

An Assessment of the Government Response to Farmer-Herder Conflict in the North-Central Nigeria: A Study of Benue and Nasarawa State, 2012-2016

Historically, farmers and the pastoralists had hitherto co-existed peacefully and symbiotically in a complementary manner. Thus, the co-existence had lasted for long but recently upset by environmental degradation which forced the pastoralists out of their traditional ecological zones migrating south-ward to the North-Central and Southern Nigeria in search of greener pasture. This phenomenon and other factors such as increased population, land tenure system and fadama programmes ignited a destructive competition for land resources, leading to the perennial clashes between the two warring groups. The study therefore, assesses the level of responses by the Government in the North-Central, Nigeria using Benue and Nasarawa as sample states. Survey research method was adopted with 350 questionnaires randomly administered to respondents in the purposively selected affected communities. In addition, Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion techniques were equally employed to obtain empirical information. The secondary data was sourced from array of published documents including Journals, reports and newspapers. Thus, quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used to analyse data obtained from the field. The findings reveal that the conflict has not adequately responded to by the Government. The study therefore recommends grazing reserves/ranches as the only viable solution to the conflict.

Keywords: *Farmers, Herder, Government, Assessment, Response*

Introduction

Clashes and skirmishes between Herdsmen and Farmers in Nigeria, is one of such land resource-based conflicts which has caused analysts and policy makers sleepless night. For instance, over the last twenty years these clashes occurred severally, between 1997 and 2010, there were a total of 18 reported attacks, with most of them taking place in the North East. More so, over the last seven years, there have been incidents in various states across all the Geopolitical zones. The four-year period between 2011 and 2015 saw an escalation with 371 incidents (Nwanze in Financial Nigeria, 2017). The prevalence of the clashes in most recent years is indeed quite alarming with high rate of occurrence in the North Central Region of the country. Perhaps the reason has to do with the strategic location of the region in terms of natural endowment such as abundant grass-land, wet land or fadama and waters.

According to the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2017), the main cause of the conflict is the environmental resource scarcity that induced movements of herders from the northern part of the country southward. Some scholars such as Okoli et al., Odoh & Chigozie as well as Abbas, cited in

Muhammed et al. (2015:24) shared similar opinion which relate the conflict with “global climate change and the contending desertification and aridity that has reduced arable and grazing lands, forcing pastoralists to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock”. Similarly, ASUU (2018:1) posited that “severe changes in climatic conditions which triggered a large hunger for land and consequently, hardship in the availability of feed for cattle was a significant causal factor”. Accordingly, in a closely related narration Gambari et’al (2018:10) remarked that:

The demographic increase has led to an expansion in the farmland and a reduction in available grazing land for pastoralists characterized by competition over dwindling resources. In the far north, the impact of desertification as well as the crisis of energy, which has resulted in deforestation, coupled with climatic uncertainty and lower rainfall have made it more difficult to sustain increasing populations, pushing many farmers and pastoralists with livestock southwards. This has happened gradually over a period of decades-with an apparent increase over the past decade-and has added to pressure on land and water in central and southern Nigeria.

According to Eromo cited in Idowu (2017) an official report in Nigeria indicates that more than 35 percent of land area of 923,768 square kilometers is threatened by desertification affecting the livelihoods of more than 40 million people. Besides changes in climatic conditions, which is seen as a natural phenomenon, also, there are Man-induced factors such as weak government policy and institutional frameworks particularly the case of Land tenure system in Nigeria, increased large scale agricultural investment, increased land occupation by private individuals due to the population increase etc. all have therefore combined to make land not just scarce but competitive. Tenuche and Olarewaju, (2009) opined that essentially, the land tenure system in vogue in Nigeria is a precipitation of farmers-herdsmen conflict. Consequently, ASUU (2018:2) remarks that.

The farmers-pastoralist conflict is an outcome of a combination of environmental ecological crisis, and socio-historically derived problems which the ruling class of Nigeria, in its different wings, has been manipulating to suit its economic and political goals.

The conflict, therefore, has strong potentials to threatening the nation’s economy, as well as human security. Its attendant consequences can have adverse effects on the national productivity most especially in the area of agricultural production since farmers are directly affected as well as the pastoralists. “Farmers/herdsmen conflict in Nigeria has demonstrated a high potential to exacerbate insecurity and food crisis, particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts occur, with reverberating consequences nationwide” (Adeoye, 2017:130). The two conflicting groups are apparently relevant to the productive sectors of the economy. “Both are food producers and both compete for a similar resource” (Blench, 2004: viii).

1 According to Idowu (2017) the incessant clashes has widened the scope of the
 2 conflict with deadly incidents being increasingly reported in the affected areas
 3 of the country, raising fears that the violence could widen ethnic chauvinism
 4 and threaten the brittle unity that exist among Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups.

5 Nigerian government has therefore, made several attempts to mitigate the
 6 problem from the root. One method involves the coordination of the National
 7 Grazing reserves by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural
 8 Development which unfortunately, the annual budgetary provisions by the
 9 ministry do not seem to achieve the desired objective due to lack of proper
 10 policy implementation. For instance, in the 2020 appropriation bill, a sum of
 11 two billion thirteen million naira (2.013 bn) was budgeted for grazing reserves
 12 development by the Ministry (Okechukwu, 2019).

13 Also, a former senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Mrs Hajiya
 14 Zainab Kure and two of her colleagues in the House of Representatives, in
 15 persons of Honourable Karimi S. Sunday and Honourable Sadiq Ibrahim have
 16 sponsored bills to establish National Grazing Reserve Commission that would
 17 preserve and control the national grazing reserves and livestock routes in the
 18 nation. Hence, the bills were strongly opposed and criticized by some
 19 lawmakers and subsequently failed to scale through.

20 Furthermore, Federal Government, has recently come up with initiatives
 21 such as National Livestock Development and Transformation Plan coordinated
 22 by the office of the Vice President Professor Yemi Osibanjo, and Ruga
 23 Settlement Scheme as a way of reviving the defunct National grazing reserves
 24 for the settlement of the nomadic Fulani against the traditional open range
 25 grazing in the country. Thus, for the National Livestock Development and
 26 Transformation Plan about twelve states have so far indicated interests to pilot
 27 the scheme for others to join subsequently. Accordingly, about eleven states
 28 governments have equally indicated interest for the Ruga Settlement Scheme.
 29 The question here is how viable will the schemes be in addressing the lingering
 30 problem?

31 Other measures set towards finding solutions to the problem are the
 32 ecological programmes one of such is the Great Green Wall Programme
 33 (GGWP) aimed at addressing the problem of desert encroachments. The
 34 effectiveness and efficiency of these programmes is what we are interrogating.
 35 On the part of the two affected states government of Benue and Nasarawa,
 36 various reconciliatory meetings were organized by the two state governments
 37 at both state and local levels in collaboration with the security agencies on how
 38 the two parties could embrace peace and end the recurrent conflict in the
 39 respective states. It is therefore against this background that the study seeks to
 40 assess the efficacy of the Government responses to the conflict.

43 Literature Review

45 The first effort at mitigating the conflict between Farmers and Pastoralists
 46 from the root was the establishment of the Northern Region Grazing Reserves

1 Law of 1965 (Awogbade, 1987). Although efforts were made in the past during
 2 the pre and colonial eras to settle the nomadic Fulani but there was less or no
 3 significant impact. The law however, provided an impetus for the government
 4 of northern region to establish about 417 grazing reserves and demarcation of
 5 Livestock routes (Burtali) in the northern states (Ibrahim, 2017). The question
 6 arising from this therefore is to what extent these grazing reserves have been
 7 effectively managed?

8 Furthermore, the establishment of National Commission for Nomadic
 9 Education in 1989 through decree 41 now replaced as Nomadic Education Act,
 10 Cap No 20 laws of the federation was another move in addressing the problem
 11 of pastoral Nomadism in Nigeria. The main goal of the commission was to
 12 economically and socially integrate nomadic pastoralists into national life,
 13 through the provision of relevant, functional and mobile basic education and
 14 livelihood skills provision (Kwaja & Bukola, 2018). Also, the programme was
 15 designed to help the pastoralists modernize their techniques of rearing cattle to
 16 maximize their economic potential, including dairy processing and marketing,
 17 animal vaccinations, and modern herding techniques (Kwaja & Bukola, 2018).
 18 This programme could not achieve the desired objective due to the
 19 lackadaisical attitude of Nigerian government in the implementations and
 20 executions of its programmes.

21 It has always been the dominant feature of the Nigerian Government while
 22 responding to violent crises to deploy security agents in the trouble spots or
 23 areas. Hence this approach is a temporary and palliative measure in resolving
 24 security challenges in Nigeria. The approach however does not seem to provide
 25 permanent and lasting solutions to the problem of security in the country. For
 26 instance, in Plateau State, a special Task Force-Operation safe Haven (STF-
 27 OSH) has been deployed since 2001 to restore law and order. Paradoxically,
 28 the security challenge in Plateau State still persists despite the presence of
 29 special security forces in the state for a long period of time. Also, due to the
 30 recent clashes between the farmers and herders in states such as Benue,
 31 Kaduna, and Taraba, Chief of Defense Staff General Gabriel Olonisakin on
 32 15th July, 2016 announced the deployment of “Operation Accord” to put an end
 33 to the colossal killings in those areas (International Crisis Group, 2017).

34 The establishment of Great Green Wall Agency (GGWA) by the Federal
 35 Government in 2013 was a response to the African Union on Great Green Wall
 36 Initiative introduced in 2007. The Initiative however, was a response to the
 37 economic, political and security challenges posed by climate variability and
 38 environmental degradation in African continent. It set out to create an 8000km
 39 (nearly 5000 miles) of trees along the southern Sahel, accompanied by rural
 40 development and ecosystem management initiatives, to combat the encroaching
 41 desertification of the Sahara desert that has been responsible for the migration of
 42 herders from the Northern part of the country to the North-Central region in
 43 search of water and pasture (International Crisis Group, 2017).

44 Another mechanism put in place by the Federal Government in addressing
 45 the lingering conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria, was the Inter-
 46 ministerial technical committee alongside a political committee on Grazing

1 reserves set up by President Good Luck in April, 2014. The political committee
 2 was chaired by the then Executive Governor of Benue State Gabriel Suswam.
 3 However, the committee resolved at reviving and improving all the existing
 4 grazing reserves and cattle routes that have been encroach upon by farmers. To
 5 this end, the committee recommended for a release of N100 billion to the 36
 6 states of the federation by the Central Bank of Nigeria exclusively for the
 7 stated purpose yet no state has been able to construct a ranch, reserve or
 8 address the issue of stock route Although, the House of Representative had
 9 since 19th of January, 2017 set up a committee to investigate the State
 10 Governments on allegations that the funds have been looted for a time frame of
 11 four weeks but up till now a report to that effect has not been published
 12 (International Crisis Group, 2017).

13 The formulation of a “comprehensive livestock development plan” by the
 14 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) in the year
 15 2015 under the Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari was another
 16 measure to curb the incessant conflict between the herders and farmers in
 17 Nigeria. However, in August of the same year, the committee constituted by
 18 the Ministry recommended short, medium and long term strategies including
 19 development of Grazing reserves and stock routes. However, when the
 20 Government announced its plan on 25th January, 2016 to map grazing areas in
 21 all the states, some Governors particularly from North-Central and Southern
 22 extraction opposed the plan which they saw as favoring Fulani herders
 23 (International Crisis Group, 2017).

24 However, following several meetings between the Federal Ministry of
 25 Agriculture and Rural Development and the National Economic Council in the
 26 year 2017, the Federal Government however, came up with a new plan tagged
 27 ‘the National Livestock Transformation Plan.’ The plan was built on six key
 28 pillars: economic investment, conflict resolution, law and order, humanitarian
 29 relief, information education and strategic communication; and cross-cutting
 30 issues (Adeyemo, 2018).

31 According to the plan, the economic investment pillar would support and
 32 strengthen the development of market-driven ranches in seven pilot states for
 33 improved livestock productivity. With regards to the conflict resolution pillar,
 34 social capital would be rebuilt at the community level to promote mutual trust,
 35 confidence building and consolidate the peace process. Also, law and order
 36 pillar, would support the strengthening of legal frameworks for improving
 37 livestock production, peace and harmony (Adeyemo, 2018).

38 For the fourth pillar, humanitarian relief will focus on rebuilding and
 39 reconstructing of common facilities-worship places, markets and individual
 40 homes that have been destroyed. The fifth pillar would aid information,
 41 education and strategic communication on the development of grazing reserves
 42 in the frontline states, and mitigate the consequences of the conflicts such as
 43 wanton loss of lives, destruction of properties, including schools and facilities.
 44 The last pillar which is the cross-cutting issues identifies various cross-cutting
 45 issues necessary to realize the objectives of the programme, which include
 46 monitoring and evaluation; and research to contribute evidence base in

programme implementation as well as gender mainstreaming (Adeyemo, 2018).

However, the frontline states to receive pilot interventions in line with the recommendations of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the National Economic Council livestock conference are Adamawa, Benue, Ebonyi, Edo, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Oyo, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara. Also, included in the plan is the creation of large ranches in each of the proposed pilot states. A ranch design plan has been proposed in models of various sizes clustered in 94 locations in the 10 pilot states. In terms of size however, the proposed ranch size models are cluster 30, 60, 150 and 300 cows' ranch models in a location within the donated gazetted grazing reserves; and a minimum 1000 cow's breeder ranch in 7 of the pilot states. Meanwhile, a sum of N179 billion has been estimated as the total spending over the 10 years period and Federal-State government funding is meant for the first three years in the pilot phase, totaling about N70 billion (Adeyemo, 2018).

Accordingly, among the Federal Government initiatives on how to end the lingering conflict between the farmers and herdsmen in the country is the controversial Ruga Settlement Scheme. The programme was approved by President Muhammadu Buhari in May, 2019 with about eleven states indicating interests to pilot scheme. The states include Sokoto, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Kogi, Taraba, Katsina, Plateau, Kebbi, Zamfara and Niger (Friday et'al, 2019). According to the permanent secretary Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Mr. Mohammed Umar, the Ruga settlement will attract a lot of investment to Nigeria and it is our belief that in the next five years, each Ruga settlement will provide nothing less than 2000 employment opportunities (Friday et'al, 2019).

At the level of state governments, the responses vary perhaps largely due to the different nature of the conflicts. The responses of the state governments are more of ad-hoc and reactionary the same as the federal Government. They are more interested in setting up commissions of inquiries as well as peace and reconciliatory dialogue committees. These are usually post conflict resolution mechanisms. For instance, in 1997 the Gombe State government set up a farmers and herdsmen conflict Resolution committee (International Crisis Group, 2017) and his eminence Sultan of Sokoto's Committee on Tiv farmers/ Fulani cattle Rearers Relationship in Benue state (Ephraim, 2014).

It is quite unfortunate that there have not been any serious measures taken by state governments in Nigeria to mitigate the long standing feuds between the farmers and pastoralists not until few years back when some state governments began to enact laws regulating open range grazing. For instance the FCT has banned rearing of animals in the major cities while states such as Benue, Taraba, Edo and Ekiti have banned all open grazing in the states.

Methodology

The data for the study were obtained from two principal sources namely primary and secondary. For the primary source, information related to the efforts of the Governments in tackling the crisis in the affected communities in Benue and Nasarawa State have been obtained from Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions conducted among all the categories of people such as Traditional Rulers, Ardo (Head) of Fulani, Security Agents, Local Government Officials, Women and Youth Groups.

Also, in order to augment and strengthen the result of the findings, field Household questionnaire survey was carried out only among the residents of the affected non-Fulani communities. This is because, reaching out to Fulani on the household basis was very difficult, considering the fact that great number of them had left the areas only the few ones around were interviewed and engaged in the focus group discussion. The secondary data was sourced from an array of academic published documents such as reports, journals, and newspapers of which some were physically accessed and others retrieved online.

The sampling size for the study was difficult to be determined hence purposive sampling technique was adopted. To this end, two affected Local Government Areas of Benue and Nasarawa States were purposively selected. The Local Government Areas were Agatu in Benue State and Nasarawa in Nasarawa State and the reason for the selection was largely informed by the incessant and protracted clashes between Agatu community and Fulani in the two respective states. However, Agatu LGA has ten (10) Council Wards and Nasarawa LGA has four (4) affected Council Wards which include Loko, Udeni, Guto-Aisa and Tunga-Bakono. The above stated councils wards are the areas where Agatu speaking tribes can be found in Nasarawa Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Thus, twenty five (25) questionnaires were randomly distributed among the respondents on household basis in each of the fourteen (14) council wards and all the distributed questionnaires were returned totaling three hundred and fifty (350).

The study adopts triangulation or mixed method of data analysis in which information obtained or collected from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively while data obtained from Interview and Focus group discussion were qualitatively analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Demographic Data of the Respondents*

State		
Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Benue	250	71.4
Nasarawa	100	28.6
Total	350	100.0

Sex

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	321	91.7
Female	29	8.3
Total	350	100.0

1

Age

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 - 30	121	34.6
31 - 40	123	35.1
41 - 50	57	16.3
51 - 60	43	12.3
61 and above	6	1.7
Total	350	100.0

2

Religion

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Islam	129	36.9
Christianity	221	63.1
Total	350	100.0

3

Level of education

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	8	2.1
Primary education	14	3.6
Secondary education	63	18
Tertiary education	265	75.6
Total	350	100.0

4

Source: Field Data, 2020

5

6 **Table 2.** Respondents' views on seriousness and determination of the president
 7 *Good luck led administrations in responding to Famer-Herder crisis*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very serious and determined	119	34
Serious and determined	132	37.7
Not at all	99	28.3
Total	350	100.0

8

Source: Field Data, 2020

9

10 This table shows the rating of the President Good luck led administration
 11 in responding to the lingering crisis between the Famers and herdsmen.
 12 However, 34% of the respondents felt that Good luck administration was very
 13 serious and determined in responding to the crisis during the period 2011-2015.
 14 Accordingly, 37.7% of the respondents were of the view that the administration
 15 was not very serious and determined in responding to the crisis under same
 16 period while 28.3% of the respondents did not identified at all with any effort
 17 of the administration in tackling the menace. Thus in a focus group discussion
 18 organized in Obagaji the Agatu LGA headquarters, the participants differ in
 19 opinion concerning the effort made by Good luck administration in responding
 20 to the crisis. Although they unanimously agreed that the only effort of the

administration was mere deployment of the security personnel at the time of clashes between the two groups.

Table 3. *Respondents' view on seriousness and determination of the present administrations of Muhammadu Buhari in responding to Famer-Herder crisis in Benue and Nasarawa States*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very serious and determined	181	51.7
Serious and determined	44	12.6
Not at all	125	35.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2020

Similarly, this table also depicts the respondents' rating of the present administration since its inception in 2015 so far in responding to Famer-Herder crisis. Thus according to the table, 51.7% of the respondents believe that the President Buhari led administration has been very serious and determined in responding to the crisis between the pastoralists and the Agatu farming community. Equally, 12.6% of the respondents believe that the government of president Buhari has only show signs of seriousness and determination in responding to the crisis while 35.7% of the respondents believed that the administration did not show any seriousness and determination in combating the menace at all.

However, in an interview with one of the youth leaders, according to him, the president Muhammadu Buhari led administration appeared to be more sincere and honest in addressing the problem. This is because the administration has intensified efforts in providing security personnel such as military and mobile police men in all of the communities. Also, the federal Government has established an Air force base in Obagaji, the Agatu Local Government Area headquarter for surveillances.

Table 4. *Respondents' knowledge on whether there were prompt responses in the trouble spots by the Nigerian security personnel at the time of the clashes between farmers and herdsman since the beginning of this administration of Muhammadu Buhari*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	192	54.9
No	145	41.4
No idea	13	3.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2020

The table above indicates that 55.6% of the respondents believe that in the present administration of president Buhari the response of the security personnel to the trouble spots in the crisis ridden communities at the time of clashes were prompt. On a contrary, 40.3% of the respondents have said

otherwise indicating none or late arrival of the security personnel at the time of clashes between the two groups while 4.1% which is highly insignificant do not even have the idea on whether there were prompt responses or not by the security men in the affected areas at the time of clashes between the groups.

Further still, in a focus group discussion with the youth wing of the Agatu community, when this issue was raised, majority of the participants commended the effort of the Nigerian security personnel most especially for the prompt response at the time of clashes particularly in this present administration of president Muhammadu Buhari although few of them differ. According to the former Chairman of the Local Government, security men were deployed in strategic places by the government for instance, 35 soldiers in Abugbe, 35 at Okokolo, 35 at Ologba, 35 at Obomagba and 35 at Oweto.

More so, in an interview with the head of the youth wing of the Fulani group, equally the security personnel were praised for prompt response. The head of the Fulani youth thus acknowledges the early presence of the military most of the time of the clashes and according to him that has been very helpful in reducing the rate of casualty.

Table 5. *Respondents' knowledge on whether the Nigerian Security personnel has ever colluded with herdsmen in their operation to restore peace in Agatu community*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	93	26.6
No	226	64.6
No idea	31	8.8
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2020

Following the T. Y. Danjuma's accusations of the Nigerian security personnel for colluding with herdsmen in attacking farming communities in the Northern Nigeria (Magaji & Hunkuyi, 2018), the above table hence indicates that 64.6% of the respondents did not see the accusation as true. However, 26.6% of the respondents believed that the allegation was true while 8.8% of the respondents did not even have the idea of the whole matter. While discussing with some key members of Agatu community in a forum, majority of the discussants remarked that from their experiences the security personnel have never been biased in the course of discharging their responsibility of maintaining law and order in Agatu community. Although a key informant from the Fulani group claimed that the security personnel have severally killed their members in the name of bringing sanity and restoring peace to Agatu land.

Table 6. *Respondents' satisfaction with the peace and reconciliatory committees set up by the two state governments of Nasarawa and Benue in respect to the crisis*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	98	28
Satisfied	118	33.7
Not satisfied at all	134	38.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2020

The Peace and Reconciliation committee was set up by the government of Benue and Nasarawa states towards finding a lasting solution to the crisis between herdsmen and Agatu farming community in the two respective states with Hon. Akpa Iduh as Chairman and Ardo Buderu as Vice Chairman. However, the committee met on 18th January, 2017 together with the Governors of the two states and their deputies where both of the warring parties presented their grievances. To this end therefore, the above table indicates that only 28.% of the respondents were very satisfied with the committee and 33.7 % was only satisfied while 38.3 % was not satisfied at all. This therefore shows that only few of the members of the community were happy with the outcome of the peace accord.

Although in an interview with a former Agatu Local Government Council Chairman which according to him peace accord was signed by the two states Governors Mr. Samuel Ortom of Benue State and his counterpart Alhaji Umaru Tanko Al-Makura of Nasarawa state. The resolution was that only the indigenous Fulani would be allowed to come back to Agatu since they could all be identified by their hurts (Ruga). Hence no any foreign Fulani herdsman would be allowed to stay in Agatu land. According to him with the peace accord, the Agatu people for the first time since 2012 were able to celebrate Christmas. However, discussing the issue with some members of the community in a focus group, the unanimous view was that with all that had discussed and resolved in the meeting, yet the crisis continues and as such, the committee was discredited.

Table 7. *Respondents' acceptance of the open grazing prohibition law as a lasting solution to the Farmer-Herder crisis in Benue and Nasarawa*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	257	73.5
No	87	24.8
No idea	6	1.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2020

Following the persistent perennial clashes between the herdsmen and farmers, the Government of Benue State has on November, 2017 signed the open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment law for the purpose of

regulating open range grazing in the state. In view of this, the above table hence depicts that 73.5% of the respondents felt satisfied with the law as one of the best measures to curb the incessant clashes between the pastoralists and the farming communities in the state. However, beyond this perspective, is the view of the 24.8 % of the respondents who considered the law as obnoxious, anti-people, unconstitutional and above all against the fundamental human rights which arbitrarily restricted the movement of certain group of people who are equally citizens of the country.

Corroborating the preceding view, was the submissions of the Fulani group who out rightly condemned the open grazing prohibition law and equally described it as a deliberate and calculated mischievous act targeting at eliminating Fulani in the state. On the other hand, some of the members of Agatu community while engaging them in a focus group discursion commended the state government for such giant stride to curb the menace in the state.

Table 8. *Respondents' satisfaction with the post crisis response by the Nigerian government in terms of relief materials given to the victims in the affected communities*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	65	18.6
Satisfied	150	42.9
Not satisfied at all	135	38.5
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2020

The table above shows that only 18.6% of the respondents were very satisfied with the post crisis response by the government, International Organizations and NGOS while 42.9% of the respondents were only satisfied and the 38.5% were not satisfied at all. This depicts that very few people were overwhelmingly impressed hence appreciated the government efforts in providing relief materials to the victims in the affected communities. In specific terms the former Chairman of the Agatu Local Government, stated that beyond deployment of the security personnel to the trouble areas by the Federal Government, the Benue State Government provided the sum of twenty million (#20, 000000.00) while Nasarawa State Government gave a sum of ten million (#10, 000000.00) naira to Agatu communities and each house hold in the affected communities got four boundless of roughing zincs from the money. More so, building materials were equally provided by the Federal Government to the affected communities even though the materials were not enough to take care of all that have been destroyed.

Conclusion

Pastoralism and Arable farming are closely related agricultural practices exclusively involving the use of land resources and their contribution to

national development in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. In other words, the contribution of Agriculture to the national economy is indeed enormous hence, the survival of the two groups as suppliers of food of both crops and meat. It is in this regard that all hands must be on deck to ensure that the duo coexist peacefully. Thus, Government has the major role to play in ensuring this peaceful coexistence between the two warring groups and as urgent as possible, the Federal Government in collaboration with State Governments, and other relevant stakeholders must intensify efforts to judiciously implement the initiated National Livestock Development and Transformation Plan for both ranches development and Ruga settlements as the states government wish to opt.

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