

Political Economy of Pastoral Transhumance and Rural Insecurity in Benue State, North Central, Nigeria, 2010-2022

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Abstract

There is an ongoing grass root war between pastoral community and host community over land for grazing and farming in Benue State. Existing works focused on how climate change, desertification, resource scarcity and population explosion as factors aggravating rural insecurity in Benue State. However, there is knowledge gap on how activities of Fulani pastoralists lead to insecurity in the State. This conflict occur when herdsmen migrate into farm lands for grazing, usually farmers becomes apprehensive any time herdsmen decided to move their cattle for grazing. This is because the process of grazing has often been preceded by crop destruction, when crops are destroyed farmers become aggressive and decide to attack cattle in retaliation for their destroyed farms because herdsmen has often refused to take responsibility for crop destruction and most often, Fulani herdsmen embark on reprisal attacks for their cattle and this lead to violent killings and displacement. We appropriated the basic propositions emanating from the blended theories of relative deprivation and frustration aggression and argued that Fulani herdsmen inability to access grazing field due to farming activities lead to frustration and aggression because they lay claim to land as natural resource whereas no one should restrain them from accessing it thereby forced cattle into people's farms. We collected data through primary and secondary sources we employed questionnaire and interview for primary data collection and review of documents such as books, newspapers, official government documents for secondary data collection, primary data were analyzed using tables and graph while secondary data were analyzed using content analysis. We recommended that laws that encourages modern methods of livestock rearing that emphasized on confinement of livestock be formulated to reduce regular contact and conflict between herdsmen and farmers.

Key words: Pastoral transhumance, herder-farmer conflicts, insecurity, grazing reserve, rural areas, Nigeria

Introduction

There is a ragging battle in the rural areas of North-Central region of Nigeria between grazers and farming communities. It has been an age long battle, but recently it has escalated and snowballed and has assumed a very dangerous dimensions. The conflict occurs when Fulani grazers move into non-Fulani home lands in search of grazing field. This usually leads to destruction of crops. According to Okeke (2014) the herdsmen usually provoke the farmers to act in defense of their crops (preventing entry into farms or attacking their cattle) in response, the herders embark on reprisal on farming communities. While farmers lay claim to land herdsmen insist that land is a common resource and will stop at nothing to gain access for grazing.

Pastoral transhumance is a system of livestock rearing and production characterized by seasonal cyclical migration between complimentary and ecological areas usually as coping

strategies for harsh conditions (Egwu, 2016). Migration is supervised by a few people, it is an enduring process of livestock production, and transhumance is based on practical and economically viable management of pastoral resources. Transhumance helps pastoralists to survive the major economic and climate crises that periodically occur. It has also enabled groups to affirm and maintain their cultural identities (Egwu, 2016). This has however led to contact conflicts with crop farmers because of crop destruction by cattle and this has aggravated insecurity in rural areas.

Rural insecurity is seen as a situation whereby a person, group of persons, or community in the rural areas are intentionally inflicted with death, robbed, raped, kidnapped. For short, it connotes kidnapping, banditry, killings, rapping, robbery, among others in the rural areas (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). For instance, banditry is organized violent crime committed by criminals who engage in raiding, armed robbery, kidnapping among others.

Herdsmen attack is prevalent in Nasarawa, Plateau, and Kogi, Niger but more severe in Benue States. This is because Benue State is blessed with vast arable land which is good for both farming and grazing activities. During the terrible dry and rainless months of the year; they find solace in the green fields found in North Central and Southern parts of Nigeria. The major problem that arises from this decision to migrate their cattle to these green fields is that these pastures are also dominated by crops because the main occupation of the people in the rural areas is farming this tend to make farmers become apprehensive and nervous when herds of cows approach their source of livelihood thus, clashes with Fulani grazers ensue. (Ibrahim, 2014).

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Benue State and determine its implication on rural security, and suggests appropriate strategies to reduce the incidence of Fulani herdsmen attacks in Benue State.

Methodology

The data for this study was drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was generated from field survey carried out in six Local Government Areas of Benue State plagued by rural insecurity. The six LGAs are Makurdi, Guma, Katsina, Kwande, Agatu, Otukpo. Interviews were conducted face to face and discussions held in local languages with the help of an interpreter. In total, 81 respondents were interviewed; 95% of respondents were male, and 5% were female; reflecting the majority of the male gender in both herding and farming activities.

Data generated from the survey was complemented by literature review on the topics activities of pastoralists and insecurity. The review provided understanding of the global and

domestic dynamics of the problem based on existing research knowledge, and records of policy oriented conferences and workshops. Media tracking and records of herdsmen attack in Benue State provided additional sources of information. However, the main limitation of the research methodology lies in the time constraints' and the unwillingness of respondents to divulge sensitive security information to make our research robust and the inability of researchers to employ qualitative sources such as focus group discussions key informants interview (KII) that would have further enriched findings.

Review of literature on activities of Fulani pastoralists and rural insecurity

Pastoralists-crop farmers' clash have become prevalent in Benue State. This is because Benue State is blessed with vast arable land fertile for both grazing and farming activities meanwhile, Benue people are predominantly crop farmers. Crop destruction is the major trigger of conflicts between the two major occupational groups. Crop farmers often complain that herdsmen negligently lead cattle into their farm lands whereas, herdsmen accused farmers of restraining their movement for grazing especially along grazing routes as it has been covered by farms that their intention is not to graze cattle on people's farms. They explain that, in some cases, some cattle go astray into farms to feed on crops leading to crop destruction (Abubakar & Yakubu, 2014).

Historically, the Fulanis are said to originate from Senegambia, before spreading across 20 States in West Africa and the Sahel up to Western Sudan and the Central African Republic (Blench, 2010). The pastoralist system involves young men who tend to herd while the women cook and sell animal products in the market. The elderly, on their own stead, are in charge of developing and managing resources at the level of the community and domestic units (Iro (1994).

The activities of Fulani pastoralists show that the phenomenon has progressively metamorphosed from rudimentary communal skirmishes to organized armed confrontation in its apparent dynamics of degeneration (Al Chukwuma, 2016). In its latest manifestation, the phenomenon depicts a genre of violence characterized by immense arms bearing and brutal sophistication (Okoli & Altehe, 2014). In almost every State in Nigeria, Fulani herdsmen graze where they like, destroy crops, block traffic, rape women, beat up farmers and occasionally unleash (wage) deadly attacks on host communities where they pass through where there is slightest restrain to their way (Okeke 2014).

According to Bolanriwa (2012) from late 2012, the killing by the Fulani herdsmen in the middle Belt began to take on a systematic and methodical pattern that increasingly looks like a deliberate plan to wipe out native ethnic groups either by killing or displacing them, in

order to take control of lands and fields in the region. For instance, in March 28, 2015 the clashes between Fulani and Tarok in Plateau State resulted in deaths of 18 persons. Similarly, the clashes between Fulani herdsmen and natives in Bokkos areas of Bokko LGA in Plateau State led to the deaths of 18 persons as well. The record is endless.

Thus, Uhembe (2016) explain that Central Nigeria has become hotbed of Fulani herdsmen attack. Benue State have come under siege in some instances, the crisis is caused by the indiscriminate search for cattle pastures by the Fulani herdsmen. In the process, they encroach on farmlands and their cattle destroy food crops. When reports are made herdsmen refuse to accept responsibility for the destructions caused by their cattle, they rather confront and challenge farm owners expressing their plight. Such challenges get heated and leads to conflicts which creates great insecurity to host communities because the herdsmen are said to be well armed.

Scholars have made attempt to explain the phenomenon from diverse perspectives with a view to finding solution to the challenges. Odoh & Chilaka, (2012:112; Okeke, 2014) argued that, the rural insecurity is centered on the change in climate. (Uhembe, 2016) observes that the most fundamental reason why Fulani herdsmen migrate to other areas is because of desert encroachment (desertification) of the Sahara region caused by climate change". A lot of communities are heavily dependent on natural resources and it is also very crucial for individual wellbeing. Admittedly, climate change significantly undermines individual livelihoods and community growth thereby undermining the capacity of states to provide social services and economic opportunities needed for state development and stability. Climate change impedes development, intensifies income disparities between rich and poor and ultimately degenerates into communal conflicts. However, Nte, (2015) observe that climate change is global phenomenon and not peculiar to Nigeria, he blamed the crisis on the failure of government.

In another view, Okoli (2016) explained that the shrinking of ecological space and resources creates an atmosphere of Eco scarcity which raises the stakes and premium on the available resources. What usually results from this is fierce competition and desperate struggle for subsistence. In this context, therefore, conflict does not only become inevitable; it simply becomes a matter of survival with reference to the herdsmen and rural communities. Blench (2004) observes that the ecological dynamics engendered by climate change tend to drag various land users into conflict relations in the context of resources scarcity and want (Okoli et al, 2016). However, this has also failed to explain the cause for increased in herder-farmers conflicts in Benue State as it only point to the likely drivers of herder-farmer conflicts without pointing to the triggers of the conflict.

Theoretical perspective

The theoretical analysis of this study is situated within the basic propositions emanating from the blended Relative Deprivation and Frustration-Aggression theory. The Relative Deprivation theory gained its present-day status and prominence through its extensive use as an analytic and interpretive tool in the book, *The American Soldier* published by Stouffer et al., in 1949. Meanwhile, its subsequent usage for social science analysis was credited to the works of scholars such as Geschwender (1964), Runciman (1966), Gurr (1970), Morrison (1973) and Wilson (1973).

Accordingly, Kommentare (2010), Relative Deprivation is the experience of being deprived of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled to have. It refers to the discontent people feel when they compare their positions to others and realize that they have less than them. Similarly, Schaefer quoted in Kommentare (2010) conceptualized Relative Deprivation as “the conscious experience of a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and present actualities”. Also, it is a term used in social sciences to describe feelings or measures of economic, political, or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute. In the same vein, Gurr (1970) defined Relative Deprivation as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Accordingly, it is the gap between that “to which people believe they are rightfully entitled” and that which “they think they are capable of getting and keeping”.

On the other hand, the Frustration Aggression theory is a product of an experimental research conducted by Yale University Scholars namely John Dollard, William Doob, Neal Miller, O. H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears, and articulated in their magnum opus, *Frustration Aggression*, published in 1939. In this inquiry, Dollard et al (1939) attempted to state a relationship believed to be essential in many different fields of research. It is intended to suggest to the Social Scientist that when he sees aggression he should turn a suspicious eye on possibilities that the organism or group is confronted with frustration; and that when he views interference with individual or group habits, he should expect aggressive behaviour.

The central argument of Dollard et al. (1939) is that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Frustration, in this context, was specified as the thwarting of a goal response, and a goal response, in turn, was taken to mean the reinforcing final operation in an ongoing behavior sequence. At times, however, the term „frustration“ is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment of a “reinforce” but also to the reaction to such blocking. Consequently, being “frustrated” means

both that one's access to "reinforcers" is being thwarted by another party (or possibly by particular circumstances) and that one's reaction to this thwarting is one of annoyance.

In interfacing these blended theories to the subject of our study, it becomes imperative to appreciate that the increase in attacks by Fulani herdsmen is associated with frustration they experience as a result of non-fulfillment of their needs. The herdsmen inability to have unhindered access to land for grazing of cattle (as a result of restriction by local farmers) whereas the herdsmen sees land and water as common resources which they are entitled to and so should not be restrained by any, this notion has made them to engage in violent activities whenever they experience any restriction by local farmers and communities in Nigeria. Hence, they regard settled farmers as their potential enemies that militate against their survival and destiny, whereas crop farmers see the herdsmen as intruders in their communities who are determined to destroy their source of livelihood. The frustrated herders and farmers resort to violence, which leads to destruction of lives and property, displacement of farmers and this have affected food security.

Findings and Discussion

Our interview with Tor TIV the paramount ruler of TIV land revealed that pastoralists-crop farmers' conflicts in rural communities in Benue State is stimulated by three factors which include:

- Porous borders (Benue State is the major gateway to and from the Northern parts of the country and the neighboring countries),
- Indiscriminate movement caused by climate related factors and
- The killing of cattle/destruction of crops

One major proximate impetus which has exacerbated insecurity in Nigeria is the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked or unchecked. The porosity of Nigeria's borders has serious security implications for the country. Given the porous borders as well as the weak and security system, weapons come easily into Nigeria. Nigeria is estimated to host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation have enabled militant and criminal groups to have easy access to arms (Hazen & Horner, 2007).

The major reason why herdsmen attack has become a frequent occurrence is that Benue State is a gateway to and from the Northern part of the country to the South East and South-South regions where these herdsmen access any part of the South East or South-South. There are many routes which the herdsmen uses to connect the state from the neighboring countries.

The two major routes or corridors in Nigeria include the North-West corridor which runs from Benin Republic and Niger through Sokoto, Zamfara, Borno, and Kwara state, terminating in the South-West (Hazen & Horner, 2007).

The second route in the North-East which runs from Niger, Chad and Cameroon Republics through Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Jigawa, Kaano, Plateau, and Nasarawa terminates in the Niger-Basin, this route that poses threat to peace between farmers and herdsmen in Benue state. Because migrant herdsmen come through this route decide to settle in some rural communities in Benue State while on transit to continue grazing the next day. The poor management of transhumance routes or borders by authority makes it porous and makes free entry and exit into the state possible thereby causing serious security challenge to the state and the country at large. Benue State is seen as a major route or gateway to and from the Northeastern region. This factor has also been seen as one of the causes of crises between the Fulani migrants and the rural farmers. Akinyemi (2016) corroborated this fact and argued that the reason central state of Benue regularly comes under attack from Fulani herdsmen has been revealed and explained that the borders are porous and lacks proper monitoring.

On the killing of cattle by farmers...herdsmen have been seen to place much value on their cattle than on the lives of human beings and so will stop at nothing to kill and destroy properties once they discover that their cow has been killed by a farmer. The following citations in Al Chukwuma evidently confirm this view:

Our herd is our life because to every nomad, life is worthless without his cattle. What do you expect from us when our source of existence is threatened? The encroachment of grazing fields and routes by farmers is a call to war... whenever we turn we find the land reserved for our cattle feast, taken over by farmers... it becomes difficult for our herd to move and graze without veering into crops fields... once that happens, the farmers confront us and we have no option but to fight back.

This is a hostile environment in which the Fulani man lives. You have to be hostile as your environment to survive. There must be balance of terror for you to survive in the jungle. The Fulani herdsmen is a man that believes the entire world is after him and what he has. He believes he has to arm himself to the teeth... (Tell Magazine No.447, November 26, 2012, 51).

He (the Fulani man) has found himself in a situation whereby if he does not pay somebody to take care of his enemies, the enemy will kill him and take over his property (Iyochia & Duru, 2014: 8-9). (Al chukwuma, 2016 401-402).

The *Nation* newspaper in its December 21, 2016 caption: "Aftermath of herdsmen's attack: food crisis looms in Benue community argues that:

The community was on the verge of severe hunger at the moment... women and elderly men are afraid of going to their farms located far away from the community for fear of encountering the armed herdsmen in the surrounding bushes.

This state of affairs have the implication for rendering most of the farmers poor as the fear of being killed in their farms has deterred them from going to farm. The paper further quoted Mr. Smart Celestine Aguba as saying:

There is hunger everywhere. My father used to be a rich farmer, with big barn of yam. Now he doesn't go to farm for fear of being killed. The community is known for its resilience, but farming has been affected seriously.

So the fact on ground is that these frequent attacks have the potentials of reducing the income of the affected farmers and the state where it occurs. According to research carried out by Mercy Crops, a global humanitarian organization 2013 to 2016:

The ongoing conflict is thwarting the country's economic development to an enormous extent, and if conflicts were resolved, the average household affected today could see income increase by at least 46 percent and potentially 210 percent or higher and average of 47 percent of taxes (internally generated revenue) during these attacks.

This means that when this attack occurs, it reduces the income of the farmers by destroying their farm produce, killing their relations and friends and creating fear and sense of insecurity in them, thereby discouraging them from going to farm. This will in turn reduce the taxes will they pay to the government and thus the internally generated revenue (IGR) of the state will be affected.

The various cases of violent attack in Benue State involving the Fulani pastoralists and farmers consist of significant variables in economic, social, political and ecological parameters. These conflicts occur mostly in areas of stiff competition for grazing land and farming but the degree of intensity differs from community to community depending on the ecological location and communities involved (Ayih, 2013). The various activity also have the potential of rendering the affected farmers and communities poorer as many breadwinners were killed, thus affecting the income of their dependents.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to demystify the contending explanations in relation to the emergence of herder-farmers conflict in Benue State. Firstly, while we agree with the views held by some scholars that implicated climate change, resource scarcity, over population and increasing struggle for survival as factors responsible for the emergence of rural insecurity, we, however, argue that the explanation remains incomplete as it failed to unravel

the hidden cause of the aforementioned socio-economic phenomenon in the State. The emergence of herder-farmer conflicts can be located in the nature and character of Fulani herdsmen activities which tactically encouraged rural insecurity in Benue State. \

This is because of the peculiarities of the activities of the herdsmen, they move from one place to another in search of pastures. In this process, the herdsmen have reportedly trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables attempts by farmers to prevent them from causing havoc are met with stiff and violent resistance. Most times, the farmers are overpowered, injured, and killed, while others are displaced from their homes. Sometimes, the herdsmen are accused of taking this opportunity to steal, rape, raze homes and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through.

Secondly, contrary to the conventional belief that premised the emergence of herdsmen attack on factors such as resource scarcity, climate change, population explosion, we contend that this unilateral perspective is erroneous and incapable of explaining the emergence of rural insecurity in Benue State. As a result, we state clearly that the invasion and destruction of farmland by cattle is responsible for rural insecurity in the State.

Thirdly, we assert that the audacity with which herdsmen graze their cattle on every available land including farms is responsible for violent clashes. During conflict they rape female farmers, this invariably, created room for mutual suspicion and atmosphere of conflict. Finally, the illegal bearing of deadly weapons by Fulani grazers weakens proper regulation of migration across States boundaries. Contrary to the purported reason adduced that weapons were carried by herdsmen to secure their cattle, they have used same arms to kill, injure any one restricting their grazing activities. Table 1 below indicate casualties arising from herdsmen attack in Benue State beginning from 2009 to 2018.

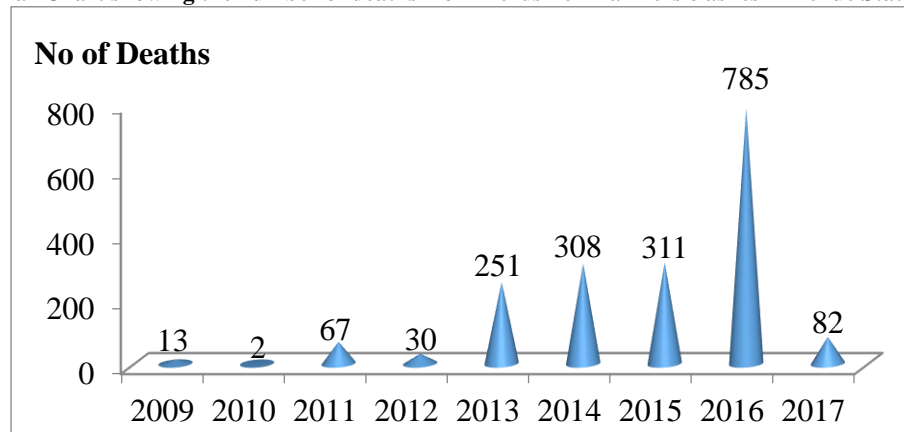
Table 1 Timeline of herdsmen attack in Benue state from 2009-2018

S/N	Description	Start Date	End Date	Number of deaths
1	Communal Clash	2009-04-16	2009-04-16	8
2	Farmers vs Herdsmen	2009-07-18	2009-07-18	5
3	Fulani clash with Tiv	2010-05-03	2010-05-03	2
4	Fulani herdsmen's revenge	2011-02-07	2011-02-07	2
5	Fulani herdsmen's revenge	2011-02-07	2011-02-11	27
6	Fulani sack Tiv communities	2011-06-21	2011-06-21	38
7	Fulani invade Tiv community	2012-03-03	2012-03-05	30
8	Farmers clash with Fulanis	2013-01-27	2013-01-27	3
9	Tiv farmer vs. Fulani herdsmen	2013-03-08	2013-03-08	2
10	Tiv farmers clash with herdsmen	2013-03-13	2013-03-13	2
11	Farmers clash with Fulani	2013-04-23	2013-04-23	10
12	Fulani killed Mourners in Agatu	2013-05-07	2013-05-07	47
13	Fulani invade Agatu community	2013-05-14	2013-05-14	40
14	Fulani herdsmen attack	2013-05-29	2013-05-29	17
15	Gunmen kill five villagers	2013-06-12	2013-06-13	5
16	Tiv farmers clash with herdsmen	2013-07-05	2013-07-05	20
17	Communal clash	2013-07-08	2013-07-08	9
18	Fulani herdsmen invade Agat	2013-07-31	2013-07-31	8
19	Herdsmen and Farmers	2013-09-28	2013-09-29	20
20	Herdsmen kill 3	2013-10-04	2013-10-04	3
21	Fulani herdsmen attack Agatu	2013-11-07	2013-11-07	7
22	Fulani attacks Agatu	2013-11-09	2013-11-09	36
23	Fulani attacks Guma	2013-11-20	2013-11-20	22

24	Fulani herdsmen kill 12	2014-01-19	2014-01-19	25
25	Gunmen attack Agatu	2014-01-20	2014-01-20	12
26	Fulani herdsmen attack Adeke	2014-01-20	2014-01-20	3
28	Fulani attacks Tiv community	2014-02-24	2014-02-24	8
29	Fulani herdsmen kill	2014-03-06	2014-03-06	30
30	Fulani herdsmen kill 1	2014-03-08	2014-03-08	1
31	Herdsmen attack Suswam's convoy	2014-03-10	2014-03-10	14
32	Raid in Guma	2014-03-12	2014-03-12	28
33	Herdsmen attacks Suswam's village	2014-03-12	2014-03-12	22
34	Herdsmen attacks Guma	2014-03-23	2014-03-23	25
35	Attack on Agena village	2014-03-25	2014-03-25	7
36	Fulani attacks Agatu	2014-03-29	2014-03-29	19
37	Chemical weapons on Gwer west	2014-03-29	2014-03-29	15
38	Fulani attacks Agatu	2014-03-30	2014-03-30	19
39	Cattle dealers kill 5	2014-04-01	2014-04-01	5
40	Herdsmen attacks Logo	2014-04-10	2014-04-10	6
41	Fulani herds attack Obagaji	2014-04-15	2014-04-15	12
42	Herdsmen attacked Ogbadibo	2014-09-10	2014-09-10	20
43	Herdsmen attacked Agatu	2015-01-27	2015-05-27	17
44	Herdsmen attacked Logo	2015-01-30	2015-05-30	9
45	Marauder	2015-02-11	2015-02-11	40
46	Herdsmen attacked Agatu	2015-03-15	2015-03-15	90
47	Cattle rustlers kill 3	2015-04-23	2015-04-23	3
48	Herdsmen attacked Guma	2015-04-27	2015-04-27	28
49	Herdsmen invade Kwande	2015-05-11	2015-05-11	5
50	Herdsmen attacked refugee camps in Logo	2015-05-24	2015-05-24	100
51	Herdsmen attacked mourners in Kwande	2015-07-07	2015-07-07	1
52	Herdsmen attacked Buruku	2015-11-05	2015-11-05	12
53	Fulani herdsmen vs. farmers	2015-12-06	2015-12-06	6
54	Fulani herdsmen vs. farmers	2016-02-01	2016-02-01	13
55	Herdsmen & farmers clash in Buruku	2016-02-08	2016-02-08	10
56	Fulani herdsmen kill 6	2016-02-11	2016-02-11	6
57	Fulani herdsmen vs. community	2016-02-18	2016-02-18	226
58	Herdsmen attacked Agatu	2016-02-20	2016-02-24	500
59	Fulani herdsmen killing	2016-03-04	2016-03-04	6
60	Herdsmen attacked Logo	2016-03-09	2016-03-09	8
61	Fulani herdsmen killing	2016-03-10	2016-03-10	2
62	Farmers/herdsmen clash	2016-03-10	2016-03-10	3
63	Herdsmen attack	2016-03-16	2016-03-16	11
	Fulani herdsmen vs. farmers	2017-01-03	2017-01-03	5
64	Fulani herdsmen vs. farmers	2017-01-23	2017-01-23	13
65	Rampaging herdsmen attacked Ohimini	2017-01-24	2017-01-24	15
66	Herdsmen attack	2017-03-02	2017-03-02	10
67	Herdsmen attacked Tiv community	2017-03-15	2017-03-15	7
68	Rustlers vs. herdsmen	2017-03-15	2017-03-15	1
69	Herdsmen vs Farmers	2017-04-20	2017-04-20	6
70	Herdsmen attack	2017-05-08	2017-05-08	3
71	Herdsmen killing	2017-05-13	2017-05-13	8
72	Fulani vs Farmers	2017-08-09	2017-08-10	3
73	Fulani herdsmen	2017-10-23	2017-10-23	10
74	Fulani vs Farmers	2017-11-01	2017-11-01	1
75	Herdsmen kill man	2017-11-1-	2017-11-10	1
76	Fulani herdsmen kill 50	2018-01-01	2018-01-01	58
77	Fulani herdsmen attack	2018-01-03	2018-01-03	3
78	Herdsmen vs Community	2018-02-01	2018-02-01	7
	Total			1916

Source: Nigerian Watch, Retrieved from <http://www.nigerianwatch.com/on> April 2nd, 2018 and Daily post Retrieved from <http://www.dailypost.ng/on> June 3rd, 2018.

The table above show the number of deaths from herdsmen attack in various communities and Local Government areas on different occasions and dates in Benue State from 2009 to 2018. Statistics between the periods indicate a total of 1916. This is represented on the graph below. The analysis that follows was undertaken with relevant cases which were reported by the press across the country.

Figure 1 Bar Chart showing the number of deaths from Herdsmen-Farmers clashes in Benue State 2009-2018

Source: Researchers' field work Data, (2018).

Result

The observation of the study arising from the answers to the questions posed to the participants indicated a unanimous and unbiased recognition that the activities of Fulani herdsmen lead to rural insecurity in Benue State. Majority of the participants agreed that the killings of villagers is responsible for increased in rural insecurity. According to them, the activities of herdsmen such as kidnapping, rape of female farmers among others has led to low agricultural output, hunger and soaring food prices and rural-urban migration. Basically, the larger number of the participants are of the opinion that one of the dangers of the activities of Fulani herdsmen is food insecurity. Hence, from the results gathered, it is safe to conclude that the activities of Fulani herdsmen is directly responsible for rural insecurity in Benue State.

Conclusion/Recommendation

We have observed that, the peculiarities of the activities of Fulani herdsmen, they move from one place to another in search of pastures. In this process, the herdsmen have reportedly encountered cattle theft hence their purported reason for carrying arms about. During their journey, they frequently trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables attempts by farmers to prevent them from causing havoc are met with stiff and violent resistance. Most times, the farmers are overpowered, injured, and killed, while others are displaced from their homes. Sometimes, the herdsmen are accused of taking this opportunity to steal, rape, raze homes and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through these acts has affected agricultural production to a large extent. We recommended modern method of grazing through enabling laws, this will go a long way to reduce frequent contact and friction between herdsmen and farmers.

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