

Perceived Effects Of Herders And Farmers Conflict On Socioeconomic Activities In Uzo-Uwani And Isi Uzo, Enugu State

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ABSTRACT

The current spate of violence in the South East region of Nigeria has resulted in not only the imminent risk of mass exodus of people and loss of valuable resources but also in the worsening of an already bad economic situation for both the states in the region and those living in them. The herders and farmers' conflict is notably one of the significant causes of increased violence within this region with devastating consequences. Using both frustration-aggression theory as framework and the survey research design, the study sought to find out the perceived effects of the frequent conflict between cattle herders and farmers on the socioeconomic activities in Isi Uzo and Uzo Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State, Nigeria. A sample size of 385 respondents was obtained using the multi-stage sampling technique. The result of the research unveiled that herders and farmers conflict has perceived effects on the socio-economic activities of the people in Isi Uzo and Uzo Uwani LGAs of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study recommended the establishment of strong conflict management/reconciliation body/committee to look into ways of resolving the herders-farmers' conflict that is bedeviling the communities.

1. Introduction

The Nigerian state has experienced and is still experiencing conflicts of immense proportions amongst numerous ethnic and religious communities across her states. Nwakanma and Boroh (2019) attest that Nigerian history is saddled with different aspects of conflict, stretching from religious to sectional violence, and to the more recent surging clashes between different livelihood groups, particularly between stationary farmers and nomadic herdsmen across the country. According to Odalonu (2020), the combination of environmental degradation and violence (related to factors such as climate change, high population growth, the Boko Haram insurgency, cattle rustling etc.) has resulted in recurrent drought in the Sahel regions and has pushed herders from North southwards towards the Guinea Savannah of the tropical rain forest in search of pasture and water resulting in competition for grazing routes with farmers. In the course of their journey and search, the herders frequently trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, causing havoc and destroying crops and valuables in their wake. Nwakanma and Boroh (2019) and Nwosu (2017) posit that the farmers are not only over powered and injured, they herders use the opportunities to rape, steal, raze houses and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through and in very extreme cases make them vacate their villages thereby rendering them internally displaced persons (IDPs). Worse still, these are done without least provocations only that the indigenes questioned the rationale of trespasses and forceful land acquisitions.

Although there is no concise collective account of the death toll resulting from herdsmen-farmers' violence in Nigeria due to lack of a dedicated database, the International Crisis Group ICG (2018) attests that the farmer-herders' violence killed up to six times more than the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's North East (particularly in Benue, Kaduna, Plateau and Nasarawa States) in the first half of 2018. Another study provided an estimate of about \$14 billion annually as the economic loss accrued from destruction of properties, agricultural products, and the management of the herdsmen-farmers' crisis as a result of the herdsmen- farmers' conflicts in four states of Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa and Plateau (Nwosu, 2017). The rate and intensity of occurrences of these clashes has escalated in recent times spreading beyond the Middle Belt States to other communities. Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Enugu and Katsina states have been the most hit of late having suffered devastating attacks by the Fulani herdsmen with a

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heavy toll in human lives and properties (Iheriohanma, Opara and Raimi, 2020; Verjee and Kwaja, 2021). One of the most well-known reported clash allegedly perpetrated by cattle herders was the Agatu Massacre in Benue State in February-March 2016 which resulted in not only the cold blooded massacre of about 300 Agatu indigenes in four communities but also the displacement of more than 7,000 persons from their homes. On the 4th of March 2018 in Omusu village, Ojigo ward in Edumoga Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue state 26 people were also killed in another attack. Davidheiser and Luna (2008), Nwosu (2017) and Nwakanma and Boroh (2019) affirm that these killings were accompanied by the destruction of houses and other properties, rape, as well as illegitimate occupation of victim communities. The Ukpabi Nimbo community were victims of another attack on the 25 April 2016, when suspected armed herders invaded the agrarian community in Enugu State, in a reprisal attack, killing about 46 indigenes. Furthermore, on the 25th July 2021 Fulani herders attacked at Obi Aku farm camp in Opanda village another community in Nimbo Uzo Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State.

Table 1 below shows a compilation of media reported attacks on Uzo Uwani and Isi Uzo LGAs of Enugu State.

Table 1: Compilation of Some Media Reported Attacks in Uzo Uwani and Isi Uzo LGAs of Enugu State

Location	Date	Incident and Casualties	Source
Ukpabi Nimbo, Uzo Uwani LGA	April, 25 2016	46 killed, 11 houses burnt, Christ Holy Catholic Church burnt	Igata (2016) in Vanguard Ng of April 30, 2016
Neke Isi Uzo LGA	April 27, 2017	Many injured and disabled and goods destroyed	Ajiboye, (2017)in The WitnessNg of May 6, 2017,
Umulokpa , Uzo Uwani	March 22, 2019	Dr. Nnamdi Ogueche, Secretary of Uzo Uwani LGA was killed after a peace meeting between farmers and herders	Thisday Live Ng of Thisday, March 22, 2019
Adani, Uzo Uwani	March 29, 2021	8 people killed	Anyanwu (2021) inThe Sun of 30th March 2021
Obie-Aku, Opanda, Nimbo Community, Uzo Uwani LGA	July 22, 2021	4 killed, 10 missing after Fulani Herdsmen attack	Ede (2021) inPunch Ng of 27 July 2021
Abor Eha-Amufu ,Isi Uzo LGA	August 1, 2021	At least one killed and others critically wounded	Odu (2022) in Vanguard January 24, 2022
Okpokwu-Mgbuji community in Isi-Uzo LGA	August 1, 2021	8 persons dead, including a pregnant woman; and several others missing	Okoli, Odu, & Nwaiwu, (2021) in Vanguard Ng of August 6, 2021
Ugwujoro Nimbo, Uzo Uwani	October 18, 2021	Mrs Cordelia Utazi killed in her farm	Odu(2021) in Vanguard Ng of October 21, 2021
Mgbuji, Isi Uzo LGA	7 January 2022	More than 5 people killed 5 village farm settlements sacked, destroyed over 100 hectares of rice farms, cassava farm destroyed	Ede (2022) in Punch Ng of 8 January 2022

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2022

2. Literature Review

The International Crisis Group ICG (2018), reports that the advancement of this conflict into states in the Southern region of Nigeria is provoking anger in the already strained relations among the country's major regional, ethnic and religious groups. The implications of these are enormous as they tend to not only provoke ethnic, religious and

political crisis in the country, they equally impact negatively on the socioeconomic activities of the country in general and the affected communities in particular. Bearing in mind the violent nature of these conflicts between nomadic cattle herders and the farmers, this study seeks to examine the perceived devastating aftermath effect of the turbulent crisis on the socio-economic activities of the people of Isi Uzo and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State. It also seeks to proffer recommendations on ways of ameliorating and if possible eradicating the conflict.

2.0 Conceptualizing Conflict

The term conflict is often viewed as a serious disagreement and controversy and a prolonged struggle between groups of people with divergent interests. Opara and Okafor (2020) argue that conflict is a natural phenomenon and well rooted in traditional African society as a result of their cultural lifestyle. According to Ofuoku and Isife (2010), conflict is seen as the right of taking over incomparable ideas that result to violent attacks on human beings, live stocks, destruction of properties (loss of wealth) and permanent abandonment of people's ancestral homes and land. Ningxin (2018) in his study pointed out that in January 2013 and February 2016 respectively, Fulani herdsman attacked some communities in Benue State leading to loss of lives and wealth and displacement of the survivors. Equally, Ndubuisi (2018) sees conflict as having clash of interests and objectives by different people while Mufutau, Bramah, and Shittu (2020) opine that conflict takes the shape of division or rancor that occurs between groups or parties. Conflict could be said to lead to general untold hardship to all living and non-living creatures within a geographical setting if not properly managed.

According to Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu (2020), the high population growth rate in the world today, the increment in the number of farmers and the ugly manner of destroying the surroundings and interruption in the normal course of resolving land and water issues result to conflicts. Again, the illegal importation of deadly weapons in and out of West Africa and the Sahel Regions as well as the struggle for safety and search for assurance of economic livelihood have antagonistically changed the previously established cordial relationship between the herders and farmers of West African communities. Conflicts negatively affect peoples' lives in its entirety. Implicitly, conflict is as old as human race and is a part of human phenomenon that only demands tact in handling.

2.1 Causes of Herders – Farmers' Conflicts

Ewetan and Urhie (2014) opine that the rate of insecurity in Nigeria has been higher since the return of democracy in 1999. According to them, violent crimes can be traced from Nigeria's independence to the Nigeria-Biafra war of 1967 - 1970 during which time people started acquiring arms for self-defense. Consequently, some unemployed criminally-minded youths used the arms for committing various violent crimes. To expatiate on the position of Ewetan and Urhie, some die-hard criminally-minded sit-tight politicians who wanted positions of office by hook or crook let out arms to criminals for electoral malpractices. Gun-runners cashed in on this and the business thrived as the beneficiaries in political positions and policy makers could not control the market and marketers. Bad governance that has generated discrimination, ineptitude, non-participation and marginalization in governance especially of perceived ethnic groups and those whose lands lay the eggs that hatch the wealth of the nation has been fingered as a major root cause of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria (Iheriohanma et al., 2020). Unfortunately, these frustrated-marginalized ethnic groups view themselves as second class citizens of a country whose common patrimony is being consistently 'balkanized' and allocated by the political rulership of another ethnic group that is seen as not contributing as much to the resources and wealth of the nation. Yet this same sectional ethnic group sees rulership as hegemony and their right. To worsen the threat, the farmlands and planted crops are destroyed by the cattle of this same ethnic group that is forced out because of desertification and drought down south in search of grazing fields and roots for their cattle, cows and other animals (Iheriohanma et al., 2020; Verjee and Kwaja, 2021). The frowning and resistance by the affected community land owners and farmers generated conflicts with the Fulani herders who 'demand' that their cattle must have lands for grazing. Yet, they make no efforts to buy the 'demanded' land for their personal cattle business.

2.1.2 Systemic and Political Corruption Problem

Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), aver that systematic and political corruption is a double edged sword which has held the Nigerian state to ransom. Nigerian government has totally failed in addressing this deadly social problem because of the ulterior motives of most of those who are holding higher political offices. Corruption, they say, hinders

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economic growth, underscores the successful deposition of future wealth and assistance as well as stealing all that were kept in their charge thereby worsening the conditions of the poor citizens. The inability of the federal government to demand accountability and transparency from public office holders and punish the offenders has really destroyed the image of Nigeria as a country (Udeh & Nwokorobia, 2021). Corruption has also dented the governance structure as it has virtually become systemic having been observed in all spheres of Nigerian life. The effect of corruption on the masses invariably breeds restlessness and anger of the citizens on the political leadership and elite who flagrantly front and display the looted wealth to the chagrined aggressive poor. Only a little infliction of injury on them as a reminder will spark off demonstration and violence against the authority of the state.

2.1.3 Conflicts of Interest Factor

For quite some decades now, the regular occurrence of herders – farmers' conflict in Nigeria has reached the apex. These bloody events were previously experienced only in the Northern and Middle Belt areas but have recently reared their ugly heads up in the South Eastern zone due to conflicts of interests. Almost all the trusted conflict resolution institutions seem to be inducers of conflicts. Distrust and greed have unavoidably crept into the system. In 2019, the federal government of Nigeria launched a 10-year National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) to reduce and assuage the fears on open grazing (Aliyu, (2019), yet the suspicion on the interest of the federal government on land grabbing for the Fulani herders, who are the supposedly beneficiaries of the NLTP, has continued unabated. The question has always been why introducing this policy of national livestock transformation this time around when the consensus has been ranching? The people see conflict of interest in the areas of protectionism for the Fulani herders who flagrantly kill, maim, rape, engage in burning houses and properties etc. and land grabbing on one side of the divide and those who only benefit from government continued assurance of tracking the evil perpetrators on the other side of the divide. At best they latter are quartered in Internally Displaced People's camps.

2.1.4 Population Growth Problem

The high rate of population in Nigeria has equally given rise to the herders – farmers' conflict. As human population has skyrocketed so has the cattle population in Nigeria. Ufoegbune and Fabiyi (2016) maintained that livestock and people depend on enough water and food for their survival. The two conflicting parties – herders and farmers - keep accusing each other of being the cause of each other's predicament. Climate change has rather aggravated the situation as the parties in contention always disagree over land use and water and grazing routes. The torture has also heightened the struggle for survival of the fittest as natural resources are only available to the power-mighty, hence the carrying of dangerous weapons by the herders against resistant land owners and cattle rustlers.

2.1.5 Security Problem

Insecurity is the most pressing issue Nigeria is facing for quite some time now. Omede and Omede (2015) commented that the rate at which innocent people's lives are being wasted in Nigeria is very alarming and disturbing. Every part of the country is porous and security structures already collapsed. Nigeria has failed her citizens in playing her democratic roles security-wise (Iheriohanma, et al., 2020; Verjee and Kwaja, 2021). Olukoju, Adesina, Adesoji and Amusa (2018) opined that unequalled security problem is starring on the face of Nigeria as a country and nothing serious is being done to solve it. Insecurity problem has given birth to so many ills in the society such as killings, kidnapping, banditry, robbery, terrorism etc.

2.1.6 Poverty and Economic Factor

Herders – farmers' constant clashes have undoubtedly negatively affected both people's lives and their livelihood. Poverty has been known as the root cause of insecurity since it is recorded that 43% of Nigerian population is living in abject poverty. The regular occurrence of insecurity has posed danger to lives and property and most of the socio-economic and business activities have stopped and some closed down totally, yet the people must have to feed themselves..

2. 2 Conflicts and Socio-Economic Activities

Conflict adversely affect people's general way of living since it usually harbors on destruction of lives and properties and equally stops both the social and economic activities from flowing smoothly. Onime (2018) observed that the rate of unemployment increases whenever there are cases of insecurity. Ewetan and Urhie (2014) and Iheriohanma et al. (2020) equally opine that the incessant cases of insecurity in Nigeria bring about strong threat to both lives and properties which in turn not only discourages investors of every kind but distort investment from flourishing and put all economic activities to a halt. Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma, Iheanacho, Ezeji, Okafor and Wokoma, (2022) reiterate that the adverse impact of insecurity on both individual savings and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria cannot

be overlooked because it plays a major role in exacerbating the current high rate of poverty and violent crimes. According to Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu (2020), the continuous occurrence of violence and stubborn resistance of control throughout Nigeria is detrimental to growth and suffocates economic growth and regular loss of life and destruction of properties. Flowing from the literature above, it could be reiterated that constant break-down of law and order, violence and destruction of lives and property in the society breeds decimation of human capital and poverty.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Frustration - Aggression theory to explain farmers-herders' conflict. Dollard (1939) who developed this theory posited that frustration is the major determinant of aggression hence the aggression and killings carried out by Fulani Herdsmen on the people of Uzo Uwani and Isi Uzo were caused by frustration. On the other hand, the reprisal attacks on the herdsmen by communities were caused by frustration of attacks chronicled in the table 1 below. This theory has been expanded by scholars like Miller (1941), Berkowitz (1962) and Yates (1962). In addition, in *Why Men Rebel* by Ted Gurr (1970), the linkage between frustration and aggression were brought to the fore. Gurr analyzed the psychological frustration – aggression theory that frustration does not lead to violence immediately. However, prolonged frustration anchored on deprivation will always result to conflict. Gurr further argues that relative deprivation could lead to collective violence by social groups. The relevance of this theory is anchored on the premise that both farmers and herdsmen are frustrated by the strained relationship between the two groups as anchored on dearth of access to natural resources and climate change on the Lake Chad region leading to the influx of herdsmen down south.

3. Methodology

3.1 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Isi Uzo and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State. The two local government areas were purposively chosen as area of study because of the repeated incidence of herdsmen-farmers' clashes and because they share borders with other states that have equally witnessed such clashes. Isi Uzo L.G.A has borders with Benue and Ebonyi States whereas Uzo Uwani shares borders with Kogi and Anambra States. These States are also battling with farmers-herdsmen' crisis.

3.2 Population and Sampling Procedure

Survey research was adopted in this investigation. The population of the study is gotten from the two local government areas -Isi Uzo and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State.

Table 2: Population of the Two Local Government Areas of Study

S/No.	Name Of Local Government Area	Population Census, 2006	Population Projection, 2016
1	Isi Uzo	148,597	200,600
2	Uzo-Uwani	127,150	171,600
	Total		372,200

Source: National Population Commission, Nigeria (web); National Bureau of Statistics (web 2022)

The statistical formula devised by Yamane (1967) was employed to determine the sample size.

Where n is the sample size,

N is the population size,

e is the margin of error 0.05. When this formula is applied to the above population we have

Thus $n = 372200 / (1 + 372200(0.05)^2)$

$n = 372200 / (1 + 372200 * 0.0025)$

$n = 372200 / 931.5$

$n = 399.6$

$n = 400$ approximately

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This research utilized both purposive and multistage sampling technique in the process of selection of respondents. Stratified sampling was used to ensure that the correct percentage of samples was allotted to the two local governments of study. Purposive selection was employed to choose three communities each from the two local government areas [LGAs] of the state where the herders-farmers' conflict is most prominent (Nimbo, Umulokpa and Adani in Uzo Uwani LGA and Neke, Eha-Amufu and Umualor in Isi Uzo LGA). Random sampling was used to administer questionnaire to respondents in the six LGAs.

Table 3: Stratified Sampling Size for Uzo Uwani and Isi Uzo LGAs

S/No.	Name Of Local Government Areas	Stratified Sample%	Stratified Sample Size
1	Isi Uzo	54	216
2	Uzo-Uwani	46	184
	Total	100	400

Source: Field Work, 2021

Table 3 above shows the stratified sample size for the two local government areas of study.

Close-ended questions were used to ensure reliability. The questionnaire was self-administered. Secondary data were gathered from text books and journals.

4. Results and Discussion

This session documents the responses to the questionnaire administered to people living in local government areas under study. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed with 385 (96.5%) returned. The presentation is made in 2 parts namely (a) the Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, and (b) the response to the segment of the questionnaire that helps to answer questions on perceptions on the socio-economic effects of herders-farmers' conflicts in the areas under study.

Table 4: Socio Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Category	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	239	62
	Female	146	38
	TOTAL	385	100
Age	18 - 30	83	21.5
	31 – 45	190	49.4
	45 and Above	112	29.1
	TOTAL	385	100
Occupation	Student/ Unemployed	70	18.2
	Civil Servant	102	26.4
	Self Employed	127	33.0
	Politician	36	9.4
	Private	50	13.0
	TOTAL	385	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4 shows that a large proportion (62%) of the respondents were male while 38% were female. For their age the respondents within the 18-30 bracket make up 21.1%, 45 and above are 29.1% while 31-45 are in the majority with 49.4% signifying an active working population. The table equally shows that a high percentage of the respondents (33%) are self-employed consisting of farmers, traders, businessmen/women and craft workers; 26.4% are civil

servants, 9.4% are politicians while 18.2% are students/unemployed. Thus, 81.8% of the respondents are engaged in various forms of economic activities to enable them make ends meet and this is in tandem with Oyesola (2007)'s submission that rural dwellers are engaged in various economic activities for their living.

Table 7: Frequency Distribution of Perceptions on the Socio-Economic Effects of Herders-Farmers' Conflicts in the areas under study

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1	Does the herders-farmers' conflicts affect farming activities in your locality?	186 (48.4%)	145 (37.6%)	3 (0.8%)	26 (6.8%)	25 (6.5%)
2	Does the herders-farmers' conflict affect access to basic necessities in your community?	169 (43.9%)	142 (36.9%)	8 (2.1%)	39 (10.1%)	27 (7.0%)
3	Does the herders-farmers' crisis affect daily income earnings?	177 (46%)	141 (36.6%)		43 (11.2%)	24 (6.2%)
4	Does the farmers-herders' conflict affect general social activities such as weddings, funerals and other cultural events in your locality?	135 (35%)	107 (27.8%)		93 (24.2%)	50 (13%)

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2021

Table 7 above indicates the perception of respondents on the substantial issues under investigation. In question 1, a large proportion of the respondents (85.97%) agreed that the herders-farmers' conflicts have affected the farming activities in the areas under study, 0.7% were undecided while 13.25% disagreed. This is in agreement with Chikaire, Orusha, Irebuisi, Amanze and Asonye (2016)'s assertion that conflicts have consequential effects on all agricultural farming processes including prices of produce, output, agricultural extension activities, marketing and distribution of agricultural products, agricultural credit opportunities, labour supply, transportation costs and farm income of farmers. They respondent majority response to question 2, where 80.78% agreed that herdsman and farmers conflicts adversely affect access to basic necessities, concurs with Kasarachi (2016) postulation that the conflicts between herdsman and farmers has led to not only the destruction of vast expanse of arable crop farmlands but also to inaccessibility of food thereby causing serious threat to food security. This implies that the conflicts affect people's access to basic amenities in the communities under study. Response to question 3 illustrates that 82.59% of the respondents, a clear majority, agree that the herders-farmers' conflicts affect their daily income earnings. However, 17.40% disagreed. Tanyi, Nwatu, Ugwu, Amadi, and Idongesit (2021) noted from their research that communities are starving, as a result of the very significant decrease in the farm produce and income level of individual families orchestrated by the herders and farmers conflict.

Question 4 indicates that 62.86% of the respondents agree that farmers-herders' conflict affects general socio-economic activities such as weddings, funerals and other cultural activities while 37.14% disagreed. This is in line with Omotara (2016)'s assertion that conflict over farmland has negative effects on the socio-economic activities of the

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residents and seemingly in agreement with Mbah, Jiriko and Amah (2020) that socio-economic activities are usually grounded to a halt in states battling herders and farmers clashes as people restrict/limit their movement out of fear of being killed. The implication is that majority of the respondents accepted that the conflicts affected general social activities which were at the lowest ebb as most people cancelled their social activities and events and stayed in-doors for fear of being victims of bandits, kidnappers, herders and cattle rustlers. This is indicative of the fact that government has abysmally failed in its constitutional responsibilities of protecting peoples' lives and property and agrees with the view of Mbah, Jiriko and Amah (2020) that the Nigerian government has not sufficiently addressed the situation. This is very disheartening.

It is therefore very pertinent to seriously look into ways of dealing with the menace of farmers-herders' conflict and its associated violence in Nigeria generally and the south-eastern region in particular. Bearing in mind the intensity of the looming food crisis incurred as a result of the inability of these farmers to go about their occupation, there is need for urgent action to be taken. All stakeholders including the representatives of the farmers and herders and government with her concerned agencies and parastatals must come together to genuinely find a lasting solution to the conflict.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Farmers and herdsman conflicts has continued to expand and the cause is attributed to not a single factor but to multi-causal factors which majorly include limited resources in face of greater needs, reprisal attacks, shortage of pastoral lands and climate change among others and these have concomitant great effects on entrepreneurial practices and economic activities of the people. These conflicts have caused so many havocs such as loss of lives and properties, loss of farm produce, displacement of people, unnecessary expenditure, poverty and hunger as seen in the response from the two LGAs understudy. The findings reveal that there is a strong relationship between herders and farmers' conflicts and the socio-economic activities of the people of Uzo Uwani and Isi Uzo in Enugu State. Social and cultural activities are cancelled, put off or abandoned as a result of insecurity, unquantifiable farm produce have been destroyed, human lives have been wasted and children orphaned with the killing of their parents and bread winners. The unrestrained attacks on these communities by herdsman have largely contributed to food insecurity and food crisis and a dwindling of the fortunes of the people of the area. As a matter of urgency, some measures have to be taken to ameliorate the situation. The study recommends among others, the establishment of strong conflict management/reconciliation body/committee to look into ways of resolving the herders-farmers' conflict that is bedeviling the communities in Nigeria generally and the South East in particular.

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