

## **Herdsmen-Farmers Clashes in Nigeria and its Effect on Food Security**

Article by Chinenye Cynthia Kalu  
Texila American University, Nigeria  
E-mail: chinnykalu77@gmail.com

### ***Abstract***

*Farming is the process of cultivating the soil and growing seed plants that are for human and animal consumption which can be used for human consumption and the raw material can also be used for processing of other items that are used for human and animal. Most of the things that are used are from the farming.*

*Herdsmen are those agriculturists that are involve in mainly keeping of livestock especially cattle, they keep herds of cattle through the nomadic method which involve the roaming from one place to another in search of pastures and drink for the cattle.*

*Agriculture involve the food cultivation and breeding of animals for food thereby the farmers and the herdsmen are working towards achieving same goal for mankind. The worries are why the clashes between the two groups.*

*“Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.*

*This paper will study the history of these various agriculturist and the causes of their clashes in Nigeria and how the clashes has affected access to sufficient food, safe and nutritious food that meet the dietary needs for an active and healthy life and some possible actions to put in place to reduce the effect on food security in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Food, Farmers, Herdsmen and food security.*

### **Introduction**

Researchers still believe that farming as an agricultural system which has been modernized and improve through different techniques has been in existence about 12,000 years ago. According to the creation of Mankind farming of food has been in existence since man came to be in the world. Food has been the sustenance of mankind for nutrition, health and growth, Man has been sustaining since existence through food and most of this food is being cultivated.

Food from the soil is been eaten by men and animals in the world. Animals are known to eat food as it grows from the soil, while mankind eat the food in the same manner but as evolution system progresses man learnt to transform the crops to different form of food for easy preservation and consumption. Man, also learnt to integrate the different food in order to have a more nutritious and balanced food for improving human health.

Farming is the process of cultivating the soil and growing seed plants that are for human and animal consumption which can be used for human consumption and the raw material can also be used for processing of other items that are used for human and animal. Most of the things that are used are from farming.

Herdsmen are those agriculturists that are involved in mainly keeping of livestock especially cattle, they keep herds of cattle through the nomadic method which involve the roaming from one place to another in search of pastures and drink for the cattle.

The herdsmen in Nigeria are known as the Fulani's, they are called the Fulani- herdsmen, which are known to have spread from the Juta Jalon mountains of West Africa, just as their name implies they don't have a base they keep moving from one place to another due to the search for green pastures for their cattle and drink. In this regard, they have spread to different part of West Africa including Nigeria.

Farmers are known for the cultivation of food crops and they have been of significance importance to the growth of the nation and has made the food accessible in different locations to allow for human consumption in different place in the country.

Food accessibility has made it possible for Mankind in a different location to have access to food that is important and nutritious to health even if it is not cultivated in the area. Accessing the sufficient and required amount of food for consumption at a particular time and place for human consumption. Farmers have contributed immensely to food accessibility globally through their various activities.

The final report of the 1996 World Food Summit states that food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"

These agriculturist clashes when there is conflicts of interest in their various activities which they do not consider the effect on the mankind and animal which are their major factor in all their activities, due to this insensitivity the clash has affected both mankind and the animals and has created a huge impact on food accessibility and security.

The purpose of this research work is to study the effects of the farmers and Herdsmen clashes on food accessibility and food security.

## **Theoretical framework**

Food are all consumables that are nutritious for health and are cultivated or rather processed in other forms for all living creatures. Food is needed by all living creature to keep life and remain healthy for the growth and proper body development.

## **Food farming in Nigeria**

Nigeria as other West African countries are known for fertile and rich vast land that is fertile for farming and this has been traced back to Nigerians being dominant farmers, they live and survive through the cultivation of crops for food. Nigerian soil is blessed with fertile soil that is rich to grow different types of crops for food.

In the ancient days in Nigeria, every family relies on the cultivation of crops to survive the economy, the whole members of the family are all involved in the production of crops that lead to the desire for a large family size because the larger your family the large the number of workforces to be used for the production of crops for food.

Farming in Nigeria has taken a dramatic turn to a better direction in recent years, creating jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs who dare to go into the farming business. Millionaires are currently being made every year through farming in Nigeria and there is certainly no end to the prospects of creating more wealth through farming in the coming years.

Nigeria has a huge population of over 200 million people, twice more than the populations of Zimbabwe and South Africa combined. The entire population of Nigeria depends on staple foods produced from farms and another farm produces for their daily meals and sustenance. More than 80 percent of Nigerians buy their farm produce from the market.

Nigeria has large expanses of fertile farmlands laying fallow across the nation. Nigerian land area, when measured in sq. km is about 910,770. The land area of any country is the country's total area, excluding areas that are considered to be water bodies. So, Nigeria has one of the biggest expanses of Land in Africa of which 70 percent is available for farming.

Nigerian Government is seriously turning its attention to promoting farming in Nigeria to help boost food productions in the country and minimize food importation. The government is willing to assist any would be farming entrepreneur/investors with the necessary supports and logistics.

Nigerians boast the highest purchasing power in Africa, far more than any other indigenous Africans. We buy things here and we pay cash. Talk about parties, Nigeria is the most merriment people on earth. The food used for parties and merriment in Nigeria can feed four other African countries.

By the time Nigeria attains its full capacity utilization is agriculture, farming will become a great foreign currency earner more than the oil. The implication is that Nigerian farmers will be able to earn in Naira and in Dollars as well as other foreign currencies.

Nigeria government in its recent policies has really developed policies to boost the farming the system in order to transit from the traditional system to modernize the system of farming which will increase the productivity of farm produce.

Government has mapped out funds and program that have been seen encouraging and effective which has attracted the educated and professional farmers to engage in modern farming, the policies has shifted a lot of businessmen and white-collar job earners to be involved in farming, it has also encouraged every civil servant to be involved in farming.

Some workers have seen to resign of their duties and are fully engage in farming and this has improved productivity in farm produce.

Most young graduates are willing ready to involve in farming as they are being encourage in that area and they have seen it lucrative. Data has shown that some of the biggest farm in Nigeria are owned by young farmers.

### **Herdsmen in Nigeria**

A herder is a worker who lives a possibly semi-nomadic life, caring for various domestic animals, in places where these animals wander pasture lands.

Herdsmen are the owners or keepers of domestic animals. Most of the herdsmen in Nigeria are still done in the traditional way and are mostly Fulani's that have migrated in to the country, they are mostly nomadic farmers that are not based in a particular place, they are known to be moving from one place to the other in search or pastures and drinks or the animal.

Fulani herdsmen or Fulani pastoralists are nomadic or semi-nomadic Fulani people whose primary occupation is raising livestock. The Fulani herdsmen are largely located in the Sahel and semi-arid parts of West Africa, but due to relatively recent changes in climate patterns, many herdsmen have moved further south into the savannah and tropical forest belt of West Africa.

The herdsmen are found in countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon. In Senegal they inhabit northeastern Ferlo and the southeastern part of the country. In many of these countries the Fulani's often constitute a minority group.

Fulani pastoralists started migrating into northern Nigeria from the Senegambia region around the thirteenth or fourteenth century. After the Uthman dan Fodio jihad, the Fulani became integrated into the Hausa culture of Northern Nigeria. Thereafter, during the dry season when the tsetse fly population is reduced, Fulani pastoralists began to drive their cattle into the Middle Belt zone dominated by non-Hausa groups, returning to the north at the onset of the rainy season. But while managing the herd and driving cattle, cattle grazing on farmlands sometimes occurs, leading to destruction of crops and becoming a source of conflict.

Nigeria's implementation of the land use act of 1978 allowed the state or federal government the right to assign and lease land and also gave indigenes the right to apply and be given a certificate of occupancy to claim ownership of their ancestral lands. This placed the pastoral Fulani in a difficult position because most did not apply for lands of occupancy of their grazing routes, and recurring transhumance movement led to encroachment on the properties of others.

Herdsmen in Nigeria are mostly the Fulani's, who move around in different part of the country, they are mostly immigrants that have moved into the country through the borders in search of food for their cattle. Their activities are mostly not control by the government of the country because they don't have a base and not ready to settle in a particular place.

They are always seen by the road side and inside the cities sometimes obstructing traffic as they move their cattle from one area to another.

### **Herdsmen and farmers clashes in Nigeria**

Agriculture is the cultivation and breeding of animals, plants and fungi for food, fibre, biofuel, medicinal plants and other products used to sustain and enhance life.

Agriculture involve the food cultivation and breeding of animals for food. Thereby the farmers and the herdsmen are working towards achieving same goal for mankind. The farmers that cultivate food crops is for mankind and also processed for the feeding of the animals which is also in turn for mankind

consumption. The plants are hereby used and processed in different form for human consumption, industry (products also used by human) also some plants by products are consumed by animals which is also used to keep the livestock that will also be sold for human consumption and some of it parts processed for used for mankind, the Fresh milk is gotten from cows, meat and the skins and bones are further processed in the industry for various uses by Mankind, the dungs are also used to nourish the plants for growth.

The BIG question is WHY the CLASHES? As the plants are for the Mankind and animals and also the dungs from the animals are also for the plants.

These clashes have been stirred from ethnic clashes to what it is called today since 1999 areas like Taraba states, Benue states and Plateau states have been engage in clashes that seems to be ethnic and has recorded a lot of human lives.

Most often, the arguments that trigger the violence result over the grazing of farmlands by livestock. The dangerous trend with each crisis is that our security agencies fail to fish out the perpetrators. Under such Hobbesian conditions, the perpetrators often see themselves as avenging warlords for whatever ethnic interests they may be defending. What is more, with such warlords walking the streets free, younger otherwise law-abiding youth are misled by such impunity into believing there are no consequences for bad behaviour.

Indeed, since the Fourth Nigerian Republic's founding in 1999, farmer-herder violence has killed thousands of people and displaced thousands more in Africa's most populous country not limited to Nigeria, various communities has been affected in the country.

These clashes have been extending from the North to the South and to the East and has been involving different communities in Nigeria. There are different version of the story and the clashes which has move from community clashes to terrorist clashes that involve the dead of human being and the destruction of various community settlement which has led to displacement of human and the fear of poisonous meat and farm produce, these clashes are sometime mixed up and people has different interpretation for the clashes. The majority of farmer-herder clashes have occurred between Muslim Fulani herdsmen and Christian farmers, exacerbating ethnoreligious hostilities.

The question. Are these clashes under the quest of farmland for pasture and for food cultivation or rather had the clashes been hijacked by some terrorist group as a platform to accomplish their desired attack? The Nigeria security system are doing their best to control the various attack and to make sure that communities are being protected.

### **Causes of the herdsmen and farmers clashes**

The research has shown that some factors are the main causes of the clashes which are

1. Destruction of farmland: The Herdsmen in search for pasture for the animals allow the cattle to fed on farms thereby destroying the food crops in the farm, the farmers has device a method of controlling the effect by building barbwire as a form of protection on the food crops. Herdsmen will also destroy the barb and allow the cattle to graze on the Farm.
2. Harassment of Herdsmen by youth: The destruction of farm crops which has causes a lot of scarcity and had cause some hardship to farmers whose main occupation and source of livelihood is farming in the quest for revenge had set up youth to harass the herdsmen as there are trespassing into their territory.
3. Loss of Cattle: The herdsmen have suspected the loss of some of their cattle to the community and had traced it to act of revenge for the destruction of farm produce.
4. Sexual harassment of women: Women had been reported missing and being sexually harassed in the farms which has been traced to the act of taking control of farm by the herdsmen.
5. Killings and sudden disappearance of farmers: The frequent disappearance of farmers and killing which is at the high rate have been traced to the retaliations of the herdsmen as the reaction of the response of the harassment received at their end.

These quest for retaliation and revenge has gone so deep that the various group has extended it to loss of lives and it has affected human even more than the farm and the animals.

No, this regard power to take away life and property as human being are more valuable than animals and crops because is human that has the dominion over them and has the power to maintain and keep

them so life should not be destroying. Life should be Preserve in order to keep and grow the animals and crops. Socio-economic effects of the conflicts led to reduction in crop yield and income of farmer's/nomad's displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties and loss of products in the storage.

### **Food security and food accessibility**

Being able to reliably obtain, consume and metabolize sufficient quantities of safe and nutritious foods, is essential to human well-being.

### **1996 World food summit**

*"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."*

### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

"Food security means that

1. All people at all times have both physical and economic access to enough food for an active, healthy life;
2. The ways in which food is produced and distributed are respectful of the natural processes of the earth and thus sustainable;
3. Both the consumption and production of food are governed by social values that are just and equitable as well as moral and ethical;
4. The ability to acquire food is ensured;
5. The food itself is nutritionally adequate and personally and culturally acceptable; and
6. The food is obtained in a manner that upholds human dignity.

Similarly, **Community Food Security** has been defined as follows

*"Community food security exists when all citizens obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone."* - Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC)

### **Food security**

The FAO provides this well-accepted definition of a state of food security: *"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."*<sup>1</sup>

### **Components of food security**

#### **Availability of food**

Availability is one of the four components of food security and it addresses the supply side. The phrase refers to the physical inflow and presence of safe and nutritious food at a given time and in a given place (e.g. at a local market or in a country). Food availability relates to the supply of food through production, distribution, and exchange. It constitutes all the necessary factors that allows human being to have readily food at any given time. Crop production allows growing of crops as food for mankind. This makes availability of food possible to mankind. Man has device means of growing food in and out of season in order to make sure food is available to mankind at any time through the use of water and irrigation system where water is channel through irrigation to provide necessary water for crop production. Food is made available at all time through different stocks / storage and preservative measures that allows crops to be available for human consumption round the year. When the stocks are kept, trading is use to make the food available through the act of buying and selling.

#### **Access to food**

Access, one of the four components of food security, concerns itself with whether or not an individual or household is able to gain access to (and therefore eat) available food. It addresses the ability to purchase or exchange goods for foods, as well as foods that are given and other social mechanisms that

affect access (e.g. unequal distribution of food among the members of a household). Here, an individual will be able to access the food through availability of income. Here income determine the kind of food that an individual can access. An individual can only access the available food by considering the prices of food that he/ she can afford. The availability of market is another factor that plays an important part in the accessibility of food, whereby an individual/ household cannot access some markets due to some infrastructures they will have difficulty accessing food that are grown in that part of the country. Inability to transfer food crops to some areas can bring about difficulty in accessing such food in an area where they are not grown.

### Utilization of food

Utilization is one of the four components of food security. It addresses the body's ability to make the most out of the nutrients in food that is consumed. Utilisation of food can be affected by factors such as poor storage, spoilage, cooking practices, food safety, and diseases (such as worms, or HIV/Aids) that might affect sufficient consumption and digestion of food. There should be knowledge shared on preparation of food to promote preparing nutritious food which will help build healthy body and system. Different crops that are grown should be use in other to put a healthy and well balance diet on our table at every given meal. Household should be exposed on different food crops and the different nutrients. Knowledge on handling of different food crops should be shared to avoid food poisoning.

### Stability

Stability is one of the four components of food security. It cuts across and affects all the other components. Food may be available and accessible to people who are able to utilise it effectively, but this state of affairs needs to be enduring and so stable over time, rather than being a temporary state that is subject to fluctuations. To put all factors in place in relation to the components of food security as they work concurrently in other to have a stable food security.

### Malnutrition

Malnutrition undermines a person's ability to lead a healthy life and occurs when a person is not able to obtain the right variety of nutrients in the right amounts from their diet. It is an umbrella term that includes over nutrition (an excess of food energy), undernutrition (a lack of food energy and macronutrients such as protein), and micronutrient deficiencies (insufficient micronutrients such as iron, vitamin A or iodine).

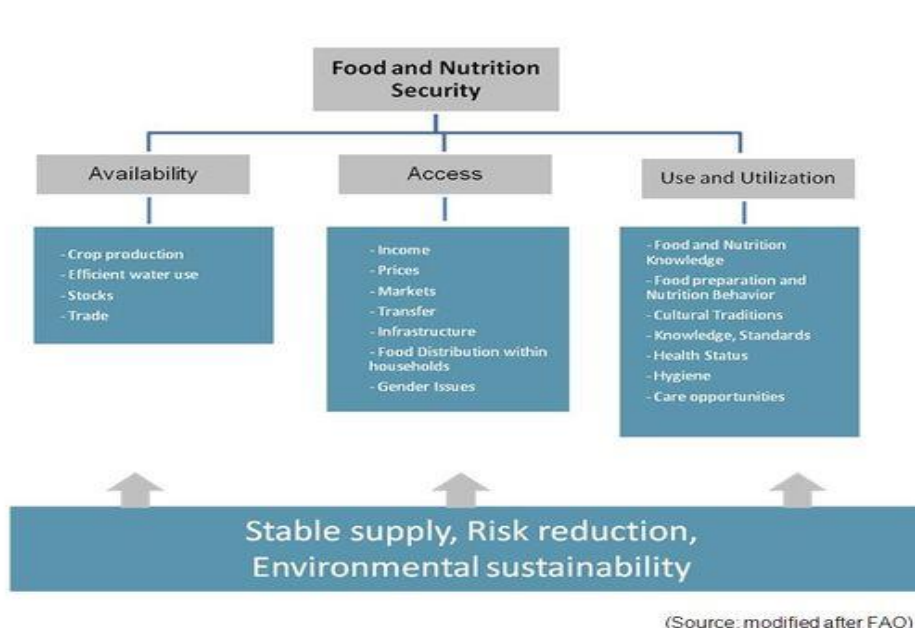


Figure 1

<https://wocatpedia.net/wiki/File:Dimensions2.JPG>

## **Importance of food security**

Everyone has to eat: It goes without saying that we all need food to survive, and if there is food security, then everyone can worry about things other than from where to get food or how to get it.

Food is considered a basic human right. Every person is entitled to food, and food security means that everyone can execute this right without too much hassle.

Food security is the backbone of the economy. As long as there is food security, the economy has a chance to grow. Many people are involved in all forms of food production, and it is one of the industries that cannot fail.

Good food is necessary for people's good health. As we have mentioned before, food security is when people have access to good food that keeps them healthy. When there is food security, all people get necessary nutrition and keep their health in check.

If a person cannot pay for food, they should not go hungry. Even if someone cannot afford to buy high quality foods, they should at least be able to have access to nutritious food, and when there is food security, they have that ability.

Country that cannot provide food for its people is at mercy of those who can. If a country is struggling to feed its citizens, the only thing it has to rely on is the mercy of other countries. It is a very unstable option, and it can be used against the country in need.

Hunger is an issue for many Nigerians. As a result of constant conflicts, many people from the Northern Nigeria go hungry because of limited staple harvests, poor labour opportunities and high food prices.

## **Herdsmen-farmers clashes in Nigeria and its effects on food security**

The clashes had caused a lot of loss to the Nation but we will concentrate on the effects on food security for the purpose of this paper.

Food security is the measure of availability of food (nutritious and healthy food) for human consumption and being able to access it.

**Food Availability:** A number of cases has been recorded on crop destruction by the herdsmen, some of the seedling that was stored for farming have been destroyed in the farm by the cattle. this has affected food security in that food crops are limited for human consumption thereby causing non availability of food in some area.

Men and women are discouraged from farming as it poses fear of losing their lives by the herdsmen, hence causing an increase in scarcity of food as food production is being discouraged.

Trading becomes very discouraging as there are no or little food crops for exchange. People have to travel to another community in search of food crops for exchange which has brought about increase in price as little are being supplied irrespective of the demand in the market.

**Food Accessibility:** The herdsmen and farmers' clashes has affected the prices that are tagged on the available food crops, the prices are increases as little food are available for the people. Some of the income earners has invested their income on farming in return for profit but was recorded as wasted investment as the seedlings were destroy by the herdsmen. Most investors are afraid to invest their income on farming.

Due to the killings and some cases of disappearance of people, it has made transfer of food crops difficult as the places that are not affected by the clashes find it difficult to move around as they fear kidnap and being harassed.

In the act of retaliations, some of the cattle are being killed and sometimes poison, these in the other hand has brought about the increase of price of cow meat in the area and the avoidance of such as people fear the meat are not healthy for human consumption.

The clash has caused the non-availability of some nutritious food crop that are used within the community to boost the healthy system of the people. some crops that are grown for healthy and nutritious needs are lacking within the community and has affected what is obtainable in a household meal that constitute balance diet for healthy and active life.

## Recommendations

1. A public forum involving the actors in the decision making and to be permitted to take part actively in related issues. Representatives of the host communities and Fulani herdsmen should be conveyed under the planning procedure of restoring peace to most of the affected communities
2. Participatory planning process that involves all stakeholders (herdsmen and farmers) in the dispute resolution mechanism should be adopted.
3. Ranching method of cattle rearing should be adopted at rearing location across the country while the herdsmen should be given needed training for effective and efficient management of the ranching.
4. There is need for proper re-orientation of the essence of social interaction irrespective of the religious and ethics background
5. Government should be firm and fair in its resolution and implementation of decisions.

## References

- [1]. <https://thebftonline.com/2019/business/agribusiness/fruitful-agricultural-transformations/>.
- [2]. <https://www.wealthresult.com/agriculture/top-10-farming-in-nigeria>.
- [3]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulani\\_herdsmen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulani_herdsmen).
- [4]. <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/killings-in-benue-plateau-and-taraba-states/211068/>.
- [5]. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-08-21/my-land-not-your-land>.
- [6]. <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/jesr.2018.8.issue-2/jesr-2018-0024/jesr-2018-0024.pdf>.
- [7]. <https://nifa.usda.gov/topic/global-food-security>.
- [8]. <https://www.foodsource.org.uk/building-blocks/what-food-security>.
- [9]. <https://www.eufic.org/en/healthy-living/article/the-determinants-of-food-choice>.
- [10]. <https://www.legit.ng/1163922-importance-food-security-nigeria.html>.