

# Socio-Economic and Psychological Impacts of Land Use Conflicts on Herdsmen and Local Communities in Kogi State, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

The importance of land resources to mankind has brought with it a lot of competition amongst its uses and users. This has led to series of conflicts and litigations such as the crisis between Fulani herdsmen and the local community farmers in the middle belt region and the northern states of Nigeria being reported by the media almost on daily basis. The consequences of these incessant conflicts are becoming worrisome and a threat to national security. It is on this basis that this study was carried out to assess the socio-economic and psychological effects of such conflicts amongst Fulani herdsmen and local community farmers in Kogi State of Nigeria. A total of 293 farmers from Alloma, Okula and Iboko villages and 56 herdsmen from Gaa Ofolikpa, Gaa Iboko and Gaa Efekpe were selected for this study. Structured questionnaire were administered on the sampled respondents to obtain data on their losses and gains from such conflicts. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that both parties suffered untold hardships ranging from destruction of crops, herds, houses, bush burning to loss of lives. Others include raping, food insecurity and sleepless nights. In order to forestall these hardships, it is recommended that both herdsmen and community farmers be properly educated and sensitized on living together in harmony for peace to reign. Moreover, policy makers should create ranches where the herdsmen could feed their cattle without moving to community farmlands.

**Keywords:** Community farmers, Fulani herdsmen, land use conflict, psychological, socio-economic.

## **Introduction**

The competition between farmers and herdsmen has often times turned into serious overt and covert manifestation of hostilities and social friction in many parts of Nigeria. The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity of life and properties particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide (Adisa, 2011). In fact, incidences of crises between farmers and herdsmen in the northern states were being reported almost every week (Ofuoku, 2010). Nweze (2005) stated that many farmers and herders have lost many lives and herds, while others have experienced dwindling productivity in

their herds. This was supported by Ajuwon, (as cited in Nweze, 2005) in his observation that in Imo State for instance between 1996 and 2005, nineteen (19) people died and forty-two (42) people were injured in this rising incident of farmers-herders conflict and the violence that often accompanies such conflict is an issue that can be regarded as being of national concern. These conflicts were threats to both state and national stability. It also has implication for tribal coexistence, Nigeria being a multi-ethnic and a multi tribal nation (Ingawa, 1999). Conflict in resource use is not uncommon and perhaps not unnatural in human ecosystems. Ekong (2003) opined that conflict may have positive and negative effects. In positive

effect, people may not know that certain nagging issues exist. Thus conflict leads to clear definition of issue. Once such issues have been identified, they can then be amicably resolved. Moore (2005) noted that conflict *per se*, is not bad: it is perhaps a necessity in the evolution and development of human organizations. But when conflicts degenerate to violent, destructive clashes, they become not only unhealthy but also counterproductive and progress-threatening. Nyong and Fiki (2005) pointed out that resource-related conflicts are responsible for over 12 percent declines in per capita food production in sub-Saharan Africa.

Many researches have been carried out on conflict resolution and management, especially on conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in Nigeria. While most of these studies focus on the causes of the conflicts (Adisa, 2007; Ajuwon, 2009; Ibrahim, 2009; Olabode, 2010; Abbas, 2011; Adisa, 2011b; Alawode, 2013; Okoli & Chukwuma, 2014), others like Tenuche and Ifatimehin (2009), Oladele and Oladele (2011) dwell on the effects of such conflicts. However, more expansion of frontiers of knowledge in this area of national concern cannot be unjustifiable; hence, the aim of this study is to examine the socio-economic and psychological effects of the incessant conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and the local farming communities in Kogi State of Nigeria with a view to finding a lasting solution to identified bitter consequences of such conflicts.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Whatever the causes of farmer-herdsmen conflicts are, it is evident that the conflicts have been of great negative effects. These range from economic effects (such as loss of income/resources/yield) to physical (such as home/farm destruction, bodily injury or death of family member) and socio-psychological effects such as emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, etc, (Adisa, 2011a). The manifestations of the conflicts ranged from mere altercations to violent skirmishes resulting in loss of livestock, crops, lives and valuable

property. Categorically, the economic effects include loss of yield, reduction in income, loss of household resources, loss of man-hours and security expenses. Also, the physical effects of conflict include home destruction, bodily injury and death of household member while the socio-psychological effect also involves declining quality of children's education, sleepless nights, anger/anxiety/emotional exhaustion, reduction in family food quality/quantity and job dissatisfaction (Adisa, 2011b). Ajuwon (2009), in determining the effects of Fulani-farmers conflicts in Bauchi state discovered that between 1994 and 2002, 28 villages were affected and recorded loss of lives, crops, livestock and properties while between 1995 and 1997, in 8 out of the 28 villages affected, it was reported that 31 farmers, 66 herdsmen and 4 policemen were killed. Also 44 farmers and 2 herdsmen were injured (Bauchi State Agricultural Development Programme, 1997). Between 1997 and 2002 in Gombe state, a woman was abducted for some days and another was amputated, 366 people were seriously injured, two herdsmen were apprehended by the police, 20 people lost their lives, a number of cattle were killed and some houses were burnt. Also some valuables were lost, rainy season crops were prematurely harvested and there were delays in starting dry season farming as a result of the conflicts. Between 1996 and 2002, 27 persons were injured and 17 persons lost their lives. Crops estimated at over a million of were reportedly damaged in Kogi State. In Imo State, there were loss of lives, properties, animals and farm produce. Between 1996 and 2002, nineteen (19) people died and forty two (42) persons were injured. One hundred and ninety one (191) animals valued at ₦233,000 and crops worth over ₦334, 000 were destroyed during the conflict (Okoli et al, 2014). The herdsmen live in fear of attacks on their cattle and themselves (Adisa, 2011b). Accordingly, Okoli, et al (2014) asserted that conflicts have resulted in dire humanitarian, social, economic, and socio-economic consequences. For instance, herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa State

have led to loss of lives, population displacements, human injury and livelihood crisis. According to a source credited to the National Orientation Agency (NOA *Nasarawa State Pulse Report*, 2013), the conflicts have led to the killing of not fewer than one hundred and thirty (130) persons between 2011 and 2013. This is in addition to scores of people who have been rendered morbid, homeless, displaced and destitute by the conflicts. Psychologically, the conflicts have created an atmosphere of mental siege and terror among the populace in such a manner that threatens public peace and tranquility. The conflicts have also led to tense and volatile inter-group relations amongst the various peoples of Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue, Kogi and some other states in the northern part of Nigeria (Ofuoku, 2010). This manifests in mutual mistrust and animosity which are often

misplaced. The pastoralists see the settled farmers as enemies of their collective survival and destiny, and vice versa. This creates an ambience of mutual suspicion and perpetual tension that threatens peaceful coexistence, security and stability of the society.

On the whole, the conflicts have been engendered untoward outcomes that impede sustainable societal peace and development. As pointed out by Nchi (2003) “these rounds of strife disrupt community life and solidarity and destroy local and national economies with negative consequences on general social and economic development”. Sunday Trust of 1<sup>st</sup> September, (2013), reported cases of Fulani/Farmer Clashes in Nigeria with their respective date, place of incidence and the number of deaths recorded as follows.

**Table 1: Cases of Fulani/Farmer Clashes in Nigeria**

Date	Place of Incidents	No. of Casualties
January 1	Jukun /Fulani clash in Taraba State	5
January 15	Farmers/Fulani clash in Nasarawa State	10
January 20	Farmers/Fulani clash in Nasarawa State	25
January 24	Fulani/Farmers clash in Plateau State	9
February 7	Fulani/Eggon clash in Nassarawa State	30
March 20	Clashes between Fulani an Tarok, Jos, Plateau State	18
March 28	Clashes between Fulani and Farmers in Riyon, B/Ladi, Jos, Plateau State	28
March 29/30	Clashes between Fulani and Natives in Bokkos areas of Bokkos LGA Jos, Plateau State	18
March 30	Police killings in clashes between farmers and Fulani	6
April 3	Farmers/Fulani clashes in Guma LGA, Benue State	3
April 10	Clash between Fulani and Tiv farmers	28
April 23	Fulani/Egbe Farmers clash in Kogi State	5
May 4	Fulani/Farmers clash in Plateau State	13
May 4	Jukun/Fulani clash in Wukari, Taraba State	39
May 13	Fulani/Agatu clash in Benue State	50
May 20	Tiv/Fulani clash at Benue-Nasarawa boarder	23

**Source: Sunday Trust, 2013.**

Empirical studies on socio-economic effects of herdsmen/farmers’ conflicts include Ajuwon (2009) on conflicts in Fadama communities in Nigeria. Using descriptive statistics, the study identified the effects as destruction of lives and properties on the people of Bauchi, Kebbi, Nassarawa, Gombe, Benue and Plateau states. Ibrahim (2009) researched into access to and conflict on farm and grazing lands in semi-arid areas of Nigeria with

particular reference to Yusufari Local Government Area of Yobe State. While these two studies have done much on the subject matter, they were carried out, outside Kogi State, hence the necessity to replicate it in the State due to social and geographical differences. Tenuche and Ifatimehin (2009) examined resource conflict among farmers and Fulani herdsmen and the implication on resource sustainability. The study described the

traditional relationship between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the incessant resource conflict witnessed in Kogi State as strained and of consequential effects on resource sustainability of the communities. However, Oladele and Oladele (2011) studied the effects of pastoralist-farmers conflicts on access to resources in Savanna area of Oyo State and found that the conflicts did not significantly hinder the agro-pastoralists access to resources. As it were, the study did not address the holistic impact of conflict on the psychological, social and economic life of the communities which this study is out to take care of.

### The Study Area

Kogi State is located between latitude 6°30'N and 8°51'N and longitude 5°51'E and 8°00'E. The State is structured into 21 Local Governments Areas with a total landmass area of about 30,354.74 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 3,278,487 (NPC, 2006). It has an average temperature of 28°C. Annual rainfall ranges from 1016mm to 1524 mm and humidity is 69%. The State is endowed with both human and physical resources. It hosts the confluence of the two largest rivers in Nigeria-Rivers Niger and Benue.

The study area comprises Alloma, Okula, and Iboko, all in Ofu Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria. The total population of the people in the study area is about 53,725 (NPC, 2006) and most of the inhabitants are predominantly farmers. This

area is located within 8°50'N and 8°20'E of the equator. The study communities located within Ofu Local Government Area share boundaries with Ajaokuta in the West, Idah in the South and Dekina in the North.

The climate in the study areas in particular permits the growing of arable and permanent crops. They grow crops like yam, cassava, maize, millet, beans etc. Due to the abundance of palm trees in the areas, most women engage in palm oil processing. Annually, the area is subjected to extensive bush burning in the dry season and flooding in the rainy season. Poultry, sheep and goats are also kept in small scale. The vegetation is savanna type, hence the area is also good for grazing. There are two distinct seasons – wet and dry. The wet season is normally from April to October, with the highest amount of rainfall between June and September. Most of the vegetation however has been destroyed by man through cultivation and grazing, as a result of which the present vegetation is a secondary type.

### Research Method

The target population for this study comprised of Farmers and Herdsmen in Alloma, Okula, and Iboko farming communities and Fulani camps consisting of Gaa Ofolikpa, Gaa Efekpe and Gaa Iboko. The sampling frame and size for the study are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2: Sampling frame and size (Farmers).**

Farming Communities	Sampling frame	Sample Size
Alloma	270	151
Okula	165	117
Iboko	158	113
<b>Total</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>391</b>

Source: Author's computation, 2015

**Table 3: Sampling frame and size (Fulani herdsmen)**

Fulani Herdsmen	Sampling Frame	Sample Size
Ofolikpa	25	25
Iboko	18	18
Efekpe	20	20

<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>63</b>
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**Source:** Author's computation, 2015.

To obtain the sample size, the formula by Yamane (1967) was chosen for this study for the fact that the population is finite; the formula is given as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \text{----- (i)}$$

n= sample size

e = accepted error (the precision) taken as  $\pm 0.05$

N = population

The application of this formula gives a sample size of 391. Isreal (2003) suggests that the census method should be applied for a population less than 200. Hence the sample size for the Fulani herdsmen was 63. For the purpose of this study proportional random sampling was used for the farming communities. This is necessary because the three villages were not of the same population. Structured questionnaires were administered on both farmers and herdsmen to elicit relevant information, on the socio-economic and psychological effects of conflicts in the study areas. The questionnaires were designed in simple forms to enable the respondents to answer appropriately by ticking either yes or no. Moreover, the questionnaires were

interpreted to the respondents in their local languages by trained field officers.

## Results and Discussion

Tables 4 to 6 show the socio-economic and psychological effects of conflict in the study area.

Table 4 indicates that loss of income had the highest frequency (91%) among farmers, followed by loss of yield (85%), household resources (23.5%) and stored products (23%). On the part of herdsmen, losses whether material or not were minimal. Indeed, 14.3%, 8.9%, 7.1%, and 3.8% of herdsmen claimed to have suffered losses in respect of their, income, yield, stored products and household resources respectively. However, concerning non-material resources, 30%, 20%, and 13% of herdsmen suffered losses in respect of job status, self-esteem, and quality of relationship respectively. These figures in respect of herdsmen were generally far less than those for farmers. This implies that farmers experienced more losses than the herdsmen. It also means that farmers suffered loss of material and non-material resources than the herdsmen.

**Table 4: Socio-economic effects (loss) of conflicts on farmers and herdsmen.**

<b>Loss of</b>				
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Farmers</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Herdsmen</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yield	249	85.0	5	8.9
Household resources	70	23.5	2	3.6
Social support	13	4.4	2	3.6
Stored products	66	22.5	4	7.1
Job status	162	55.6	17	30.3
Self esteem	154	52.9	11	19.6
Income	266	90.8	8	14.3
Family/personal health	40	13.9	9	16.1
Quality of relationship	72	24.6	12	12.5

Source: Field Survey (2015).

**Table 5: Socio-economic effects (gain) of land use conflict on farmers and herdsman.**

<b>Gain of</b>				
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Farmers</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Herdsman</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yield	0	0.0	0	0.0
Household resources	0	0.0	.0	0.0
Social support	<b>78</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17.9</b>
Stored products	0	0.0	0	0.0
Job status	0	0.0	0	0.0
Self esteem	0	0.0	0	0.0
Income	0	0.0	0	0.0
Family/personal health	0	0.0	0	0.0
Quality of relationship	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: Field Survey ( 2015).

Table 5 shows that the only item that constituted a 'gain' for both parties were in areas of social supports and quality of relationship, although the figures were very low; 4.1% for farmers and 5.4% for herdsman. This implies that both farmers and the herdsman were assisted in the areas of provision of relieve materials from the Government and NGOs like foods, clothing and other necessary materials.

Table 6 shows the result of the psychological effect of mutual conflict on the quality of their respective lives in the

aspects of the quality of their children education, physical exhaustion, sleepless night, reduced interest in family matters, reduction in food quality and quantity, staying more away from home and farm/job abandonment. All the adduced psychological effects of conflict have t-cal. < t-tab. except in the aspect of the quality of children education with the t-cal. > t-tab. This means that of all the factors considered, decline in quality of children's education is the only factor that is significant at 0.05 levels.

**Table 6: Result of t-test of variables of socio-psychological effects of the conflicts**

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Mean scores</b>		<b>Df</b>	<b>t-calc.</b>	<b>t-crit.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
	<b>Farmers</b>	<b>Herdsman</b>				
Decline in quality of children education	3.55	1.05	348	5.71	1.645	S**
Physical exhaustion	3.75	2.15	348	1.47	1.645	NS
Sleepless night	3.85	3.56	348	1.56	1.645	NS
Reduced interest in family matters	1.40	1.25	348	1.07	1.645	NS
Reduction in food quality and quantity	3.95	1.50	348	1.11	1.645	NS
Farm/job abandonment	1.35	1.15	348	1.52	1.645	NS
Staying more away from home	1.38	1.05	348	1.60	1.645	NS

Source: Field survey, 2015

\*\*significant at 0.05 level

## Findings and Implications

Mostly, farmers suffered various socio-economic effects than the herdsmen as a result of the conflict between the farmers and herdsmen. There is reduction in output and income of farmers through destruction of crops by cattle and through indiscriminate bush burning by the herdsmen. This reduces yield which translate into low income on the part of the farmers who take farming as major occupation.

The study found that both farmers and herdsmen reported a few non-material gains. Both farmers and the herdsmen gained social support as a result of mutual conflict. Social supports for the farmers and herdsmen were in the form of non-tangible and tangible or instrumental supports such as money and housekeeping. Sometimes, Governments and NGOs come to their aid by providing food items, clothing materials and shelter.

The farmers and herdsmen experienced socio-psychological effect of conflict on the quality of their family lives. From the findings, there was significant difference in the effect of the conflict between the farmers and herdsmen in terms of the quality of children education. Farmer-herdsmen conflicts affected the proper education of children as many farmers claimed to experience difficulties in paying school fees, textbooks and other school materials. The findings confirm the outcome of studies such as Ortega, et al(1994), Coelcho (2000), and Bosch (2003) that work related stress have negative socio-psychological effects on family lives among farmers. During crises, school buildings were burnt down, teachers posted to these communities ran away for their dear lives. This evidently, does not augur well for the development of the affected children, and is capable of creating

further social problems in the future if not timely checked. The farmers suffer this most because the Fulani herdsmen do not disposed favourably to western education.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has examined the socio-economic and psychological effects of land use conflicts on the Fulani herdsmen and local community farmers in Kogi State Nigeria. It identified the major losses and gains resulting from the conflicts on both sides. It also further identified the psychological effects suffered especially by farmers as truncated children education, physical exhaustion, sleepless nights and farm abandonment among others. The study can unequivocally conclude that both herdsmen and farmers have suffered huge losses as a result of the incessant conflicts between them.

Following the result of this study, it is hereby recommended that farmers and herdsmen alike should be educated and sensitized on the need for peace and mutual co-existence. Moreover, policy makers are advised to create ranches where the herdsmen could feed their cattle without moving to community farmlands.

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