



Influence of Farmers-Herders Conflict on Food Security of Cooperative Members Household in Anambra State

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Page | 1

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of farmers-herders conflict on food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State. The study was anchored on the theory of Deprivation Frustration and Aggression by Dougherty and Pfaitgraff (1971). A descriptive survey was adopted by the study. The population consisted of 308 farmers and herders. Complete enumeration was chosen for the study. The source of data was questionnaire which was subjected to both validity and reliability tests. The data collected was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed that there is a statistically significant effect of effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area for both herders ($R = .919$; $R\text{ Square} = .845$; $F\text{ statistics} = 480.899$; $t\text{ statistics} = 21.929$; $p\text{-value} = .000 < 0.05$) and farmers ($R = .777$; $R\text{ Square} = .603$; $F\text{ statistics} = 246.413$; $t\text{ statistics} = 15.698$; $p\text{-value} = .000 < 0.05$). Following these findings, it was concluded that indeed, farmers-herders conflict has a significant effect on food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State. Sequel to this, it was recommended that land should be treated as sacred, thus, issues of forceful dispossession should be avoided through whatever means possible. Regular sensitization is needed for the herders' community to also talk to their people on the need to respect the sanctity and sacredness of the lands belonging to the aboriginals.

Keywords: Farmers-Herders Conflict; Food Security; Cooperative Members Household

Introduction

Farmers contribute immensely to the increase of the Gross Domestic Product of Anambra State and also provides employment opportunities for the rising population (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020). Farming involves cultivation of crops and management of livestock for the purpose of producing food, fibre, or other agricultural products which is often done at subsistence level or commercial level using different techniques and equipment to grow crops. The sector contribution to the Nigeria's total GDP were "145,639.14 and 154,252032" billion naira for the year 2019 and 2020 respectively (CBN Statistical Bulletin, 2020). The sector also contributed 19.63% to nominal GDP in the first quarter of 2023. This figure was lower than the rate recorded in the first quarter of year 2022 and lower than the fourth quarter of 2022 which recorded 21.09% and 24.90% respectively (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2022 to 2023).

Herders on the other hand are people who take care of animals like goat, cow, sheep, donkey and many more. Herding activities is said to have developed about 10,000 years ago when prehistoric hunters domesticated wild animals such as sheep, goats, and cows for domestic use (NGS, 2023). However, herders learned that by controlling and caring for animals they could have a reliable source of meat, milk, hides for tents and clothing (NGS, 2023). In Nigeria, pastoral activities date back to the inward time of migration of Fulani clans that were seen grazing their cattle for centuries across Sahelian African region (International Crisis Group, 2017).

In the past, farmers and herders shared a long series of relationship by intermarrying and rendering assistance to each other with their various economic activities. Herds were used to transport farm produce to the market and their dung served as fertilizers to grow crops while farmers in return provided grains and grazing land for

the herders to feed their herds. But recently, this long-term relationship has been affected by continuous conflict which arises as a result of conflict between the two groups (Egodike, et al., 2022).

Conflict between these two groups has created a lot of fear and worry in the minds of household, caused set back on farming activities, displaced farmers from their homes, increased prices of food stuffs, cattle rustling and many more. Herdsmen now move about with dangerous weapons like daggers laced with poison, matchets, Ak 47 and other kinds of guns ready to attack the farmers at the least provocation as they go about with their daily business activities (Okoli & Igata, 2016). Herders forcefully acquire farm lands belonging to the farmers to graze their herds and treat land as a mere commodity in the process of grazing by destroying the cultivated crops on the land (Egodike, et al, 2022). They also engage farmers in conflict when they are disallowed to graze on cultivated lands and this often leads to serious casualties among the two parties and also create a negative impact on social and economic activities of the two group (Adelaja & Awokuse, 2021; Okunlola & Okafor, 2020).

Anambra State is not left out on this conflict with its several consequences on her farming economy. It has also witnessed and is still experiencing conflict of different diversity that breeds violence and have several negative implications such that have created unrest between farmers and herders which in several occasion is caused by land dispossession and commodification (Kugbega & Aboagye, 2021). Notwithstanding, herders have been allowed to camp in several places in Anambra State such as, Anambra East and West, and Anyamelum local government areas of Anambra State. These local governments have also witnessed and experienced a share of the conflict. Herders were reported to have camped in Dalgo Farm in Umueje Community which also experienced several attacks following their several fights with the different host communities in different ways. Fight against Ifite Ogwari, 2021, and Omor in 2020, 2021. The most recent is fight against Nkpu, Nando, Aguleri in March, 2023. All as a result of land dispute and cattle encroachment on farmland (Okibe, 2022). It is against this backdrop that this study was necessitated.

Statement of the Problem

The regular attacks on farmers and their communities in Anambra State these days caused by herders has become something to worry about, though, conflict between herders and farmers has always existed in the past, but the rate at which it occurs these days is greatly alarming. It has also led to a state of violent land dispossession, commodification of farm land, environmental degradation which have affected accessibility, availability, affordability and utilization of food for households. The worst of the implication is that herders now go about with dangerous weapons, killing, raping, beating, molesting and causing injury of great proportion to farmers and farming communities and this reveals a worrisome dimension.

Arguably, conflict between the two parties threatens farmers productivity level, which poses a threat on food security in the state and country at large (Ndubuisi, 2018). There is rising food security challenge in the country because of farmers lamentations that herders destroy their farmlands and crops through over grazing of cattle, farmers have also reported to have been assaulted, injured and killed by herders when they are not allowed to graze on cultivated land which have as well proven a consequential effect on the farmers by displacing members of farming communities.

There are existing works related to the topic such as Ojiagu et al, (2022) who studied influence of farmers-herders conflict on farming economy of Anambra Agricultural Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria., Egodike et, al (2020) studied, clash between farmers –herders: A Threat to Food Security in South East, Nigeria, Nwankwo, (2020) studied, land use conflict between farmers and herders in Anambra State with implication for food security exposing various causes of conflict between the two groups which are majorly on land encroachment, crop damage by cattle. However, there are no known works on farmers-herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State based on the researcher's knowledge, hence, the motivation for the study. The study is also informed by the severity of the symbiotic relationship, which existed between farmers and herders as a result of conflict, food security challenge, high cost of acquiring food, loss of lives and properties.

Objectives of the Study

The study focuses on farmers-herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State as the broad objective. Specifically, the study seeks to ‘ascertain the effect of land dispossession on food availability in Anambra State due to the farmers-herders conflict’.

Research Questions

To what extent does land dispossession affect food availability in the study area due to farmers-herders conflict?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on farmers-herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria. The unit of analysis of the study are the farmers and herders in the study area. The time scope of the study is year 2023-2024.

Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study contributes to knowledge by supplementing existing literature in determining the influence of farmers-herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State, Nigeria. It is also significant to scholars and policy makers by pooling together and giving them ideas and educational materials for further research. It as well provide scholarly information, direction to the government that will encourage effective food production and national security and help formulate policies that will stop the menace, as well as serve as acquired additional scholarly knowledge by widening the intellectual horizon of scholars, hence the empirical significances. Farmers and herders also benefit from the study through the recommendation that is raised which will help curtail or stop the menace so that they will go about doing their business without interference.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Farmers

A farmer is a person who engages in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials. Farmers can also involve in combining both raising field crops, vineyards, poultry or livestock, a farmer might also be an owner of a farm or a labourer on a farm land owned by another. In most developed economies, a “farmer” is usually a farm owner (land owner), while employees working on the farm are farm workers or labourers (National Geographical Security, 2023). A farmer is an expert, land manager, food producer in different ways, and faces several challenges while carrying out farming activities and crop production in order to provide food for the rising population daily. However, in the process, of managing the farm, a farmer also need to consider the implication of their decision as regards to household members because they are in the best position to understand the direct effect of conflict and its negative implication on food security and how best to mitigate and adapt to situations (sherran & Thomas, 2018).

In cognizance to that, Thi, et al. (2019) report that farmers around the world face multiple challenges in the cause of working on the farm and also assert that these challenges rise daily as a result of several causes which in most cases could be related to globalization and climate change all of which have hindered agricultural production and food security and forcing farmers to adjust their production and farm management strategies.

Nevertheless, Sheunesu, Gladman and Menelisi (2022) report that farmers are persons practicing mixed cropping on a small or large piece of land which practically relies heavily on low or high level of labour and finance depending on the piece of land used in order to produce crops for household consumption and to further generate income. However, farmers utilize small or large land capacity for growing of crops such as maize, cassava, rice, yam and so many others. Hence, the contribution of farmers to food security can not be

underestimated. But recently several challenges faced by farmers have not only affected food security but also households means of getting better livelihood and nutrition.

Herders

Herders are individuals, or group who care and manage livestock like cow, goat, sheep, donkey and many more. Herders live a nomadic life style or semi-nomadic life style. The pure Fulani Pastoralist live a nomadic life style which involves random movement of cattle from region to region while the semi-nomadic pastoralist makes a transhumance movement and return to their camp or places of abode (Egodike, et al., 2020).

In Nigeria, Pastoral movement Started in the era when Fulani clan were seeing moving from place to place grazing their livestock centuries across sahelian African region (ICG, 2017). The Fulani herders are found usually in sahelian and arid parts of West Africa but move from region to region due to change in climate condition. They are found in countries such as Nigeria, Benin, Guinea, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Cote D'Ivoire, they constitute the minority group (Egodike et al., 2020). They started moving into Northern Nigeria from Senegambia region around 18th or 14th century after the Uthman Dan Fodio jihad. They were integrated into Hausa culture of Northern Nigeria that were seeing moving about with their cattle especially in dry season searching for grass land, water point and to escape from tsetse fly bite which harms their cattle and return back in rainy.

The Fulani people of Nigeria have been a nomadic herders a longtime ago and they move about with their cattle grazing from one area to the other while their cattle feed on scrub and grasses in the land that is not fit for farming. They rely heavily on their cattle for milk, but rarely kills them for meat, nomadic herding is reducing because of constant disaster such as conflict between farmers, natural disaster, loss of land due to development and pressure from the government to settle in a permanent place (NGS, 2023). In the same vain, Roberts and Sailus (2022) defines a herder to be a person or group of persons who herds animals primarily at local level involving nomadic or semi nomadic life styles who rely on agriculture, living in grasslands area for grazing by exchanging in barter with farmers.

Herders in Nigeria are known to have come from the fulbe / Fulani Hausa group, whose major language is Hausa language. They have a mass population that is widely spread and culturally different in all Africa. Most of them are dominant in West Africa and Nigeria in particular a huge number of Fulani group are nomadic in nature, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry grass lands of their environment which makes them the world largest pastoral nomadic group. The main Fulani sub-groups in Nigeria are; fulbe, Adamawa, fulbe Mbororo, fulbe Sokoto, fulbe Gombe and fulbe Borgu (Ekwunife, 2021; Ajibo et al., 2018).

Conflict

Conflict can be defined as opposition among social entities directed against another. It is an opposition among social entities which arise from striving for something of which the supply is limited (Shittu, 2020). It is also defined as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rival (Ojiagu et al., 2022).

The communal conflict that occurs constantly among farmers and herders in Nigeria is as old as agriculture in Nigeria. This conflict occurs as a result of competition for scarce resources (i.e land) amidst strained social relations in recent time, the conflict has assumed a great dimension with increase in number of casualties across Nigeria States (Olagbaju & Awosusi, 2019). Abdul and Isifu (2017) argue that many of the conflict issues have gone through mediation process but that the only process of mediation that is usually successful is locally based Civil Society Organization (CSO). They believe that Government intervention to a conflict is bias and that in the cases where civil society organization intervened, peace and stability review which made parties to conflict to often see (COS as trustworthy compared to the government).

Okafor, Abada and Ofobuikwe (2018) report that conflict as a social action, involves a simultaneous occurrence of two or more mutually antagonistic impulses or motives. It is such that can also be defined as a struggle involving ideas, values and limited resources. Conflict is an action that obstruct, prevents, and renders ineffective, another action with which it is incompatible. Therefore, the conflict between the two livelihood group across Nigeria states has taken a different dimension as a better way to manage the limited resources due to fast

encroachment of arid and desertification in the northern parts of the country and other places within the country, following the fall in the level of bodies of water at the lake Chad basin and threats emanating from deadly Boko Haram terrorists. It is observed that herders moving from the Savannah and rain forests of the central and Southern state are moving into regions where there is population growth over the last four decades and has heightened pressure on farm lands and farmers productivity, water pollution and disagreement increasingly results to violent-conflict (ICG, 2017).

Conflict destroys the most vulnerable, causes insecurity of lives and properties, increases food shortage, displaces the inhabitants of the communities where it takes place (Egodike et al 2020). However, the impact of conflict can never be forgotten easily as parties to conflict will always find it difficult to bounce back after the conflict situation. In other words, conflict is an ugly scenario that destabilizes an economy. Conflict between farmers and herders can be attributed to fight over resources which are limited in supply, who will use available land, religion and many more (Baderinwa, 2019). Furthermore, conflict can be seen in everyday life of human beings and can be seen in different forms. It is seen as a dysfunctional phenomenon like, discord, disparity, or fight between parties (Swartz, 2018).

Food Security

Food security exist when all people, regardless of age, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food such that meet the dietary needs and food preference of the consumer for an active and healthy living at all times. It also represents the absence of hunger, deprivation and malnutrition (FAO, 2018). Similarly, Egodike et al (2020) and Idris (2019) argue that food security exists when there is enough food access, supply and proper usage regardless of personality, depending on agricultural productivity for household members. In addition, food means absence of hunger and malnutrition, it is the accessibility, availability and proper utilization of food for all ages such that meets the basic needs of the people (Oti et al, 2017)

Food security remains a great challenge for the Nigeria population over the years as many of her states suffer shortage of food characterized by several causes which includes conflict among farmers and herders in Nigeria, particularly, Anambra State. In the course of improving food security in the country, different government and administrations in the country have tried to and are still trying to improve food security by increasing agricultural production and productivity in order to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty but this effort have been destabilized severally by the constant conflict between farmers and Herders over ownership and control of land, as well as usage of water and grassland which also constitute a major obstacle to food security making it difficult to have access to food in a state of conflict and it also becomes apparently difficult to boost agricultural productivity as land are destroyed (Oti, Onyia & Umoinyang 2017). Similarly, armed conflict and other threat to security pushed about 139 million people into acute food security problem in 2021, an increase to the year before. Other major driver of food insecurity includes economic shocks pushing 30 million into crisis and weather conditions making an additional 23 million in 2022 causing food shortage, increase in prize of food stuffs, disruption economic activities, hunger, malnutrition among household members (Global Report on Food Crisis, 2022).

Shortage of food items in recent times in the state can be attributed to fight between farmers and herders and several others which has also resulted to increase in the prices of these food items like yam, corn, rice, cassava processed into garri and cassava flour all have gone beyond normal more than it used to be several years back. In this situation, household finds it difficult to afford food items for family consumption comfortably. Even the prices of meat, pork, mutton are not left out on the hike in prices of these goods and this has become a worrisome situation for household members (Onyejekwe, 2022). However, household are food secure when the people living within its territory have both physical and economic access to good food. Hence, food security encompasses the following four dimensions, physical accessibility of food, availability of food, affordability of food and utilization of food. In cognizance with above, farmers house household members contribute to sustainable agricultural production and they become food insecure when such household is unable to afford, or have access at all times to good quantity and quality of food that improves the health of its members, lack of resources to acquires enough food for individuals or household result in insufficient nutrition, poor calories intake and poor nutrition; as a low income household may not be immune to hunger and the challenges of health since they are constrained economically to access food which would result to poor nutrition (malnutrition) which may either be chronic or temporal in nature (Oguniyi et, al, 2021). According to FAO (2017), people, countries and the world would be truly food secure at all times if our livelihood systems are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, because food security is an integral part of livelihood strategy.

Influence of land dispossession on food availability

Food availability addresses the supply side of food security and it is determined when there is an increase in production of farm produce according to the number of farm lands owned by farmers. Therefore, forceful collections of land meant for farming by the herders reduces the productivity of farm produce and food item available for household use and also reduces the number of lands available for use by farmers for cultivation and reduces food for consumption for the rising population. Thus, food supply is the availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imported access by households (FAO, 2018).

In cognizance, Adelaja and George (2019) argue that conflicts reduce availability of food through its negative impact on reduction of farm labour supply. Hence land disposition leads to food shortage, deprivation and malnutrition. Food shortage may happen when enough food is not produced for individual consumption such as when crops fail due to drought, pests, or too much moisture or war. The problem of food shortage can also result from uneven distribution of natural resources endowment for a country, and any human institutions, such as government and public policy. Food shortage may exist at national level, city level, individual level or state level. Notwithstanding,

The world trade organization estimates that if total calories from all the food produced were divided among all the people, there would be 2,750 calories per person per day, since the recommended daily minimum per person is 2,100 calories per day, there are enough calories to feed everyone in the world. But not everyone is getting the needed calories because it is not evenly distributed across the land scope of the world (Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2023). Food deprivation occur when an individual, is denied of access to food with the right quality or quantity at the right time, it is also a state of being kept from possessing, enjoying, or using something or food. It is an act of being in loss of food (Webstar, 2023). A person is food insecure when they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. This may be due to unavailability of food or lack of resources to obtain food. More so, People experiencing food deprivation have in way or the other reduced the quality or quantity of their food intake and are not certain about their ability to obtain food at the next minute due to lack of money or other resources. These people have run out of food and extremely have gone days without eating meaning that they are not sure of their next meal and might also have to deny themselves of other basic needs, just to be able to have food available and when they do eat, it might be whatever is readily available or cheapest, which might not be nutritious (FAO, 2023). However, when a person is not having enough food with the necessary nutrient intake it leads to malnutrition.

Malnutrition, occurs when a person's diet containing too few of nutrients needed to build up the body growth. No matter how we define malnutrition, it starts with what we eat, the product of the food and farming system. It also involves working on our food systems, on the way we produce, collect, store, transport, transform and distribute foods. Household or individuals can experience malnutrition in lack or in excess of food nutrients consumed. The problem malnutrition always starts when we make inappropriate, choices and practices, malnutrition exposes individuals to diseases and reduces our source of energy to live and be active, lower wellbeing and learning capacity of individuals thus, compromising the future (FAO, 2023). In other words, when there is enough food nutrient and adequate food supply malnutrition will not occur.

Food supply or availability means that the overall supply should potentially cover all nutritional needs in terms of quantity quality, should also be safe, (free of toxic factors and contaminants) and of good value (taste, and texture) to maintain the body system. It should also be such that is culturally accepted (Idris et al, 2019).

In a conflict situation, parties involved may set their target on valuable assets of their opponent by deliberately destroying their farms, livestock and other means of survival and this can trigger more conflict and can cause food shortage and serve as disruption of economic activities, threatening the means of survival of the entire population (NGS, 2023). Food availability connotes that food must be readily supplied for consumption through improved agricultural production, market access, uniform distribution to all while producing more food. to achieve food security means that the economic and biological challenges confronting the food system have to be overcome (Oguniyi et al, 2021)

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the theory of Deprivation Frustration and Aggression by Dougherty and Pfaitzgraff (1971). The theory is anchored on the premise that, aggression arises out of deprivation and frustration and that, the occurrence of an aggressive behavior is as a result of a felt frustration. According to Dougherty and Pfaitzgraff (1971), aggression is an action with the mindset to cause injury, physically or emotionally. The central truth of theory is that, scarcity and uneven distribution of resources amongst farmers and herders' results, to deprivation and frustration which in return leads to aggression. Therefore, conflict cannot occur without a reason, as there is no conflict without a cause. An example is the depletion of natural resources such as land and grass which leads to competition for scarce resources which will also results to deprivation of the weak and vulnerable towards having access to these resources. Frustration can occur when one's effort to improve standard of living is being denied or restricted by another which will breed annoyance and further result to physical or non-physical harm to the other party involved. In order words, in the process of conflict it is the innocent people who are likely to suffer severely the consequences of aggressive behaviour when it is misunderstood.

A practical deduction from this theory is that, farmers are frustrated when their farmlands are taken away and crops destroyed by herds thereby reducing their means of survival and livelihood while herders on the other hand are frustrated because they are forced to move out of their region during weather change in order to search for water, grass land and drugs for their herds and are restricted by farmers or communities. In the process of moving into other region, they encounter several challenges which breeds conflict with farmers and host communities because of cattle stray movement which causes tension to rise and leading to feeding on cultivated farm crops, diffusion of dungs in water points meant for drinking. In the process of conflict between the two groups, their source of livelihood is threatened as well as that of the host communities where this conflict takes place. The relevance of this theory is that the theory explains conflict situation and further explains that conflict occurs for a reason and also relates the view of parties involved and the reason to why they will always want to pay back their opponent for wrong done to them.

Empirical Review

Nwankwo (2023) conducted a study on land use conflict between farmers and herders in Anambra State with implication for food security. The study described the personal characteristics of the respondent; identified the causes of the conflict between the farmers and herders, described the socio-economic effects of conflicts and identified coping strategies adopted by farmers. Data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire and analysed using mean and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that women dominated crop farming by 61.67%, mean age was 42.83% with a household size average of 6 persons and mean size farm land of 2.45 hectares. The study also showed that coping strategy adopted by the farmers were formation of vigilant groups (86.67%). Income diversification (85%) and combination of available farming with other cash crops (71.67). The study revealed that farming in the study area is mainly done by women with large family and farm land.

Ojiagu, Okafor and Michael (2022) Studied influence of farmers-herders conflict on Farming Economy of Anambra Agricultural Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. The study identified causes of conflict between farmers and herders in the study area, the effect of conflict between farmers and herders on resource use in the study area and also examined the effect of farmers-herders conflict on extension agent-services in the study area. The study adopted a survey research design and Slovin's formula was used to collect sample size from the population of 1534 cassava farmers and herders data was also collected with the use of questionnaire. Findings from the study showed that the causes of farmers-herders conflict were struggle over grazing land, poor grazing policies and deliberate grazing of cattle on crops. The study further revealed that there was statistically significant relationship between farmers and herders on resource use and that farmers/herders conflict has a significant effect on extension agent services in the study area.

Okere (2022) researched on causes behind conflicts between Herders and Farmers in Nigeria and perceived efficiency of institutions in managing the conflicts. The aim of the study was to investigate perceived causes, behind conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria and also the perceived efficiency of institutions in managing the conflicts. Questionnaire was used to get data from 200 respondents (87 women, 113 men) in Nigeria. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed crops damaged by cattle, land encroachment and killing of stray cattle were the main perceived reasons behind the conflicts between herders and farmers.

Kugbega and Aboagye (2021) researched on farmers herders conflict tenure in security and farmers investment decisions in Agogo, Ghana. The study made use of qualitative methods and empirical evidence given by primary data collected from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study examined the implications of consequent or competing interest over land resources between farmers and herders on indigenous farmer's agricultural investment decisions. Findings from the study showed that land owners exploit lapses in customary land administration systems and allocate lands in exchange for money, to pastoralists while neglecting indigenous farmers land use rights.

Sambo and Babayo (2020) conducted a study on farmers versus herders conflict and its implication on nation building in Nigeria. The study investigated the nature of farmers-herders conflict, manifestations and its effect on nation building. The work relied on descriptive qualitative data collected through secondary sources such as books, journals, reports and internet. The research found out that the implication of farmers-herders conflict on nation building includes insecurity, food security, ethnicity, politicization of national interest, creation of national disunity, economic sabotage and mutual suspicion.

Gap in Knowledge

After a thorough examination of several literature collected for the purpose of this study, from similar topics or related topics. The researcher was able to find a "Knowledge Gap" which the present study tends to examine as there is no such work on farmers /herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State based on the researchers knowledge. however, with the help from various literature reviewed, the research showed that conflict between farmers /herders have reduced food security, displaced farmers and communities, and many more, which calls for permanent solution to avoid further occurrence of the conflict.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is a descriptive survey which aim is to examine farmers-herders conflict and food security of Cooperative Members Household in Anambra State, Nigeria. Survey research involves asking questions, collecting and analyzing data from members of the population at a particular point in time in order to determine the current situation of that population as regards the variables under investigation (Grey, 2014).

Population of the Study

The population of the study is derived from all members of Agricultural cooperative societies in Anambra East and Anambra West of Anambra Agricultural Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria and Members of Herders Group (Cattle Breeders Association). Anambra East and West recorded two hundred and eight 208 members of agricultural cooperative societies, source, (Department of Agricultural Cooperative, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, State Secretariat Awka). And one hundred members of herders in Anambra State, source (Cattle Breeders Association Eastern Zone, Amansea) making a total population of three hundred and eight 308 which was used for the study.

Sample Size Determination and Sampling Technique

The Sample Size of the Study was derived using complete enumeration because of smallness of membership size of agricultural cooperative societies in Anambra East and West, two hundred and eight (208) and herders one hundred (100) making a membership, strength of three hundred and eight (308).

Sources of Data Collection

The data for this study relied heavily on primary sources where a first-hand response was obtained directly from the target respondent through a structured questionnaire.

Description of Research Instrument

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire where appropriate forms of question was asked depending on the information sought. The question focused on farmers-herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, section A and B. Section

A deals with Bio-Data of respondent, while section B, was structured multiple questions concerning farmers-herders conflict and food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The research instrument (questionnaire) was reviewed and confirmed by experts in research area. Their views, observation and recommendations, was used to produce further copy of the study. The experts validated the research instrument ensuring that the study addresses research purpose, objectives, research question and hypotheses.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

The researcher made use of test's re-test reliability of instruments in order to determine consistency of data, identify problems encountered while answering the questions, omissions, ambiguity and to improve the structure and layout of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha was further used to test reliability of questionnaire using statistical package for social sciences software. Cronbach alpha measures internal consistency or reliability of a set of survey items and also quantify the level of agreement in a standardized 0 to 1 scale. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient obtained was .893 which is higher the .7 threshold of acceptance.

Method of Data Analysis

The study made use of descriptive statistics such as tables mean, frequency and percentage to analyze the causes of farmers- herders conflict. The analyzed data were presented using tables. Inferential statistics such as ordinary least square (OLS) regression was used to test the hypothesis at a 5% level of significance.

Data Presentation and Analyses

Data Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Allocation and Collection Analytics

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Ministries</i>	<i>Distributed</i>	<i>Retrieved</i>	<i>Analysed</i>
1	Herders	100	93	90
2	Farmers	208	170	164
	Total (Percentage)	308 (100%)	263 (85%)	254 (82%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 reveals the questionnaire distribution schedule. From the Table, a total of 308 copies of questionnaire distributed to both herders and farmers in accordance to their respective population size. In the end, 263 copies were retrieved (93 from herders and 170 from farmers). However, all the collected copies of questionnaire were not correctly or completely filled, hence, just 254 were analysed which represents 82% of the total copies of distributed questionnaire.

Descriptive Statistics for Research Questions

Research Question One

To what extent does land dispossession affect food availability in the study area due to farmers-herders conflict?

Table 2: Distribution of responses for Land Dispossession and Food Availability (Herders)

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UN (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
Land Dispossession								
i.	Most times farmers do not want to share their farmland with us	-	60	10	15	5	3.39	Accept
ii.	We forcefully go into their farmland to graze our cattles	-	-	-	30	60	1.33	Accept
iii.	In the process of taking over their farm land, conflict sets in and food cultivation is affected.	-	-	25	10	55	1.67	Reject
iv.	When we go into their farmlands we now have access to food for our herds	-	40	10	20	20	2.78	Reject
v.	Because we have access to their farm our herds will not have to suffer hunger and die.	-	50	5	-	35	2.78	Reject
Food Availability								
i.	Most times our cattle are stolen when we fight and that reduce the number of herds and meat in the market.	55	35	-	-	-	4.60	Accept
ii..	Because our herds are reduced, number of cattle used for meat is affected and there is hike in prices of meat due to this.	56	34	-	-	-	4.62	Accept
iii.	We have lost our crazing land because of fight with farmers.	56	34	-	-	-	4.62	Accept
iv	Because we do not have enough land our herds go hungry and may die	55	35	-	-	-	4.61	Accept
v.	Our fight with farmers reduces our grazing lands because farmers believe that they own the land and may give us or not if they likes	58	32	-	-	-	4.64	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses for land dispossession and food availability from the Herders. The analysis here is also done using mean of the respective questionnaire items with a benchmark of acceptance of 3. From the questionnaire items used in measuring land dispossession, it was seen that the respondents, through a mean of 3.39 agreed that most times farmers do not want to share their farmland with them. They, however rejected that as shown with a mean of 1.33 which is less than the threshold of 3 that they forcefully go into their farmland to graze their cattles. They also rejected that in the process of taking over their farm land, conflict sets in and food cultivation is affected with a mean of 1.67 which is also less than 3. In the same vein, they also rejected that when they go into their farmlands, they now have access to food for their herds and that because they have access to their farm, their herds will not have to suffer hunger and die with a mean of 2.78 and 2.78 respectively.

For questions used in measuring food availability, the respondents agreed that most times their cattle are stolen when they fight and that reduce the number of herds and meat in the market with a mean of 4.60. A mean of 4.62 also reveals that because their herds are reduced, number of cattle used for meat is affected and there is hike in prices of meat due to this. Similarly, they agreed that they have lost their crazing land because of fight with farmers with a mean of 4.62. in the same line of responses, they agreed that because they do not have enough land, their herds go hungry and may die and that their fight with farmers reduces their grazing lands because farmers believe that they own the land and may give them or not if they like with a mean of 4.61 and 4.64 respectively.

Table 3: Distribution of responses for Land Dispossession and Food Availability (Farmers)

S/ N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UN (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
Land Dispossession								
I	Most times cattle rearers share our farmlands with us	100	64	-	-	-	4.60	Accept
ii.	Our farmlands are forcefully taken away from us	90	74	-	-	-	4.55	Accept
iii.	When they take away our farmland we stop farming	164	-	-	-	-	5.00	Accept
iv	Because we stop farming food supply is reduced for the people	94	70	-	-	-	4.57	Accept
v.	When supply of food is reduced there will not be food produce in the market for the people and hunger will rise.	100	64	-	-	-	4.61	Accept
B. Food Availability								
i.	When they take away our farm lands, we will no longer have land to farm and no crop to plant	164	-	-	-	-	5.00	Accept
ii.	Because we do not have land to farm and crop to plant, there will not be food available for consumption	104	60	-	-	-	4.63	Accept
iii.	When our crops are destroyed our farm output is reduced.	94	70	-	-	-	4.57	Accept
iv.	Even the remaining farm output cannot meet the needs of the people.	84	80	-	-	-	4.51	Accept
v.	When our farm yield is reduced, it also affects our income generation and makes us vulnerable to hunger.	100	64	-	-	-	4.61	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the distribution of responses for land dispossession and food availability from the Farmers. The analysis here is also done using mean of the respective questionnaire items with a benchmark of acceptance of 3. From the questionnaire items used in measuring land dispute, it was seen that the farmer respondents agreed that most times, cattle rearers share their farmlands with them as revealed with a mean of 4.60. A mean of 4.55 also indicates that they agreed that their farmlands are forcefully taken away from them. They were unanimous in agreeing that when they take away their farmland they stop farming with a maximum possible mean of 5.00. In a similar manner, they also agreed that because they stop farming, food supply is reduced for the people as shown with a mean of 4.57 and that when supply of food is reduced, there will not be food produce in the market for the people and hunger will rise as indicated by a mean of 4.61.

On questions measuring food availability, the respondents were also unanimous in agreeing that when they take away their farm lands, they will no longer have land to farm and no crop to plant as shown with a mean of 5.00. A mean of 4.63 also reveals that they agreed that because they do not have land to farm and crop to plant, there will not be food available for consumption. Similarly, they also agreed that when their crops are destroyed, their farm output is reduced with a mean of 4.57. they were also in the affirmative to the question of whether even the remaining farm output cannot meet the needs of the people with a mean of 4.51 and that when their farm yield is reduced, it also affects their income generation and makes them vulnerable to hunger with a mean of 4.61.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One for Herders

There is no statistically significant effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area.

Table 4: Regression Result for Hypothesis One (herders)

Mod el	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	t	Sig.
1	.919 ^a	.845	.844	.949	480.899	21.929	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), LD							

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Where: LD: Land Dispossession

Table 4 shows the regression summary statistics for hypothesis one which states that there is no statistically significant effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area. (herders). The Table reveals that the R is .919, the R Square is .845, the F statistics is 480.899, the t statistics is 21.929 and the Sig is .000. Going by these results, the R indicates that a 92% relationship exists between land dispossession which is the independent variable and food availability which is the dependent variable, the R Square shows that an 85% change in the dependent variable is as a result of changes in the independent variable. The p-value of .000 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance used in this study reveals that the relationship observed is by no chance, hence, statistically significance. As a result of this, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. It is, therefore, stated that there is a statistically significant effect of effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area for the herders.

Hypothesis One for Farmers

There is no statistically significant effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area.

Table 5: Regression Result for Hypothesis Three (farmers)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	t	Sig.
1	.777 ^a	.603	.601	.950	246.413	15.698	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), LD							

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 shows the regression summary statistics for hypothesis three which states that there is no statistically significant effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area. (farmers). The Table reveals that the R is .777, the R Square is .603, the F statistics is 246.413, the t statistics is 15.698 and the Sig is .000. Going by these results, the R indicates that a 78% relationship exists between land dispossession which is the independent variable and food availability which is the dependent variable, the R Square shows that a 60% change in the dependent variable is as a result of changes in the independent variable. The p-value of .000 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance used in this study reveals that the relationship observed is by no chance, hence, statistically significance. As a result of this, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. It is, therefore, stated that there is a statistically significant effect of effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area for the farmers.

Summary of Findings

From the test of hypotheses, the following are summarized:

There is no statistically significant effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area.

- i. From the herders, there is a statistically significant effect of effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area (R = .919; R Square = .845; F statistics = 480.899; t statistics = 21.929; p-value = .000 < 0.05).
- ii. From the farmers, there is a statistically significant effect of effect of land dispossession on food availability in the study area (R = .777; R Square = .603; F statistics = 246.413; t statistics = 15.698; p-value = .000 < 0.05).

Conclusions

The farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria has lingered for a while, most especially in the northern part of the country and most recently crippling into the southern part of Nigeria in places like Enugu and Anambra state, and this ugly trend seem to have led to skyrocketing food prices leading to astronomical inflation in the prices of foods in the market. This is not unconnected to lesser agricultural activities/farming occasioned by fear of being killed or loss of investment as a result of destruction of farmlands by straying herds of cattle. It is against this backdrop that this study was necessitated to examine the effect of farmers-herders conflict on food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State. After collecting data and testing the hypothesis of the study, it was concluded that indeed, farmers-herders conflict has a significant effect on food security of cooperative members household in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Following the findings from the study, it is recommended that:

Land should be treated as sacred, thus, issues of forceful dispossession should be avoided through whatever means possible. Regular sensitization is needed for the herders community to also talk to their people on the need to respect the sanctity and sacredness of the lands belonging to the aboriginals, as this is one of the major causes of conflict between herders and farmers which leads to reduced food availability.

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