

## CONFLICT OF LIVELIHOOD AND SURVIVAL: THE ABSURDITY OF FARMERS VERSUS PASTORALISTS CONFLICT IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN OF NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The discussion on conflict of livelihood and survival between farmers and pastoralists in the Lake Chad Region Nigeria is focus on examining the nature and dynamics of livelihoods among farmers and pastoralists, and how does the struggle for livelihoods interact and metamorphose into conflict between these resource users. Both farming and pastoralism are the most dominant source of livelihoods to many rural populaces in Nigeria. Therefore, when there are disruptions in people's source of livelihoods by natural or human factors, may cause competition and conflict over access to resources such as forest, water and land. The paper argued that, farmer-pastoralists face-off is a conflict over struggle for livelihood and survival which both parties passionately engage in defense of their source of livelihood from possible threat. The paper concludes that, any threat to people's sources of livelihoods and survival may easily be resisted and possibly degenerate into conflict because traditionally is among the tangible livelihoods sources bequeathed by their kith and kin from generations past and they will at all cost try to protect as well as defend. This development poses an unprecedented socio-economic implication on peace and development in the Lake Chad region Nigeria. The paper utilized content analysis of existing literature and unstructured focus group discussion with both farmers and pastoralists in the Lake Chad basin region.*

**Keywords:** Conflict, Farmers, Pastoralists, Livelihood and Survival

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, the area referred to as the Lake Chad region is a remnant of inland sea. Before the colonial era, organize early empires such as *Kanem-Borno Empire* attempt at various degrees to exercise the dominance and hegemony over the entire vast region popularly referred to as Lake Chad region. However, the spread of Islam throughout the region in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of *Kanem-Borno Empire* were instrumental to the development of the region prior to the colonial conquest. The colonial hegemony which emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century redesign boundaries and collapse the traditional relationship that have existed for years between *Kanem Borno Empire* and other small kingdoms around the Lake Chad. When the riparian states sharing the region [Chad, Nigeria, Cameroun and Niger] became independent in 1960s, there was a renaissance of interest in order to explore areas of cooperation and integration between these countries. The Government of Chad undertook the bold step in 1962, which finally led to the establishment of a commission called Lake Chad Basin Commission [LCBC] in 1964. Since then the commission has been in the vanguard of management of the Lake's resources such as water, land, fisheries among others for economic development and regional cooperation. The Nigerian side of the conventional Lake

Chad is strategically located on the edge of Sahara desert, bordering three countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The conventional basin covers an area of 3,500 square kilometers, 42 percent in Chad; 28 percent in Niger; 9 percent in Cameroon and 21 percent in Nigeria (Oyebande, 1997).

Available estimates revealed that the basin covered an area of 400,000 square kilometers. During the 1960s, it covered a land space of 26,000 square kilometers. Between 1966 and 1997, it further shrunk from 25,000 square kilometers to less than 1,500 kilometers (GIWA Report, 2004). In the words of Masari, (2006) ‘the Lake dramatically receded between 1994 and 2004, covering just an area of some 532 square kilometers losing about 90 percent of its size in 1960s’. The entire Lake Chad, described as the major wetland in the semi-arid Sahel corridor supporting some 20 million people directly dependent on the lake and its hinterland for survival (FAO, 2004). The impacts of this recession led to continuous decrease in agricultural and water related productions, with accompanying scarcity of natural resources, inevitably caused competition due to increase in resources demand and consequent conflict of livelihood and survival between the resources users in the basin particularly between farmers and pastoralists. More pathetic is the consistent threats by the receding water, desertification, degradation and other environmental challenges due to vulnerability to climatic changes.

Conflict of livelihood and survival between farmers and pastoralists was further worsening in the last six years due to the activities of the dreaded ‘Boko Haram’ insurgents. The area becomes no-go-area for both farmers, pastoralists and other resource users. This development compelled all the resource users to abandon their traditional ecological zones to safer areas around the Lake Chad basin. Eventually, their socio-economic sources of livelihood and survival was virtually disrupted and usurped due to threats from ‘Boko Haram’ elements. Thousands of farmers and pastoralists were forcefully displaced and became vulnerable to struggle over livelihood and survival with high tendencies of conflict over scarce resources in areas they believe to be safer areas within the Lake Chad hinterlands.

However, there is no common consensus among environmental conflict researchers on the link between resource scarcity, vulnerability due to source of livelihood and conflict. For instance, Deudney, (1990) argued that, security has a militarized framework, therefore analyzing environmental issues as a security concern is strategically not appropriate. But several researches on some specific case studies concluded that, strenuous struggles and competition over access to and control over natural resources arising from its decrease in quality and quantity; population migration; weak political institutions among others are responsible for resource tension and conflicts (see Galtung, 1982; Brundtland et al, 1987; Opschoor, 1989; Brock, 1991; Gleick, 1993; Homer-Dixon, 1991, 1994, 1999; Shetima and Tar, 2008). According to Ahmadu and Yusof, (2010) tensions over claims to shrinking natural resources are mostly attributed to declining sources of livelihood and survival. For instance, the riparian states that share the Lake Chad, (Chad, Niger, Cameroun and Nigeria) in West and Central Africa are still grappling with farmer-pastoralist conflict over deterioration of source of livelihood such as land, water, fodder and other resources arising from increase in the number of users, receding lake water, desertification and other climatic changes that bedeviled the region since 1980s.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The focus of this paper is to provide an explanation on how disruption in the socio-economic sources of livelihood/survival of farmers and pastoralists metamorphoses into conflict. In doing so, the paper seeks to address some of the questions facing paucity of scholarly attention. Some of the questions are:

1. What is the nature and dynamics of livelihood and survival struggles among farmers and pastoralists around the Lake Chad Basin?
2. How does struggle for livelihood and survival metamorphoses into conflict in the Lake Chad Basin?
3. What are the major causes of farmer-pastoralist conflict in the Lake Chad basin area?
4. What are the socio-economic implications of 'Boko Haram' insurgency on farmer-pastoralists conflict?

The paper argued that when people's livelihood is largely disrupted by natural or human factors may cause conflict as the case with farmers and pastoralists in the Lake Chad Basin. Historically, both farming and pastoralism are as old as human beings and are the most predominant sources of livelihood and survival for especially rural populace. Traditionally, farming and pastoralism is embedded to some extent with socio-economic and cultural traits of communities bequeathed since time immemorial. Therefore, any disruption to their means of livelihood and survival may generate tensions and conflict unless if their means of livelihood and survival are managed on a sustainable manner.

### **The Concept Livelihood/Survival: An Overview**

The concept of livelihood among rural populace in Nigeria and most Third World countries remains a challenge. Most Challenging is the development and support for sustainable livelihoods among the rural populace. Chambers and Gordon, (1991) defined livelihood in its simplest sense as a means of gaining a living. While the issue of capability, equity and sustainability combine together in the concept of sustainable livelihood. They argued that Livelihoods will be needed on continual basis in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century because human population is expected to be increasing in the near future. Livelihood includes people themselves, their capabilities and their means of earning a living which includes basic needs such as food, income and assets. Therefore, capabilities are both an end and means of livelihood (Chambers and Gordon, 1991). Early researchers on livelihood categorized assets into tangible and intangible ones. Tangible assets are resources and stores while intangible assets are the claims and access to resources (Chambers and Gordon, 1991). A livelihood becomes sustainable when it is resilient to conditions and enhancement of its capabilities and assets without necessarily undermining the natural resource base of the environment both now and in the future.

The growing literature on north-south movements of pastoralists has been viewed as essentially actions by the marginalized poor protecting their environmental means of livelihood and sustenance. Land, water and forest constitute the material basis of the production and reproduction of the poor (Ranjit, 2001; Onuoha, 2007). For instance the pastoralists' migratory trend towards the Lake Chad basin and its hinterland is predicated on two issues. First, the pastoralists whose mobility is dependent on availability or otherwise of pasture and water are basically engaged in a livelihood struggle and secondly, they realized that struggle for livelihood and survival can be meaningful only if their means livelihood is managed in a sustainable manner. However, environmental resources such as land, water, pasture among others is critical to both farmers and pastoralists' livelihood. The duo derives their living from land, water, and other livelihood-sustaining resources, conflict and competition in most cases underlies access and control of such resources.

### **The Nature and Dynamics of Farmer-Pastoralists Livelihood Struggle**

The Nigerian pastoralists are comprised of various ethnic groups such as *Fulbe or Fulani*, *Kanuri-Koyam related groups*, *Shuwa-Arab* among others. The *Shuwa-Arabs and Kanuri related groups such as Kenembu, Buduma, Bodawi, Manga*, among others confined

themselves within the Lake Chad region. There are about 120 million pastoralists worldwide, 50 million in Sub-Saharan Africa and they constitute 12 percent of rural populace (Rass, 2006). They are found in more than twenty Countries (Fabusoro and Oyegbami, 2009). The Fulani are the largest pastoralist group in the world and they constitute about 95 per cent of the nomadic pastoralists in Nigeria with estimated population of 15.3 million (Majekodunmi, et al 2014). Across ages Fulanis are well known for deriving their livelihood and survival through mobile livestock rearing as a key strategy for survival. Their enormous contributions to Nigeria's agricultural food security and local food chain cannot be underscored. The Fulanis produce 90 percent of Nigeria's livestock population which accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP and 32 percent of the nation's GDP (Fabusoro and Oyegbami, 2009). Unfortunately, despite their huge contributions to the economy of Nigeria, modern civilization has done little to their livelihood.

Pastoral mobility increases when climatic condition deteriorates under conditions of drought, desertification among others. Availability of pasture and otherwise determines their degree of mobility. However, there three groups of pastoralist in the Lake Chad Basin. First is the nomadic Fulani pastoral group (*Udawa, Mbororo among others*) whose mobility or migration pattern is determine by opportunity of resources or otherwise. The second group is the Trans-humane Fulani pastoral groups comprised of the *Tareq, Uled Sulaiman* among others have planned mobility or migratory routes on seasonal basis. The third group includes *Koyam, Kanumbu, Shuwa-Arab, Fulbe Fombina* among others who are agro-pastoralists sedentarized within the Lake Chad Basin. They simultaneously engaged in both livestock rearing and farming as sources of their livelihood and survival. Whereas farmers around the basin, are categorize into two groups. The first group are the sedentary farmers who have settle their permanently. The second groups are seasonal farmers mostly engaged in dry season irrigation.

In most communities in Nigeria including the Lake Chad Basin livelihoods of pastoral people is predicated on three major factors as explained by Rass, (2006).

- 1) The right of access and use of major assets such as land, pasture, water, markets, animal health services, institutional support among others.
- 2) Political, environmental and institutional frameworks in which these assets are brought together for production and consumption which overtly or covertly influence their ability to utilize these assets to attain positive livelihood and survival.
- 3) The dynamic nature of risks such as drought, marginalization, violent conflict as the case of 'Boko Haram' in the Lake Chad which leads to intense struggle and competition over scarce resources and consequently affect assets and the environment that ultimately determine vulnerability to not only livelihoods but their entire survival.

Conflict between farmers and pastoralists is a struggle for survival and defense of livelihood over material interests that are oppose to each other. Central to this interest is the material resources that both parties struggle and defend as sources of their livelihood and survival. Turner, (2004) stress that, 'the portrayal of farmer-pastoralist conflict in the growing literature and histories as being fundamentally a social transformative struggle over scarce natural resources is quite compelling. The genesis and social implications of these conflicts are more complex than portrayed by local people and outside observers. He further argued that, resource related conflict between farmers and pastoralists is a conglomeration of two images of two interdependent groups engaged in a zero sum conflict over a dwindling resource base. The underlying material basis for farmer-pastoralist conflict is typically, seen as one over land cover'.

## **Linking the Struggle for Livelihood and Farmer-Pastoralists Conflict**

Since the historical evolution of sovereign nation states, there has been competition over who can access and who cannot access livelihoods sustaining resources such as land, water, forest among others. Most importantly is the control over these resources have been historically blamed as one of the genesis of numerous resource conflicts in most nations. This scenario has unprecedentedly destabilizes states and nation to the extent that rebellion, famine and migration become inevitable (see Runner, et al, 1991). Wars are often over resources (Galtung, 1982:99). Livelihood struggle to gain access and control over scarce resources has been a vital source of conflicts (Galtung, 1982; Brock, 1991; Runner, 1991; Gleich, 1993; Homer-Dixon, 1991, 1993, 1995; Percival and Homer-Dixon, 1998). On the opposite side, some scholars on resource conflict also question the role of resources and climatic conditions in conflict (Deudney, 1991; Levy, 1995; Gledtsch, 1998). Their major objection on case study findings, which can hardly be generalized or define other characteristic obtainable in other distinct areas (Hauge and Ellingsen, 1998:300).

Since the debate over the links between climate change and conflict dominate discussions in several international forums, especially on global warming, Sahel belt including the Lake Chad area has been cited as a good example of where resource scarcity metamorphosed in to conflict among resource users. For instance, during the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize award, the chair of the award Committee, declared that, ‘global warming not only has negative consequences for “human security”, but can also fuel violence and conflict within and between states’ and that the Sahel belt has already seen the first ‘climate wars’ referring, in particular, to clashes between herders and sedentary farmers’ (Mjos, 2007 cited in Benjaminsen, 2012). Former United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also concludes that, there is connection between the current global warming and the Darfur conflict (Ban, 2007)

The overwhelming fall-out of this debate in the last two decades is that there is no direct causal link between resources and conflict. But scarcities lead to vulnerability of livelihood sources and competition over claims and access to depleted sources of people’s livelihoods, which can persist and subsequently degenerate into conflict. The narratives of resource scarcity literature are mainly concern about ‘overpopulation’ and ‘over usage’ of renewable natural resources (see Homer-Dixon, 1999). The link provides a relationship of independent and dependent variables that are central to the study of how resource scarcities turn into conflict between the state and resource users and within different users as the case of farmer-pastoralist conflict.

On the issue of overpopulation, World Resources Institute (WRI) in 1992 and 1998 has predicted that, ‘by the year 2050 the World’s population may exceed nine billion and economic industrial output will quadruple’. If their prediction happens to be so, there will be expected increase pressure on renewable resources, and invariably exacerbate farmer-pastoralist vulnerability of basic livelihood sources, competition and conflict over scarce resources in Sub-Saharan Africa. Perhaps, vulnerability due to human and natural factors will become severe in future (Westing, 1986; Myers, 1993; Homer-Dixon, 1994). Resource scarcity can emerge in so many ramifications, such as, desertification, land degradation or depletion, over use of resources and other human and natural factors. Perhaps, environmental resources may be abundant in certain areas and its scarcity in other areas can create a condition where groups are compelled to compete over it as the case in Lake Chad basin.

The Nigerian side of the Lake Chad area has been grappling with depletion of the lake water as well as other environment challenges. Despite these challenges it has witnessed convergence of Trans-humane pastoralists who embark on north-south movements due to

climate change and political instability that has engulfed most countries of the Sahel region. This situation has created what the Malthusian theorist like Thomas Homer-Dixon referred to as ‘overpopulation’ and ‘over usage’ of scarce resources. As a result of over-population of both the herds and the pastoralists, though there is no reliable statistics of the herds in the basin, Lake Chad Basin area continued to experience demand-induced conflicts due to North-south influx of pastoralists from others ecological areas of the Sahel. This scenario brought both farmers and pastoralists into close contact with high tendencies of conflict over crop-damage and access to forest resources.

With the invasion of the Lake Chad Basin area by ‘Boko Haram’ elements since 2013, has altered the livelihoods of many resource users particularly farmers and pastoralists. The entire Lake Chad territory became inaccessible and unsafe. Farmers, pastoralists and their herds were displaced and their sources of livelihood denied by the insurgents. They were forcefully evicted from their communities to other areas they believe is safe with consequences of conflict over sources of livelihood and survival.

### **Major Triggers of Farmers-Pastoralists Conflict in The Basin**

Many researchers have tried to trace the root causes, rationale and factors responsible for fuelling farmer – pastoralists’ conflict across Nigeria (See Shettima and Tar, 2008; Abbass, 2012; Bello, 2013; Baidoo, 2014; McGregor, 2014; Muhammad, Ismaila, Bibi, 2015; Fasona et al, 2016; Chinwokwu, 2017). They attributed the conflict to poor resource governance by states as a key factor responsible for conflict between farmers and pastoralists. The further blamed the institution of the state for being reactionary rather than proactionary and responsive in tackling the major triggers of the conflict. However, the deliberate attitude and behavior of both farmers and pastoralists alike cannot be under scored in analyzing the root causes of the conflict. For instance, pastoralists contaminate water ponds by their cattle while farmers poison the water ponds with harmful insecticides intentionally meant for killing herds to prevent pastoralists from contaminating their source of water. Farmers burn forest while pastoralists need grasses and fodder for their herds. Farmers block cattle routes and grazing reserves meant for grazing, while pastoralists invade farms and damage crops. According to Fasona, et al (2016 cited in Chinwokwu, 2017) Fulani herdsman “hardly request any permission to move or stay around any community, and are thus regarded as invaders by the host communities”. This has been some of the major triggers of violence with consequences of threat to lives and livelihood of thousands of both farmers and pastoral communities.

In the case of the Lake Chad region, the north-south movement of pastoralists due to deteriorating fortunes of pasture in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa since early 1990s, arising from the effects of desertification, land degradation, unstable rainfall and other climatic factors, ‘pushed’ the *Fulani* pastoralist to abandon their respective traditional ecological range in the Sahel and moved inwards into the Lake Chad area. This led to increase demand for land, water and pasture as basic source of livelihood to both farmers and pastoralists. Beside, major agricultural expansion programs [*Fadama* Program and River Basins irrigation projects] as well as the capitalist allocation of large expanse of forest to individuals has also contributed in shrinking lands for both pastoralism and farming activities for the poor. Inequitable distribution of land also increased competition over limited land and pastures. The cumulative impacts of these developments led to cases of crop damage, attack on herds, inadequate and over-stretched grazing reserves, among others. According to Roger, et al (2003) ‘... expansion of riverside and valley-bottom *fadama* [irrigation] farming since the 1990s and the influx of pastoralists into the river banks meant that pastoralists and farmers are now competing very directly for access to pasture with a consequent increase in conflict.’

The current upheaval between farmers and pastoralists is a reflection of enhanced sedentarization and increase pastoralism leading to incessant conflict with agrarian societies (Blench, 2010). Central to this conflict is land and its resources in terms of right to access and use. Neo-patrimonial states pay less attention to pastoralism despite the fact that pastoral communities own 90 percent of Nigeria's livestock population which accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP and 3.2 percent of the nation's GDP (Blench, 2010). It is indisputably clear that cattle production in Nigeria contribute to the economy as a source of meat, milk and animal protein for human consumption. Yet most grazing reserves established in the 1960s and 1970s have been converted to farmlands. However, pastoralists have limited or no grazing space. Base on 2009 official report of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Nigeria has officially demarcated 4125 grazing reserves and cattle routes. Only one third out of this number is put into use, whereas 270 grazing reserves have been cultivated by farmers (Abbas, 2012).

More worrisome is the climax of militancy in the conflicts particularly with the mass influx of the aggressive *Udawa* and *Bokoloji* pastoralists from other sub-Saharan African countries with guns and other sophisticated weapons as well as the use of new communication devices, accompanied with banditry. Many criminals may have taken advantage of the conflict to perpetrate heinous acts of abductions, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, arson among others. In recent times this criminality is on the upsurge and remains unchecked (Chinwokwu, 2017). Perhaps actors in the conflict take laws into their hands unmindful of all encumbrances. Undeniably, there also exist ethnicity and other socio-cultural differences between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists which are oppose to each other. Currently, it is probably difficult to exonerate the contribution of ethnicity and other socio-cultural factors from the conflict, because the two groups are culturally different in their traditional norms and values.

The invasion of the Lake Chad Basin by Boko Haram elements in the last five years has further exacerbated the existing north-south pastoralists' migration trend because the entire region that is housing millions of farmers, pastoralists and fishermen became a ghost of its own. Eventually, all the resource users were forced to abandon their pastoral and farming villages by migrating to other areas in North-east and other parts of Nigeria and Cameroun Republics. This development has unprecedentedly increase pressure on renewable resources due to influx of migrant farmers and pastoralists alike that were forcefully dislodged by Boko Haram insurgents from their traditional grazing zones to new and unfamiliar areas across Northern Nigeria and beyond with attendant consequences of conflict between migrant or displaced pastoralists and their new host communities in most parts of Nigeria. The persistent widespread upsurge of farmer-pastoralists conflict in Nigeria when insurgency was at its peak is not unconnected with the invasion and occupation of the Lake Chad basin area by Boko Haram insurgents. Large number of pastoralists and their herds migrated for fear of threats and attack from Boko Haram foot soldiers when most Nigerian territory along the Lake Chad Basin was under their sovereignty and control. It is not surprising that at the peak of the insurgency years, farmer-pastoralists conflict becomes widespread and more diverstating with colossal lost of lives and properties.

### **Some Incidences of Farmer-Pastoralists Violent Clash**

Incidence of violence between farmers and pastoralists is today a national malady that is widespread in most parts of Nigeria. The upsurge and tenacity of the conflict across the country in recent years suggest how knotty and worrisome the issue. Hence the relentless manifestation of these conflicts has continually threatened the unity and corporate existence of the Nigeria state. History of violence in Nigeria can never be complete without farmer-pastoralist conflict. Historically the menace of farmer-pastoralists conflict has progressively

metamorphose from rudimentary communal skirmishes to an organized arm confrontation because of its apparent dynamics and trajectory (Chukwuma, 2016 cited in Chinwokwu, 2017). In Borno and Yobe states where the Nigerian side of the Lake Chad basin is located farmer-pastoralists conflict is a recurring decimal. For instance, conflict between an individual farmer and a *Fulani* pastoralist over crop damage, at *Bulabulin Ngaburawa* area of Borno State, resulted into conflicts between local farmers and *Fulani* pastoral groups. Both groups combated themselves in solidarity using dangerous weapons killing one another and set their houses ablaze. The hostilities resulted in the killing of over forty persons as officially announced by the police and several persons were injured mostly innocent people from both sides (DailyTrust, December 27, 2008).

In 2014 alone Global Terrorism Index (GTI) reported that, *Fulani* Herdsmen are believed to have killed at least 1,229 people in Nigeria. Up till today the conflict is still extant and unabated. The abandonment of the Lake Chad region by herdsmen in search of safer places elsewhere due to threat by insurgents has increased migration of pastoralists. Several communities have continued to witness the influx of strange herdsmen from other conflict ravage areas. This led incessant conflict between farmer and herdsmen with casualties and destruction to lives and properties. For instance, conflict between *Fulani* herdsmen and farmers in Wukari has led to gruesome murder of dozens of people and wanton destruction of property compelled the Tiv from Taraba State to abandon their homes and search for alternative safety places (Nte 2016). Suspected *Fulani* herdsmen launched an attack and killed 10 people while some unspecified number of victims got various degrees of injury in a village called Nwokyo in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State (Nigerian Eye, 2014). Leadership newspapers of March 12, 2014 reported the killing of more than 30 people in Kastina Ala, Kwande and Logo local government areas of Benue State by suspected *Fulani* herdsmen disguised in military uniform. Houses and farmlands were also burnt. On February 12, 2016, more than 300 people were killed in Agatu village in Benue state by *Fulani* herdsmen (Abonu, 2016 cited in Chinwokwu, 2017). Again in February 18, 2016, 5 people were killed in Okokolo village of the same Local Government. The senseless solidarity attacks and reprisal attacks between pastoralist and farmers in the hinterland of Mambila Plateau continued to manifest serially. More recently, *Fulani* pastoral villages of Toffi, Mayo Daga, Mayo Sina, Tamiya, Tugan Lugere, Timjire, Nguroje among others were attacked and invaded by ethnic militia gang who are mostly farmers suspected to be on reprisal attack mission. The attack left many in cold blood and unspecified number of people displaced from the affected communities (ThisDay June 28, 2017).

In recent years Kaduna State has also been bedeviled with notorious issues of farmer-herdsmen crises due to influx of strange *Fulani* herdsmen. For instance, *Fulani* herdsmen had killed 38 people in Kabamu and Ankpong villages. After few days 123 people were also killed by suspected militia herdsmen in some villages of Sanga Local Government Area of Kaduna state (Shiklam, 2014). In the same Kaduna state Godogodo village was attacked by militia herdsmen in September, 2016 leaving 8 people death and many injured. After a month precisely October 15, 2016 another attack was also launched on the same village which left 40 persons death and unestimated properties burnt (Morning Star News, 2016). For some years now Zamfara state is also witnessing an orgy of violent attack by *Fulani* herdsmen. More than 200 hundred villagers were killed and sacked by *Fulani* herdsmen. Some of the worst hit areas are Dansadau and Yargaladima villages in Dansadau Emirate of Maru local government area (Nte, 2016). More than 70 cases of conflicts over conversion of cattle routes to farmland by farmers and over-running of farms by herdsmen have been recorded since the beginning of 2015 farming season (Ezeonwuka & Igwe, 2016). Even the nation's capital territory is not spared from the herdsmen militia attacks. Some residents of Kuje Area council were



attacked by militia herdsmen on November 13, 2016 leaving 3 people killed while some were abducted by the attackers (Akinrujomi, 2016 cited in Chinwokwu, 2017).

The recent farmer-herdsmen violent conflict that rocked Numan and Demsa Local Government areas in Adamawa state left many Nigerians in dilemma over the capabilities of institutions of Government in bringing the menace to an end. The skirmishes started when herdsmen killed a Bachama farmer in his farm, in response to the killing, some Bachama militia farmers mobilized themselves and launch a reprisal attack on Fulani herdsmen in Safare and Kedomti villages of Numan Local Governments. According to police report the attack left 27 persons killed mostly women and children including a 3 months old baby (Punch, November 21, 2017). After two weeks, Fulani militia herdsmen also gang-up and embarked on reprisal attack in Lawaru, Dong and Kiken villages in Demsa and Numan Local Governments. Police in the area reported 55 persons killed, many injured and several houses burnt. In an attempt to tame and end the vicious circle of the attacks and counter attacks, 6 out of the Mobile Police men that were drafted to contain the situation were killed by the militia herdsmen (DailyTrust, December 5, 2017). Farmer-herdsmen conflict is not limited to Northern Nigeria. The Fulani militia herdsmen are in every part of Nigeria. For instance, on August 25, 2016 some villages in Nkanu West Local Government in Enugu state was attacked by armed Fulani militia herdsmen killing one of the Catholic Church Seminarian and injured 4 persons (Vanguard, August 26, 2016). About 5 villages of Legalu Local Government were attacked by Fulani militia herdsmen killing unspecified number of persons (Esho, 2016 cited in Chinwokwu, 2017).

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONFLICT**

The manifestations of wide spread farmer-pastoralists conflict across the country has continued to underscore the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians for sustainable peace and unity. The tenacity and veracity of farmer-pastoralists conflicts in terms of its intensity and frequency has not only reveal the fragility of the Nigerian ethnic nationalities but also a sign of how people respond to threat over their sources of livelihoods arising either natural or due human activities. For instance, the inversion of Lake Chad Basin region by 'Boko Haram' elements in the mist of extant struggle over shared resources between farmers and pastoralists has further exacerbated the disruptions to sources of livelihoods of many resource users in the basin. The Lake Chad Basin region that is reckoned as a veritable corridor for agricultural and economic potentials such as farming, fishing and livestock production has turned to be a 'war' zone for 'Boko Haram' insurgents and eventually a no-go-area for all the resource users. Farmers, pastoralists and other resource users were subjected to annihilations including kidnapping, conscription, maiming, cattle rustling, banditry and displacement from their ecological zone among others.

Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, farmer-pastoralists conflict has been on the list of knotty issues that has continued to threaten peace and unity of the Nigerian state. However, the emerging social, economic and political tensions arising from evolution to escalation of violent conflicts in Nigeria presupposes the feeble nature of institutional frameworks for managing contemporary conflict issues. Hence, inability of the Nigerian state to effectively contain the menace of these conflicts has continued to expand the forces of divisive tendencies and cleavages of disunity at the detriment of peace and national cohesion. The spate of farmer-pastoralists conflicts poses a serious threat to implementation of sustainable development programs by international and national governmental and non-governmental institutions. Attaining the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Economic Diversification Programs, Self Sufficiency in Food Production has been under threat due to relentless conflicts over sources of livelihoods by resource users including farmers and

pastoralists. This threat to sources of livelihoods of millions of Nigerians leaving around the Lake Chad basin has eventually made them to be no longer self-employed. The duo sectors of the Nigerian economy (farming and pastoralism) no doubt, have been a source of livelihood and employment to many particularly in rural areas. The existence of farmer-pastoralists is not in question but the transformation of the conflict into violence with consequences of threats to lives and sources of livelihood is among the extant challenges of the Nigerian state. For instance, between 2010 and 2013 eighty 80 people were killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen across Nigeria and one thousand two hundred and twenty nine 1229 in 2014 (Ndukwe, 2016; Sunday, 2016; Chinwokwu, 2017). While between June, 2015 and May, 2016 five Hundred and twenty five persons were killed in cold blood by suspected Fulani herdsmen across Nigeria (Adeoye and Alagbe, 2016).. Today, farmer-pastoralists conflict is one among most dangerous monsters that threatens peace in Nigeria. Over the years hundreds of lives lost as a result of the conflict which also presupposes feeble nature of institutional framework for responding to violent conflicts in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

The vicious circle of attacks and reprisal attacks between farmers and herdsmen across Nigeria predisposes the nature of fragile peace that is susceptible to what Kaplan (1994) referred to as the coming anarchy. Seemingly, the looming farmer-herdsmen conflict is among the key manifestations of the coming anarchy. When people's source of livelihood is being overtly or covertly disrupted or threatened by natural or human factors may ultimately result into conflict.

Therefore, protection and improvement in people's sources of livelihood as the case of farmers and herdsmen is not only important but necessary elixir for enhancing economic growth and development. Hence the need to enhance and strengthen sources of livelihoods devoid of conflict threats in all ramifications is paramount and cannot be over emphasized. Pro-active conflict management system is therefore necessary in tackling farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria.

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