pastures of Abuja which is the main factor for the attraction and stay of the herdsmen and their cattle. Herders know that grass in Abuja are so special and very healthy for the animals, within a short period the animals can multiple in number due to the nutritious nature of the forage (IDI with Hardo, 2024).

This makes them to give birth to twins (calves) at a time instead of single (calf). Nevertheless, Sarkin Noma narrated that the herdsmen have told him that the pasture in Abuja are very nutritious and its helps the cattle to give birth to twins or triplets at a time. Also, Hardo revealed that;

We are neglected and were seeing as non-indigene, sometime we maltreated by people due to the nature of our job, we were not considered in sharing the economic resource of our nation, that why our Burtali or Labi were sold to unknown person who usually gives those Labi to farmers, off course we do not have a particular place of staying, and our presence in a particular area depends on the climate and availability of pasture, hence, we are ‘typical’ nomads who moved to Abuja during the dry season and always willing to leave during the rainy season (IDI with Hardo, 2024).

Table 7: The Causes of Farmers-Herders Conflict in the Study Area

Causes of Farmers-Herders Conflict	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Encroachment on farm land or Burtali	181 (90.5)	19 (9.5)	200 (100.0)
Destruction of crops	132 (66.0)	68 (34.0)	200 (100.0)
Communication barriers	172 (86.0)	28 (14.0)	200 (100.0)
Inadequate grazing reserved	196 (98.0)	4 (2.0)	200 (100.0)
Cattle rustling	143 (71.5)	57 (28.5)	200 (100.0)
Mutual distrust	124 (62.0)	76 (38.0)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 7 above opines that 90.5% of the respondents stated that, encroachment on farm land or *Burtali* were the cause of farmer-herder conflicts; and 66.0% posited that destruction of crop was the cause of farmer-herder conflicts. Whereas 86.0% said it is communication barriers, inadequate grazing reserved with 98.0% and 71.5% opined that cattle rustling were the cause of farmer-herder conflicts, while 62.0% said farmer-herder conflicts were cause by mutual distrust. Thus, it is clear that majority of the respondents claim that the reasons for farmer-herder conflict multiple factors that involved farm and *burtali* encroachment, crops destruction, communication barriers, inadequate grazing reserved, cattle rustling and mutual distrust. In an interview with Sarkin Noma revealed that:

Conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria is primarily driven by competition for resources, particularly land and water. Farmers often accuse herders of allowing their cattle to graze on their crops, destroying their livelihoods. On the other hand, herders argue that they have the right to graze their cattle on available land and that farmers are encroaching on traditional grazing routes (IDI with Sarkin Noma, 2024).

Hence, Hardo revealed that;

The possible cause of conflict between farmers and herders is competition for land and resources, farmers who are typically agricultural laborers work on farms during busy seasons, were more entitled to land or resources than the herders who are transient. This led to tension and conflict within the farming community coupled with the issues of communication and power dynamics which contribute to conflicts between farmers and herders. If there is a lack of clear communication or understanding roles and expectations, are misunderstandings and disputes which arise from them (IDI with Hardo, 2024).

An interview with a Sarkin Noma narrated that conflicts between farmers and herders stem from a combination of factors related to competition, differing opinions, communication and power dynamics within the farming community. Resolving these conflicts will require open and honest communication, mutual respect and willingness to compromise and find common ground. Again, Hardo narrated that the nature of the conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria is complex and multifaceted, with deep-rooted socio-economic and political factors at play coupled with historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and religious differences play a significant role in exacerbating the conflict between farmers and herders in study area.

Also, Sarkin Noma narrated that the practice of burning the grassland is the major cause of the conflict in the views of the farmers. Farmers frequently burn the grassland during the dry season to ensure regular supply of fertilizer which has been the survival strategy for the herdsmen to feed their cattle in the lean season. The inability of the Farmer to control the fire very often result in bush fires and burning of farms all grass that supported herders to grazed their cattle. Some of the farmers prepare their lands for cultivation in the dry season, and in the process, burn the weeds which causes bush fires. Again, an interview with Hardo narrated that farmers are accusing us for trespassing into their farm land and destruction of crops, but they neglect that facts that they encroached on our old *Burtali* or *Libi* which is older than most of their parents. It

is one of the propaganda tools used by the farmers to get them evicted. In an interview with Hardo posited that:

Farmers and herders often compete for access to land for grazing and farming. As population growth and urbanization increase, there is a shrinking amount of arable land available, leading to intensified competition between farmers and herders. Coupled with competition for water sources and grazing areas can result in conflicts between farmers and herders. Limited access to water for agricultural purposes furthered exacerbate tensions and lead to confrontations (IDI with Hardo, 2024).

In another interview with Sarkin Noma revealed that:

Herders often allow their cattle to graze on farmlands, resulting in the destruction of crops, which lead to economic losses for farmers and exacerbate tensions between the two groups. Also, the population of Abuja is increased, so as with farmers and herder and their cattle population. Now, with agriculture been turned into commercial purposes, farming is now everywhere deep into the forest. Initially, if you were given land to venture into the bush to transport farm products, you won't go. Consequently, the farmers are now encroaching the Fulani herdsman and cattle lands (Labi), hence narrowing their space. For this, it makes destruction inevitable, thereby causing the conflict (IDI with Farmer, 2024).

Table 8: Respondents' View on whether Land-use Disputes significantly contribute to the Causation of the Farmers-Herders Conflict in Study Area

Land-use Disputes Significantly Contribute to the Causation of the Farmers-Herders Conflict	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	162	81.0
No	38	19.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

The above table 8 shows that 81.0% of the respondents were of the view that land-use disputes significantly contribute to the causation of the farmers-herders conflict, whereas 19.0% said is not. Thus, highest percentage of the respondents show that majority posited tat land-use disputes significantly contribute to the causation of the farmers-herders conflict in the study area.

Table 9: the Farmers-Herders Conflict Rooted in Competition for Resources in Study Area

Farmers-Herders Conflict Rooted in Competition for Resources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	169	84.5
No	31	15.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

The above Table 9 indicates that 84.5% of the respondents were of the view that farmers-herders conflict rooted in competition for resources. Whereas 15.5% said it's not. The overwhelming majority show that farmers-herders conflict rooted in competition for resources in the study area. In an interview with Hardo narrated that inadequate governance and law enforcement contribute to the escalation of conflicts between farmers and herders coupled with the lack of coherent policies and enforcement mechanisms to regulate land use and resolve disputes exacerbates the situation. Historically, farmer and herder are friend with cordial and coherent relationship, but political system of the country create a dichotomy between them. The conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria is often intertwined with ethnic and religious tensions with heavy political influence. Farmers and herders may belong to different ethnic groups or religious affiliations, contributing to the conflict.

Table 10: Respondents' View on whether the Farmer-Herder Conflicts Escalate in Study Area

Farmer-Herder Conflicts Escalate some Time	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	109	54.5
No	91	45.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

The above table 10 above presents data on escalation of farmer-herder conflicts of the respondents. The Table indicates that 54.5% opined that farmer-herder conflicts can escalate in some time and 45.5% said conflict cannot escalate. It is therefore clear that the percentage of those with "Yes" is higher than those with "No", which show that farmer-herder conflicts can escalate in some time in the study area.

Table 11: Respondents' View on whether the Consequences of Farmer-Herder Conflicts Escalation in Study Area

Consequences of Farmer-Herder Conflicts Escalation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fear	11	5.5
Lack of growth	26	13.0
Unplanned relocation of people	52	26.0
Forceful closure of business	49	24.5
All of the above	62	31.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 11 above indicates that 5.5% of the respondents said that the consequences of farmer-herder of conflicts escalation will led to fear while 13.0% of the respondents posited that consequences of farmer-herder of conflicts escalation will led to lack of growth. 26.0% explained that, it will led to unplanned relocation of people and 24.5% said that the its led to forceful closure of business. On the other hand, 31.0% of the respondents said that the consequence of farmer and herders conflict can led to numerous consequence, such as fear, lack of growth, unplanned relocation of people and forceful closure of business. The above indicates that the consequence of farmer and herders conflict can led to fear, lack of growth, unplanned relocation of people and forceful closure of business.

What are the socio-economic effects of farmer-herders conflict in Abuja Municipal Area Council?

Table 12: The Socio-Economic Effect of Farmers-Herders Conflict

Socio-Economic Effect of Farmers-Herders Conflict	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Reduction in income of farmers/herders	117 (58.5)	83 (41.5)	200 (100.0)
Food insecurity	122 (61.0)	78 (39.0)	200 (100.0)
Displacement of farmers/herder	154 (77.0)	46 (23.0)	200 (100.0)
Land degradation	115 (57.5)	85 (42.5)	200 (100.0)
Loss of basic needs	131 (65.5)	69 (34.5)	200 (100.0)
Loss of Economic value	136 (68.0)	64 (32.0)	200 (100.0)
Hate b/t farmers and herders	157 (78.5)	43 (21.5)	200 (100.0)
Fear and lack of trust b/t farmers and herders	162 (81.0)	38 (19.0)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 12 above shows that 58.5% of the respondents stated that reduction in income of both farmers and herders socio-economic effect of farmers-herders conflict and 61.0% of the farmer and herders stated that the conflict was lead to food insecurity. Similarly, 77.0% respondents stated that, the conflict have led to displacement of farmers and herders. While 57.5% said that the main socio-economic effect of farmers-herders conflict was land degradation; and 56.5% respondents stated that loss of basic needs was the likely socio-economic effect of farmers-herders conflict. Also, 68.0% of the farmers and herders are of the view that the likely socio-economic effect of farmer-herder conflict loss of economic value, 78.5% said the conflict can lead to hate between farmer and herders while 81.0% of the farmers and herders opined that the socio-economic effect of farmers-herders conflict can lead to fear and lack of trust between farmers and herders. Moreover, as narrated by Sarkin Noma who posited that, the conflict between farmers and herders in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja has had a significant socioeconomic impact on the region. He further revealed that;

The conflict can lead to the displacement of farmers from their lands, resulting in loss of livelihoods and income. This will also affect the local economy as agriculture is a key source of employment and revenue. The conflict can disrupt agricultural activities, leading to a significant decline in agricultural productivity, which will have exacerbated food insecurity and poverty in the affected communities, as farmers are unable to access their lands and generate income. This will lead to a further widening of the gap between the rich and the poor (IDI with Sarkin Noma, 2024).

Again, Hardo affirmed that;

The conflict between farmers and herders in FCT Abuja has have a detrimental impact on the socioeconomic development, affecting livelihoods, food security, and economic stability. It is very important for the government and other stakeholders to work towards finding peaceful and sustainable solutions to the conflict in

order to promote social and economic development (IDI with Hardo, 2024).

Hardo narrated that the conflict has also had a negative impact on the environment, with reports of land degradation, deforestation, and pollution in the affected areas. This has further exacerbated the challenges faced by farmers and rural communities in the study area. The conflict has created an atmosphere of insecurity and instability in the region, leading to fear and uncertainty among the local population. This has also affected investment and economic development. In an interview with Sarkin Noma revealed that:

Yes, we (the farmers) are seriously affected with their negative activities. But, economically, it affects not only Abuja, but also the entire nation. There are women from various areas who come to buy corn, tomatoes, yam, and cassava, from here. If we are not able to produce, their sources of employment and income are at risk (IDI with Sarkin Noma, 2024).

In another interview with Hardo revealed that

We (the herdsmen) are here because of the cattle, without the animals we are nothing. We don't do anything apart from tendering the cattle. So, the conflicts also affect our sources of livelihood. Also, killing of the cattle by Abuja people deprive or reduces our properties (IDI with Hardo, 2024).

Table 13: Respondents' View on whether the Community Suffer Loss of Lives and/or Property due to the Farmer-Herders Conflict

Community Suffer Loss of Lives and/or Property due to the Farmer-Herders Conflict	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	127	63.5
No	73	36.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 13 above indicates that 63.0% of the respondents posited that the farmer-herders conflict has led to suffering and loss of lives and properties in community and 36.5% stated that it does not. It is a clear indication that the farmer-herders conflict has resulted in suffering and loss of lives and properties in the study area.

Table 14: Respondents' View on whether the Farmer-Herders Conflict has an Effect on Agriculture or Farming

Farmer-Herders Conflict has an Effect on Agriculture or Farming	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	118	59.0
No	82	41.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 14 above indicates that 59.0% of the respondents said that the farmer-herders conflict has an impact on agriculture or farming while 41.0% stated that it does not have an impact on agriculture or farming. It is a clear indication that the farmer-herders conflict has an effect on agriculture or farming in the study area.

Table 15: Respondents' View on whether the Farmer-Herders Conflict Impact on Livelihood

Farmer-Herders Conflict Impact on Livelihood	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	146	73.0
No	54	27.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 15 above indicates that 73.0% of the respondents said that the farmer-herders conflict has an impact on livelihood of the people whereas 27.0% stated that it does not have an impact on livelihood of the people. It is a clear indication that the farmer-herders conflict has an effect on livelihood of the people in the study area.

Discussion of Findings

As reveals by study, most of the respondents are male and were between the age of 35-40 years' old which indicates that most of the respondents are young farmer and herders with high morale who have information about conflict and other security threats in their area. Nevertheless, the qualitative data indicate that most of the respondents were between 50 to 75 years old. Again, both farmer and herders have non-formal education, which shows that, most of the respondent have little regard to western education to certain level and are expected to act according to moral principles like literate and use their knowledge and mental capabilities to understand problems in the study area.

The qualitative data deduced that respondents have attained different levels of education that range from the informal to the highest level of formal education (the tertiary level). This implies that they are educated enough to understand the relevance of studying and thus provide relevance information. Although, some provide information for anticipating of government policies implication to restore peace in their community. Also, the study revealed that most of the respondents are married. This can be connected with the nature of the study area dominated by Muslims and where marriage is a symbol of respect, dignity and responsibility. Also, it is in line with the qualitative data, which the majority are married, signifying that the study area is dominated by married men and women, who form part of the study area.

Also, marriage is a way of getting helping hand (labour) in the farming process. Similarly, the respondents earned between ₦ 51,000 and above. This can be attributed to their numbers of cattle's reared by herder and the size of farm land cultivated by individual farmer. The qualitative data shows that they have different income levels, depending on the nature of their occupations with majority earning the highest income of N70,000 and above monthly. Also, most of the farmer and herder have 7-9 dependents, which impacted by the conflict or his dependents living with the respondents. The qualitative data indicates that a significant number are farmers and herder whose businesses were adversely affected by their conflicting activities and stay for between since birth and 13 years and above and brought up in the study area.

The study revealed that conflict between farmers and herders were for competition for land and water, greener pasture, grievance and political in nature. Also, the study revealed that both the farmers and Fulani herdsmen know the presence of the rich pastures of Abuja which is the main factor for the attraction and stay of the herdsmen and their cattle. Herders know that grass in Abuja are so special and very healthy for the animals, within a short period the animals can multiple in number due to the nutritious nature of the forage and animals are able to get nutritious pasture in the forest. This makes them to give birth to twins (calves) at a time instead of single (calf).

Also, herders were neglected and were seeing as non-indigene, sometime they were maltreated by people due to the nature of their job, they not considered in sharing the economic resource of the nation, that the reason Burtali or Labi were sold to unknown person who usually gives those Labi to farmers. This is because of their transient nature and their presence in a particular area depends on the climate and availability of pasture and always willing to leave during the rainy season. Nevertheless, farmers share and compete with the cattle for the same water. At times the Fulani herdsmen denied farmers access to the water and both farmers and herders initiate the conflict. Nevertheless, nature of relationship between farmers and herders were cordial initially, until when politics are involved.

Herders often allow their cattle to graze on farmlands, resulting in the destruction of crops, which lead to economic losses for farmers and exacerbate tensions between the two groups. Also, the population of Abuja is increased, so as with farmers and herder and their cattle population. This corroborate with the study of Obasanmi and Enoma (2022), International Crisis Group 2021 and Agricultural Development (2021) Projection differently observed that population growth had impact on the farmer-herder conflict. This has mounted pressure on the land resource for crop framer and grazing by herdsmen.

Hence narrowing their space, for which destruction of crops became inevitable, thereby causing the conflict. Factors, such as encroachment on farm land or Burtali, destruction of crop, communication barriers, inadequate grazing reserved, and cattle rustling and mutual distrust were the main causes of farmer-herder conflict. This aligned with the study of Obasanmi and Enoma (2022) and Adejumobi (2019), differently posited that conflict between farmers and herders are primarily driven by competition for resources, particularly land and water. Farmers often accuse herders of allowing their cattle to graze on their crops, destroying their livelihoods. While herders argue that they have the right to graze their cattle on available land and that farmers are encroaching on traditional grazing routes. Conflicts between farmers and herders stem from a combination of factors related to competition, differing opinions, communication and power dynamics within the farming community.

Conclusion

The study concluded that conflict between farmers and herders were for competition for land and water, greener pasture, grievance and political in nature. The causative factors of farmer-herders conflict were multi-dimensional involving competition for scarce resources, access to land for grazing, population growth and urbanization increase and farming, encroaching the Fulani herdsmen and cattle lands (Labi), destruction of crops, communication barriers, inadequate grazing reserved, cattle rustling and mutual distrust were the causes of farmer-herder conflict and

these has contributed to the deteriorating social relations between the farmers and the herder resulted in suffering and loss of lives and properties, which has effect on agriculture or farming and livelihood of the people. The study recommended that government should initiate a bill as Burtali Encroachment Act coupled with mandated proper sensitization of both farmers and herders. Ranches should be created and leased to herders as a mark of non-ownership of land in order to address the fear of land usurpation in the long-run.

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