CLIMATE CHANGE AND FULANI HERDSMEN – FARMERS’ CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract  
This paper examines climate change and security implications of Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers conflict in northern Nigeria. The paper states that these herdsmen because of drought caused by climate change were forced to migrate south from their origin in northern Nigeria. The crux of this study is that there is a diametrical link between climate change and Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict. This paper examines the causes of the incessant Fulani herdsmen and farmers’ conflicts as well as the new dimension this conflict is taking. Today in Nigeria, the Fulani Herdsmen now move about with dangerous weapons. It is not only that the cows destroy farmland; women in the host communities are raped and at times killed. These Fulani Herdsmen are known to be involved in kidnapping. In these conflicts, many lives and cattle are lost, and properties of farmers as well as farmland destroyed. This paper examines the impact of climate change on and causes of the incessant Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflicts in Nigeria and what the present government is doing to bring this conflict under control. The paper concludes that in as much as climate change plays a part in this conflict, but from our observation now, they are becoming very uncontrollable and dangerous. The study recommends that government should come up with policies to create grazing reserves and dams for pasture and water in states that are predominantly Fulani and not forcing themselves into other states to cause mayhem in the name of searching for pastures for their cows.

Keywords: Fulani-herdsmen, Farmers, climate change, Conflicts, Pastoralist.

1.1 Introduction  
Climate change is irreversible variations in the state of the climate over time. It is caused by an increased concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Climate change affects the availability of pasture and water for animal consumption and is responsible for
droughts, desertification, extreme cold, and storms. Lakes are drying up and there is a decline in river flow in the northern regions. There is fewer supply of water for agricultural purposes like crop production and maintenance of pasture for cattle rearing. When herdsmen are short-changed by these basic needs for their cattle due to climate change, it is common to find them moving from northern the northern region down to the south in search of better environmental and weather conditions (Odoh & Chigozie, 2012). It is this movement by the herdsmen in search of better pasture for their cattle that brings the herdsmen and farmers into conflict in Nigeria. According to Hendrix and Salehyan (2012), the subsistence farmers and pastoralists who are unable to access better technologies and improved agricultural practices are at the receiving end of these climate risks.

Climate change increases the risk of conflicts, poverty and hunger, undermines human rights and is a growing cause of forced migration (www.sida.se). Climate change is not ranked among the five top causes of conflict in Nigeria - namely: tribalism, resource control, religion, land, and trade. But that reality has been altered. The past thirty-six months have been fiercely violent for several Nigerian states, which have experienced rampaging Fulani herdsmen killing many subsistent farmers whilst trying to protect their land from grazing herds. A few reasons have been given for the violence, but no connection has yet been made between the herdsmen migrating south and the effects of climate change. Herdsmen - for whom cattle is a source of livelihood and wealth - have killed approximately 1,000 Nigerians. Myetti Allah - the umbrella body of the herdsmen - justifies the killings in the name of self-defence (Chiagozie, 2018).

The conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers came into existence because of encroachment of farmlands by the Fulani herders. Nigeria is under a severe internal and security threat as the threat has political, economic, and environmental dimensions. The causes of such conflict were destruction of crops, contamination of streams by cattle, zero grazing of land, disregard for local traditional authorities, female harassment, and harassment of nomads by host communities youths, indiscriminate bush burning, defecation of cattle on roads, cattle theft, and straying of Hausa Fulani states in Nigeria. Some of these herdsmen are foreigners from our porous borders.

The influence of foreign Fulani groups in search of pasture accounts for the irreconcilable conflicts being witnessed between the Fulani and their host communities. Due to cultural and religious affinity, it is practically difficult to distinguish between Nigeria Fulani and Fulani from other countries across the Sahel region moving into Nigeria (Omitola, 2014). Adisa and Adekunle (2010) argued that the migration of nomadic pastoralists follows a systematic pattern, dictated by variations in rainfall, grazing stock, pasture, and water. The migratory nature of the pastoralists is a source of potential conflicts as there is intense competition between pastoralists and farming communities. A sweeping fear of insecurity has descended upon Nigeria like haze in the harmattan. Not since the Biafran Civil War of 1967-1970 has the nation been gripped by such pervading tension. The brazen occupation, kidnap, rape, robbery, and other crimes by youths from the northern part of the country that is commanding the news headlines is a sign of a nation in dreadful trouble.
Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the nation and can be traced to many factors in which the Fulani herdsmen appears to be major factor. Most worrisome in the present development is the pillaging, raping, killing, and kidnapping by the so-called Fulani herdsmen. Stories are found in the national dailies on daily basis of how these shepherds strategically attack several communities and houses, with sophisticated assault guns, AK-47.

According to Okereke (2012) and Bello (2013), the conflicts in most part of Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. These Fulani herdsmen and farmers have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other. Recent studies conducted by Okereke (2012) and Kasarachi (2016) have shown that, serious conflict erupt between Fulani herdsmen and farmers leading to loss of lives, valuable properties and destruction of vast expanse of arable agricultural farmlands thereby posing serious threat to food security since farmers for fear of attack could no longer go to farm and harvest their farm produce. The latest attacks by Fulani herdsmen is on the upsurge, with the latest attacks in February 2018 happening in Benue State, Taraba State, Nassarawa State, and few cases of attack in other states.

In recent times, the killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash has rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with the Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer crops. This recent wave of violence in Nigeria as observed by Kasarachi (2016) has disrupted socioeconomic, religious, and educational activities, political instability and threatened the national unity in Nigeria. These extra judiciary killings have forced thousands of people to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety. Okereke (2012) asserts that this unfolding violence have become so alarming that there is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is at a crossroad and gradually drifting to a conflict society. Equally begging for answers are the social issues of the rape of women, robbery, and kidnapping with ultimate intent for ransom (Ajibefun, 2018).

1.2 Statement of the Problem
Conflict between nomad and the settled farmer goes back to the earliest written records and is mythically symbolized in many cultures (Bello, 2013). Cain slew Abel; the Chinese emperors built the Great Wall to keep out the marauding hordes. In West Africa, farmers formerly are associated pastoral peoples with large-scale military conquest (Blench, 2004). But with the coming of the colonial regimes and the collapse of indigenous states, conflict between farmers and herdsmen took on a different colouring, becoming more associated with competition for natural resources. Descriptions of such conflict abound in the pastoral literature (Chomsky, 2015).

Nigeria, however, presents a very special situation quite unlike other West African countries, for two reasons, most notably the ambiguous prestige of pastoral culture particular to Fulani pastoralists but also because of its large and comparatively wealthy population. Nigeria has a
restricted inventory of pastoral peoples, the Fulani, the Kanuri-related groups, the Shuwa, the Yedina and the Uled Suleiman. The most numerous and widespread are the Fulani who have expanded eastwards from the Gambia river over the last thousand years and probably entered Nigeria in the fourteenth century (Clark, 2018). The cattle-based pastoralism of the Fulani has thus been the most significant focus of herder/farmer conflict in Nigeria. For a long period, the Fulani were confined to the edge of the desert. During the twentieth century, Fulani herders began to migrate through and settle in whole zones that were previously inaccessible to pastoralists, bringing them into contact with previously unknown peoples, cultures, and production systems. The consequences of this were a raft of untested interactions between all parties and considerable space for misunderstandings and conflict.

Unfortunately, increased competition of pastoralists for a dwindling ‘stock’ of grazing land has pitched them (Fulani herders) against farmers. Conflict between farmers and Fulani herdsmen has become so rampant. For instance, violence erupted on 18 December, 2009, between these two groups when pastoralists attacked the farming village of Udeni Gida - two weeks after a clash with farmers on 6 December, when herdsmen led their cattle into rice fields resulting in the death of a farmer.9 Clashes between these two, made local authorities in Borno and Plateau States to expel 700 pastoralists from Borno State in the northeast in May 2009, and some 2,000 from Plateau in April 2009, respectively (Global Terrorism Index, 2015).

1.3 The Impact of Climate Change on Pastoralism in Nigeria

Global climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. Evidence is now overwhelmingly convincing that climate change is unequivocal and happening at an unprecedented rate (IPCC 2013; Adhikari et al. 2015; Huang et al. 2016). Climate change impacts are expected to severely affect arid and semi-arid rangelands which cover nearly two thirds of the African continent (Galvin et al. 2001). Many of the impacts of climate change in these areas are characterized by variability in rainfall patterns and extreme weather events such as recurrent droughts, floods and wind storms (IPCC 2007, 2013).

One of the major factors affecting pastoral farming in Nigeria is climate change, this result from long dry season in a year. Describing the annual herding cycle and how climate change has affected herders in Nigeria, Iro (1994) stated that the herding season begins with southward movement of the herds along rivers and stream valleys from October to December – marking the end of rainy season and beginning of dry season. January to February is the harmattan season that is characterized by longer grazing hours, herd splitting, and more frequent visits to stable water sources. The months of March and April are usually the toughest for the herdsman and his cattle, as it is the hottest period in the grazing calendar. Indeed, he now herds his cattle only in the evenings and nights (Iro, 1994). Iro (1994) believed that, climate change coupled with the hot weather in the north caused the Fulani herdsmen to look for greener pasture southward.

The farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria are a preview of the economic, security and environmental risks posed by climate change. Further migration and displacement stemming from climate change is a global trend that is likely to increase in intensity in the coming decades. While resource scarcity and disputes in land use management are issues that are mostly endemic to the developing world, they are primed to escalate to a global scale. It is
imperative that efforts are undertaken now to develop measures to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change and reduce conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in not only Nigeria, but across the entire region.

The changes occurring in the climate, such as rainfall pattern change, can induce human (and animal) migration as a form of adaptive strategy especially by families that are agricultural or natural-resources dependent. Climate change is a global concern now that different countries including Nigeria are living in the reality of its impacts. These impacts are felt more in northern Nigeria (the arid region) where there is an evident ecological decline resulting in drought and desertification.

Climate change has constituted a great threat by putting great pressures on the land and thus provoking conflicts between them. However, improvements in human health and population have enhanced a much greater pressure on land. Since the 1980s therefore, there has been a marked expansion of cultivation of the Fadama (fertile or rich land) areas. This means that both the farmers and cattle herders have engaged in fierce struggles for access to such valuable lands which, often, result in increased conflicts and violence (Abbas, 2009).

Nordas and Gleditsch (2007) state that conflict-inducing effects of climate change have emerged in the literature and although several casual chains and/or paths to these conflicts have been suggested. While fundamental environmental factors for environmental migration are land degradation, droughts, deforestation, water scarcity, floods, storms, and famines linked to food insecurity. Changes in climate are expected to have major negative consequences in certain parts of the world. In developing country like Nigeria we are likely to see significant drops in food production, with increased temperatures possibly accelerating grain sterility, shifts in rainfall patterns accelerating erosion and desertification and rendering land infertile, sea-level increases and flows inundating farmlands and disrupting fish populations, and extreme weather events disturbing agricultural processes. Water scarcity also may increase with shifts in rainfall, while disease may spread with increased temperatures.

2.1 Theoretical Underpinnings
A conscious effort will be made to adopt a theoretical framework that will best explain and guide us in understanding the linkage between climate change and Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in Nigeria. The link between environmental resources and conflicts has engaged the minds of scholars as Baechler; Percival and Homer-Dixon; and Gleditsch. Against this background, Homer-Dixon articulated the theory of eco-violence which we shall usefully adopt here. Homer-Dixon and Blitt, argue that large populations in many developing countries are highly dependent on four key environmental resources that are very fundamental to crop production: fresh water, cropland, forests, and fish. Scarcity or shrinking of these resources because of misuse, over-use or degradation under certain circumstances will trigger off conflicts.

According to Homer-Dixon: Decreases in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth, and unequal resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This
can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts (Homer-Dixon & Blitt, 1998).

The fundamental theoretical assumption of the theory is that resource scarcity is the product of an insufficient supply, too much demand or an unequal distribution of a resource as a result of environmental hazards that force some sector of a society into a condition of deprivation and violence. These four sources of scarcity are in turn caused by variables such as population growth, economic development, pollution and obviously climate change. Thus, environmental resource scarcity will constrain agricultural and economic productivity, further inducing the disruption of economic livelihoods, poverty, and migration. Migration can occur either because the environmental quality of a habitat has become unliveable or, more commonly, because the migrant’s economic outcome is likely to be better in areas with greater resource availability. Both constrained productivity and migration are likely to strengthen the segmentation around already existing religious, class, ethnic or linguistic cleavages in a society (Gleditsch & Urdal, 2002) and thus precipitate conflicts.

It is fundamental to state that one basic feature of Fulani herdsmen is migration and at the heart of migration is climate change. Within the context of Fulani herdsmen and farmer conflict, the eco-violence theory is analytically fecund to capture, and explicate the intricate linkages that can develop between climate change and conflict. This is because the four environmental resources (fresh water, cropland, forests, and fish) are resources that climate change affects. As a result of climate change, seas have dried up leading to shortage of fish and fresh water. Drought and desertification have also eaten up crop lands and forest thereby making these environmental resources that trigger violence in short supply.

To avert these situations, individuals especially herdsmen stray to where they will get moderate weather, market opportunity, green –vegetation, forage and food, thereby threatening the means of production and reproduction of some other people who would not brook such encroachment. This engenders conflict. And when they are accepted, the long run effect will be pressure on land, food shortage, conflict of interests, cultural differences, over population, social disorganization, religious, social, and cultural intolerance which are in themselves conflict triggers.

Further, most of the impact of climate change is directly on agriculture, the theory helps us to explain the link between climate change and conflict. That agriculture has been neglected in Nigeria is no longer news. This situation has worsened considerably over the years because of government insensitivity to climate adaptation and mitigation and puts more pressure on the populace who suffer more because of climate change. As a result of low yield, farmers cultivate more lands now than they hitherto do, living little land for grazing of cattle. It is within this context that the link between climate change and conflict in northern Nigeria can be understood.

2.2 Security Implications of the Herdsmen-Farmers in Nigeria
“By all definitions and descriptions, according to Amanpour (CNN, 2018) the Nigeria’s so-called herdsmen are terrorists and if President Buhari does not believe so, then it would be difficult for anyone to reasonably absolve him (Buhari) from complicity. I cover wars and crisis as a journalist, I think I know, and the world also knows how terrorists operate”. The fact that herdsmen’s attacking pattern is focused primarily on wiping off farmers should rob Buhari who has achieved only little in hi economic agenda that is expected to be powered mainly by farmers. The impacts of these well-defined attacks on Nigeria’s economy are expected to be grave, maybe on the long run greater than that of Boko Haram which has been largely localised to the North East”. By the definition of terrorists, I agree with Christiane Amanpour that Nigerian Fulani Herdsmen are terrorists and President Buhari should deny it.

There is no universally agreed definition of terrorism. As Morris (2005) puts it “neither academic nor government experts can agree on a suitable definition for terrorism.” According to him, terrorism is a term used in broad sense to describe the use of intentionally indiscriminate violence to create terror or, to achieve a political, religious, or ideological aim. Primarily it refers to violence against civilians or non-combatants by armed person(s). Chomsky (2015) describes terrorism as simply “the killing of innocent people” for any reason in such a way as to create a spectacle. Many of the definitions characterize terrorism as a lower form or scale of insurgency motivated by a political agenda. The question is what are the Fulanis fighting for?

The southerners should wake up from their slumber and protect themselves because these attacks are becoming very unbecoming. In the words of Mazi Ejiogu Ugochukwu, reacting to Christiane Amanpour’s allegation on Buhari been behind the Herdsmen, “I don’t need a prophet to tell me about all these killings in Nigeria. We have seen their desperation to continue in power, their utterances, and their thoughts for the masses; it is simply inhuman and pathetic. Submit guns, then another is, create an FM station, after paying them some huge amount of money, and yet some miscreants are not seeing anything wrong in it. Rwandan genocide started this way.

Reports abound on the herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria. In a recent report chronicled by Nzehi, Onani and Anule (New Telegraph, Dec. 20), Amnesty International stated that between Jan. 5, 2016 and October 5, 2018, not fewer than 3,641 lives were lost in Nigeria. In the report captioned, “Harvest of Death: Three years of Bloody Clashes between Farmers and Herders” the organization stated that 57 percent of the deaths occurred in the year 2018 alone. According to its Director in Nigeria, Osai Ojigho the herdsmen attacks on the farmers were well planned and coordinated with the use of weapons like machine guns and AK47 rifles, it however appears little has been done by the authorities in terms of prevention, arrests and prosecutions, even when information about the suspected perpetrators was available”. It blamed the incessant bloody attacks and high casualty figures on the failure of the government to investigate the communal clashes and bring the perpetrators to justice. In yet another report, (Premium Times, December 17, 2018) captioned “Nigeria: How Nigerian Government’s Failures Fuel Farmers Herders conflict causing nearly 4000 deaths, another gloomy picture was presented. The International Criminal Court, ICC, independent body said it was examining farmers-herders crisis in Nigeria. The Lead Prosecutor of the ICC, Fatau
Bensoula is quoted to have disclosed this in The Hague, Netherlands, while presenting the annual report of the ICC activities in the year 2018, on Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. He said the ICC was examining information to determine where there is reasonable basis to believe that the crimes allegedly committed fall under its jurisdiction (Premium Times, 2018).

Another international independent Organization, International Crisis Group, ICG, in a published report, (Pulse, Nigeria, July 2018), pointed out that violence between Nigerian herders and farmers has escalated, killing more than 1,300 people” within seven months of the year 2018. According to ICG, the conflict has “evolved from spontaneous reactions to provocations and now to deadlier planned attacks particularly in Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, Nasarawa and Taraba states. The farmers-herders attack has become Nigeria’s gravest security challenge now, claiming far more lives than the Boko Haram insurgency”. Same report quoted by the (Vanguard, July 26, 2018) raises alarm that “worsening violence between farmers and herders could hit Nigeria’s general elections and destabilise the country. Fulani Herdsmen can now be called a terrorist group. How do we define terrorism in the light of the mayhem caused by this group?

There have been escalations of reported attacks by Fulani herdsmen who brutally kill natives of the invaded farming communities including women and children in various states across the country. Worst affected states include Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Kaduna, Adamawa, Zamfara, Oyo, Imo, Cross River and Enugu. The incursion by Fulani herdsmen is the second greatest security challenge confronting Nigeria. The attacks by the herdsmen on the sedentary communities have been increasing with each passing day (Akevi, 2014).

In Plateau state, where such conflict has a long history, some locals feel the attacks are part of an effort to get farming communities to leave their land, allowing the herdsmen to settle without competition for resources. “That’s why they attack villages – they don’t just attack because of quarrels with villagers,” said a farmer who did not want to be named. “They burn homes and farms so that we will have to start again somewhere else. But we cannot and will not leave because this is our land.”

The crisis has had a significant impact in Adamawa, a state with already stretched resources due to the huge influx of IDPs. The number of people reliant on land to farm for food is increasing just when climate change has made farming more difficult. As a result, the land disputes with the herdsmen are likely to increase. Despite the many deaths and federal government statements, there is little sign of the crisis coming to an end (www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jan/03/drought-worsens-deadly-conflict-between-fulani-herdsmen-nigeria-farmers)

The attacks by Fulani herdsmen have in recent years taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. In consequence, the sedentary agrarian communities have resorted to self-defense through local vigilante groups (Abass 2012; McGregor 2014). This has further aggravated violence, with destruction of lives and properties. According to Fasona and Omojola (2005), conflicts resulting from cattle grazing accounted for 35% of all reported crises between 1991 and 2005 in Nigeria.
Disagreements over the use of essential resources such as farmland, grazing areas and water between herders and local farmers are said to be the major source of the fighting. Fulani herders can travel hundreds of miles in large numbers with their cattle in search of pasture. They are often armed with weapons to protect their livestock. They frequently clash with farmers who consistently accuse them of damaging their crops and failing to control their animals. The Fulanis respond that they are being attacked by gangs from farming communities who try to steal their cattle and they are just defending themselves. The clashes used to be confined to Nigeria's central region, with the mainly Christian Berom farming community in Plateau state engaging in tit-for-tat killings with Muslim nomadic herders. But the continued effect of climate change on grazing lands has pushed the Fulani herdsmen further forward south in search of grass and water. This has widened the scope of the conflict with deadly incidents being increasingly reported in southern parts of the country, raising fears that the violence could threaten the fragile unity that exists among Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups (Mikailu, 2016).

In many of the affected rural communities, farmers are driven out of villages, ultimately becoming refugees in neighbouring states. Those that remain in the villages are afraid to travel to farms in remote locations due to fear of violence from herdsmen. The implication of this situation is ominous on food production. Already, there are reports that prices of foods have increased in some of the affected states while refugee problems have escalated. People have left their villages in the Benue state and migrated to the Nasarawa state, where the governor has voiced his inability to cope with the spillage. There are similar situations in other states as well.

The report noted that the large-scale violence is perpetrated by both sides "who engage in mass village raids" that involve wanton violence. "78% of the deaths committed by Fulani extremists since 2010 have been carried out as armed assaults," the report indicated. The report also disclosed that the Fulani Ethnic Militia is the deadliest of the bunch of Muslim Fulani herdsmen who have taken up arms against farmers in largely Christian areas. The report read, "The Fulani herdsmen are primarily Muslim while the southern farmers are predominantly Christian, which adds a religious dimension to the conflict over resources. Christian farmers in the south perceive the influx of Muslim herdsmen as an Islamisation of the country at a time when Boko Haram's presence in the country is still strong."

In April 2018 Fulani gunmen killed 19 people during an attack on the Church; afterwards, they burnt dozens of nearby homes. It is on record that in June 2018, over 200 people were killed and 50 houses were burnt in clashes between farmers and Fulani cattle herdsmen in Plateau State. In October 2018, Fulani herdsmen killed at least 19 people in Bassa. By 2018, over 2000 people were killed in those conflicts. On 16 December 2018, Militants believed to be Fulani Herdsmen attacked a village in Jema'a, killing 15 people and injuring at least 24 others, the attack occurred at a wedding ceremony. Some of these Fulani Herdsmen that are causing these problems are not even from Nigeria but from neighbouring countries. The porosity in the border leading to the influx of Fulani herdsmen from other West African States to Nigeria as well as illegal importation of firearms and ammunitions from Nigeria neighbouring borders of Cameroon, Benin Republic, Niger and Chad Republic (Omitola, 2014).
Terrorist groups are usually sponsored directly or indirectly by financial provision and other facilities. This is not different with the Fulani herdsmen. Apparently, the Fulani herdsmen are working on behalf of the cattle owners. Often the herdsmen are not the owners of the animals; they are only agents and caretakers on behalf of the owners on commission. It implies that their principals would provide support to enable them to actualize their struggle for grazing fields since it is in the business interest of the cattle owners. The question now is why these cattle owners cannot build ranches for their cows instead of letting them destroy farmlands across the country. Also, why should the federal government take it upon itself to provide grazing land (RUGA) for them across the country? It is individual businesses and what you do not have, you provide it. The cattle owners should import fodder or grass from the Southern States. I believe that it is the cattle owners that also equip them with the sophisticated weapons.

The terrorist atrocities were also committed in Kogi State, as the suspected Fulani herdsmen killed traditional ruler, the Onu Agbenema, Musa Edibo, and his wife and burnt several houses in separate attacks on Agbenema town, Aj’Ichekpa, Opada and Iyade villages on 19 March, 2018 (www.legit.ng, 2018). Dimelu, Salifu, Enwelu and Igbokwe (2017) has recorded similar attack carried out in Kogi that hundreds of lives lost in Kogi State in 2017. In Ondo State, suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked the farm of a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Olu Falae, at Ilado Village in Akure North Local Government area of Ondo State. The hoodlum burnt down five hectares of the oil palm farm; this attack preceded the attacks later carried out in his farm killing his security guards in the farm this was after the said man Olu Falae was kidnapped by suspected Fulani Herdsmen in September, 2015 and released after three days (Alabi, 2018).

Apart from clashes with farmers, there have been allegations that some Fulanis have been involved in armed robbery, rape, and communal violence especially in central and northern part of the country. Similar accusations have also been made against them in Ghana and Ivory Coast. Their association with the Hausa ethnic group and their nomadic nature has also made them vulnerable to attack, and they have been caught up in ethnic clashes not of their making. Much of the violence in central Nigeria dates to the 2002 and 2004 clashes in the Yelwa-Shendam area of Plateau state in which thousands lost their lives (Mikailu, 2016).

Plateau State, which had been relatively peaceful for about two years, has witnessed renewed confrontations, with herdsmen and farmers trading blame as to who triggered the resurgence. One report claims that at least 75 people were killed, some 13,726 displaced and 489 houses burned down, largely in Bassa local government area, from 8 September to 17 October 2017. The violence continued into 2018: since January, over 300 people have been killed in attacks on villages in Bassa, Bokkos, BarkinLadi, Riyom, Mangu and Jos South local government areas. The deadliest sequence of events was the 23-24 June attack on eleven villages in BarkinLadi and subsequent reprisals on a highway, which altogether killed more than 200 people.

In Benue State, tension rose sharply after 1 November 2017, when a state government law against open grazing – thus prohibiting herdsmen’ longstanding practice of letting their livestock forage unrestrained – took effect. From 1 to 7 January, armed men widely believed
to be herdsmen angered by the law raided six farming villages across Logo and Guma local government areas, killing over 80 people. The attacks have continued with over 300 more killed in the state since then. Logo and Guma, largely populated by farmers of the Tiv ethnic group, suffered the highest death tolls. As these areas abut Nasarawa and Taraba States, locals say attackers usually strike across the boundaries and retreat.

Nasarawa State has also suffered an increase in violence involving both herdsmen and farmer militias. From January to June 2018, over 260 people were killed in several incidents, mostly in the southern zone covering Doma, Awe, Obi and Keana local government areas. Most of these killings followed the influx of herdsmen driven there by the Benue state anti-grazing law.

North-eastern Adamawa state has seen recurrent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers from the Bachama ethnic group. Tensions rose sharply after 20 November 2017, when Bachama youth militias attacked three Fulani herdsmen’ settlements – Shaforon, Kikem and Kodemti – in Numan local government area, killing at least 55 people, including 48 children. That incident sparked Fulani reprisals in five Bachama villages in nearby Demsa local government area in the first week of December. Bachama leaders say over 100 people were killed, some allegedly by two Nigerian Air Force aircraft – an Alpha Jet and an EC135 attack helicopter – deployed to disperse Fulani fighters who were advancing upon Numan town. The air force rejected the allegation, insisting its mission was to fire “warning shots” at the “hideouts of miscreants”. It insisted its intervention caused no casualties and stopped the Fulani attackers from destroying Numan town. Vigorous police and military interventions in Adamawa stopped further major attacks, but killings continue a smaller scale.

Findings

The findings of this study also revealed that the major social effect of the menace of Fulani herdsmen are loss of human life, sexual harassment of human life, acquiring of weapons/arms, reduction in quality of social relationship, reduction of social support and high cases of rape. The major economic effect of the menace of Fulani – Herdsmen are reduction in output and income of farmers/nomads, loss of produce in storage, displacement of farmers, scarcity of agricultural products, loss of house and properties and infrastructural damages. The result agrees with the findings of Nweze (2005) and Bello (2013).

Two-thirds of eleven states of Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara could turn into desert this century. In these states, around 35% of the land that was cultivatable fifty years ago is now no longer arable (Odoh, and Chilaka, 2012). In addition, the Sudano-Sahelian region of Nigeria has experienced a 3 -4% decrease of rainfall per decade since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Climate change and population growth has brought about change in productivity of land. (Odoh, and Chilaka, 2012). Collectively, these impacts have led to disruptions of livelihood with serious consequences to food and civil national security as a result of competition for scarce environmental resources, especially arable land and clean water, but also habitable land, which is likely to become scarcer, more crowded and more costly as a result of continued rapid disruption by climate change.
Regardless of the economic and social aspects, a standard character of the Nigerian boundaries is porous (Burton, 2016). Nigeria has porous borders with Cameroon (1,690 kilometres) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometres) in the north, Benin (773 kilometres) in the west, and Chad (87 kilometres) in the northeast (Onuoha, 2012). The three critical immediate neighbours of Nigeria have a predominantly itinerant Fulani Islamic population that share common borders with Nigeria’s eight states in the northern region, namely Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Taraba and Gombe. The cross-border activities are defined in certain push and pull variables (Onuoha, 2012). According to (Alli, 2011), the push factors consisting of the domestic conditions in Chad, Niger and Cameroon include the severe socio-economic dislocation that stalls sustainable development, perennial drought, famine, political instability, social and ethnic conflicts and near collapse of state control of resources and institutions, as well as the survival pressures on immediate and extended family members. To Onuoha (2012) the Fulani herdsmen, moving with guns, causing violence, fighting with farmers are not Nigerians. These are foreigners coming into Nigeria to cause a breach of the peace of the nation. They are, therefore, terrorists and should be treated as such by the

The fact that farmer/Fulani clashes are politically motivated with ethnic conflation in Nigeria cannot be undermined. The comments of Nigerian political class especially Emir of Kano, Sultan of Sokoto and the silence of Mr. President, Muhammad Buhari juxtaposed this fact. Burton (2016) argued that, even Nigerian President Muhammad Buhari has been accused of giving the Fulani preferential treatment due to his own Fula heritage, and legislation proposed by his party has been met with suspicion and outrage. This legislation, a series of attempts to provide grazing land for the Fulani herdsmen, has been rejected at least once already, though the government continues its attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully (Burton, 2016).

The environmental factors range from desertification, bush burning, climate change and increase in population. Mohammed (2018) observed that like lake chad that used to provide water and other resources to more than 30 million people in four countries including Nigeria in the early 1960s has shrunk by 90% from 25000 square kilometers to 2500 square kilometers, thus forcing those affected to move southward in search of resources for their flocks. The figure 1 below shows how herders graze their livestock in farmland in northern Nigeria.
3.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, there is agreement among scholars that the social and economic impacts of climate change on developing countries like Nigeria are greater. The effect of climate change has led to poverty, poor health, increased migration and could possibly increase the occurrence of violent conflicts in these countries including Nigeria. Whether deadly conflict will break out under climate stress is also complicated. Studies suggest that climate effects could contribute to violent conflict in a number of ways, including, long-term environmental deterioration which may lead to scarcity (especially declining access to water or to land and the returns on use of land), increasing competition over those resources and possibly leading to violence.

Fulani-herdsmen and farmers’ crisis are very deadly and should be put to a stop by leaders at all levels and the led. It has taken thousands of lives in the country and therefore should be a very pressing situation that needs to be arrested.

A careful assessment of threats to national security reveal the activities of the armed herdsmen more than any other security challenge in the country now constitutes, the most dangerous. In the last one year, the activities of the armed herdsmen have resulted in unimaginable destruction and displacement of many communities and loss of thousands of lives. The development as pointed out earlier has added to the humanitarian challenges in the country. Equally very disturbing is, the fact that, the activities of the herdsmen have without doubt aggravated the feeling of mutual suspicion between host communities and herdsmen. The herdsmen who before now peacefully coexisted with communities all over the country are now perceived to be enemies. Yes, this is because of their new mood of operation of these Fulani herdsmen – killing, raping women and kidnapping.
The conflict has cost Africa's largest economy more than $14bn (£10bn) in the three years to 2015, according to the UK-based humanitarian organisation, Mercy Corps. It has "impeded market development and economic growth by destroying productive assets, preventing trade, deterring investment, and eroding trust between markets actors," it added in a report last July. The recent upsurge also represents a fresh security challenge for a country already stretched by the seven-year Boko Haram insurgency in its north-eastern region. Unlike that crisis, which is concentrated on a fraction of the country, this conflict is occurring in almost every part of Africa's most populous nation. The UN says it is worried by the "complete impunity enjoyed so far by perpetrators of previous attacks", and called on the government to do more to protect its citizens. Reports in the local media say MPs are working on a law that will establish grazing areas across the country to douse the tension between the rival groups. But the move has proved unpopular with many, especially in the south. "The Fulani herdsman is running a business with his cows, why should Nigerians give up their lands for his interests. The present Nigerian government has addressed these security threats in a very suspicious and callous manner. The first abnormality in the country’s security setup is in the president’s choice of security chiefs, it is antithetical to the democratic nature and federal character of Nigeria that majority of the security agencies in Nigeria are headed by persons who share the same faith. Despite repeated calls by different religious bodies and groups in the country on the president to diversify his security appointments, the president has blatantly refused to do so. Secondly, the cold and shady response of the police and army in Nigeria to cases of insecurity makes one wonder if they are not complicit to the religious violence being inflicted by these terrorists. Thirdly, despite glaring evidence of repeated unwarranted attacks by the Fulani herdsmen, the president has refused to declare them terrorists or place serious grazing sanctions on their corporate body known as the Miyetti Allah. One is poised to assume that it might be a calculated attempt to realize the goal of Uthman dan Fodio which Sir Ahmadu Bello championed (Mbagwu, 2019).

The President has failed to make public a copy of what he termed gazette of application by any State Government that accepted RUGA in her State. He has not also been able to explain reasonably to the citizens of this country why the hurry to set up RUGA in various States, knowing very well that power to allocate lands is vested on the States Governors (Abayomi Ahmed).

According to CNN/Sycamoretimes.com, “By all definitions and description, the Nigeria’s so-called herdsmen are terrorists and if President Buhari doesn’t believe so, then it would be difficult for anyone to reasonably absolve him from complicity” (Christiane Amanpour – CNN). It is quite clear that the Fulanis have destroyed Hausa tribe and made them their slaves. Look at the tribes of the Emirs and the governors in the core Northern States of Nigeria; most of them if not all are Fulanis and not Hausas. Look at all major Imams in all the Northern States are all Fulanis and not Hausas. Nigerian should all open their eyes especially the Yorubas. This is not the time to chicken out.

5.2 Recommendations
The sporadic and on-going violent conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in rural communities in Nigeria are a serious threat to human security and development in the
country. The threat of the Fulani herdsmen is taking a new dimension now. It is not only in rural communities that they operate now but also along the country’s highways where they kill and kidnap innocent Nigerians. Something urgent must be done and be done now because tomorrow may be too late.

(i) The first thing to be done for the country’s insecurity is for all the Service chiefs to be removed and fresh Service Chiefs appointed to replace the current ones. If this is not done now, then it shows that President Buhari and his government are only paying lip service to security issues in the country.

(ii) RUGA should be provided in the Northern region for these herdsmen and their cow. The issue of providing RUGA in all the state of the country is not acceptable. The federal government getting involved in this is very suspicious because cattle rearing is an individual business. The owners of these cows should import fodders and grasses for the cows and not take them to farmlands to destroy crops.

(iii) Cattle breeders should build and have their ranches as it is done in foreign countries. Cows are not to be allowed to roam about into farmlands and the street causing accidents.

(iv) The owners of these cattle to change from pastoralism to ranching, and government support could be provided through the provision of soft loans and start-up incentives.

(v) The Federal Government as a matter of urgency should ensure that ranches are created in the Northeast and other states that want them and not by force. This will go a long way to stopping movement of the cows, reduce clashes with farmers. The owners of these cows should provide fodders and grazing land in their communities after all cow breeding does not contribute much to our GDP.

(vi) Nigerian borders must be checkmated by our security operatives to track all foreign herdsmen illegally migrating into the country. Nigerian immigration and forest guards must increase and intensify surveillance around the forests surrounding Nigerian boundaries with neighbouring countries to stop illegal immigrants generally and foreign herdsmen in particular, whom the cattle breeders associations and other stakeholders have claimed to be responsible for the terrorist attacks on farming communities and rural dwellers across Nigeria.

(vii) The issue of arm proliferation should be seriously investigated because these herdsmen carry about dangerous weapons without any challenge from the police and army.

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