

EFFECT OF MIGRANT PASTORALISTS ON THE SOCIO – ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the effect of migrant pastoralist activities on the socio – economic life of the people living in Edo State, Nigeria. The study takes a look at the herdsmen activities and insecurity in Nigeria, factors militating against effective management of migrant herdsmen activities, as well as socio- economic effects of Fulani herdsmen activities on the people living in Edo State. The study which adopted a survey design approach concluded that the struggle for limited natural sources is the bane of migrant pastoralists/ farmers’ conflict in Edo State, and that the reckless and senseless attacks on the framers in Edo State have great Socio- Economic implication on the people living in Edo State as many farmers have abandoned farming and farms, for fear of being killed, raped, or maimed by the ravaging migrant herdsmen. This by extension has led to increase in the prices of food items. Based on this, may recommend among others that the government should encourage the establishment of ranches by the herders’ in line with international best practices to forestall the serial killings by the migrant herdsmen and address the security threat posed by this attacks.

Keywords: Migrant Pastoralist, Socio- Economic, People, Edo State.

Introduction

Edo State was created out of the defunct Bendel State on 29th August, 1999. It lies between the latitude and longitude 6, 5438° N and 5, 8987°E. It is bounded in the North by Kogi State, East and South by Delta State and West by Ondo State. Edo State has an estimated population of three million, two hundred and eighteen thousand, three hundred and thirty two (3, 218,332) people only, spread across eighteen (18) Local Government Area (NPC, 2015). The state, like many

others, have three senatorial district; Edo North, Edo South and Edo Central. Edo state also lies within the tropical rainforest and farming is the predominant occupation of the people with specialisation in food and cash crops that are environmentally efficient in production capacity.

A large population of the Edo State practice husbandry. Migrant pastoralism is not of vocational interest to the state. Over the years, the different ethnic groups in the state have welcomed, with open hands Fulani herdsmen (pastoralist) into their communities. This has led to the increase in the population of Fulani herdsmen. Unfortunately, it has been noticed that blossoming relationship in cooperation is fast turning into fratricidal “wars” of immense socio – economic and sometimes, political effect on the state, in particular and the nation in general.

Going by the ugly stories that emanate from the covers of the newspaper about the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, one would think that cattle rearing have just begun in Nigeria. The Fulani cattle herders of today, is no longer what he used to be, unlike before, he is armed to the teeth. In fact, the Fulani herdsmen were listed by Global Terror Index as one of the top four deadly terror rings in the world. It has become re-curing phenomenon to see different ethnic groups across the geo- political zones at daggers drawn with Fulani pastoralist over issues that bother on grazing. In these conflicts, farms are looted, farms and homes burnt, food barns and storage are destroyed, and avoidable death tolls recorded. Particularly in Edo State, sundry reports of pastoral criminality across the state abound, leading to reprisal attacks by affected communities. The most dangerous aspect of this issue is that this seemingly organised atrocities are simultaneously going on in many parts of the country, thus, making it a national problem. As farmers’ herders’ conflict continues the search for peaceful resolution has been the concern of many Nigerians who are interested in the issue of peaceful resolution in including the government new community etc.

Objective of the Study

This study is intended to fill the knowledge gap in our understanding of the issues. It will also seek to expose the socio – economic effects of pastoralist herdsmen attack on the people living in Edo State, as well as seek workable solutions to reverse the trend and promote peaceful co-existence in the short run, and national integration and unity in the long run. This is the crux of this paper.

Research Questions

1. In what way do migrant pastoralist activities affect your farming activities?

2. In what way do migrant pastoralist activities affect your business?
3. In what way do migrant pastoralist activities affect your social life?

Related Literature

The theoretical framework for the study is the conflict theory. Basic social science theories on natural resources conflict such as Malthusian theory, Homer – Dixon theory, and classical sociology theory by Dufkheim, are amalgamated and galvanised to form a solid base for the study. The basic premise of conflict theory is that individual and groups in society struggle to maximize their share of the limited resources that exist and are desired by humans. Given that there are limited resources, the struggle inevitably leads to conflict and competition. No doubt, intergroup conflicts over scarce resources can snowball into violence and security breach as the herdsmen and farmers' clashes in Nigeria. Hence, Idris and Ewemien (2019), vividly capture the situation that over 600 Grazing Reserves were created from 1965 when the Grazing Reserve law was promulgated by defunct government of Northern Region. However, most of the Grazing Reserves have been acquired by powerful northern elites as private farms under the land use Act. This has reduced the land available for herdsmen to tend their flocks. The attendant over grazing of the available land, and the climate change facilitated aggressive desertification which rapidly turned the hitherto grazing lands to desert.

As observed by Green (2018), in the current global context of increasing consumption, growing populations and declining availability of many natural resources, numerous analysis have predicted that dispute over natural resources such as water, timber and oil (and in the case, grazing land), will become more common. Conflicts over natural resources are likely to occur in various contexts, from local disputes to international disputes.

Fulani are referred to by different names in Africa. In countries where French is the official language, the Wolof term Peul is widely used. In Gambia and Sierra Leone, the Mande term Fula is principally applied. In Nigeria and Ghana, they are known by the Hausa term "Fulani". Kanuri and other people of Chad basin refer to them as **Felaata**. Their own term for themselves is Fulbe, which is also the term employed in German writings (Hagberg in Baidoo, 2014).

In 2014, according to the global terrorism index report, Fulani militant kill more than 1,200 people and they headed the list of the most fanatical terrorist groups in the region according to the BBC (Soriola, 2018). This has created a situation of insecurity in the nation, while the search for security seems elusive.

Etymologically, the English word ‘security’ originates from the latin word ‘securus’. ‘se’ means ‘without’ and ‘Curus’ means ‘uneasiness’, or a peaceful situation without any risks or threats’ (Mesjaez in Ekot, 2004). The concern of security is a basic pre – occupation of every human person or community. This is because security affects, not only the satisfaction of human person or nation, it is only under a secure atmosphere that individuals within the state can engage in productive activities to meet their needs. Similarly, it is under a secure atmosphere that the state can effectively mobilize its human and material resources for meaningful and sustainable development (Imobighe, 1998).

Insecurity is a product of conflict. Conflict on its own is a result of differences in opinions and perspectives. It arises as a result of perceived misconception of the superiority of a shared value of an individual or group of persons over that of another. It springs up from the deliberate effort of a person or groups to impose its ideals, beliefs and convictions on another, which it considers to be of low value. Though conflict is an inevitable part of life (Ogonor in Okhiku, 2015); yet conflict when not properly managed, could snowball into violence, which in turn breeds insecurity of lives and properties in the state. (Okhiku, 2015). This no doubt is quite frightening as there seems to be no way out of these labyrinths as there seems to be a political undertone to the imbroglio.

Just like some other states of the Federation, Edo state has had its own share of herdsmen attacks on farmers and other citizens of the state. Alexander (2018) reported that armed men suspected to be Fulani herdsmen allegedly killed no fewer than five persons in Ugboha and Odiguate communities in the Esan South – East and the Ovia North – East Local Government Area of Edo State. In these attacks several persons were also said to have been injured. The Ugboha incident which occurred about 7:30pm on that fateful day involved a first year student of the Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, Collins Ojierakhi who was ambushed along with his friends along Uromi-Ugboha road. However, in Odiguate community the herdsmen were said to have allegedly invaded the community and shut sporadically killing two persons in the process.

As also reported in Punch (2018) bandits suspected to be herdsmen reportedly attacked a farmer indentified as one BashiruAlliu in the Owan East Local Government Area of Edo State. This took place at Ivbiaro community. It was reported that armed men numbering about six, had laid an ambush in Aliu’s farm as he was attending to his crops and suddenly attacked him with machetes. The assailants were said to have inflicted deep cut in the victim’s head at about 9:30am and left him to die before fleeing. The man, who was lucky not to have died, said he was told by the assailant that they were there to take his life.

Christian religious leaders are equally not left out in this ignoble development. As reported by Adekunle (2019), Reverend Father Agabi was adopted by gun men suspected to be herdsmen along Auchi-Igarra road on his way back to the parish at Ikpeshi, Akoko Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. It was however reported that the priest managed to escape from his abductors when the kidnappers slept off in the night.

In the same vein, certain woman was equally alleged to be raped and killed by the Fulani herdsmen at Ofumwegbe, close to Okada, in Edo South senatorial district. This resulted in protest by Ofumwegbe youth. (Independent Television, June 2019). This killing as recorded here is among the few recorded cases of the senseless killings by the Fulani herdsmen in Edo State.

It is a common belief among humans that every problem has an expiring date. Even among the medical practitioners, there is the motion that some alignments wears out with time. What this means is that no problem is seen to last forever. At least, after employing some medications or procedures, it is expected that positive results comes in at the end of the day. No doubt, there is also the belief of some progressive minded Nigerians that definitely, the herdsmen problem after all may not last forever if adequate and proper management techniques are adopted by the government in power to address the problem headlong, if they really care to try. Regrettably, as observed by Imobighe (2000), in some African countries, where political power has been hijacked by small powerful elite or group, to talk of national security is simply to talk about the security of the small ruling elite. For instance, until Samuel Doe seized power in Liberia, the interest of the small group of Americo – Liberians was all that mattered in the country. Also, until the liquidation of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the white minorities were all that mattered in that country.

A factor which is closely linked with the effect Of migrant pastoralists is religion. Religious intolerance is a major factor militating against effective management of the herdsmen induced crises in Nigeria. Religious bigots from time to time have used the cover of religion to inflict pains and hardship on the people who are presumed to be pagans. The herdsmen's who are Islamic fundamentalists, see the scramble for pasture as a means to go further and carry out the uncompleted jihad (Holy war) among the assumed "Pagans" who are mostly Christians in Northern and Southern Nigeria. One will not be in a hurry to refer to the gallant role of an Imam Alhaji Abubakar in Plateau State, who hid some 300 Christians from being massacred by the blood thirsty Fulani herdsmen were ready to slay the Christians in one of the villages. It took the patriotic stand of Alhaji Abubakar who is eighty – two years, and which though Muslim knew that Nigeria of old was one entity no matter the tribe, and creed. He told the ravaging herdsmen

that they were Muslims praying in the mosque and they left. It was on news that many Christians were not so lucky in that massacre.

The invasion of Catholic seminary in Benue State by herdsmen is also a fact that it is beyond the issue of grazing grass, but as some would always say, simply a matter of ethnic cleansing. And if so, then there must be a strong force who are behind those ravenous herdsmen, especially as they have been publicly backed by strong and influential lords who see nothing wrong in the killing of these innocent Nigerians. Edo state like many other states in Nigeria has had its own share of the matter, as it is no longer news to hear of massacre and killings by these herdsmen in different parts of the state. Realising the Catholic Faith in particular if nothing is done fast, the Catholic Church carried out peaceful protest in 2018 to show their displeasure. Yet, nothing seems to be happening in the physical, except perhaps in the spiritual realm.

Doubt standard in the implementation of laws in Nigeria has also created a very big problem. In fact, the Nigeria constitution forbade the possession of firearms by those who are not members of trained forces, such as the Army, Police, Civil defence, Customs, National Drug Law Enforcement Agents (NDLEA), etc. The law has even been worse implemented in the south as even hunters have been harassed from time to time for being in possession of even local gun; but contrarily, the Fulani herdsmen go around with dangerous weapon such as daggers, pomp action, AK47, etc. And yet despite known atrocities carried out by them in different parts of the country ,the Federal Government is yet to declare them terrorists groups ,yet the indigenous People of Biafra who did not perpetuate such heinous crime was declared terrorist group by the Nigerian Government. As noted by Gundu(2019),in part of West Africa and Nigeria, these herdsmen are affiliated to Jihadist movement and have access to military grade weapons. A typical case is Benue state where some farmers were said to have killed some Fulani herdsmen in retaliation to their serial killings is a point of note. The judgement of death sentenced on them shows that all is not well.

Moreover, the insecurity in the part of some of our politicians cannot be over emphasised. Like the African leaders (Kings and Chiefs), during the slave trade era; the politicians seem not to be in any way better. During the slave trade, African chiefs betray their subjects, arrested, tried and sold them into slavery, while acquiring ungodly wealth from the sales. Some of them, such as the victims of the trial of Arochukwu Oracle who was assumed to eat off the guilt, while in the real sense, they were sold out as salves to the whites. This concept of dog eat dog is visible today. As a result, they move unrestrictedly from one part of the country to another, living behind relics of destruction. In fact, there seems to be insecurity to the fragility of the political structure and the need to sustain it (Okhiku&Ujuanbi, 2015).

Closely related to the above, is the role of the Traditional African leaders, such as the Enigies, Edions and others who are saddled with the responsibility of leadership in the African society. Most of these leaders in their craving for wealth, do the unimaginable after collecting some cows or money from the Fulani, sometimes sold out their subjects by defending the Fulani's who perpetuate heinous acts in their domain.

Apart from the aforementioned reasons militating against effective management of herdsmen induced crises in Nigeria, there is the external factor. Basically, the external factor responsible for entrenched herdsmen activities is linked to African countries. The national borders of Nigeria are very porous. They allow for unrestricted movements from one country to another. This is even worse off in the boundary with Niger Republic and Chad. There seems not to be adequate demarcation of the boarders. This allows for unhindered movement in and out of Nigeria.

There is no gain saying that no meaningful development can take place in an unsafe environment, especially where the inhabitants are deprived of going to their farms or where herdsmen graze their cattle's freely in farms experience has shown is that nothing threatens the socio – economic development of a state as much as where there is insecurity. The teachers are afraid of fully armed herdsmen, have no option but to give in by receding the learners to an enclosure "safe enough".

Another angle to this is the high cost of money that the federal government is pumping into the fight against insecurity in the North which includes the Boko – Haram and its twin brother, the herdsmen. No doubt, such investment in military hardware automatically affects that should have been spent on the development of the nation's economy. Today, we hear of the Nigeria government spending much into state, while millions of its people are living in penury while the government is spending much on acquiring fighter jets. No doubt, this will boost the economy. Recently, it has become a common sight on the television to see an inception "Armed bandit" killed by fighter jets.

In addition, herdsmen activities which sometimes go with raping, maiming and killing of their victims, has further tend to undermined the dignity of the African woman who is expected to treat her body with utmost respect and exclusive reserve of her husband. This however is the untold story of victims of herdsmen attack. The fears of being raped or killed have led to a situation where many of these peasant farmers have abandoned their land and farms for the ravaging Fulani pastoralist. What thus portend is that nothing threatens the socio – economic development of state as much where there is insecurity, security gives confidence to people to

effectively invest and toil under a second environment because he is some of his or her life at least as long as God would permit it.

In addition, herdsmen attacks on villages and farmlands have led to a situation where prices of farm products are on the increase, since only few and bold Nigerians have the temerity to go to farm. This has led to a situation where the hardship of the people have further been aggravated as they now spend their take home money which do not take some barely able to have three square meals in a day.

Methodology

The survey research design was employed in this study. This is because it satisfies the three bases of qualitative research – i.e. describing, understanding and explaining the phenomena being investigated. Population of the study comprised of 3, 218,332 people across the 18 Local Government Area of Edo State. The sample size of this study was 300 respondent in (23) vulnerable communities in Edo State.

Questionnaires and focused groups interview (FGI) was used for the purpose of data collection. Purposive sampling method was used to ensure that communities with higher risk of conflicts are deliberately included in the sample.

Also a parametric and non parametric statistical tool was used for analysis of data that was generated across the three senatorial district of the state.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The focus group Discussion responses was gotten through personal contacts with the respondents as well as through the help of trained assistants who were mobilized to the different locations in the three senatorial districts of Edo states, where a total of 300 respondents from 30 villages from the three senatorial districts were interviewed.

The following responses were computed and presented below:

Research Question1

In what way do migrant pastoralist attacks affect your farming activities?

Table 1
Effect of Migrant Pastoralist attacks on farming Activities

SN		N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Migrant pastoralist attack affect how often I go to farm	300	3.5733	0.59369	Agree
2.	Migrant pastoralist attack affect how early I go to farm	300	3.6567	.072609	Agree
3.	Migrant pastoralist attack affect how long I stay in farm	300	3.6867	0.77707	Agree
4.	Migrant pastoralist attack affect my farming in areas far away from home	300	3.5400	0.81483	Agree
5.	Migrant pastoralist attack has prevented me from going to the farm alone	300	3.6867	0.77707	Agree

The result shows that all items from 1 to 5, had a mean score above the cut-off mark of 3.00. This shows that all the respondents considered that migrant pastoralist attack have influence on farming activities.

In most of the villages with the highest spate of attacks, farms location was a common denominator in all the attacks by pastoralist herdsmen. For example in of unmegbe, ikpeshi etc, findings indicate that the farms were located in the deep part of the forest. From discussion, it was submitted by the respondents that though the location of their farms are in the thick forest, and most times close to rivers and streams as mostly is the case with Edo north and south, however the fact that such areas guaranteed good yields has been a driving force to such location.

Research Question 2

In what way do migrant pastoralist activities affect your business?

Effect of Migrant Pastoralist Activities on Economic life of people living in Edo State

S/N		N	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Do migrant pastoralist attack affect your business	300	3.5500	0.86603	Agree

2.	Migrant pastoralist attack prevents me from taking my farm produce to markets outside my village	300	3.2867	1.07160	Agree
3.	Migrant pastoralist attack has prevented customers from outside my village to come to our markets to buy our produce	300	3.8200	0.56746	Agree
4.	Migrant pastoralist attack has reduced the quantity of goods that we take to the market	300	3.9167	0.35138	Agree
5.	Migrant pastoralist attack has reduced my income derieveable from my farming activities.	300	3.8500	0.53709	Agree

The data in table 2 above, show that most respondent who reacted to the interview in three senatorial districts of Edo State agreed that attack by pastoralist herders in their villages especially as it relates to their farm which is major source of their income has drastically reduced their economic empowerment and so has invariably affected their economic life. Thus, they have gradually adjusted to the meagre income contrarily to their hitherto existing life style.

Research Question 3

In what way do migrant pastoralist activities affect your social life?

S/N		N	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Migrant pastoralist attack affect your social life	300	1.5167	0.83188	Disagree
2.	Migrant pastoralist attacks affect your church/mosque attendance	300	2.2400	0.68114	Disagree
3.	Migrant pastoralist attack affect your social outing such as marriage ceremonies	300	1.9733	0.48999	Disagree
4.	Migrant pastoralist attack affects your night outing?	300	2.9133	0.80497	Disagree
5.	Migrant pastoralist attacks affect your attendance of birthday celebration?	300	1.9733	0.48999	Disagree

Results of respondents' reaction as seen in the table above also consistently shows that activities of pastoralist migrant has not affected the social life of the people living in Edo state Nigeria. Many have decided to avoid social activities especially during the night as there is no longer the certainty of safety return home after such outing. This has become even more terrible as movement from one village to the other within a particular local environment is not even guaranteed.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this research reveal that the attack by the migrant pastoralist on people living in Edo state Nigeria has greatly and adversely affected farming activities in Edo state, Nigeria. This is highly reflected in reduction of series of farming activities in different parts of the state due to seemingly unending attacks by migrant pastoralist, popularly referred to as Fulani herdsmen. This study is in line with Okhiku, Omorogbe and Okodugha (2019) that the fear of being raped or killed by these herdsmen has led to a situation where many farmers have abandoned their land and farm for the ravaging Fulani pastoralist. This no doubt will increase the poverty level of the people in a country regarded as the poverty headquarters of the whole world.

Effect of Migrant pastoralist Activities on the Economic life of the people living in Edo state life of the people living in Edo state, Nigeria.

The findings of this research reveal that migrant pastoralist activities have effect on the economic life of the people living in Edo state Nigeria, with mean scores of over 3.00 in all the five questions raised as indicators to economic activities among the people living in Edo state. This study is in line with the findings of Oseni and kadiri(2019), that the conflict between the Fulani-herders and farmers will obviously generate loss to the economy at large. The research also reveal that question two which elicits information on movement from one village location to another was highest with a mean scores of 4.00. The result is also a reflection of public opinion on the effect of the ravaging migrant pastoralist on the economic life of the people living in Edo state in particular and Nigeria in general.

Effect of migrant pastoralist activities on the social life of the people living in Edo state

The first part of the findings of this research reveal which are questions 1-3, clearly states that activities of migrant pastoralist is highly

Conclusion

As was noted at the beginning of this paper, the people of Edo State are predominantly farmers and their farming activities have been marred by activities of the pastoralists Fulani, popularly referred to as herdsmen. The problem of the Fulani herdsmen activities on the people living in Edo state is particularly germane for the people in Edo State, which has a distinctive culture, religion and profession. The paper therefore concludes that the nefarious activities of herdsmen on the people of Edo State who are predominantly farmers have setbacks on the socio – economic development of the people many of whom have abandoned farming for fear of being killed, especially as the Fulani herders are now fully armed to the teeth, while their presence and activities leave behind relics of destruction and plans.

Recommendations

Based on the negative effect of herdsmen activities on the socio – economic life of the people living in Edo State, and by extension to the Nigerian nation, it is important to make the following suggestion towards forestalling the Fulani pastoralist invasion of some parts of Nigeria, especially in a period when the much talked about diversification of the Nigeria economy occupies the front burner. There should be inclusive education for the Fulani's pastoralist. Education plays a significant role in enhancement of economic growth through individual's socio – economic circumstances (Krueges, Lindahl& Samir, 2012 in Okhiku and Ujuanbi 2015). The above underscores the importance of education to solving life problems either on the individual side or generally as it relates to a nation's security. It therefore means that one of the ways out of the present herdsmen farmers' crises is through functional and sustainable education. More emphases therefore must be placed on strengthening nomadic education in Nigeria beyond the mere policy and paper work. No doubt, when this is done, some of these nomadic Fulani's may change from being herders to gainful employees in the offices. Even when they still want to practice herding, it will inevitably be in a new direction. They will no doubt cherish the human life. This is because it education transforms an individual's to value his life and those of others.

The Nigeria security needs a security perspective that upholds the tenets of social justice, fair play and probity in public life. It is dangerous enough for the citizenry of any country to feel uncommitted to their country and to lack the true sense of patriotism (Imobighe, 1998). The law enforcement agents such as the military, police, civil defence etc, must remain apolitical in the process of responding to security breach. This should be devoid of ethnic, religion, or political considerations.

Government should ensure that ranching in line with international best practices is emphasized. The migrant pastoralist should be encouraged to live a sedentary life style and encouraged to

practice the ranching system and not cattle colony, because the later will only help to aggravate the already existing situation.

The government should set up a special trans – border patrol outfits. This should be made up of the military, police, civil defence, member of the immigration and customs to regularly patrol the borders of the nation to checkmate influx of illegal migrants into the country.

In addition true federalism should be practiced in Nigeria which allows for some level of autonomy for the federating units instead of the present unitary system of government in disguise. Along this direction, the different state of the federation should be allowed to operate a state police, while efforts towards restructuring of the federation should be shore up. This no doubt will help to curtail the excesses exhibited by herdsmen.

On the whole, the Nigeria government should develop the courage and temerity to enforce its laws on all violators irrespective of the tribe or creed. No doubt, if perpetrators are brought to book, it will serve as deterrent to others who may try to follow the same line in future.

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