

## Prospects of using Community Directed Intervention Strategy to Stem the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers Crisis in South-East Region, Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

This study by a three-man team draws together a vast range of information about herdsmen and farmer crises in the South-East region of Nigeria. To do this study, an exploratory qualitative method was adopted. It examined the complex interactions between social, political, economic policy responses and initiatives that have already been brought to bear in dealing with herdsmen and farmer crises and mapped out key policy options for the future. This study explored the prospects of using community directed intervention strategy to stem the perennial clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. Equally important, the study adds to the post conflict reconstruction in regions harmed by the competition for natural resources. The study concluded that, with emerging issues and considerable potential risks without appropriate and thoughtful action, the legitimate aspirations of the farmers of the South-East regions and their compatriots on other parts of Nigeria would go unrewarded.

Keywords: Community, Intervention, Strategy, Crisis, Herdsmen, Farmers, South East Nigeria.

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### INTRODUCTION

Conflict is seen to be endemic in all human society. Conflict can be between individual, groups, communities, and nation states. A major challenge for all societies is how to reduce conflict to its barest minimum and ensure peaceful coexistence that guarantees socioeconomic development. Over the years, several clashes have been recorded between the host farmers' communities and the herdsmen, with the indigenes often times at the receiving end. Nomadic populations otherwise, herdsmen constitute a significant proportion of the population in many sub-Saharan African countries. Nomads include nomadic hunter and gatherers, pastoralists and

peri-pathetic communities (i.e. Groups of people moving around settled populations and offering a craft or trade). Pastoralists can be further differentiated into (a) trans-humans (nomadic groups migrating regularly between two grazing areas along well-defined routes), (b) pastoralists migrating along conventional routes but also moving into different areas each year and (c) semi-pastoralists with semi-sedentary residence and mobility patterns [1] in [2]. However, in the context of this study, nomadic populations are defined as communities of people that temporarily or permanently move their residence and occupational activities from one location to the

other. Sixty per cent of the world's estimated 50-100 million nomads and semi-nomads live in Africa [1]. Of this number, a significant proportion about 7,611,000 herdsman lives in Nigeria [3]. The Igbo of southeast Nigeria on the other hand, is one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, a group who live east of the river Niger with an estimated population of 33,000,000 people [3] across Abia, Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Imo States with high population densities. Their major occupation includes farming, trading and crafts making.

The Fulani herdsman and farmers conflict in Nigeria, a land resource-based conflict cuts across the north-eastern Nigeria, the south east Nigeria, south-south Nigeria, southwest Nigeria and Nigeria's middle belt being the major theatre of the guerilla war. This land resource-based conflict is said to be occasioned by the sudden change in the pattern of herding and residence of the nomadic groups who hitherto were migrating regularly between two grazing areas along well-defined routes, or as pastoralists migrating along conventional routes; or moving into different areas each year, or as semi-pastoralists with semi-sedentary residence and mobility patterns, now seek for land for permanent residence and for grazing of their herds. Consequent upon this need, Fulani herdsman and farmers are in constant violent conflict over herdsman's increased need for access to grazing lands against the expansion of farmland by farmers into corridors traditionally used by the Fulani as grazing routes. Farmers accuse the Fulani herders of allowing their animals to feed on still-growing crops and contaminate their community watering-places. The Fulani herders in turn accuse the farmers of denying them access to grazing areas when alternatives

cannot be found. So the traditional relationship between farmers and Fulani herdsman is that of incessant resource conflict as witnessed in many States in Nigeria which consequently affects livelihood, security of those involved and resource sustainability for the communities.

Summarily, the problem started with climatic changes in Northern Nigeria that brought with it cycles of draught that produced a pastoral ecology that has left the northern region more vulnerable and a serious pressure on the southern region with serious socio-economic and cultural implications. The sudden changes in the Fulani pastoral nomadism is at a higher social cost in the south. For example, the increasing number of herdsman settling down in the southeast since 1990 with a deepening pastoralism in the south has led to series of cultural space contestations among the different indigenous and settler (nomadic Fulani) populations in the southeast.

In recent times, south east Nigeria has been on the news concerning the clashes between Fulani herdsman and farmers. Of the five states in the south east, communities in Enugu State were allegedly the hardest hit by attack of suspected Fulani herdsman. The most recent incidents include the invasion of Abbi community in the Uzo-Uwani area of Enugu by Fulani herdsman in February, 2016. In the clash, hundreds of people (farmers and their families and even pastoralists) lost their lives in the conflicts. Resources worth millions of Naira had been lost and thus increasing aggressive poverty in the affected regions.

This has called for this study's adoption of the community - directed intervention (CDI) approach as a methodology. The use of this community- directed interventions approach is justifiable for the following reasons. First, the Fulani like the Igbo have social structure and the full complements of human resources needed for the implementation of CDI. Second, the use of the community-directed approach is possible because, previous

studies in other West African and Sahel societies have demonstrated that nomads are capable of participating in health programmes if genuinely involved [4]; [5]; [6], [7]. Generally the study is justified to the extent that the outcome/results of the research will help to reduce the violent clashes, increase productivity of both nomads and sedentary population thereby reduce the ravaging poverty in the affected areas.

### OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to explore the prospects of using community directed intervention strategy to stem the perennial clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria.

Specifically the study tried:

- (i) To review the social structure, the cultural traits, beliefs, values, norms of the different people that can facilitate the use of the community -driven approach to stemming the Herdsmen and Farmers conflict;
- (ii) Find out the cultural traits, beliefs, values, and idiosyncrasies
- (vi) To see what common grounds exist for the two warring parties to coexist.
- (vii) To suggest what roles formal and semi-formal authorities should play in addressing the intractable issues.

that have deleterious effect on the behaviour (Hate / aggression) and psyche of the people.

- (iii) To find out those conditions, barriers, misconceptions and challenges affecting effective and peaceful coexistence of the nomads and host communities.
- (iv) To ascertain the challenges faced by both parties and the concerns they raised.
- (v) To see what common grounds exist for the two warring parties to coexist.
- (viii) To suggest ways of promoting behaviour change among the nomads and the host community members to guarantee peaceful coexistence.

### CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

#### Conceptual Review

The Fulani Herdsmen crisis falls within the purview of inter-group relations. With respect to the existence of the phenomenon in the South eastern part of Nigeria, it is specifically a part of inter-ethnic relations both parties stand to benefit or lose in the course of the relationship [8]. An ethnic group in formation believed to share common cultural traits.... Which give them a common identity [9]. The view of [9]

implies that the resources within the territory of ethnic nationalities are part of their identity which they lay claim to. This is also supported by [10] that migrants must understand that the resources within particular vicinity already have an ethnic group who laid claim to them.

Commerce has been identified as a factor in creating cordial inter-ethnic relations [11]. Crisis may occur between groups where one group tries to gain

control over the other's business domain [11]. [12], observed that inter-ethnic relationships in Enugu city were found to be relatively peaceful and symbiotic since after the Nigerian civil War (1967-1970). In the study by [11] very few instances of aggression among ethnic groups in the Enugu area were identified. However, one case involved the killing of an Igbo man by Hausa man at the artisan market; fortunately, the timely intervention of the Government and social networks prevented it from leading to full-blown crisis. Continuing, [11] is of the view that for commerce to create a cordial relationship between ethnic groups, each group should specialize in their own area without intervening in the business of the other group. He noted that despite the potential for trade to become a locus of conflicts, trade specializations along ethnic lines, non-exclusive market relations and trading relationship have facilitated coexistence and harmony among ethnic groups.

The operations of the Fulani Herdsmen in the South east geo-political zone has become most disturbing to farmers and land owners, especially, the way they forcefully colonize, kill, maim farmers and allow their cattle to destroy farm crops where ever they set their feet. [13] did cite cases of invasion of farmlands in Ebem and AkanuOhafia communities of Abia state. [14], observed that the pastoralists migrate due to extreme and unfavourable weather conditions occasioned by climate change.

The impact of this migration on the host communities has been devastating as [14] noted. Since year 2000 till date, hundreds of people (farmers and their families and even pastoralists) have lost their lives in conflicts arising from the grazing by the herdsmen's cattle. Resources worth millions of Naira had been lost and thus

increasing aggressive poverty in the affected regions. The intimate ties between ethnic and economic activities shed light on social relations among ethnic communities [15]. On how to curb the incidence of inter- ethnic crisis in general and the crisis of the Fulani herdsmen in particular, the views of [11] are germane as he noted thus: When ethnic groups provide complementary goods and or services to one another (rather than competition between the groups) the incentive for aggression diminishes and peace is enhanced. This is corroborated by Sha, 2007 in [11] thus: the greater the inter-group relation is complementary, the less the incentives for ethnic violence.

#### 111.2 *Theoretical Consideration*

From literature, two theories appear relevant to the explanation of the high prevalence of ethnic prejudice and clashes between the Fulani and other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The first of these theories is the realistic conflict theory [16] which states that direct competition for valuable but limited resources breeds hostility between groups. This is so because all the groups will not fare equally in the competition. The groups that fare poorly become frustrated and resentful while those that fare better feel threatened and protective. This situation degenerates to conflict. The second relevant theory is the relative deprivation theory. This theory, [17] refers as 'the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the 'ought' and the 'is' of collective value satisfaction, and this disposes men to violence'. According to the definition provided by [17], Relative Deprivation is the discrepancies between what people want, their value expectations, and what they actually gain. [17], contends that people

are more likely to revolt when they lose hope of attaining their societal values, and the intensity of discontent/frustration'[varies] with the severity of depression and inflation'. Consequently, people may become resentful of other groups not because of their conviction that their own security or resources are threatened by other groups but because of their sense of relative deprivation. People take action for social

change in order to acquire something (for example, opportunities, status, or wealth) that others possess and which they believe they should have, too. Here people form themselves into social movement to take action for social change in order to acquire something, for example, land and water resources as is the case in the Fulani herdsmen and Igbo farmers' conflict.

## METHODS

### Description of Study Area

The study was carried out in the south east geo-political region of Nigeria made up of Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Imo, and Abia states (see the enclosed map in fig 1). Enugu State and Abia State were selected as sampled states. Enugu State is located between latitude 6° 30' N and longitude 7° 30' E. It is a mainland state in southeastern Nigeria ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enugu\\_State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enugu_State)). The state shares borders with Abia and Imo States to the South, Ebonyi State to the East, Benue State to the Northeast, Kogi State to the Northwest and Anambra State to the West.

Lying partly within the semi-tropical rain forest belt of the South, the State spreads towards the North through a land area of approximately 8,727.1 square Kilometres (3,369.6 sq mile). Its physical features change gradually from tropical rain forest to open wood-land and then to Savannah. Apart from a chain of low hills, running through Abakaliki, Ebonyi State in the East to Nsukka in the Northwest, and

South-wards through Enugu and Agwu, the rest of the state is made up of low land separated by numerous streams and rivulets, the major ones being the Adada River and the Oji River.

For Abia State, it lies between longitudes 04° 45' and 06° 17' North, and latitude 06° 00' and 06° 10' East .It shares boundaries with Cross River, Akwalbom and Rivers State in the south, Enugu and Ebonyi in the north, and Imo and Anambra in the west. It occupies a landmass of. 6,320 square kilometres. It is about 596km from Lagos and 498km from Abuja. The State is located within the forest belt of Nigeria, and the temperature ranges between 20° C and 36° C. It is characterized by the dry dust-laden north-easterly winds, which blow across the country during the dry season (mid- October to March). The rainy season is from April to October, during which period the moisture-laden south westerly winds blow, bringing with it the rains.

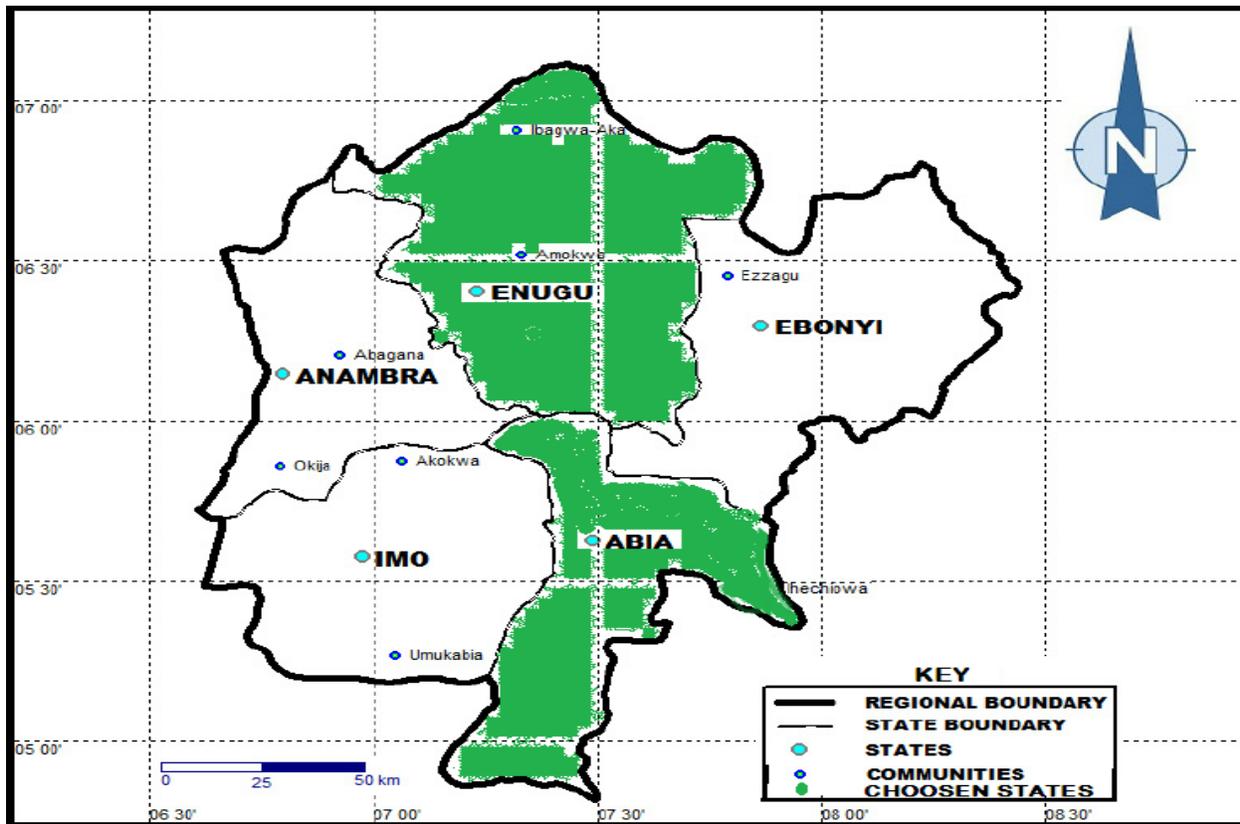


Figure.1 Map of South east Geo-political Zone showing the chosen States for the Research

### STUDY DESIGN/ DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The study being an exploratory one, adopted qualitative methods using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. The study was conducted in two purposively selected local government areas in the two selected states in south east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The two states are Abia State and Enugu state and the selected Local Governments include: Isuikwuato and Bende in Abia State and Enugu north, and Ezeagu in Enugu State. In each Local government, 4 communities were selected randomly to represent the nomadic communities and 4 communities for the host sedentary communities giving a total of 16 communities. 10 key informants interview (K1Is) were held with Community Development Officers and security officers. 20 IDIs were held with camp and community leaders of nomadic and sedentary communities respectively. A total of 28 FGDs were conducted among the nomadic and

sedentary populations. The segments include 2 sets of male youths and 1 set of female youths, 2 sets of adult males and 2 sets of adult females.

These FGD sessions were held in the nomadic and sedentary communities. Participants in the FGD sessions were purposively selected by the moderator depending on the group interest and age of the participants. Participants must be permanent residents of the camps and sedentary community. For strategic reasons, some of the teachers in the National Nomadic education centres were recruited and trained as field note takers. Also teachers in the conventional schools within the communities were recruited and trained as field note takers.

The data collected were analysed using ethnographic summaries. The data collected were reviewed and corrections made. Thereafter, all interviews and discussion transcripts were typed with MS

Word processing package and converted into standard code for intonation interchange Rich Text Format (RTF) files. These were coded and sorted using the Atlas Ti version 6 programmes. The process of analysis started by reviewing the interview and discussion experiences with the field assistants, and the facilitators of the field work to obtain the views on factors that either inhibited or animated the discussions. A more detailed analysis was done by the researchers reading the transcripts and making notes of major concepts, secondly, reading was followed with a system of open coding. In this qualitative analysis, emphasis was placed on the interpretation, description

and recording/writing of the words of participants.

The instrument used in this study was pre-tested in one of the local governments outside the chosen local government areas as part of the training of the research assistants. This pretesting of the instruments helped to confirm the instrument's strength to capture the comprehensive information, and the ability of the respondents to understand the questions. The pre-testing also helped to ascertain appropriateness of the duration of the interview, and the issues around logistics during the actual field work.

## DISCUSSION

### **The Social Structure of the Ethnic Groups Studied**

The people studied have peculiar social structures, and an intricate web of relationships and interactions among the different segments of their society. This web informs the pattern of everyday life in these two communities. The peculiarities of their social structures derive from the peculiarity of the social institutions that make up the structure. It is the blend of these institutions that produce an undulating pattern of social relationships both within the social system and with other social systems. A critical look at the social structure of both the Fulani and the Igbo communities reveals that they practice the extended family system which in practice, people share conjugal, affinal and adoption ties with them within two to three generations. For both, the family unit is the fundamental unit for procreation and socialization. To them, the family is a branch of the entire lineage group. It is the basic unit of identification for the individual. Family resources are controlled by a male head and shared among members. For both, kinship system is patrilineal. Inheritance is through the male line as children inherit both movable and non-movable property from their fathers. Only males inherit property (cows for Fulani and land for the Igbo) but females through dowry receive a share of family property upon marriage. Residence among them is patrilocal. While the economy of

the Fulani depends on cattle, the economy of the Igbo farmer depends on land.

In the Fulani political system, the camp head, the Lamido is the head. He is believed to be the trustee of the famous Islamic Jihadist Uthman Danfodiyo. He works through a subordinate called Ardo; while the Lamido is the judge, the Imam and the arbitrator, the Ardo mediates between his people and the constituted authority [18]; the Eze is the traditional ruler in charge of the Igbo community. The Eze works with the Village Heads and also the President Generals of the constituent communities. Beyond this traditional leadership structure, the nomadic Fulani have well-defined leadership structure which extends across the states. Within each state, there is an overall leader of nomads called the Ardo. However, each camp has a camp leader who provides leadership with the help of Madaki (Chief Adviser) and Waziri (Chief Security Officer). In conjunction with the family heads of each camp, the Ardo and his assistants take decision on the welfare of the camp members. Subsidiary to these are the youth and women leaders, who preside over matters that directly affect the youth or women as the case may be and present same before the committee of elders for further assistance. These could provide structural basis and support for any community directed intervention efforts.

### Existing approaches to community mobilization and prospects for the use of Community Directed Intervention approach

The study revealed that there are various mobilization approaches applied by both the Igbo communities and the Fulani Herdsmen camps across the study area. These include the use of town criers, religious gatherings, contacting the family heads, and Ardos in charge of the camps of herdsmen among others. Once the Ardo is sufficiently sensitized, he directs other camp leaders. The camp leader in turn directs the Madaki to invite the family heads to a meeting where they are briefed on what has to be done. Among the Fulani, kola nut play significant role in the mobilization of people for action. The use of telephone is also mentioned as an approach for mobilizing members of the communities to action. Mobile phones are readily available in most homes. So far, the study revealed very high prospects for the use of Community-Driven Intervention (CDI) approach to stemming the conflict between the warring groups under study. During the study, using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method, members of the two groups showed very high interest in being part of the solution to reoccurring problem affecting them. The following quotes from a member of the cattle Fulani illustrates the existing approaches to community mobilization in the communities studied. *"We have town criers. They make announcement calling out the people to converge. When we converge, the information would be passed across and those present would brief those that were absent. "...It is at this meeting that everything about the welfare of this community is discussed. Mobilization on everything is discussed there and decisions are taken. Each camp will go home and inform the members of their hamlets to participate.... In the mobilization, when there is an emergency, and it needs others to participate, we pass the information across to the leaders of each of the camps and it is done when we meet at the cattle market because we have a meeting point*

*where almost all the leaders of the settlements meet; then the leaders go to the camps and inform the head of each family unit about the decisions taken: who in turn also pass information across to their people.* [Respondent:IDI; Ardo at the new cattle market ,Enugu South LGA.] . *"If in the event that a Fulani is attacked and killed by the host community, we gather together and after our meeting, some young men are appointed and given some kola nuts to go to Fulani camps in and outside for revenge mission"* (Respondent; IDI, Chairman, Lokpanta cattle market, Umunneochi LGA, Abia State). For the Igbo communities, In the event of serious emergency, the big talking drum (**Ikoro**) sounds to quickly mobilize the men"(Respondent: IDI; Adult Male, Community leader, Ozuitem, Bende LGA, Abia State).

The existing structures and approaches for community mobilization make possible the use of community-Driven Intervention to stem the crisis. For example, Ardo in charge of Enugu south boasted and said "we as a community have both the people and the structure that can be useful in brokering peace. According to the Ardo "... some of our boys were born here. The least have stayed here for 20 years".These boys speak Igbo language fluently and they can be trained to participate in the delivery of the peace interventions. Some of the elders indicated that they can support the young volunteers with small money for transportation. Furthermore, the elders among them offered that they could raise money from their cows to support any intervention that is brought to maintain peace and save their lives and those of their children. The women on their own part indicated that they could sell the milk to raise money in support of the delivery of any programme that will promote peace. Again, the Chairman, Cattle Dealers Association at the cattle market, Lokpanta, Umunneochi, Abia State, has

this to say to reinforce their interest and commitment to peaceful coexistence, *“we will support peace for the sake of our life and business; any time there is crisis between herdsmen and farmers, the host community usually come here for reprisal attacks”*

The study also identified potentials for community self-monitoring of intervention programs in both the camps and villages. In every camp and village, there are structures and officials all of which could be weaved into a committee to monitor the peace building process between the herdsmen and their host communities. There are the youth, elderly men and women who could play different roles for the CDI implementation. Previous studies in other West African and Sahil societies have also demonstrated that nomads are capable of participating very positively in health programmes if genuinely involved [19].

### **Causes of Conflict between Fulani Herdsmen and Igbo Farmers**

There are major causes of the conflict between the herdsmen and farmers. They include:

#### **(1) Length of Stay and Pattern of Relationship**

Over the years, several clashes have been recorded between the host farm communities and Fulani herdsmen over grazing land. This clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers is a land resource based conflict. The Fulani herdsmen in search of pasture and water had brushes with local farmers whose crops are routinely destroyed by the herdsmen. The study revealed that changes in Pastoral ecology of Nigeria occasioned by cycles of drought due to climate change have become the defining character of a substantial part of Northern Nigeria. The changing pastoral ecology has led to an expanded pastoral activity in the south, to some extent replicating the northern semi-arid environment that is now turning more arid. According to one of the discussants in an FGD session, *“...Due to the scarcity of green grass in the north; and discovering that the southern*

*environment is good for our pastoral business, they continue to move southwards and settling down for their expanding pastoral business.”* The length of stay of Fulani herdsmen in the south has increased. Those on permanent stay in the south have grown in numbers since 1990. Some of the herdsmen were found to have stayed with the host community for upward of 20 years. In one of the FGD sessions, the Ardo in charge of Enugu south LGA, said *“... some of these men were born here. The least have stayed here for 20 years”*. Many of them said that though their stay is presumed to be semi-permanent, they see their stay as more permanent arguing that *“rarely do we travel out of this place and stay more than 2 weeks in the north”*. The number of these pastoralists settling in the south has been steadily increasing since the 1990s, and experimentations on southern-run cattle production with Fulani breeds are proving successful.

On why they stay permanently instead of the usual migratory pastoralists they are, the Ardo (leader) explained *“we initially come from the north (Sokoto, Borno or Kastina) to Southeast and South-south in search of green grass and water for our cows, that if in the course of our movement we locate a favourable area with abundant green grass and water points, we settle down there; our youths with some hired hands (Gainakos) move our cows as far as Calabar and Bayelsa in south-south in search of grasses and return back to Enugu around April when the rain comes back”*. Following this settling down, pastoralism is deepening in the south. Thus, the cattle markets in the southeast in places like Lokpanta in Umunneochi local government Area in Abia State and new Garki in Enugu South, Enugu State have become major Fulani cultural heaths. In effect, out of every 100 Fulani herdsmen in the southeast, 30-40 are now permanently resident in the south east. These new unplanned settlements have both positive and negative effects on their relationship. On the positive relationship, the Chairman of the cattle

market at Lokpanta has this to say: ‘...there is positive personal relationship and positive group relationship as a result of the many years of co-existence which consequently has broken the language barrier. The cordial relationship has snowballed into several successful marriages and business relationship’. Describing this positive relationship, the Chairman said “*I usually go to Ibeku in Umuahia North Local Government Area (LGA) to celebrate their new yam festival with my friends; they also celebrate our Salah festival with us*’.

The positive relationship between Fulani herdsmen and the host community in Ugwuogo Nike in Enugu North is cemented by an indigene building and donating a small structure for the Fulani herdsmen to use for their prayers and interactions when they come to the market on market days. In the words of the donor, ‘*the relationship is simply cordial*’. However, the discussants agreed that though the long stay of the Fulani herdsmen in the south east has led to some kind of positive relations; it has also led to some negative relationship with its consequent schisms. A community leader in Obinwanne in Awgu LGA of Enugu state, have this to say ‘*we are not comfortable with the Fulani’s sudden*

*permanent stay with us in our community, we are afraid of their long permanent stay that can lead to contests*’. Another community leader in Ozuitem in Bende LGA in Abia State in his contribution during an in-depth interview said ‘*we cannot just sit and watch and do nothing about this Fulani sudden takeover of our land and their cultural audacity*’.

Further discussions reveal that majority of the Igbo farmers are of the opinion that the increasing dependence on the southeast for an all-year round grazing leading to high grazing pressure that pushes the herdsmen into off-limit spaces like farmland and public water sources is the major cause of the incessant clashes. The trend also runs through North Africa[20]. All such conflicts were confined to areas northward of latitude 8°N. Since that date, there have been more than 7 major ethnic crises involving the Fulani nomads in the south with heavy losses and casualty rates. According to them, this reckless grazing and destruction of farmlands and farm crops has led to frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the southeast as can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1 Major Conflicts between Fulani Herdsmen and Igbo Farmers**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Place of occurrence</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Nature of conflict</b>
1	Okigwe (Imo State)	1998	<b>Violence over improper grazing</b>
2	Aba (Abia State)	2000	<b>Reprisal for the killing of Igbos in the north</b>
3	Owerri (Imo State)	2005	<b>Over grazing rights</b>
4	Egbema (Imo State)	2006	<b>Over grazing rights</b>
5	Umunneochi (Abia State)	2007	<b>Over grazing rights</b>
6	Owerri (Imo State)	2008	<b>Conflict over grazing rights</b>
7	Eke in Udi (Enugu State)	2014	<b>Due to differences</b>
8	Nkpologu in Uzo-uwani (Enugu State)	2015	<b>Robbery attack</b>
9	Obinwanne in Awgu (Enugu State)	2016	<b>Over grazing rights</b>
10	Isuikwuato (Abia State)	2016	<b>Destruction of farm</b>
11	UkpabiNimboUzo-uwani (Enugu State)	2016	<b>Over grazing right</b>
12	Ogbunike, Oyi (Anambra State)	2016	<b>Due to differences</b>
13	Ozuitem in Bende (Abia State)	2016	<b>Destruction of farm land and crops</b>

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### Source: Extracts From Varied Newspaper Reports

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The table reveals that as the year progresses, the frequency of the conflict increases as can be seen in 2016. The need for grazing movements to access pasture resources across regions in order to ensure food security for the herds has led to competition for pastures, woody vegetation, water resources and land taken as a common property resource as reported by [21]. Again, the complex land-use system that has changed markedly over time has culminated in the present day tension and conflicts between herds man and host communities. This type of conflict is not peculiar to the southeast, it is pervasive, pervading traditional nomadic societies in North Africa [22], Ferlo region of Senegal [23], eastern Sudan [24] and Niger [25]. The entire scenario is one of environmental change induced space contestation that mirrors the case of the Horn and East Africa in which demographic change is pushing pastoralists to inhabit more marginal rangeland (HPG, 2009b). Therefore, [26] conclusion that 'The increase in the size of population and size of herds generates anxiety and competition; where there are inadequate policies for the delineation of routes or grazing areas, problems arise' applies to the Nigerian scenario.

Consequent upon these competitions and conflicts so many lives have been lost through the activities of the hired killer herdsmen. The audacious herdsmen who parade the South east Nigeria are said to be filled with lust to kill. They are referred to '*as a merciless killing squad*' who lacerate people's bodies with

matchet wounds. A gory video recording of the Nimbo killings recovered from a suspect's phone. The video recording revealed the suspect (Mohammed Zure) while they were slaughtering their victims saying in Hausa "*I have killed you now. You think that you can kill Fulani herdsmen, and go free*". He took the picture to show to his family members that he actually participated in the revenge mission. The suspect confessed that they were more than 100 Fulani herdsmen selected from different states in the north (Taraba, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Kastina and Niger) for the killing to retaliate the killing of their people in Uzo-uwani (Saturday sun, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2016). These militant Fulani were mobilized through the sharing of Kolanuts among all cattle herdsmen across the country to join in the killing mission to retaliate the death of their brothers in Uzo-wani LGA. The attack on Nimbo community in Uzo-uwani LGA, Enugu State left many houses razed down and many people dead. The incessant resource conflicts witnessed in the tropics have resulted in loss of lives, properties and environmental degradation as also witnessed in some developed countries such as Balkans [27];[28]. The discussants agreed that climate change, environmental degradation, southern migration of Fulani pastoralists and their settling down permanently in the southeast has implications.

#### (2) Ethnic prejudice and hate

The ethnic consciousness and prejudice defines the kind of social interaction and relationship among the Fulani herdsmen and host Igbo farmers. The ethnic consciousness was found to determine human beings from other ethnic groups; it abuses the natural and constitutional rights of such people from other ethnic groups. The relative deprivation was reported among the Fulani herdsmen. They were found to be frustrated and resentful. Among the Igbo group, it was found that they become resentful of the

strangers (Herdsmen) because of their conviction that their resources and security are threatened by the activities of the herdsmen. Another account of this reckless killing by the Fulani herdsmen came from Ozuitem in Bende LGA of Abia State. To this man, "*these Fulani equate their cows with human life. They fight and are ready to annihilate the entire village on the claim that a villager stole their cow. So to them, the punishment for stealing a cow is not death for the thief but for the entire village*" (IDI

with Secretary General, Ozuitem Development Union). In general, the farmers see those attacks as calculated invasion to take over their land for cattle grazing. This feeling is against the background of the phenomenon of indigene ship in Nigeria. The factor of indigene ship confers on individual the right to own land. It is this consciousness that makes the Igbo farmers claim ownership of the land against the Fulani, the cultural traits, beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices by the Igbos against them have been passed on to their children, who now see us *“as cows, people without brain”*. These bigoted ethnic opinions offend the sensibilities of the Fulani. These stereotypes are best seen in values. For instance, the Fulani said it is disrespectful when the Igbo calls them Aboki. In the words of the Ardo in charge of the New Garki in Enugu. *‘... though there has not been any physical confrontation between the two groups, there has been eye to eye confrontation; they look at themselves with anger in their eyes depicting bitterness in their hearts’*. This state of affairs was found to lead to the development of feelings of hatred, mutual suspicion, distrust and aggression. Because of this deep-rooted hatred, the Fulani in the cities were found always to be intimidated and victimized. There was an instance To many of the Igbo discussants, cultural audacity is at the heart of the conflicts. They expressed the fear and concern that *“the Fulani are becoming a big menace; not only do they destroy our farms, and our crops with their cows, they are now into raping our women and girls, and threatening our lives with weapons; continuing he said that two weeks ago, the herdsmen came into a man’s compound and were plucking his oranges, when asked why, they threatened him with their gun; they even chased some people out of their homes for days”*. (FGD for adult males in Akamo Oghe in Eziagu LGA, Enugu State). It was further reported that when the Fulani herdsmen were asked why they engage in this level of impunity, their

Fulani herdsman who is seen as an intruder. This no doubt heightens the conflict. Again, the study revealed that Land among the Igbo people in the south east, Nigeria, is freighted with symbolic meaning, it is seen as sacred and considered as an ancestral and historical sphere of influence. On the strength of this, the people do everything to defend the land.

according to an Adult Fulani discussant, *‘when after an incidence of robbery and kidnapping, the people (Igbo) on seeing a group of Fulani boys arrested them just to give the Fulani bad name; The boys were accused of rape, even the rape of an old woman, older than their mothers.’*(Adult male Fulani discussant at Ugwuoge Nike, Enugu). The discussants unanimously saw this as ridiculous. To further drive home this claim of hate, intimidation and victimization, the leader of the Fulani in Ugwuogo Nike cited an instance in 2015 when the police in Ugwuogo Nike arrested 24 Fulani youths on a particular market day accused them of kidnapping and rape, that when he met with the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), they were released on bail with money. In his words *“that is intimidation and extortion”* (IDI with Fulani leaders at Ugwuogo Nike).

answer was *“we are in charge”*. This has far reaching implication for peace as a farmer among the discussants said *“If this impunity continues and they push us to the wall, we will react in our own way”*. This implies that the relationship is resting on a keg of gun powder waiting to explode soon. So beyond the problem of climate change, hate and aggression, there are other driving forces which includes; contest over ownership and use of land resources, closure of cattle routes, arms proliferation, corruption and sharp practices by Igbo community leaders, urbanization, infrastructural development and youth restiveness among the Fulani and Igbo, increasing human population and also increasing population of cows.

### Contest over the

**Ownership of Land and land resources-** The major driving force (underlying grievances) to this conflict is context over the use of land and land resources like water. The Secretary General of Ozuitem Development Association, opined that ..., *“What land is to the Igbo man is what cow is to the Fulani “. (While the Igbo man values land so much, the Fulani man values his cows so much. They value their cows more than other properties like house, cars, etc. In short, the worth of a Fulani man is measured by the number of cows. They value cows to the extent of celebrating the successful delivery of a calf.”*The differences in the value for land lead to conflict. So the need for sustained livelihood based on land was found to be major driving force for this conflict.

1. Again, to the Fulani, closure of cattle routes constitutes serious problems to their grazing business. The cows must eat and they must be taken to where they will find
3. serious problems especially when children are driving the cows.
4. Added to this problem of children driving large number of cows, is the recent development where non Fulani like the Shuwa Arabs, Hausas, rich Igbo politicians/businessmen are joining the cattle business. It was reported that these non- Fulani who own cows now use hired hand/undertakers (**Gainako**) to drive the cows. These **gainakos** as hired hands are said to be very reckless without any recourse to caution in the herding of cows. Their only interest is their pay.(Banabiyu payment/compensation of 2 year- old cows for 6 months work. It was found that beyond recklessness of the *Gainakos*, many of them engage in criminal activities.

The resident Fulani blamed all the destruction of the farm and other criminal activities on the marauding herdsmen who drive cows at night. They generally agreed that these marauders are dangerous and cannot be controlled by the resident Fulani. In the words of one of them, “... these marauders carry dangerous arms; an attempt to accost them will be at the risk

grasses to eat. However, It was found that the over 450 cattle routes (Burtali) created during the colonial period have been blocked due to development (building of houses, high ways, markets, industries and the increase in human population that forced farmers to cultivate very close to the high ways leaving no space for the cows to pass. Consequently, the farmers are found to be complaining that these cows while passing are feeding on their crops and destroying their farm lands.

2. It was further found that the number of cows is increasing on daily basis and finding food for them and driving the cows are becoming over whelming. *‘... for example a situation where 100 cows that are supposed to be driven by 3 or 4 herdsmen are now driven by only 2 persons including a child or children is a problem’* (IDI with Secretary, New Garki market at Enugu). This was found to cause of our lives and properties”. (FGD-Adult Fulani males, Ugwuogo Nike, Enugu State).

To the farmers whether these bandits/rustlers are the hired Gainakosis not the issue;the issue that they are strangers who are seen laced with sophisticated military grade weapons (guns). In the guise to protect themselves and their cows, they are found to be threats to the peace and security of the farmers’ community. One of the farmers in AkameOghe in Eziagu LGA, Enugu described these herdsmen as *“militants hired for the expansionist (Jihadist’s) agenda”*.It was found that the questions agitating the minds of most of farmers include- Are these Fulani herdsmen or militia?, Are they mercenaries? If they are mercenaries, are they locally sourced or foreign. It was found that many of the hired herdsmen who carry guns are foreigners. It was revealed by the resident Fulani at Lokpanta, Umunneochi LGA, Abia State that most of the attacks by the Fulani youths are not by hired mercenaries. They revealed that in the event of the reckless Gainakos destroying farmers’ crops and the farmers in a

revenge attack the resident Fulani's; this may have spiral effects. The Chairman, Lokpanta cattle market, said". . . *for our interest in the cattle market, we intervened to ensure that the crisis does not escalate. We liaised with the Government of Abia State and Imo State to settle and compensate the Fulani victims*". (IDI with Chairman, Lokpanta cattle market, Umunneochi LGA, Abia State.

On further enquiry on who pays the mercenaries, the Fulani explained that these fighters are not hired mercenaries, but rather they are on solidarity visit to fight for their brother's interest. They are mobilized to fight by the elders, they are not paid. They fight to defend their ethnic interest. The age-long anti Fulani hate and pre-justice has made the Fulani to form themselves into very strong organization within West Africa. They speak with one voice. They have an association called Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN). The association was found to have among other aims, to help stop cattle rustling, bringing lasting solution to the clashes between Fulani

Another account of this reckless killing by the Fulani herdsmen came from a community leader in Ozuitem in Bende LGA of Abia State. To this man, "*these Fulani equate their cows with human life. They fight and are ready to annihilate the entire village on the claim that a villager stole their cow. So to them, the punishment for stealing a cow is not death for the thief but for the entire village*" (IDI with Secretary General, Ozuitem Development Union). In general, the farmers see those attacks as calculated invasion to take over their land for cattle grazing. This feeling is against the background of the phenomenon of indigeneship in Nigeria. The factor of indigeneship confers on individual the right to own land. It is this consciousness that makes the Igbo farmers claim ownership of the land against the Fulani herdsman who is seen as an intruder. This no doubt heightens the conflict. Again, the study revealed that Land among the Igbo people in the

herdsmen and farmers. The association has a national spread with state chairman and other executives. It is the highest decision-making body of the Fulani. As an umbrella body, it is funded by the herdsmen who task themselves to raise money to fund the association. The Chairmen in turn receive instructions and protection from the umbrella body. This explains why the herdsmen in the bush when farmers challenge them on their reckless impunity, their response has always been "don't you know we are in-charge'. This underscores the farmers' allegation that these reckless destruction of farmers crops and killings by herdsmen are sponsored and that the attackers are hired mercenaries. These heinous activities of the herdsmen have engendered an attitude of hate against the Fulani. Many reprises of the heinous attacks by the herdsmen in the southeast Nigeria - In Uzo-uwani LGA, Awgu in Enugu State, Umunneochi, Arochukwu, Bende and Isuikwuato LGAs in Abia State are eloquent testimonies of the jihadist agenda of the Fulani.

south east, Nigeria, is freighted with symbolic meaning, it is seen as sacred and considered as an ancestral and historical sphere of influence. On the strength of this, the people do everything to defend the land. Thus, the conflicts over land are usually fierce with massive destructions of lives and properties.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the failure of Government at various levels (federal, state and local) to adequately address the issue of land has played key role in the conflicts over land in the affected areas. First, the government inability to address the indigene and settler phenomenon in the Nigerian Constitution; second, the unresolved issues on grazing land and water spots that are central to the economic survival of both the herds men and the farming communities; third, the Nigerian land tenure system which has had serious implications for land acquisition by the peasants and the lower

class. All these failures by governments have implications for the incessant

#### **Recommendations for Peace-Building**

The study found that there are common interests and common grounds for the co-existence of the two groups. Suggestions were made by members of the two groups. The farmers suggested that for peace to reign (i) when the herdsmen come into a community, they should see the community leader (s) for discussion and to secure permission to graze in the community; (ii) they should sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the community leaders. (iii) The herdsmen should brand their cows for easy identification of the owners; there should be the profiling of both cows and herdsmen at the point of entry into the Local Government. This will help in the proper documentation of the herdsmen-(who they are, where they are coming from, where they are going). This profiling will not only check the activities of criminals among the herdsmen, it will help trace those that spoil farmers crops for them to pay compensation; it will also be a source of revenue to the Local Government and also create a platform for community- stranger relationship. (iv) In the event of cows destroying a farmer's crops, the farmer should report to his community leader (Eze/ Igwe or Chief) who in turn will liaise with the leaders of the Fulani group (ArDOS) for appropriate compensation rather than taking laws into their hands chasing the cows and killing the cows in revenge.

Again, for the Fulani, for the peace to reign, Community members should stop making inflated community demands for compensation for damages done on an individual farm. It is also agreed that for peace to reign, that villagers should mark out areas for the herdsmen to graze their cows. However, the farmers refused to assent to this. They are of the general view that cow rearing is a business and the only way they can live in peace with the herdsmen is if they properly manage their cows. One of the farmers has this to say—*“anybody that want to do cattle business should at least lease a piece of*

conflicts.

*land where he will build a ranch and graze his animals; after all it is a business. It is difficult to understand why somebody will use his business to destroy another person's business; it is sheer-wickedness”* (participant: **adult male FGD in Ozuitem, Bende LGA, Abia State**). For most of the farmers across the study areas, cows should be domesticated like the Igbos have ranches for their own cows as seen in Umuchigwe in Nike, Enugu State, in Brazil in Argentina, and in Australia.

Again, it was suggested that the government should intervene by liaising with community leaders to facilitate the creation of grazing routes with water points along the routes or acquire land and establish government owned ranches for herdsmen in the Southeast and South-south regions like the Otuore Cattle ranch in Gwagwalada, Abuja.

Fulani herdsmen for purpose of peace should check the activities of the hired hands and under aged children driving cows recklessly thereby destroying farms and crops. The resident Fulani herdsmen should liaise with community Vigilante group to check the excesses of the migrant herdsmen who move at night across the states.

To achieve some of these suggestions, discussants agreed that there are roles to be played by formal and semi-formal authorities in mediating the conflict.

On conflict mediation, the discussants agreed that community members and the community leaders have various roles to play. First, the community members, both hosts and Fulani herdsmen should seek peace and pursue peace by keeping to their respective limits; always try to make use of conflict resolution channels to resolve their conflicts. There should be an enlargement of the leadership structure of the Fulani herdsmen. To him, there should be an Ardo (head) in every Local Government Area (LGA) and an ArdoHardodi (head of the ArDOS) at the state headquarters. This will be a channel of communication that will make for easy

complaint and compensation for the parties. Some of the discussants further suggested that traditional institutions including the Eze and village heads are required to check the activities of the restive youths in their communities; that they should encourage their subjects to unlearn some of the anti-Fulani prejudices and encourage peaceful coexistence.

At the State level, they suggested there should be State-level training of the vigilante groups. Community based security agencies to be trained on counter terrorism. The activities of these community-based security agencies should be coordinated by an agency of Government. The State should not only look into the proliferation of small arms, they should check the illegal carrying of arms by non-security agencies by embarking on stop and search. They should create enabling institutions that will make for peaceful coexistence.

To facilitate the proposed peace-building, there is need to promote behaviour change made possible through positive attitudinal change. To achieve positive attitudinal changes and promote peaceful coexistence many discussants across the groups suggested among other things:

- Sensitization of both group members on the need for attitudinal change.

This study “the use of Community-Driven Intervention (CDI) approach to stemming the conflict between the warring groups under study” found that the fight over land resources by the two affected groups continue to escalate as government at various levels (federal, state and local) fails to adequately address the issue of land in Nigeria. First, the government inability to address the indigene and settler phenomenon in the Nigerian Constitution; second, the unresolved issues on grazing land and water spots that are central to the economic survival of both the herds men and the farming communities; third, the Nigerian land tenure system which has had serious

- Education especially citizenship education among the herdsmen.
- Mounting of media programs especially radio programme in Hausa and in Igbo languages that address peaceful coexistence and importance of peace to community development.
- Establishing joint Peace and Security Meeting at the Local Government Area level and State level to be attended by Autonomous Community Leaders (Eze) and Village Heads, ArdoHardodi at the State level and Ardos at the Local Government Area levels as leaders of the Fulani group.
- Government on its part is recommended to apply the conflict-sensitive approaches to development in the context of the current unrests; there is need for a national leadership committed to equitable government leadership that will strive for a practical and active understanding of the origins and risks of conflict in order to sustain the momentum of peaceful development and avoid planning that does not take into account the dynamics of conflict and its core causes.

### CONCLUSION

implications for land acquisition by the peasants and the lower class. Though, the study also found that in spite of the fears and challenges of these groups, there are common interests and common grounds for the co-existence of the two groups. The study concludes that, if nothing is done fast with appropriate and thoughtful action about the emerging issues and considerable potential risks, the legitimate aspirations of the farmers of the southeast region and their compatriots in other parts of Nigeria will go unrewarded.

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